

le News

SWISS NEWS IN ENGLISH

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Health costs vote on knife-edge



A single public fund could save billions by reducing bureaucracy and marketing costs.

GENEVA When Swiss voters go to the polls in a national referendum on 28 September, the critical issue of private versus public health insurance will likely be decided along the Röstigraben line, the famous psychological divide between German and Latin language cantons.

At least this is according to recent opinion polls, which indicate that German-speaking voters prefer to retain the pre-

sent system of multiple-choice private insurers, while those in French and Italian-speaking cantons favour a single, public system. Although German-speakers are the majority in Switzerland, those campaigning for a public system have been active in urging a strong voter turnout in Suisse romande and Ticino. This indicates that the outcome is far from certain.

Switzerland's health system ranks sec-

ond on a US index of 11 wealthy countries, just behind Britain's National Health Service (NHS). The US came in last, despite President Obama's efforts to reform the American system, based in part on the Swiss model. However, out-of-pocket payments in Switzerland are 60% more expensive than in the US and three times higher than the average in the countries of the industrialized

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Next week: Take a Norwegian break



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Swiss Update

Swiss shoppers bought less in July than in the same period last year. According to statistics released this week by the government, overall retail sales fell by 0.6%. The turnover of food, drink and tobacco decreased by 2% in real terms, while those in non-food sectors remained stable.



Sepp Blatter (78) has confirmed he will stand as Fifa president for a fifth term next year despite repeatedly denying that he would do so. Blatter claims that the support expressed by most national associations at Fifa's congress in São Paulo made him reconsider. Several Fifa members, including England, state that they will not support his re-election.

Apple, the US-based technology company, has predictably tried and to a degree succeeded in getting a rise from the Swiss media by claiming that its latest device, a digital watch, will cause the demise of the Swiss watch industry.



Every year 100 people in Switzerland die due to lack of an organ transplant, but the country's nationwide organ shortage could now be reduced. A new smartphone app developed by Jocelyn Corniche, an anaesthetist at Lausanne University Hospital, and Swisstransplant, informs emergency-room staff that the phone's owner is a registered organ donor – even if the phone is locked.

The fast-food restaurant chain McDonalds stated this week that it has invested more than CHF 10 million in its Geneva business and created over 100 jobs in the canton. Currently serving 25,000 customers per day, the company's expansion continues unabated with the introduction of a full breakfast menu in its 12 restaurants.

Health insurance vote

Continued from page 1

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Proponents of the current referendum argue that a single, public fund managed by the cantons could save billions of francs by reducing bureaucracy, marketing and advertising costs. Opponents cringe at the spectre of a national monopoly on health care and want to stick with the present system that allows clients to choose among 61 different insurers.

Comparis, a Zurich-based consumer-ranking service noted that Swiss-speaking Germans are largely content with their choice of insurers, while their compatriots in Geneva, Vaud and Ticino feel that they are paying too much for what they get. Insurance premiums are expected to rise in 2015 by 3.8% across the country, according to the Zurich newspaper SonntagsBlick.

The public health campaign has received support from an unexpected quarter, the Geneva Association of

Doctors. Reasons to vote "Oui", according to the association at a press conference on 28 August, include reducing inflationary premiums, increasing transparency along the lines of the existing fire insurance plans in some cantons and, most importantly, continuing to give patients a choice of doctors and coverage through private supplementary plans.

Many election observers are predicting that this year's result will mirror a similar vote in September 2010 to revise the law on unemployment insurance, considered sufficient by the Right and inadequate by the Left. The Röstigraben decided that outcome with 53.4% agreeing with the revision. The question now is whether this linguistic and ideological divide will be supplanted by another widening chasm – the city versus rural divide.

Pamela Taylor

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Editor's comment

The Referendum:
How representative?

On 28 September, Switzerland will hold yet another referendum on crucial federal and cantonal decisions. The Swiss do this every three months, often on technical issues, such as solar energy or parking garages, about which they are not particularly knowledgeable. Or they pass judgement on passionate themes, such as last February's initiative on curbing mass migration, which can make or break the country economically.

This month's federal vote will decide whether to introduce a public health insurance, as Pamela Taylor writes, and whether restaurants should continue paying VAT. Local initiatives vary. Geneva will be voting on a proposal to build a tunnel across the Rhone, while Vaud has no changes on the table.

Another key referendum is next week's Scottish independence vote, notably, the right to break away from the United Kingdom with which they have been associated for more than 300 years. The most recent polls suggest a very close "yes" win for the nationalists.

French-dominant Quebec has tried twice to vote on independence from Canada. The first was in 1980, when it lost significantly, and the second in 1995 where the initiative was defeated.

Barely. Now, nearly 20 years later, the Quebec nationalists are on the out. Many Québécois, particularly young people, are coming to realize that independence would only be shooting themselves in the foot economically and that union is preferable.

How democratic are these referenda? Do they really represent the public will? In Switzerland, participation is usually high, but a referendum can be decided by a 50.3% majority as happened with the migration vote. This means that nearly half the voting population does not agree. But at least every Swiss citizen is allowed to vote, regardless whether in Lausanne, Los Angeles or Lagos.

The Scottish referendum only allows current residents to participate. Scots living elsewhere in the UK or abroad cannot, even if they pay taxes for properties they own in Scotland. Some UK citizens argue that they, too, should be able to vote as the decision will affect them.

Both Scotland and Quebec can have their futures decided by a 50.1% local vote. US citizens, who can vote from abroad, can propose change, but both Houses need a two-thirds majority. So at least, that's arguably more democratic. But what happens when people realize – only much later – that devolution with union is perhaps better than independence with borders?

