

le News

WEEKLY SWISS NEWS IN ENGLISH

Hebdomadaire gratuit N°16

Lake Geneva region 27 February - 5 March 2014

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BERN The Federal Council is seeking the same surveillance tools used by those who spy on Switzerland.

If approved by parliament later this year, Switzerland will have a new surveillance law giving intelligence services greater powers to tap the internet and private phone lines in the name of countering military and industrial espionage and

combating terrorism. Bern wants the same tools as those who spy on Switzerland.

Parliament rejected an earlier attempt to strengthen secret-service powers in 2009. However, that was before revelations by US whistleblower Edward Snowden about the extent of eavesdropping by his employer, the NSA.

In presenting the proposed law last week, defence minister Ueli Maurer

denied the Snowden affair had any bearing on their discussions. However, security expert Alexandre Vautravers of Webster University believes that concerns about the breadth of NSA's data collection activities "has definitely changed the context for the present legislative discussions".

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Next Week

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This Week in Switzerland

Last year 1,038 individuals were considered **"unfit" for military service**, compared to 989 in 2012. The shooting of a 16-year-old girl in Zurich by a soldier in 2007 spurred the Swiss army to take preventive measures against those posing a risk to public security. Preventing potentially dangerous individuals from receiving military training or access to weapons is considered essential by the **Department of Defence**.



According to Swiss **anti-racism** laws, labelling an individual a "foreign pig" or "dirty asylum seeker" is not a punishable offence. The ruling of the federal tribunal found the policeman who had branded an Algerian asylum seeker in **Basel** with such terms **not guilty**. Despite the clearly insulting nature of the incident, the tribunal considered that the policeman had not broken the law, as no reference to ethnicity, race or religion was made.

The **Sochi Olympics**, the costliest to date with over **CHF 45 billion** invested into the coastal resort, came to a close last Sunday. The 17-day long event saw **Switzerland** finish **seventh** in the medal rankings, with **six gold**, three silver and two bronze. Russia topped the rankings, with a total of 33 medals, including 13 gold. Germany, Austria, France, and Italy respectively finished sixth, ninth, 10th and 22nd out of the 26 participating nations.

Online criminals are infecting computers with **malware** by disguising their attack as an e-ticket from **British Airways**. Criminals hope that recipients will think their credit card has been used to purchase the ticket, and will click on links inside the email to find out more. However, if users download the **fake ticket** they will be infecting themselves with a **trojan** that gives hackers access to their data.

Switzerland has halted its weapons exports to **Ukraine** as clashes with government forces have resulted in 88 fatalities. Over CHF 2 million worth of **weapons** and munitions were **exported** to the country between 2009 and 2012. Though no request to block assets linked to the ousted regime has materialized, the foreign ministry has emphasized **Didier Burkhalter's** proactive stance in finding a lasting solution to the Ukrainian crisis.

For the first time in more than 30 years the Federal Customs Administration has released information regarding Switzerland's **precious metal** trade. Around one third of the country's foreign trade is in gold. The statistics show that **Asia** is Switzerland's main **trading partner: Hong Kong** tops the list, followed closely by India, Singapore, the United Arab Emirates and China. These countries account for **80% of total gold exports**, which stand at CHF 6.9 billion.



New cantonal and federal measures are to be introduced to counter the shortage of **organ donors** in Switzerland. The measures, which include greater **education** for medical staff, checklists to identify potential donors and improved **hospital resources**, will seek to address the growing amount of people awaiting donor **transplants**: 1,274 in 2013, compared with 641 in 2003.

World War II documents have shed light on **spying** conducted by the **FBI** against **Swiss diplomats** during and after the conflict. The FBI was also able to read Swiss code until 1950, by which time **Enigma machine** code had been replaced by code written by the Swiss-made **Nema machine**. Among other feats, the FBI managed to discover how much the Swiss government was willing to pay for **Nazi gold** stored in Swiss banks.

Bern plans more tapping

Continued front page 1

Maurer sought to assure that privacy would be respected, noting that any phone tapping would require approval from the cabinet and judges on a case-by-case basis.

"Switzerland is not planning to introduce exhaustive surveillance measures against its citizens," he said. Such "special searches" would require proof that a real threat exists. In addition, before any data may be used, its accuracy and relevance to national security would have to be proven.

The new law has three basic changes, according to Vautravers: "The constitutional basis, collaboration between cantons and the federal government, and surveillance of [internet] cable networks." Cooperating with foreign secret services will continue to be subject to approval by the cabinet. Last October, Maurer denied that the Swiss government had ever had any contact

with the NSA. But he did add that Switzerland was cooperating with the US in the fight against terrorism.

Traditionally, there has been resistance from the Swiss political left against expanding intelligence capabilities. This was partly the result of the discovery in 1989 that secret-service agencies had files on more than 900,000 people in Switzerland. The files dealt primarily with travel and activities linked to political groups with connections behind the Iron Curtain. "But today all governmental parties realize the need to protect Switzerland, its inhabitants and its economy against acts of terrorism and activism," said Vautravers. Bern nevertheless continues to face calls from parliamentarians to lodge a formal protest with the US authorities or, at a minimum, to seek political measures in response to alleged spying activities implicating Switzerland.

Pamela Taylor



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Editor's comment

Swiss decisions: Shooting oneself in the foot

I was once shooting a film on "lost" tribes in Western New Guinea. Together with 27 porters, we slogged through the rain forest until we reached a ridge leading into a valley. This was where our porters abandoned us. They were afraid of what was on the other side. Yet they still benefitted from outside barter such as tobacco for pigs.

Mountain communities are very similar, whether Afghans in the Hindu Kush or Kurds in Iraq. They exhibit the same forms of suspicion toward outsiders. Swiss Alpine folk are no different. Justified or not, they loathe change, but are happy to benefit from the skilled migrant labour and foreign investment that has made Switzerland Europe's wealthiest country.

Ever since the narrow 50.3% immigration vote, Swiss politicians, both left and right, have been debating options such as hauling back retired Swiss doctors to replace highly qualified foreign medical staff. For the moment, it's all up for grabs. Yet Swiss pragmatism may not be enough. Foreign perception is crucial. The Swiss have shot themselves in the foot before by refusing to acknowledge that the world may see matters differently. The Swiss need to be careful about how they deal with the immigration issue. The referendum has already prompted the EU to freeze funding for Swiss research. Companies, too, are reconsidering investment. The political parties – and the media – need to inform the people about what is really at stake. Living isolated is not an option.

Edward Girardet, editor@lenews.ch

Léman NYC meets Léman Geneva

The Collège du Léman's exchange programme recently welcomed five students from the international school's New York City counterpart, the Léman Manhattan Preparatory School. The students will spend three weeks immersed in Swiss culture to broaden their outlook and improve their French. When finished, they will head back accompanied by a member of their host family, who will spend three weeks in New York.

