

le News

WEEKLY SWISS NEWS IN ENGLISH

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Lake Geneva region 27 March - 2 April 2014

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French election results

Regional News

3

Holiday camps for kids

Education

7

James Blunt interview

Lifestyle

9

Eco-Warriors & Morality Police

Cracking Up

12



Switzerland defends neutrality

President Didier Burkhalter may have more defenders than detractors as he juggles jobs.

BERN Coincidentally both jobs last only one year – the first as head of the Swiss Confederation, the second as chair of the 57-member OSCE, the European security organization which includes Russia. It promises to be a challenging 2014 for the Federal Council

member from Neuchâtel. Trouble started earlier this month when Defence Minister Ueli Maurer said in an interview with the Zurich weekly Die Weltwoche (21 March) that Burkhalter's role as OSCE chair was difficult to reconcile with Swiss neutrality and independence. There was an immediate uproar in the Swiss media and Maurer even posted his regrets on his party's website. In an interview with the

SonntagsZeitung, Burkhalter said his actions are in accordance with the Swiss constitution. He was vehemently defended by the head of the centre-left Social Democratic Party, Christian Levrat, who said the OSCE was created as a neutral platform between east and west and that it was Maurer who "betrayed the interests of our country...because of party considerations or stupidity". **Continued on page 2**

Next week: Lavaux wines

Meet Blaise Duboux, a wine-maker from the Lavaux, a region with an ancient rich wine heritage.



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This Week in Switzerland

According to Le Temps, watchmaker **Patek Philippe** has threatened to leave Geneva given the canton's high tax on profits. Ten times higher than in cantons such as **Schwyz** or **Zug**, tax levels are starting to damage the family-owned company despite a slight increase in sales in 2013.

Statistics show that the number of **criminal offences** in Switzerland in 2013 **dropped** by 3% compared to 2012, to 725,687. Of the offences, 13% were related to **illegal substances** and 6% to laws regarding immigration. Only crimes relating to fraud, blackmail and extortion are on the rise.

Credit Suisse has agreed to pay more than CHF 781 million to the Federal National Mortgage Association and the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation for alleged **misrepresentation** of the amount of mortgage-backed securities it sold to both organizations between 2005 and 2007. The Swiss bank is also among **14 Swiss banks** under investigation for accepting undeclared finances from US citizens seeking to avoid taxes.



Vaud authorities started construction of the new cantonal **Parliament building** last week. The works were launched with a ceremony held by the state councilor Pascal Broulis, in charge of construction, and the president of the Grand Council Laurent Wehrli. The reconstruction of Parliament is expected to continue until spring 2017.

The International Monetary Fund (**IMF**) forecasts growth of about 2% for **Switzerland** this year. The organization stated that monetary conditions have improved over the past year and predicted growth given improvements in the export sector. It also recommended that the Swiss National Bank maintain the exchange rate floor of CHF 1.20 per Euro and commented that the recent approval of the referendum "against **mass immigration**" might increase **uncertainty** regarding medium-term growth prospects.

About 0.7% of Swiss gross domestic product is spent on problems and **ill-health** associated with **alcohol consumption**, according to a study published by the Federal Health Office. The study estimates that the social costs of drinking alcohol in Switzerland reached **CHF 4.2 billion** in 2010. According to the latest reports, between 2,500 and 3,000 people die annually in Switzerland as a result of alcohol consumption.

The **Federal Court** has stated that foreigners must be **married** to the same Swiss citizen for at least three consecutive years to retain residential status after a divorce. The landmark ruling **rejected appeals** from two men, a Kosovar and a Bengali who had been married and divorced twice, after receiving resident permits during their first marriage.



The UK's Joint Committee on Vaccination and **Immunisation** has announced that **Bexsero**, the **meningitis B** vaccine produced by **Novartis** should be rolled out across the UK – as long as a suitable price can be agreed with the company. The deadly disease kills one in ten infected children – about 180 a year and severely affects a further 20%.

Swiss neutrality

Continued front page 1

Levrat pointed out that Switzerland's role is different from that of the EU and the US. "Switzerland is in a position where it may exercise a role of mediator," he said, adding, "That's why it should not follow the examples of other countries." So far Switzerland has not joined these two powers in imposing visa restrictions and freezing the assets of dozens of Russian officials following Moscow's annexation of Ukraine's Crimean peninsula. However, it is the Federal Council that will have the last word.

In the face of the worsening crisis, Switzerland has ended arms sales to Ukraine, while suspending trade talks with Russia. As OSCE chair, Burkhalter also called on the UN Security Council to form an international contact group. "With its impartiality and inclusivity, the OSCE has the necessary attributes to host and moderate that group," he is quoted as saying in an OSCE release. In this capacity, Burkhalter has also proposed sending hundreds of civilian

observers to Ukraine. Burkhalter's chairmanship of the security organization was seen as a plus by US and European diplomats who welcomed Switzerland's role as an impartial mediator thanks to its neutrality and non-membership of the EU.

When invited to serve as OSCE chairman shortly after assuming presidency of Switzerland, Burkhalter had no idea of the responsibilities he would encounter. Addressing the OSCE Council last January, Burkhalter said that a priority would be "advancing regional cooperation in the Western Balkans". He also spoke about the conflicts in Georgia and Nagorno-Karabakh and highlighted other issues such as disaster relief, cyber security and terrorism. The last is to be the topic of an OSCE-wide anti-terrorism conference in Interlaken next month.

