

le News

WEEKLY SWISS NEWS IN ENGLISH

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Suicides: less bad news

National news

4

Geneva – a world stage

Motor show

7

Tenant and landlord rights

Property

10

Of androids and electric pets

Cracking up

12



DAB+: more tax, more waste?

GENEVA Choosing the wrong technology can be expensive. Bern has announced that to pay for DAB+ it will extend broadcast fees to every taxpayer. Is Bern off-track and charging for a white elephant?

In the 1980s, France introduced millions of its citizens to the Minitel, a clunky video terminal intended to replace

phone books. The decision briefly steered France down a technological dead end when it might have better invested in the internet. The question today is whether Bern's decision to aggressively push DAB+ over FM radio will meet a similar fate.

The arguments in favour seem reasonable enough. While FM radio has superb sound, it hogs bandwidth and fidelity drops off as the signal weakens. In con-

trast, DAB+, which relies on a digital signal, remains crystal clear until out of range, and then it disappears completely. Despite its flaws, any given frequency can handle up to 14 DAB+ stations instead of just one FM.

When DAB went into service in the mid 1990s it proved a costly, poor-quality choice. The Swiss then introduced DAB+ in 2007, forcing many to dump

Continued on page 2

Next Week: Everest bid

Interview with Sophie Lavaud.

In her fundraising efforts for Norlha, will she be the first Vaudoise to summit Sagarmatha?



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This Week in Switzerland

Switzerland has asked for a review of the decision made by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in the case of Turkish national **Do u Perinçek**, found guilty in 2007 in Vaud for denying the **Armenian Genocide**. ECHR has determined the Swiss courts' rulings violated Perinçek's right to **freedom of expression**.

The number of **skiers** has dropped significantly as Switzerland experiences its **warmest winter** in 100 years. There were **11.6% fewer visitors** in February, following a similar decrease in January. The low visitor numbers have left Swiss ski resorts hedging their bets on Chinese and Near-Eastern tourists to boost revenues.

Over 114,000 signatures have been collected in support of an initiative to enhance road transportation financing. As well as calling for more funding, the initiative wants voters to have a greater say in the use of road taxes and fees. A key demand is for all **fuel tax** revenue to be used to **finance road transport**, as opposed to the current 50%.



On Tuesday the Conseil National passed by 128 votes to 54 a motion to include **forced marriage** among crimes punishable with **expulsion**. Simone Egger, of **Terre des Femmes** Switzerland said: "TdF criticises **expulsion initiatives** as a whole and in cases of forced marriage in particular. Forced marriage comprises multiple forms and acts of violence which are already covered by the criminal code. Sentencing should always be based on a **case by case** assessment".



Russian national **Mikhail Khodorkovsky**, the former oil-tycoon imprisoned by Russian president Vladimir Putin for nearly a decade before being pardoned, has recently filed an **application to remain** in Switzerland. Considered a **political prisoner** by Switzerland and much of the EU, he arrived in the country in January on a 90-day Schengen visa.

The **cantonal police** in Geneva has unveiled its new **mobile speed radar**. The device, costing CHF 150,000, consists of two cameras that use five light flashes, three of them to calculate speed and two distance. According Tribune de Genève, the radar can control several lanes at the same time and identify "99% of incautious drivers". In 2013, traffic control campaigns increased by 75%.

National Councillor **Isabelle Chevalley** invited her colleagues to a **bizarre aperitif** at the Galerie des Alpes in the Palais federal. The main snacks were **insects**. Of the politicians who partook, many in the end expressed their surprise and appreciation. The councillor, the entomologist **Louis Champod**, and the **Grimiam Association** wanted to publicize that insects are rich in protein, don't consume much water, can taste good and vitally are an alternative food source for when we have to feed nine billion people in 2050.

The **Le Verts party** in Geneva met with supporters and opponents of the **Nouvel** project (to renovate and expand the Art and History Museum). Councillor Rémy Pagani, who is responsible for construction in the canton, stated that the total cost today stands at **CHF 139 m**, of which CHF 79 m is earmarked for renovation.

DAB+: pay to waste

Continued front page 1

their DAB receivers. DAB+ uses a system called AAC+, similar to MP3-player technology, with a few extra tweaks.

For OFCOM, Bern's broadcast authority, supporting Swiss-German, French, Italian and Romansh radio and TV, the more efficient use of bandwidth sounds like a godsend. A major push to promote DAB+ is slated for July when a bevy of multiplexing DAB+ stations come on line. In the meantime, both Bern and the European Broadcasting Union have been promoting DAB+ radios, which cost more than FM receivers, while discouraging new FM broadcasting. A notable example is World Radio Switzerland, which was taken over by Anglo Media last autumn. Its head, Peter Sibley, wanted to broadcast in FM, but Bern imposed DAB+ or nothing (see page 3). WRS now considers DAB+ the wave of the future.

Maybe, but as far as DAB+ is concerned, the future is hardly certain. WRS's experience mirrors that of Britain, where DAB has struggled to

catch on with listeners after nearly 20 years. Resistance is growing, especially in Norway, an early pioneer. Most UK stations are stretched financially and DAB hasn't helped. Nor is the transition cheap. Until it is completed, stations will broadcast in FM and DAB+, at least until 2019. Bern has announced that it will extend broadcast fees, currently CHF 164, to every taxpayer, whether they have a radio or not. The projected revenues of CHF 54 million in 2014 will be passed on to Swiss broadcasters with CHF 500,000 allocated specifically to DAB+.

The question now is whether the investment is worth it. North America is using HDFS, an improved FM signal, plus Sirius satellite radio (a pay-to-listen service). The crux of the matter for both Switzerland and Europe is that an entire new generation is now relying on radio via mobile phones, tablets and wifi with cost and technology leading the way. So will they bother to switch to DAB+ even if Bern wants them to?

William Dowell

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Editor's comment

Controlling the airwaves

For almost a century, radio has proven one of the most effective means for informing people. And yet, even with today's rapid broadening of the information platform, governments still wish to control who gets what, and how.

Switzerland is no exception. As William Dowell points out in his front-page piece, Bern's decision to impose DAB+ rather than let consumer choice decide is a risky one. The government did not help itself by first introducing DAB, the quality of which proved worse than FM. It then opted for DAB+, forcing many of us who had bought DAB radios to chuck them out.

Furthermore, in border areas, DAB+ radios can't pick up French stations.