Edward Girardet, Editor@lenews.ch

Drones for tourism

You can now travel around Switzerland – and neighbouring France and Italy – via a recently established site, TravelByDrone.com, that lets you to visit a town, prepare a hike, or plan a skiing holiday, by first viewing the area from the air. The site comprises over 3,500 quality drone videos by contributors the world over. So you can visit Venice or pursue the wildebeest migration in the Serengeti national park. There are even some from Ukraine, prior to any war devastation. For Switzerland, [TravelByDrone](http://TravelByDrone.com) now offers 62 videos. Some are short, others much longer. Simply go to the map of Switzerland and then zone in on a red marked position.



tion flag. Considered far better than Google Street View, the site offers views that include 12 from Geneva, 10 from Lausanne, and two from the Vevey-Montreux vicinity.

You can glide over the Rhone river and the Dardagny vineyards, tour the footpaths and sports fields of EPFL in Lausanne, or zoom in and out of the valleys and mountains around Sion. You can also soar over Basel or tour the Heidi

meadows near Lichtenstein. Or do VTT cross-country biking, and ski runs. Or view the impact of climate change on glaciers. This is a whole new way of visiting Switzerland. Given the relative low cost of purchasing a drone – CHF 400-500 for a relatively good one – expect regular updates as more people get into this extraordinary new form of aerial viewing.

Le News

Did you know?

BERN According to TCS, the Swiss automobile association, every year nearly 400 children will have travelled in a car when it has been involved in an accident. Worryingly, nearly half of all children are incorrectly strapped in and appallingly, one child in 14 is not strapped in at all. In the event of an accident, the risk of serious injury or even death is three times greater if a child is not secured in a child seat. TCS provides excellent advice on the types and sizes of baby seats needed throughout childhood.

GENEVA Uber, a licensed taxi substitute operating in more than 200 cities worldwide launched in Geneva this week.

The controversial service connects people with a "private driver" at the tap of a button, boasting "Anytime! Anywhere! Without cash!" But all is not as it seems: the company ignores local licensing rules. Recently, licensed cabbies in London and Berlin demonstrated against the new entrant, claiming with some justification that the licensing

Uber comes to Geneva

system needs to be protected because it in turn protects passengers. Uber is now banned across Germany. What does not need to be protected, however, is the inflated fares charged by Geneva taxi companies. A virtual cartel, they must recognize that their steep fares are indefensible given the mediocre service they offer.

Uber has ignored Geneva's edict that it should not launch unless it adheres to current regulations. Steve Salom, the company's general manager, claims that Uber is "200% legal". Its marketing, though, is not as vacuous as the maths of its general manager. This is a company that plays to the mar-

ket's desire for low prices as it pockets virtually unearned revenues. And what about the safety of passengers in unlicensed taxis driven by "private drivers"?

Let's hope Swiss start-up, Tooxme, ups its game. At CHF 0.99 per kilometre, it's half the cost of Uber, and drivers and passengers have to rate each other for security purposes.



Valued at \$18 billion in June, Uber can pick off local taxi firms at will.

IMPRESSUM

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National

Divonne station: Going, going...?

Divonne-les-Bains, well-known for its colourful Sunday market, is planning a major facelift of its former railway district.

The area is currently serving as a parking lot with the late 19th century station lying largely derelict apart from an SCNF ticket boutique. The nearly seven hectare site will soon be turned into a new commercial and residential centre.

According to urbanist Nicolas

Michelin, the idea is to revitalise the area in a contemporary manner, while respecting the "colours" and views of Divonne and its people. The current vision includes a 1,000-car underground car park, 400 apartments and new shops combined with green spaces and bike paths. Once public consultations are complete, the town will launch a nationwide competition for architects and developers to come

Given that Divonne as with nearby Gex, was where Gestapo chief Klaus Barbie, the "Butcher of Lyon," was based, the towns did not play particularly "glorious roles" during the war. This, according to Philippe Viannay, the former resistance editor of *Defense de la France* who died in 1986. Some consider it crucial to keep the station as a historical reminder for future generations.



Much of old Divonne has been bulldozed and many residents want the station preserved.

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up with appropriate plans.

A key issue, however, is what to do with the old station, which used to link Nyon and Bellegarde. Given that much of old Divonne has been bulldozed, many residents would like to see the station preserved, possibly turned into a museum or cultural hub. Critics maintain that the building is not worth keeping as it lacks proper foundations and has no particular architectural significance. To renovate it, noted one council member, "would cost a fortune."

At the end of WWII, however, the station received Jews and other concentration camp survivors who were brought to Divonne to recuperate.

Given how small the French resistance actually was during the war and how many older generation French only reluctantly talk about this period, the preserving of the station would prove significant. As local former resistance fighters point out, while other Rhone-Alp towns, such as St Julien and Oyonnax, were active in the Maquis, Divonne excelled more in clandestine trading of contraband with Switzerland. Some Pays de Gex families to this day still do not talk with each because of past collaboration with Vichy France and the Nazi occupation.

Edward Girardet

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Business & Economy

Exploring tomorrow's terrain

Planning for the future? Of course you are. We all are. But a solid plan needs to be based on a vision of how the future might change. How solid is your vision?

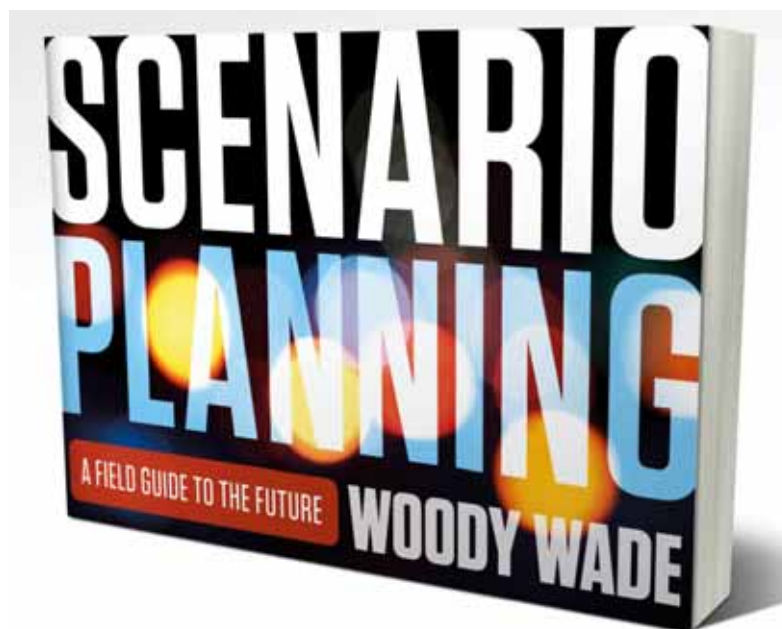
Most organizations rely on projections or forecasts to try and get a handle on the way things will develop in the future. Concocting plans based on a forecast may be fine in the short term, but if you're crafting a strategy meant to assure your competitiveness five or ten years from now, forecasts and projections may actually be dangerous.