Pamela Taylor

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Regional

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Editor's comment

The world wants more than chocolate from Switzerland

Switzerland has a very clear role to play on the international front. But this means playing intelligently and in a manner that exemplifies what Switzerland does best – mediation. As Pamela Taylor's story notes, Didier Burkhalter may be on the right track with his dual role as President of the Confederation and Chair of the OSCE. While the Swiss grapple whether to buy 22 Swedish Gripen fighter planes, possibly to avoid further embarrassment due to not being able to scramble before 8am, the real issues at hand are Ukraine, Syria and Afghanistan. And Europe.

With Ukraine, clear-minded mediation through the OSCE or the UN in Geneva is crucial. With the annexation of Crimea a done deal, the question now is how to implement the face-saving needed to avoid the risk of war. This is where Switzerland can play a role. As for Syria, while the Geneva talks failed to bring any relief, they did bring the players together in the same room. This alone is an achievement even with the need for more Geneva meetings.

Afghanistan is another situation where Switzerland could excel, given that the final withdrawal of most NATO forces may lead to further strife. Switzerland is the only country capable of offering real mediation. But this needs to be coupled with support for effective public information outreach capable of convincing all sides that peace and reconciliation are good. And finally, relations with the EU. This is where Swiss economic pragmatism can work best. Edward Girardet; Editor@lenews.ch

French elections: Round one, right wing won

GEX The first round of the French municipal elections confirmed the growing force of the right.

With record breaking abstentions (38.7% failed to vote), towns such as Perpignan, Avignon, Forbach, Fréjus and Tarascon saw the Front National (FN) take the lead. More locally, the conservative parties (UMP, DVD and FN) have done well, especially in the Haute-Savoie. In Ain, though more disputed – especially Ferney and St Genis – Cessy's right of centre candi-

date Christophe Bouvier won the first round outright with 100% of votes.

Popular discontent has been growing under Hollande's lackluster leadership, but the results also reflect frustration with the main left and right-wing parties for failing to implement effective reform. This paints a different picture from the socialist utopia imagined by Hollande during his 2012 campaign: 46.5% of votes go to the right wing, 37.7% to the left, 4.6% to the extreme right and 0.6% to the extreme left. In Paris, a socialist haven, it was UMP candidate Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet who surged ahead of socialist candidate Anne Hidalgo for the mayor's office. While repercussions remain unclear, the vote underlines the need for urgent change in a country where entrepreneu-



The results reflect frustration with the lack of effective reform.

rial initiative is hampered by high taxes and lack of imaginative government support.

Christopher Woodburn

The Swiss vote on mass immigration: the consequences for you and your organisation

Panel members:

- Yves Nidegger, Conseiller National, (UDC)
- Frédérique Reeb-Landry, Présidente du Groupement des Entreprises Multinationales (GEM)
- Professor Vincent Chetail, Director of the Global Migration Centre, The Graduate Institute

Revving up against noise pollution

construction sites and by "other noise sources", from dogs barking to church bells.

Road noise pollution is by far the biggest threat. Stress, high blood pressure, cardiovascular problems and troubled sleeping patterns top the list of potential health repercussions. With some 100,000 people suffering in Geneva alone and vehicle usage on the rise, the canton has until 2018 to address sonic collateral over 150km of roads until federal financing comes to an end. Although the use of sound-absorbing coating on roads

deals with the problem at source, the canton needs to encourage practical approaches, such as double glazing, as Zurich or Basel have done, while further promoting eco-mobility.

Christopher Woodburn



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Public conference organized by Le News and the Graduate Institute.

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"The Swiss vote on mass immigration: the consequences for you and your organisation"

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GENEVA According to 2013 statistics, 1.3 million people in Switzerland are exposed to excessive noise during the day, with the number dropping to 930,000 during the night.

If the World Health Organization's recommended 55 decibel benchmark is taken, the number rises to almost four million, nearly half the country. In densely populated areas, road noise is compounded by train, motorbike or aviation noise pollution,

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National

Paedophile ban vote

BERN The Swiss National Council recently supported an initiative seeking to ban convicted paedophiles from ever working with children again.

The so-called Marche Blanche proposal, which passed by 82 votes to 79, aims to prevent repeat offences by prohibiting access to potential victims through professional pathways. The referendum is set for 18 May.

The Federal Council, however, deems the initiative to be at odds with the Swiss constitution. The clauses would effectively categorize offences such as consensual sex between a minor and an adult as akin to rape or child pornography charges. Opponents argue that it bypasses the central tenet of proportionality in statutory interpretation cases – a legal measure ensuring a balance between punitive measures and legal leniency.

Justice Minister Simonetta Sommaruga also emphasized government plans to implement sanctions tailored to the severity of the crime committed.

The Federal Council, however, deems the initiative to be at odds with the Swiss constitution.

A life ban from certain professions and volunteer activities would only be implemented as a last resort. The parliament's agenda goes a step further: as of 2015, physical and psychological miscreants are to be punished by the same legal framework, further protecting minors and those unable to defend themselves.

Christopher Woodburn



The government plans sanctions to fit the severity of the crime.

Research fund side-steps EU ban

The Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) in Bern has set up a temporary funding scheme to get around the European Union's 26 February ban excluding Switzerland from European Research Council (ERC) grants.

Switzerland, next to the United States, has the best reputation for scientific research.

According to SNSF spokesman Jürg Dinner, researchers working in Switzerland, or who applied for an ERC

starting grant before 25 March, may request a comparable grant from the SNSF for 2014.