Initially, DAB+ sounded like a godsend. Digital radio, the European Broadcasting Union promised, would enable us to pick up any station anywhere. This hasn't happened. What has, however, is satellite and internet radio. In Canada and the US, you can rent a car with a Sirius satradio and listen to the BBC, NPR, FranceInter and 300 other stations from around the world. Internet car radio will also soon be an option. So has Bern invested in a technology that will be superseded?

The matter does not end there. Of new concern is whether Europeans, including Swiss, will continue to have access to British, Scandinavian and other TV broadcasters via cable, internet or satellite dishes. For copyright reasons, Britain wants to narrow the signal to the UK. If rights are an issue, then why not a shared European audiovisual tax ensuring freedom of choice? After all, isn't that what the EU is about? *Edward Girardet, Editor@lenews.ch*

Geneva: Resolving closed-door disputes

Geneva has gained a global reputation as a mediation and arbitration nexus for settling (often in private hotels) major, commercially sensitive disputes by means of neutral third-party involvement. Geneva's plethora of diplomatic institutions also rank as key closed-door arenas for dispute settlement.

Mediation and arbitration, however, are not the same. As Ewan Malcolm, an accredited mediator in the UK and New York State stresses, the former uses a neutral intermediary to structure negotiations. "Seventy-five percent of the time, a mutually accepted agreement is reached," he said, but added that the most difficult thing is "to get all parties sat down at the same table". Arbitration, on the other hand, involves a private judge. Both have their pros and cons, but mediation remains under-used despite costing less. Malcolm also commends specialist mediation and arbitration centres, such as the World Intellectual Property Organization, for curtailing disputes.

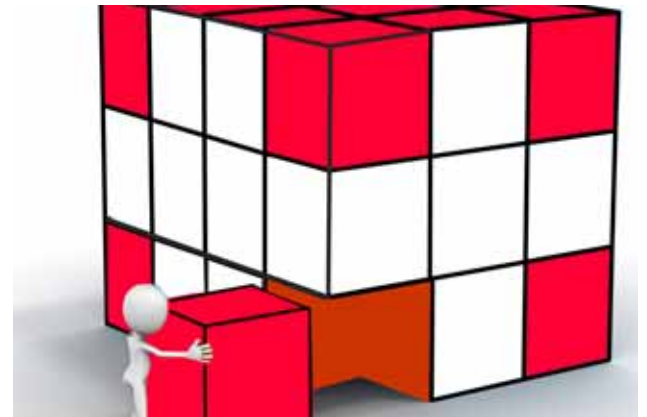
Christopher Woodburn

Foreign integration in Vaud

LAUSANNE Switzerland's views on foreigners are far from homogeneous, but a convention between the confederation and the cantons, regarding the implementation of a tailored integration approach, speaks otherwise.

Vaud announced last week that a federal-backed package amounting to CHF 7.6 million per year will help implement the three central precepts of integration: information, training and social assimilation.

Vaud's 2007 law on the



Federal backing of Vaud's programme is worth a hefty CHF 7.6 million.

integration of foreigners and the prevention of racism already facilitates a harmonious relationship between locals and foreigners. By providing a legal framework for cantonal integration practices, the law institutionalizes an insightful aspect of cultural assimilation by making integration a two-way street. Both the willingness of foreigners to integrate as well as the state's readiness to help depends on

implementing an effective plan that appeals to all.

Vaud's programme promotes advice, information, discrimination protection, language fluency, employment and social integration. This is particularly important in Vaud where more than 30% of people are foreign. Crucial, too, is to collaborate with media capable of reaching out to foreign communities in their own languages. *Christopher Woodburn*

Vaud integration policy facts

- Aimed at B, C and F permit holders and Swiss population
- French classes: Jura-Nord Vaudois, Nyon, Morges, Lavaux, Lausanne and more
- Brochure "Bienvenue dans le Canton de Vaud" available in 13 languages

For more information visit: www.vd.ch

Bullish about DAB+

re-broadcast BBC news shows proving a strong draw.

Mark Butcher, who hosts the station's morning drive-time, thinks DAB+ is particularly effective when people are caught in traffic. "You switch it on and it works," says Butcher. You can also pick WRS up over WiFi or with a smart phone app like TuneIn Radio.

You can also pick WRS up over WiFi

The station is receiving feedback from the US, New Zealand and Australia, mostly from listeners who previously worked in Geneva. "They still

want to feel connected," Smith adds. Another enthusiastic audience includes Swiss who want to check out the station's mid-Atlantic viewpoint, or simply to polish their English.

William Dowell



MEYRIN The BBC broadcasts to the world. WRS, Geneva's English language station, is resolutely local, targeting the more-than-60,000 English speakers who live and work in Geneva or commute from France. "Most people just don't have enough French to get by," says Ian Smith, who handles WRS's commercial relations. WRS is only reaching 20,000 of this niche audience, but this is growing as listeners purchase DAB+ receivers, with

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National

Swiss halt Russian mountain training

The Swiss government has postponed until further notice the training of Russian infantry soldiers in the Alps because of the Crimea crisis.

According to a Ministry of Defence spokesman cited in the Aargauer Zeitung, the 42 members of the Russian army will no longer take part in a special mountain course at the Swiss Army Alpine Centre at Andermatt in central Switzerland. "This will be suspended until further notice," the spokesman said. "As a neutral country, Switzerland feels special restraint is necessary in times of international tension," he continued, adding that the ministry would re-evaluate the situation in several weeks.

Switzerland has a tradition of providing specialized training to foreign military. The Geneva Centre for



Russian army will no longer be able to train at the Swiss Army Alpine Centre in Andermatt

Security Policy, which is partially funded by the Ministry of Defence, has regular courses for military from NATO, former Soviet, African, Asian and other countries. Subject matter ranges from how to deal with the media to integrating peace and reconciliation initiatives into their strategies. For the moment, there are no plans to suspend any of the GCSP programmes.

Given Switzerland's expertise in

mountain operations, including disaster and rescue response, Moscow and Bern signed a military cooperation agreement in 2011 enabling Russian soldiers to take part. In exchange, two Swiss officers would follow courses at the Moscow Military Academy. The Russian training began in 2013 with two groups of 20 soldiers each spending three weeks at Andermatt, the first in March and the second in July. *LeNews*

Stolen artefacts returned to Italy

BASEL The Basel City prosecutor's office has returned the last 68 of 4,536 stolen works of art and archaeological finds – the origins of which are still uncertain – to the Italian police. This closes a 13-year joint Swiss-Italian government operation.