For 10th-grade students Sophie Stoch and Patrick Andrews, both 16, the experience has been a positive one so far. "The food is amazing," said Sophie. "My host family and the students have made me feel very welcome," noted Patrick, who studied French in his native Australia. "Geneva reminds me a bit of Canberra," he said. "I really like the wide open spaces and relaxed international vibes." If successful, the programme will expand to longer exchanges, such as a semester or even a full academic year, among the other half dozen Léman schools located as far afield as China, Mexico and the US.

Christopher Woodburn

More time to shop

BERN The Federal Council's proposal to homogenize the opening hours of retail businesses throughout Switzerland will rescind existing cantonal and municipal laws.

Given growing cross-border competition, where prices can be 20–30% less, and the strong Swiss Franc, the project seeks to address strident economic realities hindering the country's retail market. If the plan passes, communes and cantons would no longer be able to decide, or impose, their own opening hours for commercial businesses, such as shops.

In Geneva for instance, the project would enable retailers to stay open an extra hour from Monday to

Thursday, an extra hour and a half on Fridays and an additional hour on Saturdays. Offering a total of six and a half more hours per week, the rationale is to benefit both consumers and employees by addressing lifestyle changes, working conditions and shopping trends. It would also stimulate more effective competition. Often hindered by disparate cantonal laws largely because of trade union and church pressure, the traditional retail sector can expect to benefit from this new flexibility. It would also favour the tourist industry as many foreigners come from cultures where shops stay open late.

Christopher Woodburn



To extend shopping hours is hotly debated by business and the unions.

Burkhalter addresses UN on Ukraine situation

On a two-day visit to the United States this week, Swiss president Didier Burkhalter proposed establishing an international contact group to support Ukraine.

In his capacity as chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), he made the proposal in an address to the UN Security Council and later in discussions with US vice-president Joe Biden.

GENEVA Tensions remain high at Geneva's Champ-Dollon prison, which holds inmates from 100 different nationalities, after three days of fighting. Last Sunday a brawl involving a hundred prisoners broke out resulting in seven injured, including one guard. More fighting erupted on Monday. On Tuesday morning, prison authorities called in ambulances after two further fights. A total of 26 prisoners and eight prison staff were hurt, some of

whom were hospitalized.

Constantin Franziskakis, the director of Champ-Dollon, which was built in the 1970s near the city's southern border with France, said the brawls occurred during exercise time, bringing together Albanian and North African prisoners. He appeared to dismiss a turf war as the cause of the unexpected violence. According to the Tribune de Genève, Franziskakis confirmed that three separate investigations have been launched. He also announced punitive measures against those responsible. Some prisoners will be moved to the high security wing. The

director added that he would address the prisoners making it clear that life in Champ Dollon is to be conducted in a civilized manner and in a spirit of coexistence. This is not the first time that rioting has erupted. In 2006, 200% overcrowding coupled with alleged guard brutality caused prisoners to mutiny. *Cristina Odero*

Photo credit: Peter Schulthess



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National

Switzerland in seventh heaven

LAUSANNE Switzerland's Olympic campaign in Russia has proved a success: its athletes have brought home a total of 11 medals – six gold, three silver and two bronze.

The tally enables the country to finish a laudable seventh out of 26 participating nations. Sochi also means two more than Vancouver four years ago, surpassing Switzerland's objective of ten medals. The results are no small feat considering its meagre population. Among the countries finishing ahead, only Norway's five million trumped Switzerland's eight.

The results further reaffirm Switzerland's pivotal role in winter sports, especially Alpine disciplines. The fact that women won five of the 11 medals confirms a reversal in gender-based performance. Swiss female con-



The Swiss women's ice hockey team won bronze at Sochi.

tenders fared poorly during the Canadian Olympics. With Sochi, they made it clear that complacency was not an option for succeeding in an increasingly competitive environment.

The Sochi games also linked Olympic success with economic pragmatism. To remain competitive, Swiss Olympic Committee President Jörg

Schild had stressed the importance of increasing funds for athletes. Winter sports are a lot more costly than their summer counterparts. Not only must equipment and meteorological restrictions be factored in, but also specialized training and facilities.

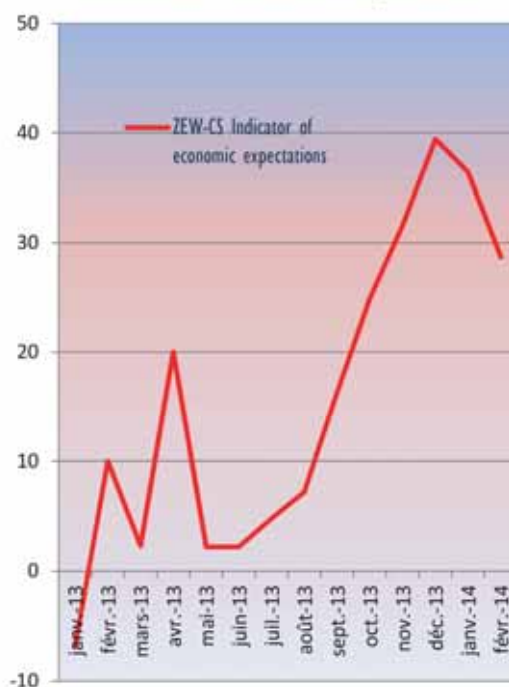
Christopher Woodburn

Economic sentiment weakens

ZURICH In February Swiss economic expectations fell from near their highest level in more than three-and-a-half years, amid concerns by financial analysts that the vote to re-impose quotas on European Union workers could hurt growth. A survey by the ZEW Institute and Credit Suisse published last week shows the headline index of investor and analyst expectations dropped to 28.7 points from 36.4 points in January, approaching a level not seen since the early stages of the eurozone crisis in May 2010.

The weaker reading, which focuses on expectations for economic development in the next six months, "is likely to be caused by the approval of the national referendum to stop mass immigration, which could impact on employment, investments and the general attractiveness of Switzerland as a business location," the report said. Immigration has supported economic growth, and roughly a fifth of Switzerland's eight million inhabitants come from abroad. About 45% of employees in its chemical, pharmaceutical and biotech industry are foreigners. A quarter of Swiss bank employees come from neighbouring EU countries. Conversely, 430,000 Swiss live and work in EU countries.

Switzerland's economic expectations



Some attribute the downturn in February to the immigration vote.

Switzerland's current conditions index slipped by 2.4 points month-on-month to 47.6 points in February. Meanwhile, the current conditions indicator for the Eurozone economy

improved by 10 points and now amounts to minus 34.2 points, indicating a significantly less gloomy situation.