Why? Because projections paint a picture of the future as if it will be a variant of the way things already are today. You take the current numbers, tweak them a bit, and – hey presto! – you've got a picture of the future terrain. Or you think you have, and that's the problem. By projecting growth rates, prices, exchange rates, etc., your focus is on

the details, whereas it is probably bigger and broader trends – so-called "driving forces" – that will actually affect you more profoundly.

Think about it. Is your long-term future success more likely to be affected by exchange rate movements, or by political developments, societal changes, technological innovations, or shifting consumer behaviour? For most companies, these are the changes that will have a real impact, yet in the typical 3-year forecast, such big-picture developments are often ignored.

So is there a way to discern the future lay of the land, given these changes? A fascinating approach is called **scenario planning**. This structured process helps you identify the most critical uncertainties your organization will face – the ones that could be make-or-break factors for you in the long run. By imagining how they might play out, you generate a range of different "scenarios", alternative ways your business environment could plausibly develop.



Unfortunately, even though its logic helps you visualise different futures, scenario planning can't tell you what will actually happen. It is not a tool for predicting the future but rather for exploring it: what could happen in your future business environment? A thorough scenario generation session can open your eyes to new ideas about your future competitive environment. You can then see that different future landscapes will present different opportunities and threats, and you can ask yourself about your readiness to compete in these landscapes:

- How would you best differentiate yourself in each scenario?
- What challenges would you face in these landscapes? Can you already prepare your company now?
- What financial, marketing, operational, or human resources policies would serve you best in each scenario?

How much would they cost to implement?

Thinking about the future in terms of alternative landscapes means you can make better strategic decisions today and more of them. But scenario planning is also a leadership tool. If you want to make ambitious plans, you need to convince your colleagues (and your Board) to support your vision of the future. This means you need to demonstrate that you've anticipated the changes that could emerge in your landscape. Scenario planning lets you do just that.

For additional information visit: www.11changes.com

Woody Wade is the author of Scenario Planning, a field guide to the future. He is also a futures coach and speaker (wade@11changes.com)



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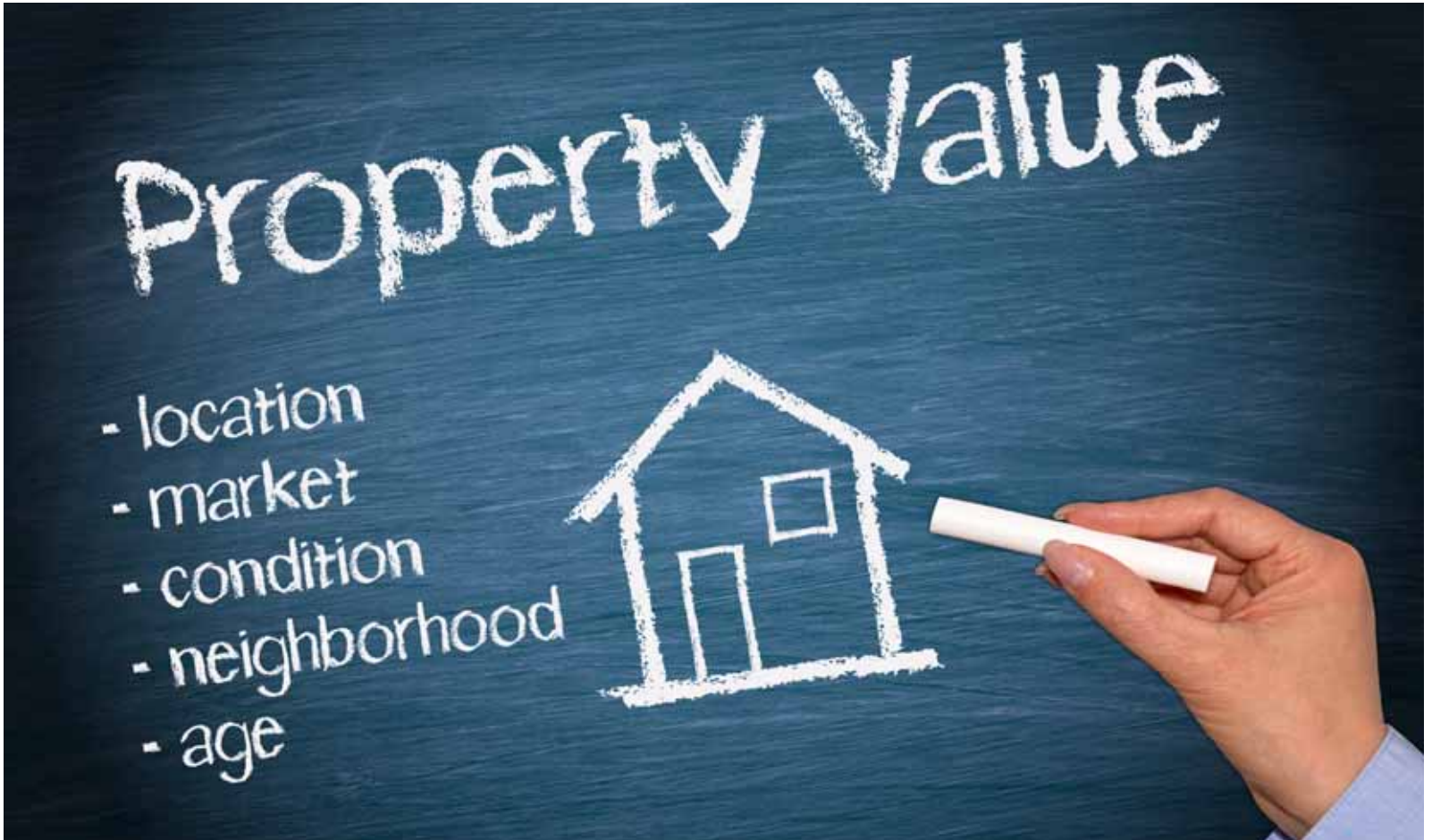
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Property

Housing prices up or down ?