The Swiss move follows a call by European francophone universities for the EU to reconsider its sanction against the 9 February Swiss vote curbing mass migration. "Never in the history of political relations between the European Community has such retaliation been implemented," said Bernard Rentier, Rector of the University of Liège.

Ambrogio Fasoli, an Italian physicist at EPFL in Lausanne, agrees that the EU reacted too quickly. "My concern is that this could reverse the proc-

ess of scientists such as myself coming back from abroad to work on projects in Switzerland, which, next to the United States, has the best reputation for scientific research." He also worries that those he calls young super-scientists will not be allowed to participate in Swiss projects in chemistry, mathematics, health or nanotechnology. "It means not only that European researchers who had applied for grant money to come to a Swiss institution will not be able to come," Fasoli said, "but also that this money will not be available for Swiss researchers wishing to participate in European projects".

Pamela Taylor



Fasoli: "The EU reacted too quickly."

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Business & Economy

Boost for Swiss start-ups

LAUSANNE Fathi Derder, Conseiller national and President of Le Réseau has announced government approval of a series of initiatives to boost start-up competitiveness.

These include improving tax treatment of investors, creating a "fund of funds" to finance start-ups and establishing a second stock market (similar to AIM in the UK). These initiatives go a long way to addressing concerns expressed by Swiss entrepreneurs in the 2014 CH60 Start-ups survey conducted by *Bilan* and Le Réseau.

The survey found that while 61% of entrepreneurs would do another start-up in Switzerland (against only 10% in the EU), funding for R&D, a 1% pension fund allocation and tax breaks for investors were cited as in need of improvement. Derder announced the move during the Swiss Commission for Technology and Innovation's celebra-



The drones are primarily used for surveying.

tion of the first anniversary of its Entrepreneurship Training Program in Suisse Romande.

Illustrating the depth and inventiveness of Suisse Romande's start-up sector, 14 new and less new start-ups, such as Sensefly, a drone manufacturer,

and Scientific Visual, the developer of technology to identify flaws in synthetic gems, presented their businesses to over 200 business leaders, entrepreneurs and investors at the event.

Jeremy McTeague

CFF on track

Swiss Railways reports that it carried more than one million people per day for the first time ever, attributing the increase mainly to better services. Punctuality was 87.5% in 2013, falling just short of 2012's 88%.

Initiative to ban speculation in food commodities

La Jeunesse Socialiste Suisse has collected over 100,000 signatures in support of an initiative to ban speculative agricultural commodities trading. The party claims that speculation places the poorest populations at the mercy of the financial markets. Referring to the current commodities exchanges as "casinos" the party cites massive price fluctuations due to the small percentage of real underlying trade as a direct cause of hunger for millions.

Party president, Fabian Molina said that a third of all speculative food trades take place in Switzerland.

Insight

Living with special needs

NYON Living with special needs, either physical or intellectual, is no impediment to a full and active life in the Lake Geneva region.

Stretching from Geneva to Montreux, the region offers an often unique wealth of opportunities for children and adults living with special needs. These include private and state-run schools and centres for youngsters with physical and learning disabilities, such as the Cité Radieuse in Echichens or the Institution de Lavigny above Morges. Geneva and Vaud seek where possible to include children with disabilities in mainstream education. Policies are in place to encourage training and integration in the workplace. Meanwhile, numerous associations offer support to those living with special needs, and their families. There are half-way houses for recuperating drug addicts or for young people with depression seeking to re-integrate themselves in active society.

But it's not all work and no play. For people living with special needs, being able to participate in leisure activities is equally important. Here, too, the area offers several opportunities.

Geneva-based Cap Loisirs is a case in point. Founded in 1980, the not-for-profit association offers structured leisure time activities for children and adults living with a mental disability. The range of pursuits on offer is impressive and includes, among others, horse-riding, cycling, skiing, archery, and swimming as well as cultural activities. Cap Loisirs also arranges fully inclusive 'adventure' holidays ranging from a weekend to three weeks. Destinations have included Australia, Canada, France, Norway and even Mongolia where participants crossed the Steppes on horseback and slept in Yurts! All activities are organised and supervised by a team of fully trained, specialised, multilingual staff whose dedication is unparalleled.

Thanks to Cap Loisirs, children and young people for whom such activities might ordinarily be out of reach are able to develop their full potential and lead well-rounded active lives. It also means that parents, families and carers are able to get some much needed respite safe in the knowledge that their charges are being taken care of in a happy and

secure environment. The association additionally hosts sports days that bring together able participants and those with special needs as part of efforts to encourage their integration. On average, it welcomes 450 participants, one-third of them children and adolescents, and organises the equivalent of 8,000 activity days.

Today, the association is very much part of the Geneva fabric. An important date in Cap Loisirs' calendar is the annual plant sale, a fundraiser that seeks to raise awareness of the services offered by the association and encourage more people to join in. Organized entirely by volunteers, this event is more than a simple plant sale. It is a chance to meet others who take part in Cap Loisirs' activities and to share experience and insights. It is also a testimony to the importance that people place in Cap Loisirs and its activities. In a show of support for the association, the plants are supplied by local horticulturalists and market gardeners, several 'vignerons' supply wine for sale by the glass or bottle, a local business donates refreshments, volunteers bake cakes, while local



musicians provide entertainment. In short, it's a fun day out. To find out more about Cap Loisirs and its activities, visit the website at: www.caploisirs.ch. For details of other organisations and associations for people with special needs, visit: <http://www.caploisirs.ch/pages/liens.html>

This year's plant sale will take place on Saturday 3 May at Salle St-François de Sales 16, Avenue Petit-Senn, Chêne-Bourg from 8H30 to 15H00.