Moyette Marrett

Xenophobia: a rising phenomenon?

ZURICH Last week's dramatic announcement by a long-standing professor from Germany at the Institute for History and Theory of Architecture that he was leaving Switzerland because of rising xenophobia was theatrical to say the least. But it is indicative of a growing unease among both foreigners and concerned Swiss that things are going too far. Christopher Höcker, a German citizen living here since 1999, said the 9 February referendum to impose immigrant quotas was "the last straw".

According to Höcker, he no longer wished to endure Switzerland's "xenophobic climate," including sometimes violent "German bashing" such as slashed car tyres. Many Swiss, particularly in the German-speaking cantons, deeply resent the highly trained immigrants who come here to work. Germans are one of the largest European Union migrant groups in Switzerland. Despite the country's heavy reliance on migrant labour, xenophobia is emerging even in the Suisse Romande, whose voters opposed the quotas but often disdain foreigners. Such discrimination does not come over well internationally. Even the pragmatic Federal Council shot itself in the foot by refusing to extend the FM license of World Radio Switzerland, the only regional English-language broadcaster.

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Le News Poll

The recent immigration vote is at the top of the political and business agenda. Take our short poll and tell us how you would have voted (or did vote). Go to: lenews.ch/vote

1. Your nationality: Swiss / EU / Other
2. Stop mass immigration: Yes / No
3. Comment (optional)

If you want to receive more information about the referendum or want to express your views in more detail, please write to: editor@lenews.ch

Business & Economy

CHF 4,000 minimum wage proposal

GENEVA The proposal by Swiss unions to raise the minimum wage has sparked debate as to whether the initiative offers a durable option for the country.

By increasing it to CHF 4,000 a month, Switzerland will have to adapt its fiscal policies accordingly. This in turn will affect Swiss businesses. They will have to contend with changes in overall labour costs that could jeopardize competitiveness. Its repercussions on unemployment levels are also a factor. The initiative ignores the indirect consequences that would emerge from such a systemic rise.

The CHF 4,000 benchmark is more than double France's SMIC (minimum wage) and triple America's mandatory baseline. In real terms, some studies suggest that the long-term impact outweighs the short-term benefits. An



CHF 4,000 minimum wage could trap the unskilled into long-term unemployment.

increased minimum wage may not only mean a surge in production costs, creating a vicious cycle of higher retail prices and decreasing consumerism, but may also threaten job security among poorly qualified personnel. The adaptation cost for Switzerland is estimated to stand at CHF 1.6 billion,

according to economist Beat Baumann. Notwithstanding that a non-negligible part of the working population would benefit, the Left's tendencies to view such initiatives as ubiquitously beneficial may highlight a lack of economic insight.

Christopher Woodburn

US report claims Credit Suisse helped tax evasion

ZURICH US Senate points finger at Credit Suisse and accuses the bank of having helped American citizens evade taxes.

A report by a US congressional subcommittee accuses Credit Suisse of having opened secret accounts for a high percentage of its 22,000 American customers between 2001 and 2008, with assets amounting to more than USD10 billion. Last Friday, Credit Suisse agreed to pay USD 196 million to settle charges for breaking federal securities laws. The bank provided cross-border brokerage and investment advisory services to American clients without first registering with the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Switzerland's second-biggest bank supplied the services to US clients between 2002 and 2013, the SEC said. Credit Suisse agreed to pay USD 82.2 million representing income from its US cross-border securities business, USD 64.3 million in interest and a USD 50 million fine.

The publication of the report concludes a two-year investigation by the US Senate Permanent Subcommittee



Credit Suisse agreed to pay USD 196 million to settle US charges.

on Investigations. Credit Suisse is one of at least a dozen institutions under criminal investigation into the use of hidden Swiss accounts to help American clients evade taxes. UBS, the largest Swiss bank, avoided prosecution by admitting wrongdoing and paying USD 780 million in 2009. It also handed over data on thousands of US accounts. According to the report, from 2002 onwards Credit Suisse's relationship managers travelled to the US to solicit clients, provide investment advice, and attract securities transactions, maintained the SEC. It did this without being registered to provide such services. "Broker-dealer and investment adviser registration provisions are core protections for inves-

tors," Andrew Ceresney, director of the SEC enforcement division, said in a statement last Friday. "As Credit Suisse admitted as part of the settlement, its employees for many years failed to comply with these requirements, and the firm took far too long to achieve compliance."

"We are pleased to have resolved this issue with the SEC," Credit Suisse said. "The Department of Justice investigation into tax-related issues remains outstanding, and while we continue to work to resolve this matter, the timing and outcome remain uncertain." The bank said earlier this month that it had set aside CHF 175 million to cover the cost of the settlement.

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Givaudan to buy Soliance?

Vernier-based Givaudan SA, the world's largest maker of flavours and fragrances, is in exclusive talks to buy Soliance SA, a French producer of cosmetic ingredients.

Fast-acting remedy

BASEL At their first meeting since the Minder initiative – to limit executive pay – was adopted a year ago, Novartis shareholders approved the board's proposal to lower board remuneration by 20%. This means that all directors, except the chairman, will receive around CHF 406,000 instead of CHF 516,000. The chairman's remuneration will be CHF 4 million, down from his predecessor's CHF 13 million. Although the Minder initiative only comes into force in 2015, Novartis has decided to act now.



Vitol buys Shell's Australian refinery

Geneva-based Vitol Group, the world's largest oil trader, has agreed to pay AUD 2.9bn for Royal Dutch Shell's Australian refinery and petrol stations, strengthening its position in a lucrative market. The acquisition includes the Geelong oil refinery and 870 petrol stations as well as supply contracts to Australia's big mining companies. Vitol will continue to sell gasoline under the Shell brand in Australia. It owns refineries in the United Arab Emirates, Switzerland and Belgium.

Insight

Going green by burning wood

ANZÈRE It may not be the best-known destination in the Valais, but the 43-year old ski resort of Anzère is among the greenest, possessing one of Europe's largest wood-pellet heating systems, after Denmark and Sweden.

A similar heating facility for Le Brassus Bois SA was built in Le Sentier, Vaud in 2009. Local Swiss energy expert, Albert Bétrisey, and his German friend, Markus Mann, whose family has had an apartment in Anzère since it was built in 1970, launched the clean-energy project in 2010. Two years later they founded Chauffage Bois Energie Anzère and proudly announced that 40 village buildings with 600 apartments, plus three hotels and a wellness centre, were fully heated by burning wood pellets.

Chauffage Bois claims that its 6.3 megawatt burner has saved 1.3 million litres of fuel oil in the past two winters by burning pellets made of waste wood cuttings from Valaisan forests. A proposal is underway to extend service to the southern part of the village by 2014–15. The CHF 8.5-million facility located just outside Anzère village is the size of a family home. It features two 300,000-litre silos filled with granules (produced by Valpellets in Uvrier, near Sion), and fed into two boilers.