Given a growing return migration of Swiss and expatriate residents from across the border in France, but also economic uncertainty in Switzerland itself, there appears to be a contradiction in the way property prices are moving. Nation-wide, prices have continued to rise in 2014 – albeit at a slower rate. The Lake Geneva region, however, has witnessed a slight drop of 0.8%. At the same time, affordable houses and flats in Geneva and Vaud appear to be just as hard to find.

According to the Swiss National Bank, family-owned properties increased by 0.5% in the year leading up to June, 2014. The Zurich and Lake Geneva regions have both witnessed slight falls in prices, yet remain among the country's most expensive.

Even though some new buildings are being offered at discount, Lake Geneva prices are largely considered solid, and, depending on location, are still rising. However, some analysts maintain that upmarket housing could be affected if more foreign companies shy away from Switzerland because of last February's referendum on mass immigration. Credit Suisse's 2014 Real Estate Market report notes that while no significant change is expected, "even super cycles come to an end sooner or later," particularly if there is a sharp rise in interest rates.

"Prices really depend on where you want to buy," noted one real-estate representative who asked not to be identified. "Morges is becoming increasingly attractive for young professionals, yet it's hard to find anything." Despite

slight drops in rentals because of low interest rates, tenants are still hard-pressed to find houses and flats at reasonable prices. "We're still looking at less than 1% availability in Geneva," he added.

Some real estate analysts expect greater demand as residents in France relocate back. There is already a noticeable rise in the number of French houses and flats up for sale, which, combined with relentless building, threatens to provoke a housing glut. Residents are worried about new health-insurance regulations that recently came into effect under the Hollande government. Premiums are now based on earnings. One can no longer simply use Swiss medical facilities unless prepared to absorb the cost of a second private insurance policy.

Many, too, are concerned that Paris will soon be able to grab taxes on Swiss properties inherited by residents living in France. Although the Swiss have yet to agree, this means that anyone left a flat or chalet in Switzerland will have to pay a hefty inheritance tax of up to 45%.

The tax regime may also change as France introduces its new administrative regions. Paris could soon be taking taxes earned by frontaliers in Switzerland, but previously handed over by the Geneva and Vaud authorities to local French communes. The latter are now worried that losing these Swiss taxes could affect their ability to develop much-needed infrastructure.

Edward Girardet

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Education

Managing workplace burnout

LAUSANNE The phenomenon of professional exhaustion, or burnout, has given rise to a number of coaching and counselling services in Switzerland seeking to educate employees and managers how to recognize symptoms and to jointly take preventive measures.

Job burnout is defined as chronic stress that affects both physical and mental health. In extreme cases, it can lead to nervous breakdowns. It can affect employees who feel overworked, yet fear being laid off if they complain. The same goes for CEOs who love their jobs but don't know how to relax or switch off. All are victims of a fast-moving 21st century, where high-tech advances are often coupled with staff reductions that impose extra burdens on everyone.

The solutions offered by burnout counselling services often appear targeted towards the victim: join a gym; get enough sleep; make time for private life. Such advice is good for anyone, whether to improve overall health, or

to deal with depression. But for many, this is easier said than done. Burnout symptoms may be more evident than solutions: having a low energy level or little motivation; feeling tired all the time; no longer enjoying ones job; and having personal problems at home and at work.

One solution, according to psychologist Catherine Vasey, director of the NoBurnout project at the University of Lausanne, is to help companies institute policies that deal simultaneously with both employees at the administrative level and with CEOs. Much of her work "is with burnout sufferers at the managerial level as it is they who need to institute prevention measures at the company and because they are frequently burning out themselves". According to Vasey, CEOs are often their own worst enemies. Despite having high motivation for their work, they are often challenged when it comes to delegating. They also find it very difficult to shut out work and to preserve a genuine



social life outside the pressured and unrelenting office environment.

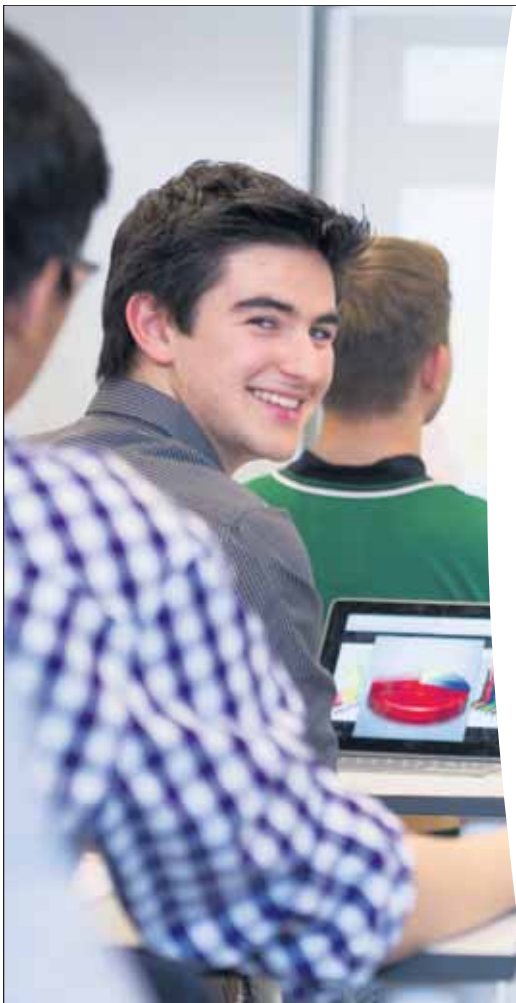
Researchers at Geneva's Webster University are currently gathering data on burnout at international organizations such as WHO, ILO and UN, and on the connection between work and common mental health difficulties.

