

le News

SWISS NEWS IN ENGLISH

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Swiss role in Afghanistan?

US army vehicles commencing the withdrawal of NATO forces from Helmand Province. Job done?

GENEVA NATO will be ending its official role after 13 years in occupation of Afghanistan on 31 December, 2014. Nearly 10,000 US troops, mainly special forces, but also several thousand Australian, British and other NATO forces are expected to remain in a primarily training capacity for another two or three years. Last week, President Obama suggested that American forces would still be allowed to engage in a

combat support capacity, if need be. By the end of 2016, however, most, if not all, foreign troops would be out, at least that's the official line. It is almost certain the Washington will retain special forces units at Bagram, Kandahar and other Afghan airbases as part of its bilateral agreement with the new Kabul government. These may be used for operations inside Afghanistan, but also, more crucially, across the border in Pakistan.

So where does this leave Afghanistan? Militarily, the western intervention has proved a failure given that the Taliban and other insurgent groups have not been vanquished. If anything, they are stepping up their attacks against the government and foreigners – military and aid workers alike. While certain progress has been made since the end of 2001, notably nearly eight million

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Timothy Berners-Lee wins Gottlieb Duttweiler prize



The man credited the creation of the world wide web, Sir Tim Berners-Lee has been awarded the prestigious Gottlieb

Duttweiler award. According to the institute, the award recognises people who have made "outstanding contributions to the well-being of the wider community". Previous winners include: Václav Havel, president of the former Czechoslovakia; and Wikipedia founder, Jimmy Wales. The Gottlieb Duttweiler award is named after the founder of Swiss supermarketing and retail conglomerate, Migros. It was set up in 1958 with money given to him by members of Migros for the purpose. Winners of the prize benefit from a significant monetary award.

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This Week in Switzerland

Ingvar Kamprad, founder of Ikea, and his family were ranked as the wealthiest in Switzerland, according to an annual listing published by Swiss business magazine Bilan. They command a fortune of approximately 41 billion francs, although Ikea maintains the amount is much lower. The Hoffmann and Oeri families, owners of Roche pharmaceuticals, ranked third on the list.



Swiss animal rights activists recently handed a petition to members of parliament demanding a ban on eating cats and dogs, a custom still practised by hundreds of thousands of Swiss people. According to the activist group, up to three per cent of Swiss secretly eat the animals, especially in the regions of Lucerne, Appenzell, Jura and Bern. Because of a loophole in Swiss law, which means pets are not included in farming legislation, it is legal to eat them, provided they are killed humanely and the meat is not sold. The petition contained 16,000 signatures, including that of French actress and animal rights campaigner Brigitte Bardot.



The Kunstmuseum in Bern, will be accepting a collection of modernist artworks bequeathed by Cornelius Gurlitt, the son of a Nazi-era art dealer. The masterpieces, by Picasso, Chagall and Monet and others, were discovered in Gurlitt's home a couple of years ago. Following an agreement between Germany and Switzerland, Bern will receive hundreds of works, which could be on public display as early as 2015. The museum confirmed that it will not accept works suspected of being looted; every attempt would be made to find the rightful owners.

Felix Baez Sarria, the Cuban doctor diagnosed with Ebola who arrived at Geneva's University Hospital for treatment in late November, is slowly improving in health. According to the hospital, he is still weak but seems to be recuperating after receiving experimental treatments, including the Canadian antibody drug ZMab. Baez was infected with Ebola in Sierra Leone, where he was helping in efforts to fight the disease.

A Swiss role in Afghanistan?

Continued from page 1

children are now at school and there is better access to healthcare for ordinary Afghans, the international community has largely failed to deal effectively with Afghanistan's recovery. As both the US and the EU have discovered, trying to conduct nation-building from the outside was a squandered illusion.

As illustrated last week by Geneva Canton's presentation of its International Solidarity Programme to support two organizations in Afghanistan, International Assistance Mission and the Nai Qala Association, much of the responsibility must now lie with humanitarian and development agencies on the ground. "Billions of dollars have been wasted since the international community came in," noted Alessandro Monsutti, of the Graduate Institute of Geneva. "People need to recover if there is to be end to this war."