In 2008, the Swiss authorities confiscated some 5,800 objects, mostly of Etruscan and Roman origin, and allegedly from illegal excavations in Italy. The Swiss Federal court decided the items were to be returned after three years to allow sufficient time to evaluate the objects. Two of the accused, however, have appealed 13 times to prevent the goods from being returned, arguing that they were not illegally imported.

In a separate case, Switzerland recently returned five stolen icons from Greece to the Athens authorities. Switzerland has repeatedly stated that it will not be used as a "laundering country" for trafficked works of art and cultural artefacts.

Cristina Odero

Suicides: less bad news



Over 30% of suicides are committed by people aged between 15 and 29.

GENEVA The good news is that despite one of Europe's highest suicide rates, Switzerland has registered a steady decline in recent decades. The bad news is that more than a dozen people throw themselves under trains each month, despite a campaign launched in January by Swiss Rail. This includes warning posters in major stations with a toll-free number for troubled individuals and counselling for those who witness such events. Last week, the Federal Council passed a motion to develop a nationwide suicide prevention plan.

The Geneva association Stop Suicide has applauded both efforts, noting that the primary cause of mortality (more than 30%) among people between 15 and 29 years of age remains suicide – at a rate of one every three days. According to spokesperson Sophie Lochet, "Each year, numerous young people lose their lives in this manner and we know that these suicides have a strong impact not only on those around the victim, but also on conductors and hundreds of train passengers."

Greater focus on suicide prevention in recent years has produced positive results. According to the Federal Office of Statistics, the rate began to decline significantly from a high in 1980 of 15 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants to 11.2 deaths for the same number in 2011. The drop was attributed to an increase in anti-depressant use and the declining availability of firearms. According to Swiss Medical Weekly, "Army weapons were used more frequently than private weapons – even among former psychiatric patients." A 2011 referendum requesting that Swiss conscripts no longer be allowed to keep their arms at home was rejected by a majority of voters.

Pamela Taylor

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Business & Economy

Online competition for casinos

Casinos have a young history in Switzerland.

After being banned by federal law in 1923, a popular vote 70 years later called for gaming laws to be liberalized, with more than 70% voting in favour. Until the 1998 law enabling casinos to set up on Swiss soil, many gamblers had to head cross the border to Divonne or Evian. Although France presented direct competition to Swiss casinos from the onset, the tables have since turned. French casinos are now struggling to compete with lucrative online counterparts while diversifying to attract clients.

Although legal in France since 2010, despite gambling addiction concerns, online betting (except for Lotto and Bingo games) is not allowed in Switzerland. This legal framework, however, presents a double-edged sword. Gamblers are allowed to access foreign online platforms, but only if the latter are licensed. In 2012, Swiss casino revenue fell by 8.2% to CHF 757 million with establishments hosting increasingly empty tables and slot machines. With the strong Swiss franc, new gambling offers in neighbouring countries are also providing new threats. Such competition is vexing the two main players with vested interests in how the country deals with online gambling: the Loterie Romande and Swisslos. Both



Casinos are losing out to online competitors.

oppose foreign internet platforms stealing their clientele – and revenue. However, Switzerland will continue to lose both as long as the law fails to address market distortions.

Christopher Woodburn

Vaud unemployment nudges down

While unemployment levels nationally remained unchanged in February, Vaud reported a reduction of 0.1% to 5.3% bringing the total number of claimants down 565 to 19'780. This is mainly accounted for by an increase in seasonal employment in the hospitality and building trades.

Revolution in dry-cleaning

ON MY WAY, a new dry-cleaning service has opened in the region to take the hassle out of dropping off and collecting dry-cleaning. The company operates at 20 service stations. The brainchild of Carlos Serrano and Cedric Rimella, the firm exploits the long opening hours at petrol stations to give clients time and flexibility. It uses an online order and tracking system. Clients are emailed when their laundry is ready. The company says its prices are competitive. Lavotel SA, the national market leader in textile cleaning will execute the orders.

Insight

Acknowledgment of healers grows

Switzerland's ancient tradition of natural healing is making a comeback after being shunned for decades by modern medicine.

For centuries, Swiss guérisseurs were known only within their own, often isolated communities for healing burns, stopping bleeding or curing melancholia. They avoided publicity, kept their methods secret from outsiders and refused payment other than gifts in kind. It is a different matter today, maintains Ilario Rossi, an anthropologist at the University of Lausanne. "There has been a dramatic change in the world of healers. Perhaps the biggest is that 20–30 years ago a healer would not accept money. They saw their skill as a 'gift', perhaps from God. They were often fervent believers."

The ancient practices are still alive in the cantons of Jura, Fribourg, Valais, Ticino and even German-speaking Appenzell – although most Swiss-Germans prefer modern medicine. Healers gained widespread acceptance following the 2008 publication of a



There's growing acknowledgement of healers among medical practitioners.

book about those in Swiss Romand by Fribourg anthropologist Magali Jenny. It sold over 55,000 copies. It proved such a sensation that it prompted a flood of calls from practitioners who requested their telephone numbers be removed from a list of 230 healers when a second edition was published in 2012.

Since then, many healers have come out of the closet, opened clinics

in major towns and even advertised on the internet. Denis Vipret, an artist who specializes in magnet therapy to draw out pain, is known throughout Fribourg. Other healers practise the laying on of hands. A select few offer distance healing by simply talking to the sufferer by telephone. Critics, notably the Catholic Church, are worried about cults or sects and have created