At a Renewable Energy Summit last September, wood biomass experts visited the Valais from neighbouring countries, the Czech Republic and Argentina to climb up to a newly equipped hut below the Bishorn peak, where they celebrated the delivery of ten tons of wood pellets. Mann remarked that not only does the Valais now host the largest centre for burning wood pellets, but "it can now also boast of possessing, with the Tracuit hut, central heating at the highest altitude". The individual use of wood pellets as fuel has increased in recent years, but Anzère is the first Swiss village to heat its buildings with this type of clean, renewable fuel.



Anzère could save 1.5 million litres of fuel oil each year by burning wood pellets.

It is not yet known to what degree heat or electricity from wood pellets contributes to climate change. Some studies indicate that burning such forms of biomass releases large amounts of CO₂, creating a carbon debt that can last for 20–25 years despite the overall net benefit. "With the rising price of oil, timber is now a competitive energy source," said Bétrisey, adding that Switzerland can do even more. In Austria, he noted, 30% of heating comes from wood sources while in Switzerland it is only 7%, although "the proportion of forests is substantially identical".

Pamela Taylor

What other resorts are doing

Leysin (VS) – The revolving panoramic restaurant Le Kuklos is operated by solar energy. Patrons can even try their hand at solar cooking in the kitchen.

Zermatt (VS) – The Monte Rosa hut at 2,883 meters is 90% energy independent with energy generated from photovoltaic panels and solar thermal systems.

Villars-sur-Ollon (VD) – The four-star Hotel du Golf and Spa has installed water-flow restrictors, solar panels and low-energy bulbs in all of its rooms.

Les Granges (VS) – The rural Hotel Balance has a solar-heated swimming pool and its 100% organic vegetarian menu is sourced partly from the hotel's garden.

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Education & Technology

Draining brains from abroad?

While Switzerland may be losing some of its academically gifted students to the USA, UK and elsewhere, it is also attracting gifted minds from around the world.

At 56.7%, Switzerland boasts the highest percentage of immigrant scientists, bypassing the US at 38.4%. But just how much does Switzerland benefit from the "brain drain" of other countries?

A study by the University of Zurich and Federal Institute of Technology Zurich of 304 foreign students who entered the Swiss higher-education system on grants and scholarships

revealed that only half returned to their country of origin. And among those who stayed, 53% maintained professional contact with home-country institutions.

Motivations for returning included family, potentially higher status and making a difference in their own societies. Reasons for staying include higher salaries, lower taxes and a better standard of living, all attractive prospects for non-Swiss candidates. Switzerland, however, does not make it easy for developing-country nationals to remain.

Despite a 2011 law granting foreign graduates a six-month job-seeking per-

mit with similar rights to those of Swiss counterparts, the reality of seeking employment is often very different. Employers tend to be put off by the barrage of Swiss bureaucracy if they wish to hire a candidate from outside the EU. Considering the outcome of Switzerland's recent referendum to impose quotas on foreigners, EU candidates may soon face the same barriers. This could cause Switzerland to lose opportunities for competing even more successfully for top global talent.

Jennifer Rose



Switzerland could now lose the competition for top global talent.

EPFL distance learning: competition for Harvard and MIT

LAUSANNE In contrast to the complex fluctuations of the "brain drain", where the top students and professionals emigrate to join organizations outside their native countries, another force has emerged. Thanks to the explosive rise in global internet access, millions now have access to high quality distance-learning programmes previously only available to those who could afford it.

That is where Coursera, an online educational platform founded in the US by Daphne Koller and Andrew Ng, as a spin-off to a Stanford University project, asserts itself. Partnered with top institutions and organizations,

Coursera offers courses online for anyone, and most importantly they are free. Its Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) cover a range of subjects from business and literature to chemistry and computer science. The Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), University of Geneva and University of Zurich are among the Swiss universities with courses hooked up to the Coursera platform. Brown University, Columbia University, Peking University and National University of Singapore are also members. Registration is simple requiring only a name and an email account. Then simply choose an institution and

a course and start studying! Resources include video lectures, homework, discussion forums and online support.

Martin Vetterli of EPFL's School of Computer and Communications was one of the initial advocates for joining the Coursera platform: "This is the future, and we must be part of it! We are in good company with these content providers and it's excellent in terms of international visibility." He adds: "I think that we can play a unique role, particularly in basic courses, for example in French-speaking Africa." EPFL now has over half a million Africans enrolled. He also notes ruthless competition among online courses will



Martin Vetterli of EPFL is an advocate of the Coursera platform.

help improve traditional teaching methods and content. Names that don't feature on the list of prestigious contributors to the Coursera MOOC tsunami include Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Harvard still resists the trend and charges tuition per course, while MIT boasts its own online platform, the MIT OpenCourseWare.

Jennifer Rose



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“We read a couple of other books about Switzerland before coming here. We did not get this one until after we were here for about a month, and I wish we had it before, as it would have made the first few weeks a lot easier for us.”

www.knowitall.ch

Chez Vous

Future brightens for solar energy

GENEVA As Switzerland moves away from nuclear energy, experts are looking into ways to encourage people to switch to renewable energy sources for their homes, such as solar power.

The clean energy source is more environmentally friendly than many others, they say, but this is not what led to a 33% increase in solar-panel sales last year; it was a drop in the price. "The massive price reduction is certainly the main driver for growth," said David Stickelberger, manager of the Swiss professional association for solar power, Swisolar. "The reasons were lower module prices, but also more competition between specialized installers."

The investment in switching to solar at home is also made more attractive with existing and planned government incentives. As of 1 April, homes will receive a one-time reimbursement of approximately 30% of the investment costs. "At the same time, self-consumption will be allowed explicitly," said Stickelberger, meaning homeowners can opt to use their own electricity to reduce electric bills to nearly zero. "Additionally, several cantons and utilities have their own 'bridging' schemes, and 24 cantons allow tax deductions," Stickelberger says a typical installation on a single family house costs between



Homeowners can opt to use their own electricity to reduce electric bills to nearly zero.

CHF 15,000 and CHF 20,000, and its capacity will more than cover average consumption.

The Energy Economics Group at the Paul Scherrer Institute suggested

last year that costs of electricity production are likely to increase in Switzerland by at least 50% by 2050. Asked if there is enough sun around Lake Geneva, Stickelberger said, "Oh

yes, Geneva and Vaud are sunnier than the rest of the Swiss central plateau."

Jackie Campo

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Cracking up

Life is nothing like a lifestyle blog

I love lifestyle blogs. I've spent hours poring over the lives of strangers: looking at photos of their furniture, pictures they've taken of interesting trees, close-ups of their dinner, served in charmingly mismatched tableware.