But peace negotiations remain imperative, particularly if Kabul manages to hold out against the insurgents once foreign troops have gone. With neither side capable of victory, this will only mean more protracted war.

For some observers, this is where Switzerland now needs to play a role. The country has been involved with Afghanistan since before fighting broke out in July, 1978, primarily with agricultural projects. Given that peace talks in Doha have stalled, new initiatives are in the offing with Switzerland taking a "quiet lead," as one EU diplomat put it. According to one Afghan foreign ministry source: "Switzerland is really the only country that both the Afghan government and the Taliban respect. We remember the ICRC and the talks held in Geneva during the Soviet war. This is what needs to happen again."

Edward Girardet

Le News online



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Editor's comment

Switzerland's initiatives: Too much democracy?



The overwhelming vote on 30 November against even more limited immigration (Ecopop); an end to special tax rates for wealthy foreigners and increasing gold reserves enabled the Federal Council in Bern, which had opposed all three initiatives, to sigh with relief.

What the government did not need were more obstacles undermining its bilateral accords with the European Union, Switzerland's largest trading partner.

The majority of Swiss, it seems, have grasped that their country can simply not function without full access to foreign workers, managers and innovators. Furthermore, even if other European right-wing parties are pushing for immigration curbs, the tone of last February's referendum restricting mass immigration did little for Switzerland's image abroad. Not only did Brussels immediately rule out any renegotiation, but the Swiss themselves felt the impact, such as the termination of the prestigious Erasmus student exchange programme. (See article in this issue).

Do such popular initiatives really reflect a functioning democracy? Last month's participation barely drew 48 percent, hardly a majority. Many Swiss complain that there are too many referenda and consider them costly.

Often, the issues are too complicated to understand. Ideally, responsible citizens should spend the time reading up before voting, but this does not happen. During one recent cantonal referendum, the local electorate voted to have their council determine how many wind turbines were needed rather than have ordinary people make such a technical decision.

Immigration might be an issue too precarious for voters to decide. How many Swiss, particularly in the rural German-speaking parts, understood the implications of blocking EU citizens from the country? Did they realise that their economic well-being, was primarily the result of such immigration? Or did they allow xenophobia regarding "die Anderen" (the "others", meaning "outsiders") to cloud their judgement?

Part of this was the failure of the Swiss media and government to inform people properly about the consequences. It was a different story leading up to the Ecopop initiative with constant debate both in the press and social media.

Encouraged by the anti-Ecopop vote, a new non-partisan citizens group (See Le News story in this issue) is now seeking to abrogate the 9 February decision by launching a popular referendum against it. But is this the way democracy should work? Would it not be better to have one's parliamentarians decide? The occasional referendum may be empowering, and sounds great when explaining Swiss democracy to school children, but it's not the way to run a country responsibly.

Edward Girardet, Managing editor. editor@lenews.ch

CHF 117 million for International Geneva

According to the Federal Council in Bern, Switzerland's budget for International Geneva is to be increased by CHF 44.8 million annually from 2016-2019. Seeking to strengthen the country's role as premier host to the United Nations, the Federal Council plans to dish out a total of CHF 117.2 million over the three-year period.

While the UN headquarters operates as the "political hub" out of New York, the Lake Geneva region serves as the leading focal point for the UN community with over 40 agencies and programmes present.



Federal funding will help Geneva retain its status as an international hub

Geneva's role with tempting offers of funding and facilities. Bonn managed to abduct the UN Volunteers (UNV) from Geneva in 1996, while Copenhagen's new UN City has brought together eight UN agencies, including UN Women in 2010. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) last month decided to move its fund-raising operations to Denmark, while the International Labour Organization (ILO) and World Health Organization (WHO) earlier relocated select administrative operations to Budapest and Kuala Lumpur respectively.

All this has finally got the Swiss worried. The new proposal now being discussed by

parliament, plans to channel the funding to improving building and technological infrastructure, plus initiatives to foster better "interaction" between the various international and national actors. "In today's increasingly competitive environment, the Swiss government wishes to enable International Geneva to continue to be a unique platform for the effective promotion of its interests and values," the Federal Council announced. What is lacking, however, is mention of Swiss support for media as the most effective means for highlighting Geneva's role.