According to project psychologist Ros Thomas, "Mental health problems account for one of the top economic burdens for employers, where mood and emotional difficulties are consis-

tently associated with lost productivity while at work." Lack of institutional support or stress among aid workers dealing with disasters are also factors. Several NGOs in the Lake Geneva area specifically handle the debriefing of returning relief personnel to avoid aggravated burnout.

Burnout ultimately leads to loss of productivity, whether among valued employees who can't say "no" or those who seek to be available at all hours for clients on the other side of the world. Many, too, remain chained to their computers with few breaks and increasing overtime. "Management needs to realize that burnout most often affects its best workers," said Vasey, adding that the best way to eliminate the fear of being replaced is for company policy to clearly state that it does not want burned-out employees. However, this may require changing the entire culture and values of a company – something that doesn't happen overnight.

Pamela Taylor



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Education

Doomed to repeat history?

Book review: Switzerland: A democracy under pressure.
By Dr Stefanie Frey et al.
Verlag Merker im Effingerhof,
CHF 59.00

Swiss–United States relations have been strained in recent years by disagreements on several issues, most recently banking secrecy, security and privacy issues. Does the US have good reason to criticize Switzerland, or do US politicians not understand the subtleties and logic of Swiss policy making? Or worse, is the US just plain bullying Switzerland for partypolitical purposes or to further its own interests? US political and media assaults often appear to be footnoted by references to Switzerland's record during World War II. Swiss responses to the country's past record have not always been transparent, and an increasing number of Swiss are critical of this and indeed of the official report by the Independent Commission of Experts Switzerland – Second World

War, which was published in 2002.

In an attempt to set the record straight, Dr Stefanie Frey, a respected historian and author has written the definitive examination of Swiss–US relations during the war. Part of a five book series, and staggering in its breadth and depth of research, it draws on contemporary official records and media to paint a perceptive picture of the opposing views at play within and between governments of both countries (and the European powers) at that time. She deftly weaves the facts together to show the evolution in relations between countries. The facts she recounts often speak for themselves and force the reader to reassess accepted history.

The flavour of the book is attractive, even charming. Frey gives us a wealth of European and US social history, liberally sprinkled with anecdotes and bon mots of the commentators and leaders of that dark time.

This book is no apologist's tract. It is compelling and comprehensible and

should be read by anyone searching for insight into US and Swiss policy-making during the war and, especially, today. The parallels are clear to see – sometimes disturbing, often reassuring. And smartly, Frey does not err by pointing them out.

The series includes *Dignity and Coolness 1940 -1941*; *A Courageous Stand 1941*; *Liberty, Independence, Neutrality, 1942*; and *A Sane Standpoint, 1944*. The set is available from the publishers for CHF 100. email: verlag.merker@bluewin.ch or visit: www.verlag-merker.ch.



Le News Author Stefanie Frey

A restless imagination

Douglas Kennedy is the bestselling author of 14 books, three of which have been adapted to film. Robyn Goss interviewed him at GEMS World Academy, where he was speaking prior to attending the Morges Book Festival.

RG: Your books are set in so many different places: Australia, Germany and Egypt to name a few. How do you achieve such a strong sense of place?

DK: I'm someone who absorbs all the time. I'm reading and I'm listening all the time. And I'm curious. A life without curiosity is terrible. Just about everything interests me and I'm a very fast study. So when I go into a place, I just seem to kind of get it.

The devil is in the detail and what I've tried to do with many of my books is look at place with a sort of clarity. I've read so many stupid novels about Americans in Paris, which were always sort of romantic and very picture-post-

card. So when I wrote *The Woman in the Fifth* I decided I was going to do something different. I set it in a grubby immigrants' quarter of Paris. When my Parisian friends asked me, "How did you discover this part of the city?" I said, "On foot." I walk around. I look.

RG: Your novels are so different to one another, in terms of genre, narrator, setting... can you talk a bit about that?

DK: I have a restless streak and a restless imagination. If I had been more of a careerist, I would have branded myself a different way. There was a point at the beginning of my career when I could have written the "Man in Trouble" novel over and over again. Like *The Big Picture* and *The Dead Heart*. But I changed. And then I changed again and again. But [in all of them] what I write about is modern anxiety. It's all over my books. My own stuff, obviously. But I discovered my own stuff was shared by most people.

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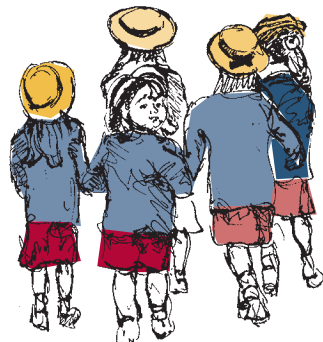
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4	Personal	Child, Lee	Doubleday Bantam Trade	Thriller
5	The Giver	Lowry, Lois	Harper Collins Children Books	Children's Fiction
6	Inferno	Brown, Dan	Corgi Bantam Paperback	Thriller
7	An Event in Autumn	Mankell, Henning	Harvill Secker	Thriller
8	The Children Act	McEwan, Ian	Cape, Jonathan	Fiction Hard Cover
9	Sycamore Row	Grisham, John	Hodder and Stoughton	Thriller
10	The Gods of Guilt	Connelly, Michael	Orion Publishing Group	Thriller

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MIGROS

Lifestyle

On the hunt for wines for game

The onset of autumn announces a highlight of the gastronomic year. Game or chasse season is here once more.