In fact, I love these blogs so much that I thought *my* family should start one. We live in a beautiful place. We love to cook. Our trees are interesting. Our tableware is mismatched.

So one day, when the freezing rain was blowing in sideways and we were bored, we embarked on our first project: making apple turnovers and hot, spiced cider, and photographing the process.

It was a horrible experience and it went something like this:

Photo 1: Spiced Cider. Lay out a pot, a jug of apple juice, cinnamon sticks, a clove-studded orange and several little bowls of spices. Take photo. Put everything into the pot and simmer.

Photo 2: Ingredients for Apple Turnovers. On a wooden chopping board, assemble a ball of pastry dough, two apples, a pile of raisins and a little bowl of honey.

Photo 3: Adorable, Pudgy Little Child-Hands Chopping Apples. Give children safety knives and instruct them to chop away. Take one photo, then send them to wash their hands again ("This time get *all* the paint off") and trim their nails.

Photo 4: Rolling out Pastry. Give some pastry to each child. A noisy fight breaks out over who gets to use the rolling pin first, and one child hits the other on the head with a wooden spoon. Send them to Timeout for five minutes.

Check on the cider. Pour a small taster mug, with a tiny bit of rum.

Bring the children back. Catch the smaller child in the act of eating a fistful of raw pastry. Admonish and threaten.

Photo 5: Spooning Chopped Apple and Raisins onto Pastry Sheets. Go into the kitchen to check on the cider. Come back to find half the apple-raisin mix gone. Interrogate the children, who deny everything through chipmunk-cheeks.

Send both to Timeout for ten minutes. Top up the mug of cider. Add a tot of rum.

Photo 6: Spooning Honey onto Apple-Raisin Mix. Give children two

little glass bowls of honey and two teaspoons.

Send everybody to Timeout for 15 minutes. Wipe down honey-covered table and chairs. Wash honey out of bigger child's hair. Catch and wash cat.

Photo 7: Folded Apple Turnover, Ready for the Oven. The pastry rips as we fold it over and the mix leaks out.

Pat everything back into shape and patch the rips with extra pastry. The turnovers bear no resemblance to any known bakery product, but we've come too far to give up now.

Pour another mug of spiced cider, with two tots of rum. Put the damn turnovers in the damn oven.

Photo 8: The End Result. The turnovers come out of the oven. One has exploded.

Arrange mangled pastries on plates and children at the table. Go into the kitchen to pour two mugs of cider. Come back to find small finger holes poked deeply into both pastries.

Take the last photo. The turnovers look horrible, no one is smiling and it's getting dark. In fact, the end result looks like a depressed version of *The Potato Eaters*.



Well, that was it. That night, as I drank the last of the rum, I deleted the photos from my camera. Perhaps there are some lifestyles that just should not be blogged about.

Robyn Goss is a South African writer, recently moved to Switzerland. You can read her blogs at www.robbygoss.com

Lifestyle

Lake Geneva region: An unrecognized asset

GENEVA The Swiss call it the "Arc Lémanique", a crescent-shaped zone stretching from Geneva to Montreux

The French begrudgingly acknowledge that Lac Léman is primarily Swiss. The English term, the "Lake Geneva region", is more pragmatic, ambitious and historically accurate. The Celts and Romans saw the lake as key to regional commerce. Even Napoleon Bonaparte III considered it a homogeneous, geographical entity by offering Switzerland the Haute Savoie in return for protecting him as a refugee for 11 years. Swiss dithering, however, ensured that it joined France in 1860. With proper vision, Lake Geneva could become one of Europe's most dynamic economic regions benefitting from a

cross-border population of up to seven million people with France's Rhône-Alpes as its hinterland.

Innovative thinking toward this goal is already beginning to happen. As some local press, have been propagating, Geneva with its frontalier areas becomes a city of 800,000 rather than 200,000. The recent immigration referendum has only exacerbated the Röstigraben. Some Lake Genevans are now contemplating that they might have a better future as part of a broader Arc Lémanique. The same goes for French towns such as Evian and Annecy, which perceive Geneva as the regional hub.

No one is talking political separation; rather collaboration. After all, the 28 lake-fish don't bother with borders. Yet both Geneva and Vaud remain parochial. The promotional Lake Geneva



Is it "The Arc Lémanique" or the "Lake Geneva Region"?

Region website acts as if France voisine doesn't exist. The same goes for the Lake Geneva tourism website. There is little dovetailing between the Swiss and French sides. And yet, this is where everyone could benefit.

Le News

Cool in sites

Dumbfacts.com

"Ohio is listed as the 17th state in the US but technically it's number 47. Until 1953, congress forgot to vote to admit it to the union." This is just one of hundreds of dumb facts this appallingly designed website offers. The site is testimony to humanity's greed, luck, inventiveness and most of all stupidity. Impress your friends with your new-found encyclopaedic knowledge of trivia.

zidbits.com

Testing the boundaries of insane endeavour. This entertaining site gives insight into such esoteric (and sometimes morbid) questions such as "Can a human be frozen and brought back to life?" or "Do salt and fresh water drown you in different ways?"

Advertisement

How to give your eyes lasting protection

KRESS OPTIC

Presents Prevensia, Essilor's new surface treatment for eye glasses.

Experts are predicting an increase over the next 30 years, of eye problems related to age, such as cataracts or ARMD (macular degeneration) and only one preventive measure throughout life can protect against this.

Developed by Essilor, the CrizalPrevensia surface treatment prevents the premature ageing of the eyes by protecting them from the harmful rays of light (UV and blue-violet light).¹ It maintains good health by allowing in the blue-turquoise light essential to human metabolism, good sleep patterns and mood. Additionally, this glass ensures perfect transparency for optimal vision, thanks to protection from reflection, scratches, dirt, dust and water.

Kress Optic recommends this new treatment in particular for the over 50s, because the eyes' defence systems become weaker with age, and for young children, whose eyes do not filter harmful rays efficiently. The CrizalPrevensia treatment is also advisable with prolonged usage of computers, tablets, and other Smartphones, whose LED also produces harmful light.

1. Result of the study done by Essilor at the Eye Institute of Paris.

• **Kress Optic**

Rue Chantepoulet 1 – 1201 Geneva
Tel. 022 908 11 11 – www.kress-optic.ch

Travel

Laax: California cool in Europe's freestyle capital

Freestyle isn't just a way of approaching the slopes. It's a way of life and nowhere captures this better than Laax, a picturesque and surprisingly hip ski resort in the Romansch-speaking part of eastern Switzerland.