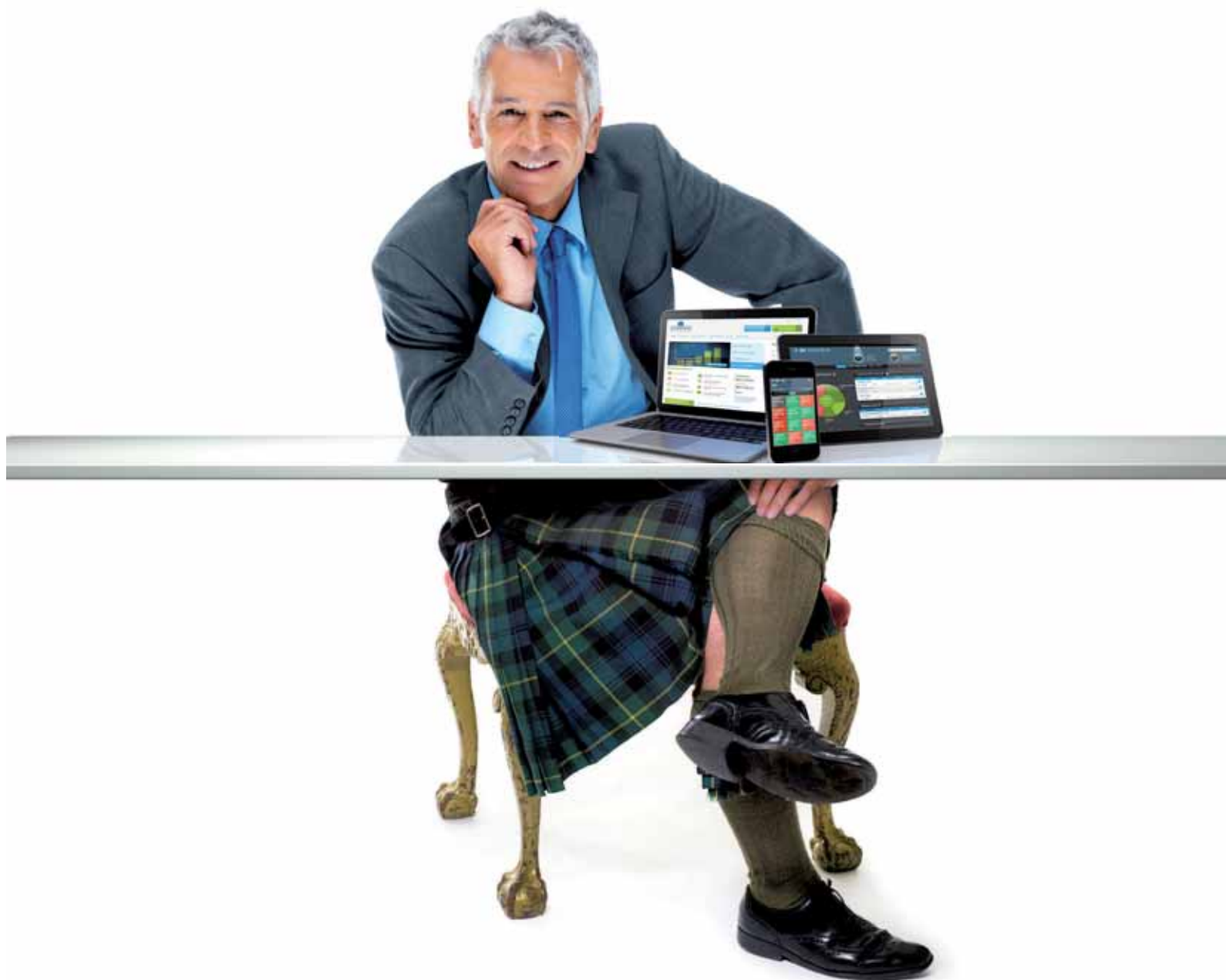
Infosekta, a website designed to deal with possible abuse and other concerns.

An old-time healer from a village in Vaud prefers to remain anonymous. He only treats family and, on rare occasions, friends. "I am not really a healer," said the modest 57-year old electrician. "I simply have a gift to be able to heal burns without leaving a scar. I do it for family members or if asked, for a friend." He believes that he inherited the gift from a grandfather who was able to cure warts and passed on his 'secret formula', or 'prayers', though he says it has nothing to do with religion.

Today some hospitals may call on a healer at the request of the family, something the Church is not happy about. Nevertheless, given what Ilario Rossi calls the globalization of medicine, there is a growing acknowledgement among modern practitioners about the palliative effect of healers. "Healers work much like a placebo effect," he said. "Whether one believes in God, a healer or modern medicine, the effect is probably the same."


Pamela Taylor

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Motor Show

Le Mans: An enduring adventure

As a cub reporter for United Press International in Paris, I found myself covering the 1975 24 Hours of Le Mans, or “the race”, as the world’s oldest car endurance test involving two-man teams is known.

I knew nothing about motor racing. I was also the sole journalist of my agency compared to the half-dozen sent by AP and Reuters. But I was not alone. A group of British mates, all car enthusiasts, had descended on Le Mans, braced to spend the night “enduring” the adventure.

This hardest Grand Prix, first launched in 1923, was for them a once-in-a-lifetime experience. I procured Press passes and placed the guys strategically around the track to observe the pit stops, rain tyre changes and tight curves tinged with the smell of oil

and roar of engines. The next morning, I debriefed them. Reflecting the freshness and excitement of their accounts, my dispatches were taken by most newspapers. The 43rd Le Mans was the year that Belgian and British racing legends Jacky Ickx and Derek Bell won with their Gulf GR-8, even if constrained by new fuel rules resulting from the Middle-East oil crisis.

For me, Le Mans was a lesson in journalism: to engross the reader in discovery and impart a sense of what it means to perform against fatigue at the wheel of the world’s best racing machines. Today (and until 16 March), you can relive its 91 years of history at the Geneva Motor Show’s 24 Hours Le Mans Exhibition. It features some 20 winning cars, including the first, the French Chenard & Walcker.

Edward Girardet



Geneva Motor Show – a world stage

As this year’s Geneva Motor Show comes to a close we look back on an event that has been the most successful show ever and is likely to significantly exceed the 700,000 visitor mark.

As the home of the UN, its agencies and all of the associated NGOs, Geneva is regularly at the forefront of the world’s news. But the Geneva Motor Show, and the Press hoard that it attracts, allows Swiss politicians a world stage they rarely command.

Swiss President Didier Burkhalter, in a wide-ranging speech, talked about women’s issues, climate change and his discussions with US Vice-President, Joe Biden, on the situation in Ukraine. He did of course touch on many of the Swiss technology companies that are involved in the automotive industry and the continued success of the Sauber F1 team.

Switzerland has had no significant motor sport since the Le Mans disaster of 1955 prompted a ban, but Francois Longchamp, president of the State Council of Geneva, has to contend with multiple motoring issues. They include the forthcoming reform of the motorway charge, the problems of congestion associated with the doubling of traffic since 1990, and the loss of revenue from petrol sales as vehicles become more



Renault Twingo, often a star of the show.

efficient. However even he cannot escape cross-border concerns with the impending vote on 18 May, on the funding of 830 park-and-ride spaces paid for by Switzerland but built in France.

More unusually, even Maurice Turrettini, president of the International Motor Show made reference to the 9 February vote on immigration: “Whatever the implementing legislation on immigration, our roads will always be much travelled by more

and more Swiss, and by foreigners, be they domiciled here, on vacation or passing through the country.”