When it comes to pairing wines with game we are blessed with a wonderful variety of local wines.

The flavours of game meat are typically quite delicate so young red wines with often aggressive tannins tend to overwhelm. Also, the sauce for many of these dishes can be quite concentrated in flavour so it is worth favouring a slightly lighter wine than one that is equally full-flavoured.

White wines are certainly not out of contention, particularly when paired with game birds. Chardonnay Reserve wines go with with roast quail with chestnuts. Viognier is not planted that widely in Switzerland but pairs nicely with pigeon or hare dishes. Humagne Blanche is a good match with all kinds of terrine.

However, red wines are more often the natural favourite with game so here are six black grape varieties that will

bring the best out of your gastronomic game experience. They are ranked from the most to the least planted in Switzerland.

In the German-speaking cantons **Pinot Noir** bears the name **Blauburgunder**, which translates as 'the blue grape from Burgundy', paying homage to its spiritual heartland in France. It produces wines with the delicate aromas and haunting sensuality that are true to the elegance and finesse of the variety. Pinot Noir pairs well with game terrine, venison stew, and wild mushroom dishes. *Recommended producers:* Georg Fromm (GR), Urs Pircher (ZH), Jacques Tatasiore (NE)

In Ticino, the country's fourth largest wine-producing region, the **Merlot** grape is pre-eminent. It can produce red wines in a range of styles from fairly light to rich, full-bodied and carefully oaked wines that can hold their own against some top Bordeaux reds. Serve the richer versions with pigeon roasted with fruits, grilled quail and wild duck. *Recommended producers:* Guido Brivio,

Sergio Monti, Enrico Trapletti

Developed in Switzerland **Gamaret** is a crossing of grapes including Gamay. It is planted extensively in the Geneva vineyards and delivers wines of an enticing deep purple colour with powerful aromas of blackberries and sweet spices. The tannins are rich and round but not overwhelming. Good pairings are stewed hare with squash and wild boar. *Recommended producers:* Clos des Pins, Philippe Villard, Domaine des Curiades

Whenever you are unsure of which wine to choose **Syrah** represents a safe bet. It has become one of the most popular grape varieties around the world yet its origins are rooted in the valley of the River Rhône in France just over the border. In Switzerland it does particularly well in the Valais. Serve with stuffed quail, roast venison, partridge and wild boar. *Recommended producers:* Simon Maye, Jean-René Germanier, Benoît Dorsaz

Humagne Rouge is one of the red wine specialities in the Valais. It makes

a well-structured, rustic wine sporting a spicy nose with smoke and leather notes and wild flavours including black fruits and vegetal notes. Humagne Rouge makes a good match with roast saddle of venison, roast squab with wild mushrooms and saddle of hare. *Recommended producers:* Simon Maye, Rouvinez, Mabillard-Fuchs

Another indigenous variety that is more or less exclusive to the Valais, **Cornalin** is rightly considered more refined and age-worthy. It produces deep-coloured wines with aromas of black cherries and wild berries and the best examples typically need a few years to age. Serve with venison casserole and roast game birds such as partridge. *Recommended producers:* Denis Mercier, Domaine Cornulus, Defayes & Cretienand.

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

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Lifestyle

Cracking up

People who need people. And people who don't.



Sometimes I like to think of my family as a patchwork quilt. Because we're covered in cat hair and permanently draped over the couch in the TV room. Ha ha. No, but seriously. I think of it as a quilt because, as any quilt-maker can tell you, organizing the various pieces of fabric into a whole can be a challenge. The bits might all be lovely on their own, but they need to achieve some sort of harmony if you want a quilt that doesn't give you a headache every time you look at it.

As with soft furnishings, so with life. Two or more people, with unique characters, different needs and (sometimes horrible) habits are forced to live together in one house for extended periods of time without going completely mad ... it may sound like a description of Big Brother, but I'm actually talking about families.

For example. In my family, we have a few differences of opinion around issues such as sleep (my husband and I enjoy it but the children aren't big fans) and holidays (I'm into Slow Travel while my husband tears through destinations as if the tour bus were being tailgated by Time's Winged Chariot). But these are minor incompatibilities. Our real area of mismatch – where we just can't get our pieces of fabric to fit together – is in our attitudes to other people.

My husband is an extrovert, which means that socialising not only makes him happy, but actually gives him energy. He'll come back from a weekend of sport, brunches, barbecues and parties all fuelled for the week. The bigger child is cut from the same cloth, only hers is a rather bolder pattern: she absolutely lives to socialise. She can't

walk to the post box and back without making a new friend, and is constantly coming home with someone's mother's telephone number scribbled on a piece of paper, which I must then use to cold call and set up play dates. She's done this at parties, in restaurants and, most recently, on a twenty minute boat ride up the Thames.

I, on the other hand, am an introvert. Socialising makes me tired (most probably because of all the extroverts, sucking out my energy to fuel themselves) and I need a fair bit of time alone to recuperate. The smaller child is like me but more so. Much more so. When we were planning her birthday party, her biggest concern was not the cake, or the decorations, but how we could best keep everyone out of her bedroom. And only last week, on hearing that friends were popping over for a visit, her immediate response was, "Oh no! Lock the doors!"

"But I thought you liked them," I said, as she headed off to her Happy Place (a cardboard box under her bed).

"I love them," she agreed. "But not in the house."

I'm not sure yet how we'll work these disparate needs into a family that is both vaguely socially normal and still respectful of the space that some members need. But I do know what the quilt that represents us should be like: it should be soft and warm, and big enough to wrap around all of us, and whatever friends we want to bring along; a joyfully-coloured, free-motion crazy quilt with plenty of embellishments. And some pins left in.

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

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Lifestyle

The serious side of humour

The death by suicide of Robin Williams, one of America's most beloved comedians, has sparked a wave of commentary about whether there is a connection between humour and depression, or between humour and desperation. Others question whether it is proper to laugh at memorial services as many did for Williams (and as many have been doing for centuries at Irish wakes, for example).