As a resort, Laax shrugs off the rustic Heidi image and instead features sleek architecture, trendy restaurants and stylish shops, all in the name of promoting the "freestyle" approach to life. Unlike many resorts promoted through the Swiss tourist office, Laax and the neighbouring stations of Flims and Falera are managed by the Weisse Arena group. Its owner Reto Gurtner returned to Switzerland after visiting California heavily influenced by the state's hip skateboard esprit. He recre-

ated this relaxed and freewheeling approach in the Alps by ensuring Laax's stunning slopes included four exhilarating snow parks featuring rails, obstacles and super pipes.

Laax's greatest draw is its unique Freestyle Academy where CHF 1.7 million-worth of trampoline, jumping ramps and a gigantic foam pit offer year-round training for all types of freestylers: skateboarders, bikers and snowboarders. Freestyling defies a clear definition, but is understood to mean performing in an unrestricted and improvised way. Laax captures the spirit of freestyle not only in its academy and snowparks but also in its overall attitude and atmosphere.

Central to this is the super-cool "rocksresort" composed of seven cube blocks representing the formation left behind after a massive rock fall 10,000



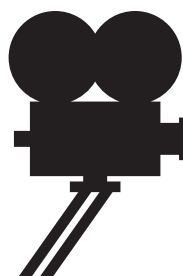
Relaax!

years ago. The buildings' indigenous grey stone is contrasted with solid oak windows and interiors lending warmth to an otherwise stark design. The inside decoration of all 102 apartments is minimalist, but striking for this traditional part of Switzerland.

The resort's emphasis on food diversity restaurants is a nod to clientele looking for more than fondue and rösti. But for those with a yearning for

Swiss tradition, one can hike 15 minutes up to Tegia Larnangs, an Alpine chalet where traditional rösti is taken to new culinary heights when coupled with herb-crusted lamb and followed by a Toblerone mousse. Several kilos heavier, guests are offered plastic red sleds to head back down.

Amelia Alexander



FILM REVIEWS

By Neptune

LE WEEK-END ★★ ★

Middle-aged British couple Nick and Meg go off to Paris to invigorate their dull marriage, and come up with a few surprises and adventures in this glorious city-of-lights. Jim Broadbent and Lindsay Duncan, as the squabbling but loyal couple, bring a tenderness and familiarity to the typically harsh and funny moments in a tired marriage, but a few clichéd turns make the story feel somewhat exaggerated. And the part with Jeff Goldblum as Blumish-as-ever makes it like a British Woody Allen tale. But it's entertaining and emotionally recognizable, as was director Roger Michell's *Notting Hill*, and Paris is the star of the whole thing.



ONLY LOVERS LEFT

ALIVE ★★

** Ah, for a tale of centuries-old vampires deeply in love and coming together in some modern-day situation, with cool music and characters portrayed by the likes of Tilda Swinton (always eccentric, even without the

fangs) and Tom Hiddleston. This is an example of style over content by director Jim Jarmusch, of such excellent indie films as *Ghost Dog*, *Dead Man* or *Coffee and Cigarettes*. Let's say it is much-ado-about-nothing, beautifully done...



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L'EDUCATION

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LE MEET

Anyone fancy drinks out / dinner out

Dinner and drinks at our place in West Lausanne? Beate Keisa +44.752.844.1672

LE MISCELLANEOUS

YOUR REUNIONS AT BOOKAFE

Hold your family reunion, worship, birthday, or business event at the Bookafe - Rue de Montbrillant 84-90, 1202 Genève. Flexible function room accommodates 50 people. 1 hour - CHF 40, 2 hours - CHF 75, 3 hours - CHF 100. To reserve, phone +41(0) 022 733 30 32/+41(0)78 760 73 15 www.bookafe.ch



Geneva Curry Club

Expats and locals come together regularly to enjoy a curry night in the Geneva region. Great for making friends and since 2006 there have been two weddings! For more info: www.curryclubgeneva.org

LES POSITIONS VACANT

Home help wanted

Girl Friday required, large house, West Lausanne. Part of team. £500/week. Beate Keisa +44.752.844.1672

Nurse required

West Lausanne. SRN / SEN preferred, but will consider others. £800/week. Beate Keisa +44.752.844.1672

Doctor wanted

Full time, will train you to eradicate cancer using ultrasonography, and later set you up in your own clinic. West Lausanne. Beate Keisa +44.752.844.1672

LES PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

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LE PROPERTY

Large family home for sale in Lutry.

320 m2 home on 1101 m2 parcel. No nuisances. Short walk to Lutry village, public transportation, shops. 10.5+ pieces. View, solar heated pool, 4 bedrooms each with en suite bathroom + separate independent access 1 bedroom/1bathroom apartment, perfect for au pair, business office or rental income. Kathryn Billington 079 783 8248



Couple seeks apartment

Young professional couple seeks affordable apartment in Lausanne area, references available. Please contact +41 (0)77.497.75.60, jacrose6562@gmail.com

LE WANT TO SELL STUFF

Ikea mattress (Fossing) 90cm x 200 cm

Nearly new, firm Ikea mattress - CHF 250. Nyon area. Buyer to collect. enilect@gmail.com



Mario Wii U game

Winter Olympic Games - Sochi 2014. Never been used. CHF 35 + CHF 9 postage. Contact: pgjudd@yahoo.com

Membership in Lavaux Golf Club

Selling a membership share in Lavaux Golf Club for CHF 5'000 (discounted from CHF 8'000). Contact Nick Galtos 079 620 72 93

Le News photo competition

Le News is offering a Payot book token worth CHF 20 and the chance to be published to the photographer who submits the best photo and caption on the subject of:

"BEAUTY"

Email your entry to competition@lenews.ch by 4 March 2014.

Congratulations to Ian McDonald, winner of the Le News weekly photographic competition "Invention".



"Invention by Design", Ian McDonald

Regional Events



These events have been recommended by Know-it-all passport!
More events on: www.knowitall.ch

Geneva Catching the slow train to Switzerland

27 February 11h45–14h00

Author Diccon Bewes will take you on the same journey that Thomas Cook took 150 years ago. See how different Switzerland once was, how difficult travelling used to be, and how the British helped change both Switzerland and the travel world forever.

Mandarin Oriental Hotel
 Quai Turrettini 1
 1201 Genève
www.bscc.co.uk



Villars Gryon Skijoring

1 March

Stick on your skis, tie yourself to a horse and you're ready for the ultimate sliding experience unlike any other. From age 7 and above, must know how to ski. Tickets CHF 40. Kids too young? Pony rides also available for children over 4 years old, CHF 20

Buvette de Cernement
 Rte de Solalex
 1882 Gryon
 Organized by Hippiskos
 079 692 56 04
hippiskos@yahoo.com



Bellevue, GE Webster University open house

3 March 16h00–19h00

Information evening on university-level education. Please visit www.knowitall.ch for information on education open-days for school-aged children.