Kathrine Mann



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Education & Technology

Holiday camps – keeping the kids busy

GENEVA Now is the time to think about what to do over the summer for your children. Camps are a good option.

For many parents, it's that eternal conundrum – what to do over the holidays? For those who can't get away, there's actually plenty to do in the Lake Geneva region. Holiday camps are varied, fun and educational, even more so in an increasingly competitive market. But which to choose? Parents need to consider several things. Obviously prices vary and the cheapest is tempting, but check what's on offer. If in Switzerland, the commune or Maison de Quartier may provide low-cost activities; in France it's the local Centre de Loisirs. So why pay more? Look into the staff-child ratio as well as educational value. Combining fun with lan-

guage camps is often the best value for money. As a teacher, I have always been an advocate for leisure time well spent. Children obviously need to have a rest from the classroom, but they also enjoy having their brains stimulated.

Language camps, such as those organized by Key English School in Geneva and Vaud, enable kids to discover English at their own level through a range of activities from art to sports. The important thing is that it does not recreate the classroom experience. Unlike traditional Swiss methods, the KES camps aim to boost the children's confidence by encouraging oral communication.

In the summer, numerous young people's activities revolve around outdoor sports, so explore the added value of education. Perhaps the camp is in a different language, or focuses on a



Children should be able to discover something new at camp.

sport that is not well-known in Switzerland, such as cricket. Children must be able to discover something new. Schools are usually well-informed about what's on, but check the canton or tourist office websites for anything from sailing to mountain climbing. Conservation groups such as Switzerland's ProNatura also have camps or weekend outings. Parents should consider the logistics: where are

the camps taking place? Can you drop your children off on your way to work and leave them there all day? How flexible is it? The aim is not just to keep kids busy but to offer an environment in which they can thrive. Find out what a typical day will be like. This way, your child will know what to expect.

Sabine Hutcheson is Academic Director and Educational Consultant at TutorsPlus in Geneva.

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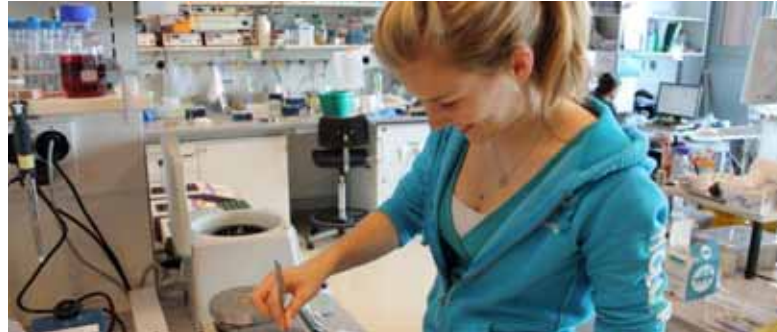
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Education & Technology

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in Science) based in Bern, Life Science laboratories from EPFL, Universities of Geneva, Zurich and Bern and the Life Science Zurich Learning Center hosted 61 high school students selected from all over Switzerland for a "Biology and Medicine" week.

The initiative's aim was to give motivated and bright students hands-on experience in either a cell biology,

molecular genetics, bioinformatics or neurobiology research laboratory so as to whet their appetite and passion for basic research. These young adults performed experiments and finished a small research project under the supervision of a lab mentor. They presented their findings at the final symposium held at the University of Bern on 22 March.

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Congratulations to Arsalan Sachal Baloch, winner of last week's photo competition "Blooming".



"And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom" - Anais Nin

Lifestyle

James Blunt: crossing the music-humanitarian divide

GENEVA The performance by English singer-songwriter, musician and former British army captain James Blunt at Geneva's Arena earlier this week was not just exceptional.

It demonstrated a truly artistic talent, which, together with Blunt's professionalism, is firmly establishing him alongside the likes of Paul McCartney, Elton John and Neil Young. Unusual too is that Blunt, perhaps because of his six years in the British army's elite Life Guards Regiment, including a stint in

nence in 2004 with his Back to Bedlam album. When I chat with him backstage, Blunt comes across as unexpectedly small, shy and low-key. He is also incredibly polite, somewhat reminiscent of the British public school boy (Harrow) that he was, but a far cry from his current energetic and melodic on-stage presence. Moving from guitar to piano, Blunt struts around, modestly Mick Jagger-style, even throwing himself into the audience before having himself skimmed back just in time to complete the song.

On stage in Geneva for one hour and 45 minutes, Blunt's "Moon Landing 2014 World Tour" show confirmed his evocative mix of soft folk-rock and sensitive, if not romantic, lyrics with some heavy licks. The warm-up act – Irish musician Gavin James, with his versatile voice and sole guitar – proved a pleasant segue to Blunt; not the easiest of performances to prelude.

Part of an exhausting tour that has already taken Blunt to China, Ireland, Holland, Germany and Austria, and will finish in March 2015, the show highlighted Moonlanding, his fourth studio album. Its first single, "Bonfire Heart", has been widely praised as a "true return" to form. On stage, Blunt played a variety of pieces that encompassed the same nostalgia for which he has become known, but sounded new and imaginative. They included the catchy ukulele-accompanied "Postcards" – "the ukulele makes me look bigger," Blunt told the audience – but also past hits, such as "You're Beautiful".