One of the world's leading humour experts, Austrian Professor Willibald Ruch of the University of Zurich, believes that although "some might object to telling jokes about the deceased in a funeral context, in fact this is precisely the place where it is therapeutic to laugh and remember the funny things about the deceased."

Ruch has focused his studies on the serious side of humour, in particular the psychological aspects of why we tell jokes. When is laughter cathartic; when does it mask deeper problems; and can humour be learned? Ruch said



his research indicates that, "Humour is the ability of a person to compensate for the inadequacies perceived in the

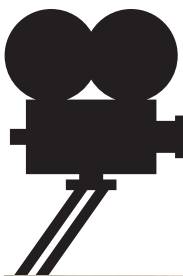
world and to deal positively with problems and adversity".

Popular wisdom holds that some-

times humour is not translatable and is, in fact, culturally specific. British self-deprecating irony and the broader slip-on-a-banana-peel type more common to Americans and Australians both serve as examples, as well as the highly political type of jokes famous among European Jewry and throughout Eastern Europe under Communism.

The Zurich psychologist agrees that humour may be culturally diverse in content but insists it is common to all mankind, however well buried or neglected since childhood. Ruch said it can even be taught. Zurich University has training courses to help people reconnect with their playful nature and learn to laugh again. "Humour in academia or in the workplace is not a contradiction," said Ruch. "It reduces stress, helps with team work and creates a more efficient and productive environment."

Pamela Taylor



FILM REVIEWS

By Neptune

**GEMMA BOVERY** ★★★

VO French
(Photo - Pathefilms.ch)

The super-talented Fabrice Luchini is back in yet another (remember his excellent *Alceste à bicyclette*?) literary reference, this time to Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*. It's a moment of pure joy, as the stylish French director Anne Fontaine takes us to a charming village in Normandy to meet this modern version of Bovary. Portrayed by the lovely Gemma Arterton, she is British and has come to settle there with her devoted husband. Luchini plays an awed-by-beauty baker, Gemma is quite the gem, there are walks in the woods with dogs, a torrid love affair and some huge misunderstandings. It's a tongue-in-cheek romantic comedy, wonderfully clichéd and a delightful escape from the miseries of reality we see daily on TV. And why not?

CAPITAINE THOMAS**SANKARA** ★★★★★

VO French
(Photo - Cineworx)

This important documentary should not be missed. Swiss director Christophe Cupelin takes us back to the mid-1980s when Thomas Sankara, a courageous leader in Africa, decided to lead his impoverished country of Burkina Faso to productive independence and away from the usual colonial acquiescence to the wealthy and powerful West. In this case, the adversary seemed to be the France of Mitterrand, who, as a left-

wing politician, should have been more open to the idealism of this brilliant revolutionary. A man of the people, one who worked tirelessly with his countrymen to build for a better future, Sankara surrounded himself with loyal friends, never afraid to be among his constituents. Nor was he afraid to carry his message of hope for a better Africa to the outside world, as he did so eloquently at a UN session in NY. Cupelin has put together an array of historical documents, recordings and amateur footage to bring to life a few years of independent pride, before the powers-to-be snuffed it out.



Classifieds



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LE MISCELLANEOUS

Networking event

Thursday 18 September at 19:30 at the Scots Kirk Business Network. Two published authors, Scott Chapman and Robyn Goss, will share their advice on how to get published. The talk will be followed by refreshments. The event is free but donations are welcome. Please confirm your attendance with:
skbn@scotskirklausanne.ch.



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Regional Events

le News

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REGIONALEVENTS



Romainmôtier. Last of the summer concerts

14, 21 and 28 September, 17h

The abbey church and priory provide an atmospheric setting for concerts. 14th (abbey): Chœur de l'Abbatiale, Chœur La Celiennne, Ensemble de Joux - Schubert and Mendelssohn. 21th (priory): Quator Sine Nomine - Haydn, Shostakovich and Schubert 28th (abbey): Ensemble Choral Voix de Lausanne, Orchestre des Jeunes, Fribourg - Bach, Vivaldi and Händel

Abbatiale and Maison du Prieur, Romainmôtier
www.concerts-romainmotier.ch
Free, collection



Evian. Marc Chagall, Impressions. Exhibition

Until 2 November
Daily 10h - 19h (Monday from 14h)

The exhibition focuses exclusively on the artist's printed works, from his first black and white copper engravings to his famous colour lithographies and the works he produced using wood engraving near the end of his life. The works show the different techniques he used and how he evolved as an artist.

Palais des Lumières
Quai Albert Besson
Evian
www.ville-evian.fr
€10/€8, children under 10 free



Neuchâtel. Imagine Japan. Exhibition

Until 19 April 2015
Tuesday - Sunday, 10h - 17h

The Ethnography Museum in Neuchâtel is celebrating the 150th anniversary of the first Friendship and Trade Treaty between Switzerland and Japan with this exhibition, featuring many of the materials collected by Swiss merchant Aimé Humbert, one of the architects of the treaty. The exhibition also includes the first Swiss pocket watches exported to Japan.
Rue Saint-Nicolas 4
Neuchâtel
www.men.ch
CHF 8/CHF 4, free on Wednesdays



Geneva. Geneva Chamber Orchestra. Concert

23 September, 20h

In "Young Romantics", the first of its evening concerts after the summer season, the Geneva Chamber Orchestra plays music by Wagner, Berlioz and Mendelssohn, conducted by Arie van Beek. With sopranos Véronique Gens and Laure Barras and the Chœur de femmes du Grand Théâtre de Genève.

Bâtiment des Forces Motrices
Place des Volontaires 2
Geneva
www.locg.ch
CHF 15-50



Lausanne. Label Suisse. Music Festival

19 - 21 September, Fri 17h30 - 1 h, Sat 10h - 1 h, Sun 11h - 1h

Label Suisse is a free urban music festival dedicated to the Swiss music scene, providing a variety of colorful styles - rock, pop, folk, electro, hip-hop, French chanson, jazz, classical and choral. With 86 concerts held in 6 concert halls and a large outdoor stage that can accommodate 7,000 people in Lausanne centre, this is sure to be music for your ears!