15, rte de Collex
 1293 Bellevue
www.webster.ch/informationday



Vevey, Blonay, La Tour-de-Peilz, Pully, Morges Music Together Riviera open door

3–8 March

Music Together® is an internationally recognized early childhood music programme helping families share a musical experience by making music together. Discover the joy of making music through songs and movement activities in a relaxed and non-performance-oriented setting! Free, but reservations are a must.

www.musictogetherriviera.com
 076 341 38 88



Lausanne Art on Ice

4–5 March 19h30

Art on Ice is the unique and colourful interplay between Olympic and world champions on ice performing alongside live international music stars on stage. Art on Ice is among the most attended indoor shows in the world with nearly 100,000 spectators annually.

Centre Intercommunal de Glace de Malley
 Ch. du Viaduc 14
 1008 Prilly
www.artonice.com



le News

PICK OF THE WEEK IN COLLABORATION WITH



Martigny Fondation Pierre Gianadda

28 February – 9 June 10h00 to 18h00

Discover the Gianadda foundation's unique exhibition on the beauty of the human form in ancient Greece, in collaboration with the British Museum. You can also visit the permanent art exhibition, the sculpture garden and the wonderful veteran car museum all for the same price! Tickets CHF 15 for adults, CHF 13 for seniors, CHF 8 for students (under 25). Family ticket CHF 35

Rue du Forum 59
 1920 Martigny
www.gianadda.ch



Nyon, Les Hivernales Rock'n'Beat Festival

27 February – 2 March

Les Hivernales, a 4-day event featuring pop-rock and electro artists, is a winter festival for the Lake Geneva public. Headline artists will perform mainly at the Salle Communale and the Usine à Gaz. Additional smaller venues allow more intimate settings.

Visit www.leshivernales.ch for more information and ticket prices



Les Diablerets, Diablerets 3D

28 February – 2 March

Three disciplines, three challenges and three routes. Held for three days in the beautiful setting of the Diablerets massif, Diablerets 3D features all Alpine skiing disciplines, from vertical racing to relaying, via long-distance racing. This 4th edition will also host part of the World Cup.

www.diablerets3d.ch



Sainte-Croix/Les Rasses 44th MARA

1–2 March

MARA, one of the most popular Swiss cross-country skiing competitions, attracts hundreds of competitors each year to tracks set in idyllic surroundings. This event features competitions on 12km and 25km skate-skiing circuits on Saturday. On Sunday, there are 12km, 22km and 42km classic style events.

www.ski-mara.ch



Villars-sur-Ollon Jazz O'Tage

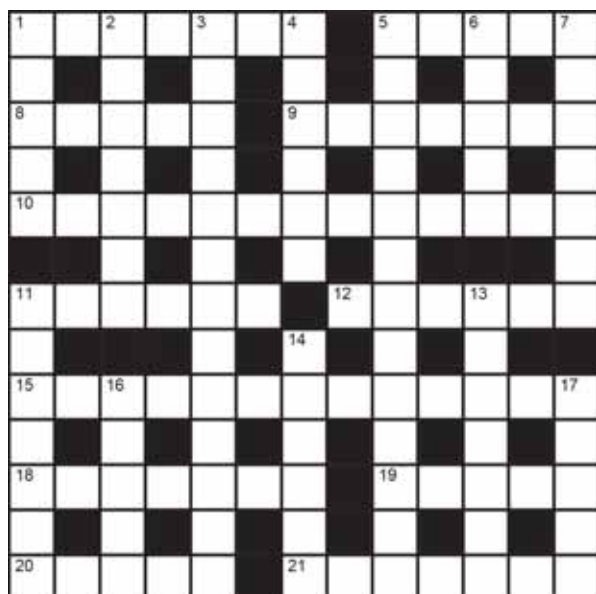
28 February, 4 March 16h30–19h30

Enjoy live music from the four bewitching musicians of Jazz O'Tage as they accompany you during your visit to the market.

Place du Marche
 Villars-sur-Ollon
 024 495 32 32



Puzzles



QUICK CROSSWORD

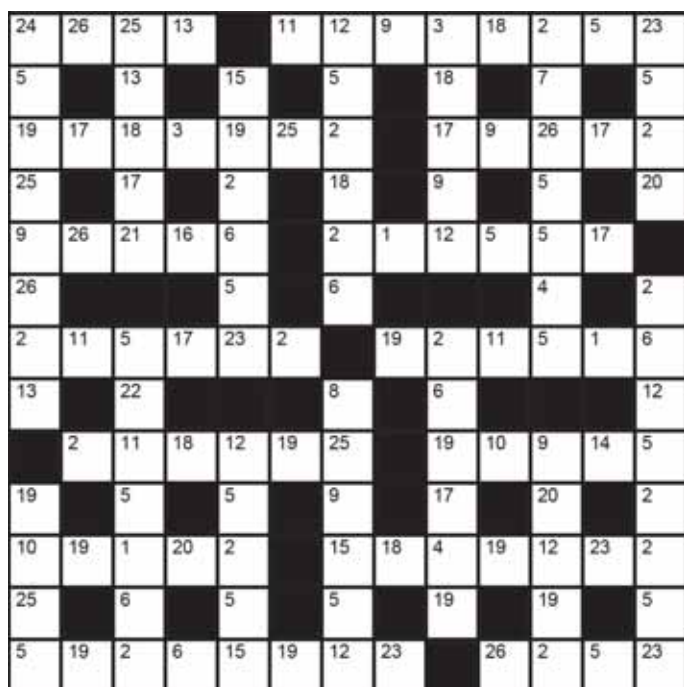
ACROSS

- 1 Disposed to peace (7)
- 5 Unpleasantly strange or eccentric person (5)
- 8 Hatched must metamorphose (5)
- 9 Reflexive form of one (7)
- 10 All in the mind (13)
- 11 A protective inside surface (6)
- 12 Able to spare or give (6)
- 15 Vegetable patch (7,6)
- 18 Sixty Romans (7)
- 19 One of three equal divisions (5)
- 20 Waste pipe (5)
- 21 Belonging to this earth (7)

DOWN

- 1 Growth on a membrane (5)
- 2 Act in a silly or improper way (5,2)
- 3 Enjoyed transient success but then failed (5,23,3)
- 4 Difficult to please (6)
- 5 Raises scones (5,2,6)
- 6 Make a great effort (5)
- 7 Humourless and disapproving (2-)
- 11 With crazyspeed and intensity (4,3)
- 13 Quaint (3-4)
- 14 Dislodge (6)
- 16 Polynesian monarchy (5)
- 17 Prod (5)