Oro Cohen

Did you know?

Gold rose after Swiss "no" vote. Many commentators went for the intuitive appeal of stories linking Sunday's 2% fall in gold prices to the "no" result in the gold referendum. By Monday however, gold was up 6%, driven probably by Moody's Japanese sovereign debt downgrade. If the vote had been on Monday, or Moody's had released its downgrade on Sunday, the net effect could have been a 4% rise. In this event journalists would have reported differently. Explaining the gold price is difficult, predicting it even more so. And if you're wrong there are no dividends or interest receipts. Good reasons for not forcing the SNB to hold this rare but largely useless metal.

There are also well over 300 non-governmental entities dealing with humanitarian, environmental, human rights, telecommunications, mountain and other key global issues. Geneva itself is the world's sixth most important financial centre, but also acts as a crucial international mediation and arbitration hub.

Countries such as Denmark and Germany have been vying hard to usurp



IMPRESSUM



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National

Early language mastery: a myth?

FRIBOURG Popular wisdom has long held it that the younger you are the easier it is to learn a foreign language. Whether expat or immigrant, parents of small children have long noticed, often to their own chagrin, how quickly their offspring become bilingual. It's a phenomenon the Swiss have long exploited in order to preserve the multi-lingual nature of their country which is considered a key to national cohesion.

The importance of learning foreign languages at the primary school level has become the subject of much controversy in Switzerland in recent years. Since the 1990s, all 26 cantons have followed federal education guidelines that called for teaching a second national language at the primary level. A decade later English has become the main foreign language taught at primary schools in the majority of German speaking cantons, a phenomenon loudly protested in Suisse romande.

In an attempt to introduce some empirical evidence into what has until now been primarily a political debate, the Institute of Multilingualism at the University of Fribourg published a review in September that indicates that early language learning may be a red herring. "In the school context, available studies show that after 200 hours of teaching, a younger child will know less than an older child," said Amelia Lambelet, research manager at the Institute. "This is related to maturity and the fact that general cognitive abilities improve with age, whether in languages or math. Young children are slower in learning structure."

The Institute reviewed all the studies they could find on the subject of



Language, the very epicentre of culture, is often a political football

early language learning, including several from North America, the UK and Spain. The most important research on this subject came from the University of Barcelona where schools teach in Spanish and Catalan. Language abilities remained the same despite lowering the age at which students learn English. The studies agreed that whether beginning earlier or later, most students reached the same level of proficiency in language.

Young children are likely speak the language or dialect of their parents at home and at least one other at school, whether they are Swiss, expat or immigrant. Many families point proudly to the multi-lingual capabilities of their children, some of whom may speak four or five languages. Many studies point to the fact that it is the phonetic aspect of language that gives younger children the edge. However, according to Lambelet, if children of different

ages in the same family are tested every three months or so the child who is 15 will be learning faster than the child of six. It is when overall knowledge of language grammar and structure become more important than pronunciation and accent that older students surpass their younger siblings.

"The problem in Switzerland is the way languages are taught," said Lambelet. "For example, I studied German, but the way it was taught there was very little input or participation by me and the German I speak is mostly due to the fact that I work in Fribourg." She believes this pedagogy is more important than the fact that German speakers tend to speak a dialect at home and need to study standard German at primary school, making the study of a "third" language such as French an extra burden.

"They are saying they don't want to teach French at primary school because the children will be overloaded with Swiss-German, High German, English and French – that children have too much to study as it is". Lambelet believes dropping French to ease this burden is an excuse being used for political reasons.

"All we're saying is that the age factor is not really important in making decisions about which language should or should not be taught. Age is not the point and learning earlier is not better but it's also not worse. It is irrelevant and should not be used as an argument about teaching foreign languages in schools. In Switzerland the symbolism of language is important and we need to preserve the cohesion that we have all agreed to in the Concordat."

Pamela Taylor

Initiative to repeal anti-immigrant vote



Micheline Calmy-Rey supports RASA

BERN RASA, a non-partisan citizen's group, has launched an initiative aimed at repealing the right-wing sponsored 9 February, 2014 vote to curb mass immigration from the European Union into Switzerland. "Raus aus der Sackgasse," or RASA, literally "Out of the Dead End," consists of 300 concerned business, cultural and intellectual representatives, who feel that the February referendum has placed Switzerland in an impossible situation with regard to EU relations.