He also mentioned that perennial favourite of the Geneva Canton, the tunnel (or bridge) under Lake Léman that is likely to come to popular vote in the near future.

But above all the Geneva Motor Show is about the cars. Among the exotic cars vying for the attention of the public are many that, while not so fast

or eye-catching, are considerably more affordable. First presented at the Paris show in 1992, the Renault Twingo has since had a number of styling revisions that have kept it as a popular choice in the “budget” sector. The 2014 model has more than a nod to the design of the best-selling Fiat 500, which is no bad thing, but it is under the hood that things are significantly different. In fact the new Twingo is a rear-wheel drive and rear-engined car just like a Porsche 911, which is a first for the budget sector: expect prices to be around EUR 12,000.

Despite the many problems faced by PSA Peugeot Citroën, the success that Citroën has found with their DS range of cars has prompted it to release the C4 Cactus. Based on the chassis of the DS3 and using a range of lightweight materials, it is a whopping 250kg lighter than the previous C4. The cabin has also been reworked; a stripped-down dashboard with just two dials and all other functions managed through a seven-inch touchscreen in the centre console.

The passing years have not diminished the Geneva Motor Show; it continues to go from strength-to-strength and remains an important showcase for manufacturers

. Ian Ellery

Education & Technology

The perpetual intern

Graduates must prepare themselves financially and mentally to take on intern roles for at least six months before securing a "proper" job

In simpler times, a bachelor's degree was the key to a world of opportunities – including the now elusive entry-level job. A university degree was enough to demonstrate that you were already capable of carrying out relatively complex tasks, and that you had the facility to *learn* and be resourceful.

Now, unless you have the mysterious "five years experience", have solid proof you raised your previous company's annual profits or are comfortable cold calling people to sell them miracle body lotions, you have two options: graduate scheme or internship. The entry-level job was on the "Things we can get rid of to increase management's bonus" list, leaving an entire generation of graduates wondering what the last five years of blood, sweat and tears – and often a large sum of money – were for.



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The graduate scheme normally involves a ferocious six-month application process which, if successful, leads to two years of corporate training. In the UK, this is a common route for graduates, and is offered in Europe mostly in large multinationals. However if you are applying to anywhere smaller than a global Fortune 500 Company, an internship is often the only option for getting a foot in the door.

Essentially an internship is a prolonged probation period whereby companies can justify employing graduates to do the same as an entry-level job or even menial work, and get away with paying – if at all – way below a living wage by dangling the golden carrot of a job in front of graduates' naïve and often desperate noses. Not everyone can afford to subsidize their internship or live for free; many students with parents unable to foot the bill are excluded from such opportunities, thus further impeding the social mobility of young workers.

Over the past few years, there have been many law suit spats in high profile companies such as Warner Music and Donna Karan concerning employers not paying interns. Or not meeting the terms of agreement whereby the intern must be provided with training – and not just serve coffee. Some go beyond this often exploitation and charge stu-

dents and graduates for hooking them up with competitive or obscure jobs, like online recruiter International Internships which can charge well over \$3,000 for 8–16 week placements. And it gets worse. Internships in "attractive companies" are now being auctioned off to the highest bidder. Often done under the auspices of charity fund-raising, the phenomenon indicates that companies have no real interest in recruiting quality people. They simply want the "charity-friendly publicity". Indeed it works entirely against the concept of merit.

The internship phenomenon is not country specific. It affects young graduates from the Americas to Europe. In Canada, it is estimated that 300,000 people are working for free at wealthy corporations. Some countries have tough legislation to protect students from exploitation such as France with its *Convention de Stage* that requires proof of enrollment at a university before it can offer internships. However no official legislation protects Swiss interns. Most companies will pay from a stipend to minimum wage, but due to high levels of demand to work in international organizations such as the UN or NGOs, some offer nothing at all.

Jennifer Rose, who has just completed an internship with Le News



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Lifestyle

Teenagers lose sleep over technology

The negative impact of light on human sleeping patterns is a given.

Engrained into our genetic makeup by millennia of evolution, our nocturnal behaviour is governed by celestial movements and hormonal triggers: we rise at day, sleep at night. Nevertheless, modern-day trends and technology are turning what was once a natural part of human routine into a particularly precarious environment for teenagers.

Modern-day contraptions such as computers or phones emitting blue light have replaced primeval essentials such as fires. Though all nocturnal lights are considered hazardous, blue light is especially harmful. Its wavelength suppresses melatonin, a hormone inducing drowsiness, and it

affects the circadian rhythm. While it is a relatively new phenomenon, scientific concern is growing with regard to the impact of blue light on cognitive behaviour and physical development.

Teenagers are particularly vulnerable to blue light as computers, phones and tablets invade what was once the sanctity of the bedroom. Melatonin is also naturally suppressed in teenage years, compounding the adverse effects of nocturnal gadget-use. According to scientific research, the long-term repercussions of sleep deficiency include cancer, diabetes, heart disease, obesity and depression. Not only is the problem quantitative, but the overuse of electronic devices erodes the quality of sleep, too. The National Sleep Foundation points out that adequate sleep is essential for "growth, learning, mood, creativity and



The overuse of electronic devices erodes the quality of sleep.

weight control". Health practitioners emphasize that teenagers represent a particular risk-group. Parents need to ensure that the sleeping patterns of their children are not jeopardized by

technological gimmicks. Maybe "lights-out" should actually mean something.

Christopher Woodburn

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howmanytall.com

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howsecureismypassword.net

A useful little site for those of us who want to think up the easiest to remember and the hardest to crack passwords. Le News did some tests and found a 12-character password that will take a desktop computer 109 thousand years to crack.

<http://llamafont.com>

Write a message, any message, in llamas. Maybe not the most practical font, but nevertheless it'll keep you enthralled – for at least 30 seconds.

33rd AMR JAZZ FESTIVAL MARCH 18-23 2014 SUD DES ALPES, GENEVA

Tuesday, March 18
SUIDI'S / BOBO STENSON-PALLE
DANIELSSON DUO

Wednesday, March 19
SEBASTIEN AMMANN
QUARTET /
STARLIGHT A.K.A SLAVIN/
ELDH/LILLINGER

Thursday, March 20
GENTLE MARVEL /
MYRA MELFORD'S
SNOWY EGRET

Friday, March 21
THAT'S THE BAND? /
STEVE KUHN TRIO

Saturday, March 22
GANESH GEYMEIER
VS STADE /
JAMES BLOOD
ULMER SOLO

Sunday, March 23
ANTIDOGMA /
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Property

Your tenant or landlord rights

As anywhere, trying to negotiate tenancy laws in Switzerland can be tricky.