"Music can help bridge differences, whether between men and women or gay and straight people," explained Blunt. "Everyone looks the same and is basically trying to survive. So on a personal level, I see my role as talking about MSF and helping raise money for them." Blunt sees work with Help the Heroes as a balance to the humanitarian side. "My military background is highly relevant to what I am doing now. As a reconnaissance officer, one had to be very sensitive to one's surroundings. This is what I'm trying to do now with my life and music. My job is not to talk about my fast car or how much I earn, but rather about my hopes, fears and failings."

Edward Girardet



Kosovo with NATO, is not caught up in ego. He has a genuine interest in the world at large. He is an active supporter of Médecins sans Frontières (MSF), the international humanitarian organization, as well as Help for Heroes, a British charity supporting wounded soldiers.

"I came across MSF in Kosovo and was very impressed by what they were doing," he explained. "I saw a lot of NGOs at work, but I felt that MSF was really pro-active." Blunt, who writes his own lyrics and music, notes that musicians and actors are not role models, and should not imagine that they are. "We're fallible," he said. "I try to see what's relevant and to stay informed. For me, it's really because there are so many questions. This is where MSF comes into its own. They're actually out there in the sticks doing what they need to do."

Blunt wrote his first song at 14 and his Bristol University dissertation is on the music industry. He took his guitar with him to Kosovo and rose to promi-

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Lifestyle

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The colourful burst of flowers heralding spring is a natural invitation to discover wines that boast enticing blossom aromas. Here is a seasonal selection of dry white and red wines made from grape varieties with a definite floral character.



Nebbiolo is the star of black grape varieties in Italy's Piedmont region

Sauvignon Blanc is one grape variety that established New Zealand's reputation for quality wine. Not only does it deliver pronounced aromas of gooseberries, nettles and even grass, but it can produce a distinct touch of elderflower. Pair it with aromatic Thai and Vietnamese dishes to see how the wine's intense aromas and flavours make a great match.

With its complex notes of apricot and peach, musk and gingerbread, the Viognier grape variety almost became extinct 50 years ago. Its revival is thanks partly to the unmistakable aromas of jasmine and honeysuckle, especially in its spiritual home of Condrieu in France's northern Rhône region. Inexpensive examples are hard to find, but it is worth the bit extra to enjoy the intoxicating perfume, especially in young wines. It pairs well with rich dishes with crab or scallops, pork or chicken with cream sauce, and rosemary or saffron-infused recipes.





Among the more surprising aromas is rose. Two outstanding grape varieties fit the bill. Gewürztraminer is one of the noble grapes in the Alsace region, but it is also grown widely elsewhere, including in Switzerland. Lychee fruits and the heady scent of rose petals set it apart from other varieties. Gewürztraminer

polarizes opinion, but whether you're a fan or undecided, serve this white wine with duck or chicken pâté, smoked fish and Asian dishes featuring lemongrass, coriander and coconut, not to mention strong-smelling cheeses such as a Munster.

Nebbiolo is the star of black grape varieties in Italy's Piedmont region with its great Barolo and Barbaresco wines. These display exotic and strangely enticing aromas of tar and roses as well as dried cherries and liquorice. Aged Nebbiolo demands heavy meat dishes like a spiced beef casserole or slow-cooked beef marinated in Barolo, whereas young Nebbiolo goes with bresaola, salami and pâté. While you can detect occasional violet aromas in wines made with Nebbiolo, it is in Chile and Argentina that you find their classic expression in some (but not all) wines made with Malbec. With their intense black-fruit flavours and ripe tannins, South-American Malbecs are best enjoyed with richly textured stews, grilled beef, pork ribs and boldly flavoured cheeses.

Simon Hardy holds a Diploma in Wines & Spirits. He is the founder of Fitting Wines, which provides a range of personalized wine services in Switzerland. simon.hardy@fittingwines.com

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Travel

Holy Yverdon, Batman!

YVERDON-LES-BAINS The Superman, Batman and Co...ics! exhibition (until 21 September) at the Museum of Science Fiction, Utopia and Extraordinary Journeys (Maison d'Ailleurs) in Yverdon deals more with the symbolism of comic books rather than history.

Nevertheless, for both young and old, it's a fascinating insight in the way superheroes, whose origins evoke Greek and Roman mythology, but more practically date back to the 1930s, have come to represent the emotional needs of humanity today.

A highly varied exhibition, which includes original comic books, it takes you through the emerging popularity of newspaper comic strips followed by dime books and pulp magazines. These focused on heroes and villains, such as Flash Gordon and *The Shadow* (1930), *Fantomas* and *Doc Savage* (1933), *Mandrake* (1934) and *The Phantom*

(1936) leading up to Superman, the greatest hero of all and ultimate protector of good, in 1938. Superman was believed to have been a metaphor for US President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who sought to promote good with *The New Deal*.

As the exhibition emphasizes, superheroes, despite their powers, have come to represent a struggling world of adolescent identity – seeking one's own place amid an ever-growing feeling of insecurity. Many of these figures have been reworked into modern-day hero films and books ranging from King Kong to Buck Rogers and even powerful radio plays, notably Orson Welle's "The War of the Worlds." A.E. Van Vogt, Isaac Asimov and Robert Heinlen have explored these themes giving birth to the Golden and Silver Ages of Superheroes, to the current Modern Age, with films such as Stanley Kubrick's 2001 *Space Odyssey*, *Fantastic Four* and *Incredible Hulk*. The same goes for rock musicians,

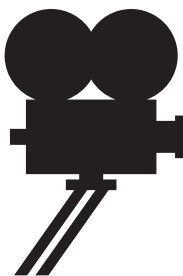


Yverdon les Bains' cultural venues are well worth a visit.

notably Queen, AC/DC and even The Beatles. This fallible superhero environment is also reflected by the works of five 20th century artists, notably Adrian Tranquilli, Gilles Barbie, Mathias Schmied, Alexandre Nicolas and Audrey Piguet.