For them, the Swiss economy but also other aspects of Swiss society, such as culture and academia, simply cannot afford to rupture ties with the rest of Europe. Swiss film-makers, for example have lost access to Brussels funding for their projects, while universities now need to re-negotiate their own individual exchange arrangements with European counterparts.

RASA originally met last August, but decided to await the outcome of the Ecopop initiative. The decisive 74 per-

cent "No" has encouraged RASA supporters, suggesting that the tide is turning with ordinary citizens more aware of the consequences engendered by the February vote. Furthermore, it appears to many that the Federal Council in Bern still has no idea how it should legally implement the decision as required by the constitution.

Le News

Business & Economy

The Swiss deflation puzzle

There is currently much talk of the dangers of deflation and the specter of its imminent arrival in the Eurozone. The Economist newspaper proclaimed last week that if deflation were to set in, the single currency would be in peril.

Economists assume that deflation, or falling prices, reduce consumption as consumers defer spending in the hope of things getting cheaper in the future. Economists predict that this force combines with falling wages, which make debts harder to pay off so driving a grim downward spiral.

Switzerland however has experienced deflation and instead of entering an economic doom loop its economy has fared better than most EU countries which have inflation. Consumer prices went down by 1.1% between 2010 and 2013, while consumption increased by 4.4%. Average household income also increased between 2010 and 2012. This is puzzling.



It may be that Swiss consumers expected prices to rise and consumed in line with this belief despite prices actually falling. This explanation fits with Swiss National Bank 2010 inflation forecasts of 0.4% for 2011 and 1.0% for 2012.

Mark Twain once said: be careful about reading health books. You may die of a misprint. Perhaps we should take the same care when reading inflation figures.

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Insight

Swiss Christmas: delightfully different

Christmas begins early in Switzerland. Not just the commercial onslaught noticed in shops but the quieter celebration of Advent on the 4th Sunday before Christmas Eve, which this year fell on 30 November. Swiss children traditionally receive Advent calendars with 24 small flaps to open one each day until the 24th to reveal a Christmas scene. These days the "gift" behind the window is often chocolate, to the distress of many parents.

The season really begins for many on Advent with visits from St. Nicholas or Samichlaus. This figure, predating Santa Claus by several centuries, may arrive anytime between now and the 24th to distribute tangerines, nuts or small gifts. In older villages, St. Nick is often accompanied by his henchman, Schmutzli or Père Fouettard in French, a dark nemesis who carries a broom of sticks to strike at naughty children.

Throughout the country, there are Christmas parades where revelers enjoy concerts and carol singing, accompanied by a warm glass of mulled wine. Switzerland has a particularly rich and diverse tradition of carol singing. Many rural families still enjoy hiking through the forest to find and cut the perfect Christmas tree, stopping by a mountain hut for fondue. For the Swiss, fondue is a winter specialty. Only tourists eat it in summer.

So where is Santa Claus in all this you might well ask? This figure did not appear until the late 19th Century in North America and the jolly icon beloved by children today around the world was fabricated, first in children



St. Nicholas or Samichlaus is accompanied by his henchman, Schmutzli or Père Fouettard

tales and later in the iconic image used by Coca Cola in a famous 1930s advert. In Switzerland, however, as in much of Europe, the figure that brings gifts either on Advent or on the evening of the 24th is St. Nicholas, Samichlaus, Père Noël or Babbo Natale. Moreover, he does not fly in a reindeer driven sleigh or slide down chimney pots. The Santa figure may also be represented by Le petit Jésus in Suisse romande or the Christkind in German-speaking regions, a beautiful, radiant, angel-like being with wings, dressed in white with a shining crown and a magic wand. Children traditionally awake to find their presents already under a real tree – no plastic, unnatural looking ones here. While electric lights have become widely used, especially in urban areas, putting real candles on the tree is still

practiced throughout the country. It is also the cause of many fires this time of year. Trees often stay up until 2 January and the candles are lit again on New Years Eve for good luck. Only in the Italian-speaking canton of Ticino are trees not an integral part of Christmas. The 24th is more important than the 25th in Switzerland and depending on the region, gifts are exchanged either then or on 1 January or 6 January (Epiphany) when the three Magi were said to have visited the Christ child. The Christmas feast takes place in the early evening of the 24th after which, the family may sing carols and exchange gifts. Many recite chapters from the Bible related to the birth of Jesus and later go to church for a midnight service or mass, afterwards sharing hot chocolate and special

Christmas treats.