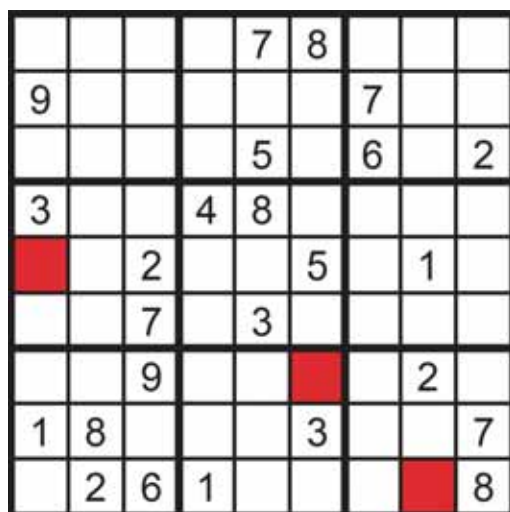
Last week's solution



CODEWORDS

Each letter has been replaced by the same number throughout the puzzle. Simply decide which letter is represented by which number and complete the puzzle. To start off we're given you the first three letters.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
			Z							P		
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
									D			



SUDOKU

Easy

Enter numbers into the blank spaces so that each row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9.

What's On

Fasnacht's music, fun and colour

Masks, lanterns and music are at the ready for the three mystical nights of Basel Fasnacht from 10 to 13 March. People begin filling the streets for the annual festival well before dawn at 4.00am on Monday with the party continuing until 4.00am on Thursday.

Switzerland's largest carnival, has origins dating back to the Middle Ages with close links to local events and traditions. While offering a unique experience with its drums, pipes and outlandish masks, the festival's overriding feature is always a dark sense of humour and harsh criticism of the authorities. Fasnacht begins with the Morgenstreich (morning prank) on Monday 10 March, when the city lights are turned off and the lanterns, caricaturing local figures, are paraded around town. They are also featured in the masked processions on Monday and Wednesday afternoons. Fasnacht is also famed for its traditional Gugge, or brass

bands. Musicians march from 19.30 to 23.00 on Tuesday around the Marktplatz, Barfüsserplatz and Claraplatz, encouraging spectators to tagalong.

"Much is special about Basler Fasnacht. There is the piccolo and drums competition where young musicians show off what they can do and compete to become the piccolo or drum "king" or "queen". There is also a lantern exhibition which is the world's largest temporary open-air art exhibition," explained Annicken Gravino of the Fasnacht Committee. The Fasnacht theme this year, "Keep clean" is portrayed by a "Waggis", a costumed figure who points at the rubbish and dirt in the streets. Waggis badges (Blagettes) are available from street vendors, carnival participants and kiosks around town. fasnachts-comite.ch



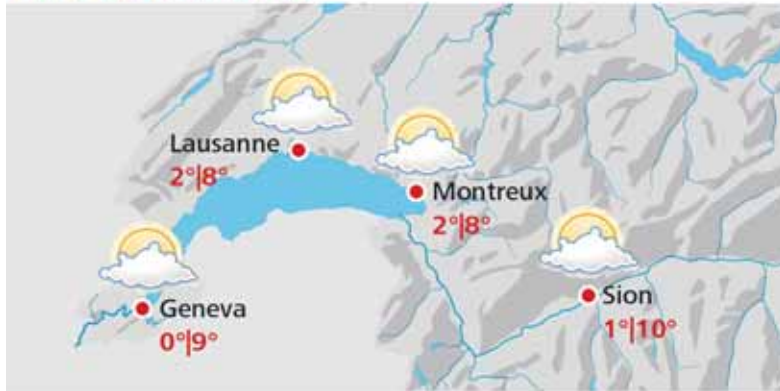
Win!

Sudoku: Send us the three numbers in the shaded squares for a chance to win CHF 10.00. The first correct answer drawn next Monday will win. Email: prizes@lenews.ch

Code word: Send us the three letters in the shaded squares for a chance to win CHF 10.00. The first correct answer drawn next Monday will win. Email: prizes@lenews.ch

Weather

SUISSE ROMANDE



GENEVA

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
2 9°	3 8°	2 8°	1 6°

LAUSANNE

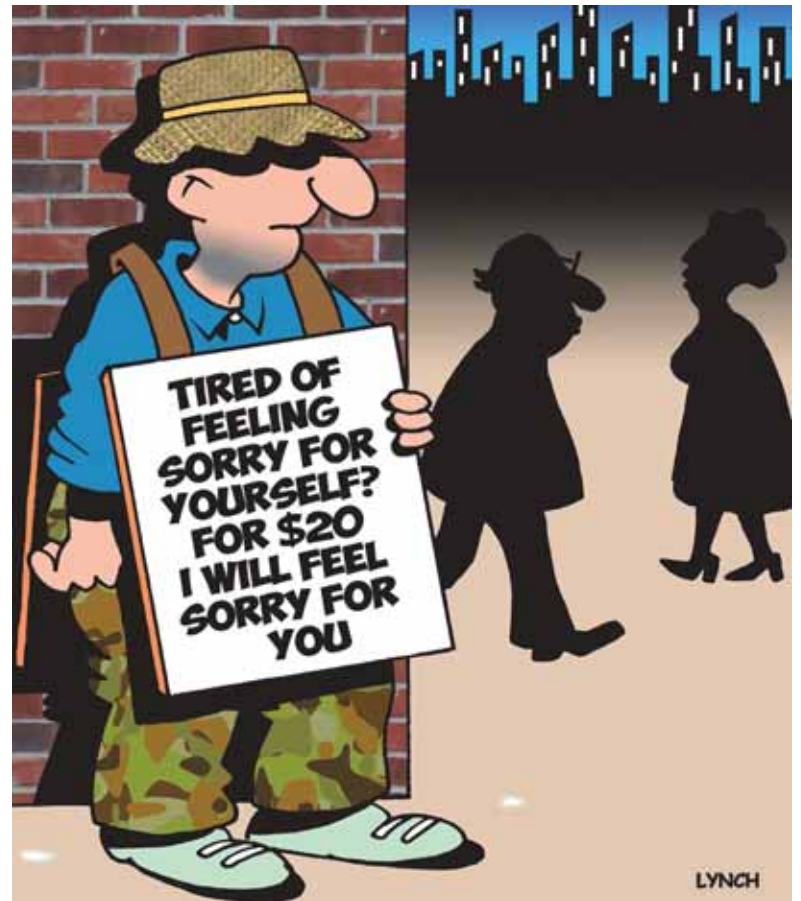
Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
-1 5°	1 4°	-1 4°	0 2°

SNOW REPORT - ON THE SLOPES

Verbier	172 cm	Crans Montana	220 cm	Les Rousses	195 cm
Villars	150 cm	Château d'Oex	90 cm	Chamonix	110 cm
Leysin	180 cm	Les Crosets	220 cm	Morzine	290 cm



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