Maison d'Ailleurs, which hosts a permanent Jules Verne exhibit, is located in the Old Town of Yverdon. (Place Pestalozzi 14). It also takes part in the *Nuit des Musées* in May and June.

Edward Girardet



FILM REVIEWS

By Neptune

Diplomatie ★★★

(vo French and German)

There are films like the vile *300* franchise that distort history, encourage hatred and promote ultra-violence (and unfortunately end up top box office material, as they cater to the massive male teen and 20s crowd). And then there are the often unnoticed gems like this film by Volker Schlöndorff (of *Tin Drum* fame) that illuminate historical moments such as the crucial encounter in August 1944 between the German General Dietrich von Choltitz and Swedish Consul-General Raoul Nordling, who managed to save Paris from being destroyed by the retreating German army. Two great actors, Niels Arestrup and André Dussollier bring these men to life in a room at the Meurice Hotel, where German headquarters were established during the occupation. Schlöndorff keeps us transfixed as the



Swedish diplomat tries to convince the German general of the utter folly and tragedy of blowing up the glories of Paris. This is intelligent, spellbinding intrigue, even when we know the outcome.

The Grand Budapest Hotel

Hotel ★★★

Wes Anderson is at it again, amusing us with his quirky, whimsical and loving cinema, as he did with *The Royal Tenenbaums*, *The Darjeeling Limited* and *Moonrise Kingdom*. He creates fairytale-like stories with great stars (Jude Law, F. Murray Abraham, Tilda Swinton, Tom Wilkinson, Willem Dafoe, Adrien Brody, Edward Norton, Mathieu Amalric, etc, etc.) who seem

to have the time of their lives playing an unforgettable cast of characters. This time, at the centre of all this joyous madness is an impeccable Ralph Fiennes as the dedicated concierge, while a hoot of a tattooed Harvey Keitel plays a helpful jailbird (don't ask...). It's wonderfully silly, and it will lift your spirits, if you understand his humour, of course. You'll walk out with a huge smile, especially after the balalaika music in the final credits.



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Cracking up

Eco-warriors and morality police

I'm trying to be a better person, because of my children. It's partly that I love them and I want to set a good example, of course. But it's also because I have the feeling that they'll tell on me if I don't behave, and I'll be in trouble with someone.

Take the seven-year-old. She's always been the kind of child who worries about the state of her soul because she stole two sweets from the cupboard; who prays before bed every night (and hopefully mentions me because I could use a good word). But recently she's become an eco-warrior, and our home has become her battleground. Quite frankly, she's insufferable.

"We mustn't waste electricity," she frequently says at dinner, before lighting a tiny leftover Christmas candle and plunging us into near darkness.

Recently, she spent an afternoon holed up in her room with a book about

endangered animals. It was a trying time for the rest of the family. As we went about our business, her outraged voice boomed down on us every now and then with upsetting pieces of information like, "The Hector's dolphin is almost extinct" and "We'll probably never see a Javan rhino."

I wanted to lighten the mood, for all our sakes, so when she bellowed, "Do you know there are only about 300 Cross River gorillas left in the world? What are we going to do about that?" I bellowed back, "Tell them to cheer up!"

And ... just a word of advice here. Don't make jokes about endangered animals. Seven-year-old eco-warriors won't think you're funny.

The four-year-old, thank goodness, is still mostly a reprobate, but I'm starting to suspect that the Morality Police might have co-opted her into some sort of surveillance role.

"You certainly like that game," she'll

say casually, popping up behind me when I'm supposed to be working but am actually playing Candy Crush. "You play it a lot."

"You do enjoy your wine, don't you?" she'll observe, appearing from nowhere at my elbow, as I pour a (tiny, tiny) pre-dinner glass.

Or, "Napping again, I see," as she stands, shrouded in shadow, at the bottom of my bed. "Always. Napping."

I really got worried last week, though, when she sat watching me in the bath for a while, eyes narrowed, before asking, "Do you think the other mummies have also got tattoos?"

I was blinded by a sudden vision of myself as she might report me: a tattooed wino who plays Candy Crush during work hours and sleeps all afternoon.

"I don't know," I answered, trying to sink beneath the bubbles. "But if you mention mine at school, could you also



mention that I get up early every morning to cook you a hot breakfast?"

At the moment, I'm the only one being judged – for the near-extinction of the Sumatran orangutan and for my own bad habits. But soon the little girls will grow up, look further afield and start taking the rest of the world to task.

I'm happy to say, our future is in excellent hands.