Among practicing Christians in Switzerland, about half are Catholic and half are Protestant. Locals say you can tell the religion of a village by whether the church dominates (Catholic) or if the school dominates (Protestant). Protestant districts also keep their Christmas decor understated. After all, it is the land of Calvin, that most austere of reformers. The city of Geneva however, is making greater efforts every year to decorate the city center, with 14 kilometers of illuminated snowflakes in trees this year and garlands on bridges crossing the lake.

Pamela Taylor



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Education & Technology

The plague of plagiarism in schools

Rather than simply punishing students for passing off other people's work as their own, schools need to help them become more discerning – and critical – with their use of online research.

William Shakespeare, Oscar Wilde and Martin Luther King all have been accused of plagiarism, so what chance do young students stand in coming up with original material if these great brains of history resorted to copying off others? To be fair, very little of their material was criticised and it is all down to speculation. In schools and universities, only a small proportion, albeit growing, of students are plagiarists. Some, as it happens, plagiarise by accident.

The advent of the internet, and especially sites like Wikipedia, have made it all too easy for anyone to lift information and pass it off as one's own. Plagiarists not only repeat such outside data, but they are likely to disseminate erroneous information. Just because it is written down somewhere, doesn't make it true!

In schools, students who may be accused of plagiarism fall into two broad categories: those copying with intent and those misunderstanding the nature of research. The younger the student, the latter is more likely. The wealth of material online and the various portals available to students, such as social and content sharing sites, or bespoke essay writing services, provide them with a double-edged sword. Indeed, it is easy for teachers to check if entire sentences have been copied off the internet, simply by looking them up using search engines.

Teachers who know their students easily spot the unusually perfect syntax or journalistic style when marking class essays. Examiners who are less familiar with their students will still have an inkling that something isn't right. This includes variations in tone and quality of language or irrelevant and specific references that the student clearly oversaw when copying and pasting.

Those students who may have accidentally plagiarised usually do not understand how to produce original work. Students must be taught research techniques and the differ-

ences between quoting, paraphrasing and summarising. Guiding students and pointing them in the direction of valid sources on the internet is also good practice, so that Wikipedia ceases to be the sole port of call for factual information.

Pupils must be informed of the consequences. While these may not go beyond a telling off and a rewrite of their homework at school, the repercussions become serious later. Universities punish this practice with sanctions varying in harshness but which always have an impact on the student's final results. Such penalties can severely affect academic and professional careers. At a higher level, PhDs have been revoked on grounds of plagiarism, and a great deal of money has been lost in lawsuits and cases of copyright infringement. However, the greatest damage is caused to the plagiarist's personal and professional reputation. Plagiarism directly implies a lack of honesty and leads to pervasive mistrust.



Rather than come down hard on young students, let us teach them good practice and honest work ethics; let us show that the original fruit of hard work is better rewarded than perfect but copied results. Let us equip them with the tools to develop research skills, by encouraging them to practise from a young age with the use of library books and accompanied internet use. Let us guide them into critical thinking so that they can discern the best sources, be they real or virtual material. If we do this, good students will emerge who are willing to work hard and are not tempted to cut corners.

Sabine Hutcheson,
Education Consultant at TutorsPlus

Education & Technology

Swiss higher education under attack

Last February's referendum seeking to restrict mass immigration from the European Union already has seriously damaged Swiss universities and complicated student exchanges.

The federal government in Bern has less than three years (February, 2017) to decide how to implement the curbs on the free circulation of people, the pillar of the European cooperation, as constitutionally required by the popular initiative. Yet the fallout almost immediately removed Switzerland from the highly popular 33-country Erasmus university exchange programme. This enables students to study at different universities throughout the continent. Since the vote, fewer European students have applied to study in one of the twelve universities of the Swiss Confederation in the fall semester 2014.