Locations around Lausanne
www.labelsuisse.ch
Free



Geneva. Rodin: The Accident. The Random. Exhibition

Until 28 September
Tuesday - Sunday, 11h - 18h

Almost 80 sculptures by Auguste Rodin in this exhibition confirm that he is the number one sculptor of the 20th century. He revitalized the medium by introducing the notions of randomness and accident. Guided tour in English on 21 September at 15h, included with ticket. No need to book.

Musée d'art et d'histoire
Rue Charles-Galland 2
Geneva
www.mah-geneve.ch
CHF 15/CHF 10, under 18s free



Geneva. Peter Knapp - Elles, 101 Visions of Women. Exhibition

Until 9 November
Tuesday - Sunday, 10h - 17h

Versatile Swiss graphic designer and photographer Peter Knapp has been photographing women for 50 years, either on commission for Elle magazine or for his own more personal portfolio. Always innovative, his image of women remains resolutely modern, free and fluid.

Museum of the Swiss Abroad,
Chemin de l'Impératrice 18
1292 Pregny-Chambésy
www.penthes.ch/musee/expositions/
CHF 10/CHF 6, under 16 free



Lausanne. Creativa.

19 - 22 September, 10h - 15h

Running in parallel with the Comptoir Suisse, Creativa is one of the best arts and crafts shows around, with more than 30 exhibitors offering everything your heart desires for quilting, patchwork, knitting, beadwork, scrapbooking and more.

Hall 2
Beaulieu Exhibition Centre
Avenue des Bergières 10
www.creativa-suisse.ch/fr/creativa-lausanne
CHF 14, discount possible with Comptoir ticket

Creativa
LAUSANNE

Geneva. Ateliers en fête. Craft event

20 September, 15h - 22h

At this free outdoor event organized by the CréAteliers association, you can try your hand at a number of crafts in workshops offered by nearly 20 artists, including engraving, jewellery making, calligraphy, textiles and more. As a bonus, you can enjoy tasty Portuguese food, Portuguese music and dance, and a free concert at 20h.

Rue du Léman and Place de la Navigation,
Pâquis
www.lescreatiers.ch/
Free entry



L'Isle. Plant exchange and market

14 September, 6h - 16h30

Come to this plant exchange ("troc") and market to get new perennials. Just bring along a plant, exchange it for a token, and swap the token for another plant. Last year 1,000 plants found a new home. Bring plants in small pots, labelled (preferably in Latin). Professional nurseries will also have stands there.

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www.jardilisle.ch/index.php/le-troc



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Puzzles

SUDOKU

Easy Hard

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

7						6	4	8
					5	3		
3		1					9	
8			2				6	
4		9			1	8		
		7		4		9	3	1
		6						9
		5				4		
				5	8			

5				7				9
1							8	
2			5					
				9				1
						7	6	
	6		1	4		3		
					7		3	
				5		4	7	
6		8			9			

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Codeword: Send us the three letters in the shaded squares for a chance to win CHF 10.– The first correct answer drawn every second Monday will win.
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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
	P			C								
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
				X								

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

Spotlight

She'll be coming down the mountain



The season of the "désalpe" is here again, when the cows led by La Reine, come down from their summer pastures, where they have been feeding on lush grass and alpine flowers. The spectacle of hundreds of cows – giant bells round their necks, ornate floral bouquets on their heads – clattering through village streets at a fast trot is a sight to behold. The farmers, often in traditional dress, work hard to keep the animals on track and – it being Switzerland – they follow a strict timetable – to the nearest ten minutes. Behind come horse or donkey drawn carts carrying the giant copper pots in which thousands of litres of milk were heated over wood fires to produce hundreds of giant wheels of cheese over the

short alpine summer season.

Some désalpes are combined with other events, such as the Vacherin Mont-d'Or Festival in Charbonnières, where the first of the new season's cheeses, in their distinctive spruce boxes, are celebrated. Enjoy squads of cow bell ringers, whip crackers and alp horn players, as you peruse artisanal products of all descriptions. These events are a real celebration of the seasons and a sense of a job well done! Dates and locations: 13 September: Gryon, from 10h; 20 September: Crans Montana, 11h30; 27 September: Charbonnières, Charmey and St Cergue, all from 9h; 4 October: Semsales, from 7h.

Jane Duncan

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² Leasing example: Term: 48 months, odometer count: 10 000 km/year, effective annual interest rate: 2.94%, first major instalment: CHF 9 200.-, instalment from the second month: CHF 339.-. Excluding payment protection insurance (PPI). An offer from Mercedes-Benz Financial Services Schweiz AG. Comprehensive insurance is mandatory. It is prohibited to grant credit where this would lead to over-indebtedness of the lessee. Subject to change. The fleet discount of 3% is based on a fleet size of 1 to 7 vehicles. The offer is valid for companies entered in the commercial register or with a valid VAT number. Car must be registered to the company, or to an employee who is entitled to the fleet discount. Car must be kept for a minimum of 6 months. Displayed model including custom equipment: CHF 59 400.-: LED Intelligent Light System, Adaptive Highbeam Assist Plus, Active Parking Assist with PARKTRONIC, 19" light-alloy wheels with AMG multi-spoke design, AMG Line exterior, EXCLUSIVE interior, iridium silver metallic, heat-insulating, dark-tinted glass including side windows rear of B-pillar and rear windscreen, Driving Assistance package Plus, 7G-TRONIC PLUS, Mirror package. 4.7 l/100 km (fuel equivalent: 5.3 l/100 km), 121 g CO₂/km, energy efficiency category: B. All prices include 8% VAT. Offer valid until 31 December 2014. Registration must be completed by 31 March 2015.