Robyn Goss is a South African writer. 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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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

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Trisa steam cooker for sale

Trisa brand steam countertop cooker for sale, barely used, with all accessories included. 1000 w, 22 L capacity, dimensions 454W, 403D, 293H. Best offer around CHF 100. Tom 079 754-6531 Geneva

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Regional Events

le News

PICK OF THE WEEK IN COLLABORATION WITH



Lausanne. Swan Lake

March 28, 20h00

Tchaikovsky's beautiful ballet, presented by ColossArt Productions. Performed by the Grand Classical Ballet of Ukraine with the Stars of the Berlin Opera.
Tickets CHF 56-100

Théâtre Beaulieu Lausanne
10 Avenue des Bergières
1004 Lausanne

www.theatrebeaulieu.ch



Leysin. WorldWide Festival

27-30 March

The WorldWide Festival presents a unique selection of artists in beautiful environments and in different cities around the world. At the Leysin ski resort, there is music by the slopes during the day followed by concerts in the evening. The artistic director is DJ Gilles Peterson, and the line-up is inspired by his radio show.

www.worldwidefestival.com



Orbe. Carnaval d'Orbe aux Pays des Merveilles

28-30 March

The theme of this year's Carnaval is Orbe aux Pays des Merveilles. Highlights include: Friday 28, 22h00: Neon Dance Party with DJ at the Cantine du Puisoir. Saturday 29, 06h00: Official opening, followed by entertainment in the city's streets and cafés with Guggenmusik. Carnaval Ball with DJ until the end of the night. Sunday 30, 14h30: Procession. Free entry
www.carnaval-orbe.ch



Villars-sur-Ollon. Grande Finale BCV Ski & Snowboard Open

29 March

The Swiss Ski and Snowboard School and BCV organize this big all-disciplines race, open to everybody. With family or friends, come to compete with the best skiers in the resort at the Col de Bretaye.

www.villars.ch



Nyon. Africa, Paroles de Griot

2-5 April, 20h30; 6 April 17.00

A musical show of an hour and a half with 70 amateur and professional artists on stage. Get ready to be entertained and fascinated, as you are taken on an extraordinary journey, carried away by a colourful and rhythmic universe.
Tickets CHF 30; concessions CHF 18

Nyon Région Tourisme
8 Avenue Viollier
Phone: +33 4 50 99 00 75
www.musica-cultura.org/africa/



Vevey. La Locandiera

3-12 April

The classic comedy by Carlo Goldoni still raises laughter and a question: is it the first piece of feminist history, or a deeply sexist and moralistic piece? Directed by Nicolas Gerber.
Tickets CHF 15-25
Thur, Fri, Sat 20h30; Sun 17h00

Théâtre des Trois-Quarts
7 Avenue Reller
1800 Vevey
Phone: 021 921 75 71
www.troisquarts.ch



Morges. Incidence Chorégraphique, dancers from the Paris Opera

30 March, 15h00

Incidence Chorégraphique, alongside ten dancers from the Paris National Opera, presents a programme of ballet extracts. The repertoire ranges from classics such as Swan Lake and Raymonda to Delibes' Suite and contemporary pieces such as Non, rien de rien. Starring Agnès Letestu and Stéphane Bullion; direction by Bruno Bouché. Tickets CHF 42

Théâtre de Beausobre
2 Avenue de Vertou
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www.beausobre.ch



Geneva. Gala Operami and Friends

28 March, 20h00

Gala concert featuring excerpts from operas including Romeo and Juliet, La traviata, Carmen, Rigoletto, Rusalka and The Marriage of Figaro.
Tickets: CHF 30; concessions CHF 15

Salle Centrale Madeleine,
10 Rue de la Madeleine
1204 Geneva
www.operami.ch



Meyrin. Playtime

20 March - 31 May, 14h00

Interactive exhibition dedicated to the culture of video games. Discover the history of the video game and its effects over the last 50 years by exploring the notion of rules, the expansion of the definition of space and architecture, the implication of the human body and the relationship between player and avatar. Wednesday to Saturday, 14h00-18h00
Tickets: CHF 5

Galleries du Forum Meyrin
5 Place des Cinq-Continents
1217 Geneva
www.meyrinculture.ch



Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat

29 March - 6 April

The ever-popular musical with lyrics by Tim Rice and music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. The story is based on "the coat with many colours" story of Joseph from the Book of Genesis in The Bible. This was the first Lloyd Webber and Rice musical to be performed publicly.
Tickets CHF 19; concessions CHF 15

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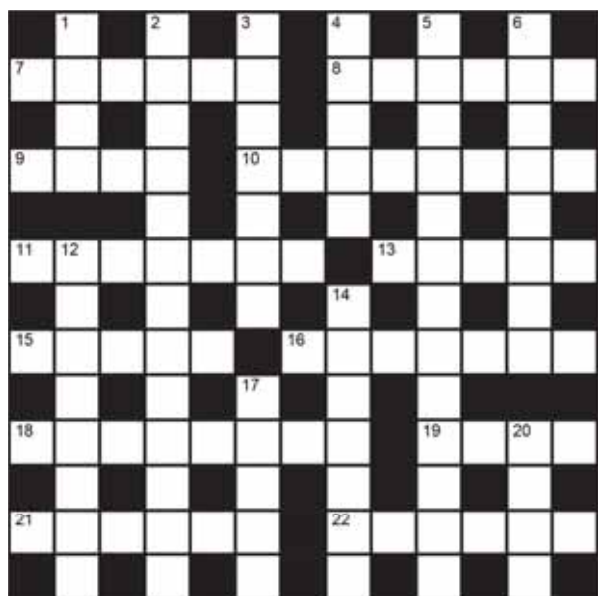
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Puzzles