Disputes can range from the level of maintenance work the landlord is required to undertake to tenants refusing to pay rent.

Whether you are the owner or the renter, it is best to have an expert on your side before things get out of hand. The Lausanne-based Federation Romande Immobilière, www.fri.ch, is the country's French-language home-owners association. The association acts on the national level as a lobbying group. It also has information on all aspects of home-ownership, including tenancy laws.

The Swiss Association of Tenants, Romande branch, can be found at www.asloca.ch. It will provide counsel to members who have questions about the obligations of renters and property owners. The site has a handy FAQ, in French, that includes questions such as when can a renter demand that wallpaper be replaced. (The answer is that the owner is obliged to replace it after a minimum of ten years if it is beginning to show wear.) The association has offices in each of the French-speaking cantons.

When things escalate and require intervention, either party can turn to their canton's conciliation board. The boards, called Commissions de conciliation en matière de baux et loyers,

comprise judges and other experts in tenancy law; their aim is to find an amicable solution to the disputes that typically involve contracts. The conciliation boards can also make legally binding rulings. Every canton's board can be found via postcode search at the

site www.mietrecht.ch.

A complete list of tenant and landlord associations around the country can be found on the federal government's website at www.bwo.admin.ch

Jackie Campo



Professional associations can help avoid property disputes.

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Travel

Bern: An unexpected delight

For many, Bern may not spring to mind as the place for a short break.

In many ways more attractive than Geneva or Lausanne, the Swiss capital is blessed with an attractive old town, superb architecture, shopping par excellence and a myriad of things to do. And then there are the restaurants! Bern is easy to reach, especially by train.

The old town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is unusual with some six kilometres of arcades (*Lauben*) hiding hundreds of shops, cafés and bars. This city offers the longest weather-sheltered shopping promenades in Europe. So even on a rainy day, you're not constrained. Wandering around by foot or by bike is fun enough, even with the hills. So is summer swimming or "tubing" in the fast-moving Aare River. Choose a restaurant by the ambience and character you prefer; many have pleasant outdoor terraces. I won't single out any particular one out, but I've



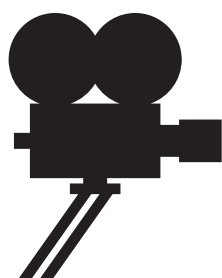
Bern has a striking mix of galleries, museums and sites that deserve to be highlighted.

never been disappointed.

As the political capital, Bern has a striking mix of galleries, museums and sites that deserve to be highlighted. The Bundeshaus (Parliament) is a short walk from the station. It's open to visitors most of the time, but you must have a *Permis B* or C, or passport to gain

entry. For the art-lover, there is the Zentrum Paul Klee on the outskirts, reachable by tram or bus. It has a huge collection of works by the famed Swiss artist. For the more scientifically minded, the Albert Einstein House is an impressive cross between museum, science exhibition and art installation,

fascinating to all ages. Then there is the spacious Dählhölzli zoo and the botanical gardens. And of course, the Bear Park – originally a depressing pit – but renovated with a spacious 6,000 square metres of open habitat for its family of bears stretching down to the banks of the Aare. *Jeremy McTeague*



FILM REVIEWS

By Neptune

MR. PEABODY AND SHERMAN ★★ ★

Here's wonderful entertainment for the kids, who were enchanted, and fun for the grownups accompanying them. This tale about Mr. Peabody, a genius dog, and the human son he legally adopts is intelligent, funny and has a sweet moral thread running through it. DreamWorks has concocted this animated film without condescending to children by portraying key historical figures from ancient Egypt, the Trojan Wars, the Renaissance and the French Revolution, all in a yarn which gets us to these places through a time machine that Peabody has invented. There's lots of action without much violence, an expanse of time from modern NY to ancient times and touching character development, from superficial adults to the love between Peabody and his son, Sherman.



Something for everyone, with both heart and brains.

THE MONUMENTS MEN ★

What happened here, Mr. George Clooney? Why such a flat, disjointed film about a fascinating moment in history? Especially after your excellent directorial endeavours in such films as *Good Night and Good Luck* and *The Ides of March*. Hopefully this is only a hiccup in your career. This film, about a group of men who tried to liberate

the art works stolen by the Nazis during WWII, feels more like a tired mix of the *Ocean's Eleven* franchise and the British TV series *'Allo, 'Allo* than the thrilling account of a heroic operation. A super cast including Matt Damon, Cate Blanchett, Bill Murray and you (in a Clark Gable role?) cannot save a lame script, amateur editing and dull pacing. Try again, our favourite matinee idol.



Chez Vous

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:



"Joy"

Email your entry to competition@lenews.ch by 18 March 2014.

Congratulations to François Morin, winner of last week's photo competition "Peace and calm" with his entry "Morning Light".



"Morning Light", François Morin

Cracking up

Of androids and electric guinea pigs

This summer I'm going to replace all the pets with robots. This fabulous idea came to me when I was reading an article about something called a "Robo Fish". Apparently it was the toy to get last Christmas, with over 15 million sold. They are brightly coloured toy fish that swim around when you put them in water and stop swimming when you take them out. My initial response was: "Isn't that what real fish do?" But no. These fish start swimming again when you put them back in water, which is very much not what real fish do.

Anyway, the reason I like them so much is that you don't need to feed them.

The second my feet hit the floor in the morning, everything in the house starts clamouring for food. If my life has a soundtrack, it's made up of meows, squeaks and the sound of a fat goldfish breaching like Shamu. It's not as if I didn't feed them all just before bedtime: fresh water and dry food for the cat; fresh water, hay and vegetables for the guinea pigs; flakes for the fish. I can understand them being keen for breakfast, but the performance the cat puts on is worthy of a part in *Les misérables*.

And after I've put food into them, I have to deal with what comes out the other side. I change cat litter, sweep up pellets, wash out filters and rinse aquarium pebbles... it's never ending.

So when the children started begging for a dog, I just started laughing hysterically. But then I remembered a friend surveying the post-dinner fall-out under my dining room table and saying, "You should get a dog. They double as vacuum cleaners." And I thought, why not do it the other way round? Why not get a vacuum cleaner and let it double as a dog? Seriously. I'm going to get a Roomba, stick googly eyes on it and tell the children that it's alive. This is not going to strain their credulity at all – they've convinced themselves that my car is alive and they hold long conversations with it almost every morning, so a cute, googly-eyed little vacuum-puppy will be no problem. They can feed it scraps of food and watch it suck them up; they can put a lead on it and take it for walks around the patio... it's genius.