QUICK CROSSWORD

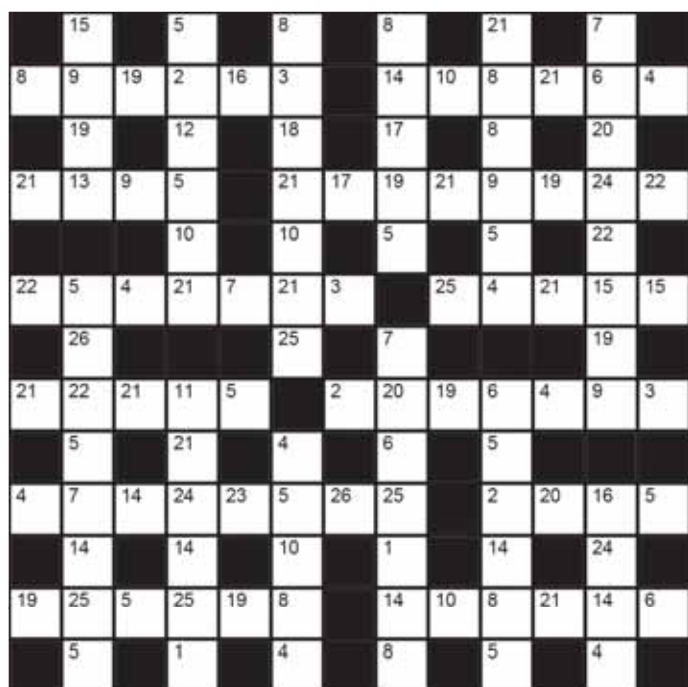
ACROSS

- 7 Lots of twenties (6)
- 8 On any vehicle (6)
- 9 Viewed (4)
- 10 Change to suit a new purpose (8)
- 11 Dazed (7)
- 13 Give or supply (5)
- 15 Once more (5)
- 16 Justification for something (7)
- 18 Spasms of pain in the side (8)
- 19 Detail (4)
- 21 An indefinitely short time (6)
- 22 Proprietors (6)

DOWN

- 1 Empire's unit of area (4)
- 2 The way a word is customarily spoken (13)
- 3 Eluded (7)
- 4 Belonging to or used in a navy (5)
- 5 Donations (13)
- 6 Ruckled (8)
- 12 In concert (8)
- 14 Wearing away (7)
- 17 Outbuildings (5)
- 20 Realise (4)

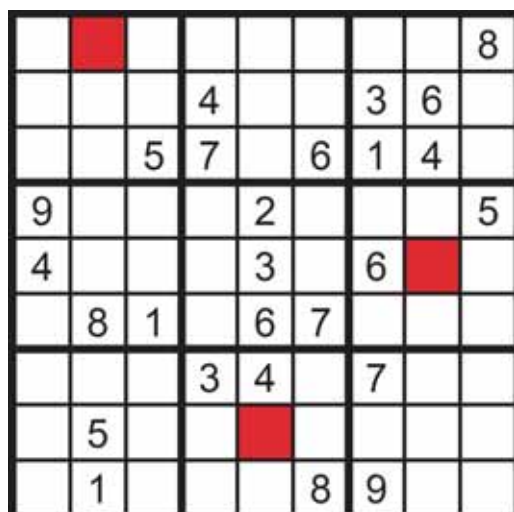
Last week's solution



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
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
			Q					G		N		



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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Codeword: 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

What's On

Cully Jazz: rhythm, colour and "all that jazz"

Enjoy nine days of great music in Cully, a magical spot on Lac Lemman. From 4 to 12 April audiences can enjoy their choice of more than 100 concerts. Those who come to listen to good music won't be disappointed. The Festival IN with its three venues - le Chapiteau, le Next Step and le Temple - has always hosted great names and this year it will kick-off the open jazz night on Friday 4 April at Chapiteau with the Avishai Cohen trio, Rusconi and Julian Sartorius taking turns on stage. On 10 April, the evening show Mali on t'aime, will feature Samba Diabaté and Vincent Zanetti, who have charmed audiences around the world, as well as hosting a special appearance by Saif Keita.



Then there is the Festival OFF, which is open to everybody. With 70 free concerts, the "OFF" is a great opportunity to wander around enjoying the atmosphere, Cully wines, traditional regional architecture and great Jazz. Certainly, being at the heart of the Lavaux region, with its fine reputation for very quaffable

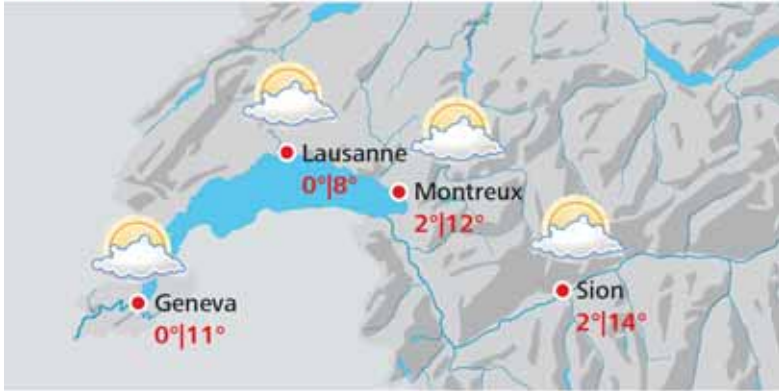
wines, is just one of the many advantages of holding a Jazz festival in Cully. Santé!

Le News has a number of tickets for readers for the « Mali on t'aime » concert featuring Saif Keita on 10 April. Email prizes@lenews.ch.

Cristina Odera

Weather

SUISSE ROMANDE



City	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
GENEVA	0 11°	1 15°	2 17°	4 18°
LAUSANNE	0 8°	1 11°	2 13°	5 14°

SNOW REPORT - ON THE SLOPES

Verbier	272 cm	Crans Montana	210 cm	Les Rousses	150 cm
Villars	160 cm	Château d'Oex	55 cm	Chamonix	40 cm
Leysin	204 cm	Les Crosets	160 cm	Morzine	280 cm



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