Then I'm going to swap the guinea pigs for Furbies. I know Furbies don't do much but, quite honestly, neither do



the guinea pigs. Unless you think that the world is suffering from a surfeit of hay and we urgently need it converted into mounds of little poo pellets. Then the guinea pigs are doing an ace job.

I'd also like a drone of my own, to play music to me all day and occasionally fly over to the school with whatever piece of gym equipment the children have forgotten.

And the cat... well, I think I'll have to keep her. The only robot cat I've seen is some bloody terrifying thing called a WildCat. I have no idea what the makers intend to use it for but I can assure you, it's not as a pet: it has no head, it

sounds like a chainsaw and it gallops along at over 25 kilometres per hour. It'll scare the Furbies out of their wits.

And then, when I've filled the house with robots, all ready to do my bidding? Well. The children had better look lively. The latest incarnation of ASIMO the android can look at whoever is speaking to him and answer them politely – skills the seven-year-old is still struggling with – and is capable of carrying a drinks tray into the lounge every evening at six o'clock!

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

Classifieds

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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

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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

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Regional Events

le News

PICK OF THE WEEK IN COLLABORATION WITH



Vevey. Presentation: Le Grand Nord

18 March, 14h15

The wildlife photographer Claude Moreillon recounts his recent polar expedition to Le Grand Nord. Wonderful photographs. Free entry.

Centre Paroissial Sainte-Claire
Rue Sainte-Claire 1
www.vevey.eerv.ch



La Tour-de-Peilz. Découverte du Mah-Jong et de la cuisine vietnamienne

16 March

A day dedicated to culinary fun and cultural discovery. From 09h00 to 14h00. Workshop game from 14h00 to 17h00. CHF 40 (including food)

Musée Suisse du Jeu
Rue du Château 11
1814 La-Tour-de-Peilz
Tel: 021 977 2300
info@museedujeu.ch
www.museedujeu.ch



Montreux. Montreux Miniature's Show

15-16 March, Sat 11h00-18h00; Sun 10h00-17h00

The ideal event for fans of miniatures, precision work and scale models. There is a wide range of figurines, plus aircraft models, helicopters, tanks and dolls' houses, just to name a few. Free entry.

Salle Omnisports,
Chemin du Pierrier,
1815 Clarens, Montreux
Tel: 021 962 7893
www.mtxms.ch



Lausanne. In The Middle Of Nowhere

20 March, 20h00

The Village Players, an English-language theatre group, gives the first public reading of a new one-act comedy. In the Middle of Nowhere by Chris Hemmens, a first-time playwright. What starts out as a fairly ordinary family gathering in rural England takes a surreal turn when a stranger seeks refuge in their home. Free entry.

Centre Pluriculturel d'Ouchy,
Beau-Rivage 2, 1006 Lausanne
Tel: 021 616 2672
www.villageplayers.ch



Geneva. Daniel Hunter Quartet "The Twentieth"

14 March 21h30

The Twentieth is a tribute to the 20th arrondissement of Paris where, after spending four years in Geneva, the Australian guitarist Daniel Hunter lives. With Warren Walker on saxophone, Nicolas Charlier on drums and Damien Varraillon on bass. CHF 20; concessions: CHF 15.

AMR/Sud des Alpes
10, rue des Alpes
1201 Genève
Tel: 022 716 5630
www.amr-geneve.ch



Blonay. Grease

15 March, 20h00

One of the most famous musical comedies in a new French version. Get ready to dance and sing to some of the most famed hits from the 1970s original film. Entry is free, so get there early to grab a seat!

Grande salle de Cojonnex
Route de Prélaz 2
1807 Blonay
Tel: 026 912 0919
www.grease-spectacle.ch



Nyon. Sandrine Viglino se pose des questionnes

15 March, 20h30

Comédienne Sandrine Viglino asks herself questions (but answers are needed). Her humour, inspired by Charlie Chaplin, Raymond Devos, Coluche, Jamel Debozze, Louis de Funès and many others guarantees a fun evening at the theatre.

Théâtre de Marens
Rue du Stand 7
1260 Nyon
Tel: 079 248 7567
www.a3a.ch



Geneva. Riverside Drive

Until 16 March, Tue-Sat 20h30
Sun 19h00

Written by Woody Allen, Riverside Drive is a biting and funny comedy play directed by Thierry Roland. A famous author, waiting on the banks of the Hudson River to break it off with his mistress, meets a homeless psychopath who knows everything about his life. Tickets CHF 25; concessions CHF 18.

Théâtre T50
Ruelle du Couchant 10
1207 Genève
Tel: 022 735 3231
www.t50.ch



Collonge-Bellerive. Barrio Chino/Radio Babel Marseille

15 March, 20h30

Double-bill concert: first, Duo Barrio Chino, one of the pioneers of the musical mix and large Mediterranean sound traditions. Then at 21.30, Radio Babel Marseille, a combo of five a cappella voices that create a melodic universe of world rhythms and languages. Café opens at 19h00, box office at 19h45. CHF 20-25. Tickets from Service Culturel Migros, rue du Prince 7, Genève. L'épicentre. Chemin de Mancy 61, 1245 Collonge-Bellerive. Tel: 022 855 0905



Vevey. Piano concert

14 March, 20h00

A duo piano concert with the two young Brazilian players Renata Bittencourt and Diego Munhoz. Free entry.

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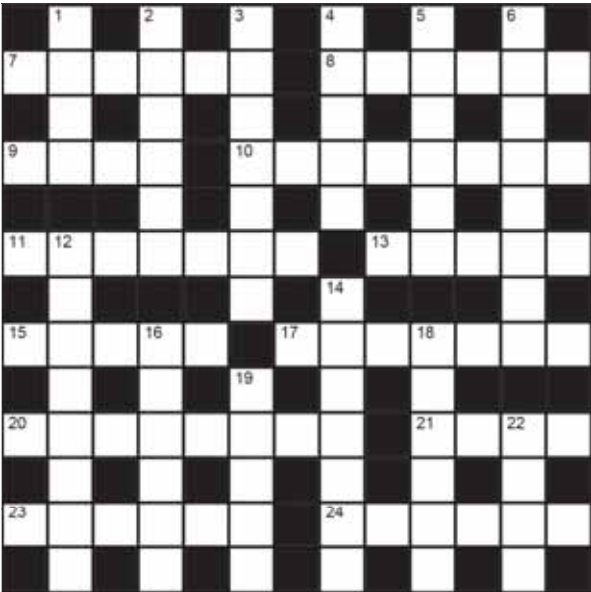
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Puzzles



QUICK CROSSWORD

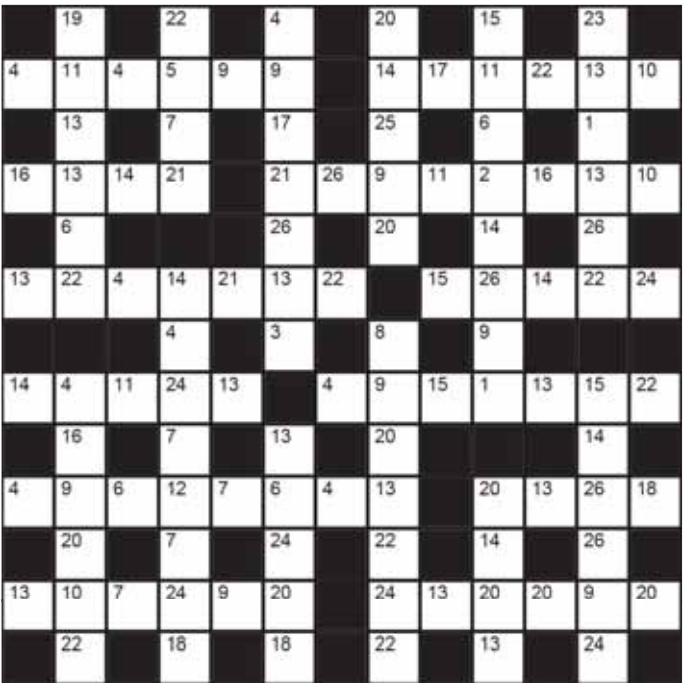
ACROSS

- 7 Working or professional life (6)
- 8 A visual representation (6)
- 9 At this place (4)
- 10 A bit for diagnostic purposes (8)
- 11 Fall slowly to a stable position (7)
- 13 Give instructions (5)
- 15 Departing (5)
- 17 Comprise (7)
- 20 Tatties (8)
- 21 Move at high speed (4)
- 23 Soundless (6)
- 24 Submerged (6)

DOWN

- 1 Arrived (4)
- 2 Perform again (6)
- 3 Contacts with something dangerous (7)
- 4 Assorted kinds (5)
- 5 More slothful (6)
- 6 Professional evaluators (8)
- 12 Financially rewarding (8)
- 14 Own (7)
- 16 Closer (6)
- 18 Stripe (6)
- 19 Antecedents (5)
- 22 Look (4)

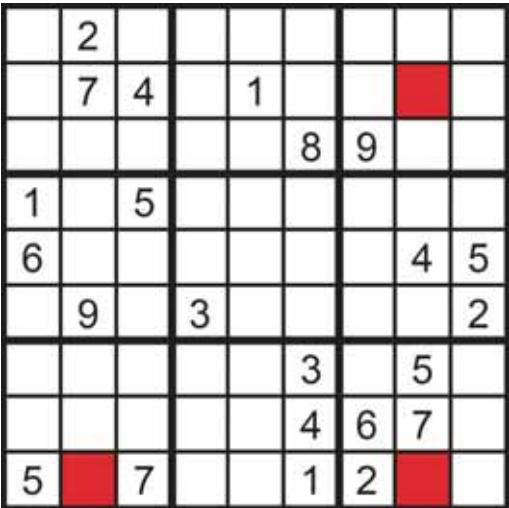
Last week's solution



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
W			C								V	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26



SUDOKU

Easy

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

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BY SUSAN HILL
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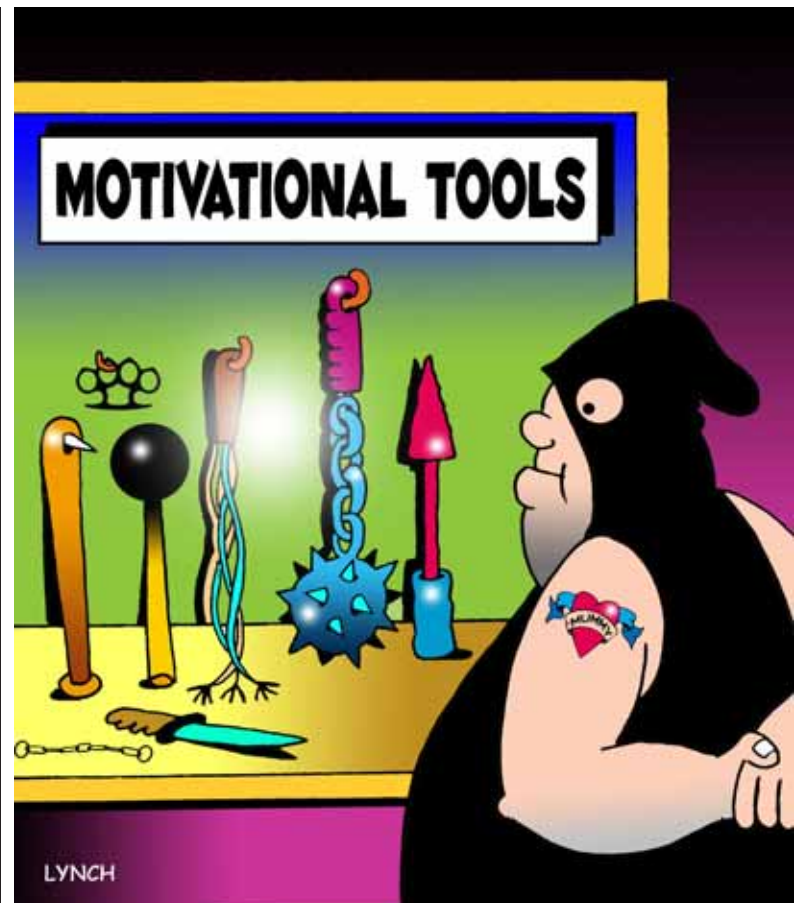
	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
GENEVA	0 17°	2 16°	3 13°	3 13°
LAUSANNE	2 14°	4 14°	5 10°	3 11°

SNOW REPORT - ON THE SLOPES

Verbier	173 cm	Crans Montana	225 cm	Les Rousses	185 cm
Villars	140 cm	Château d'Oex	75 cm	Chamonix	80 cm
Leysin	165 cm	Les Crosets	200 cm	Morzine	280 cm



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