The University of Lausanne has lost exchange deals with seven Italian and Spanish universities.

The drop in the number of candidates is estimated at between 10-30 percent. "It is a real pity for these students to whom we offer luxurious study conditions, with housing arrangements, and the possibilities of internships," regrets Marielle de Dardel, head of the department of the international relations at the University of Fribourg.

Conscious of the devastating effects on Erasmus, Bern has taken

temporary measures by redistributing the CHF 22.7 million that would have gone to the EU in the form of student scholarships. But this amount is insufficient to support the number of students coming here to live decently.

The prestigious Federal Polytechnic University of Lausanne (EPFL), which has an intake of 40 percent non-Swiss, has managed to renew its agreements with 150 European universities. Nevertheless, this does not resolve the issue. Swiss universities are forced to re-negotiate their own accords, institution by institution, country by country. To date, the University of Lausanne has lost exchange deals with seven Italian and Spanish universities out of a total of 220 agreements.

While Swiss universities may be able to stem the tide for students applying for Erasmus, it is much harder when it comes to researchers. If the proposed policy on immigration actually goes into effect – the federal government has yet to decide how, or if, it will implement the referendum – then the consequences could prove disastrous for Swiss universities. One positive indication, however, was the massive public rejection of the 30 November Ecopop initiative, which was seeking even tighter restrictions on foreign migrants. This suggests that the Swiss may seek to overturn the February vote either with a new rectifying referendum or by coming to a legal compromise that does not undermine the bilateral accords with the EU that Brussels considers not up for change.

Arlette Zakarian



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Robots, kids and complexes

Sunday was a big day for my family: for on Sunday, a perfect little miracle was delivered to us.

And no, that does not refer to another baby, for those of you who haven't read my previous 39 columns and who have no idea how much I could not cope with more children.

No. The perfect little miracle is a Roomba, and it was delivered to us by our wonderful and generous friends, who are leaving the country.

Like I said, a big day. Our first robot. Well. Second robot, if you count Furbies as robots, which I don't because they're useless. Wikipedia says that the word 'robot' comes from the Old Bulgarian for 'work', and believe me, those Furbies do nothing around here.

Anyway. After years of staring into the neighbour's garden in wonder and envy, spying on their Robomow ... our very own Age of the Robot has begun.

Familial reactions have been mixed. The cat hates the thing. My husband loves it. When it went too close to our death-trap staircase, he raced to the bottom and stood ready to catch it, just as he used to do with the smaller child when we first moved in here.

The children love it too, following it around like the puppy-starved little girls that they are. But it was not always thus. When we first turned it on, the smaller child immediately forgot all the hard work she's been doing this term on measurement and capacity, and shrieked, 'Turn it off! It'll suck up the couch!'

And I ... well, I'm expecting trouble. I watched it move around the kitchen

yesterday, without crashing into anything or spilling the cat's drinking water - thus quite outperforming everyone else in the family - and I thought: a robot that intelligent is going to aspire to something more than this, one day.

Way back when I was a child, we were somewhat unsophisticated as far as technology went. My granny mowed her front lawn with a flock of sheep, and when we wanted to make a phone call, we lifted the enormous handset off the wall-mounted cradle and asked the operator to put the call through. Never for one second did I imagine that I would own a robot one day, and I would never have wanted to. In those days, robots weren't adorable little things that buzzed around your feet, sucking up dust, cat hair and pieces of furniture. Robots were the bad guys: Gort, Cylons, Maximillian from *The Black Hole*, soulful Roy from *Blade Runner*, HAL, Ash, the Terminator ... they were huge, gimlet-eyed, mostly bullet-proof, and not taking any of humanity's crap.

The list of good robots is much shorter - as are most of the robots themselves: R2D2, C3PO, WALL-E and that creepy little thing, whatever its name is, from the Buck Rogers TV series.

No. Movies and books have taught me well. That many people can't be that paranoid for no reason. My little Roomba might be adorable now, buzzing around the lounge and trying to please me, but it won't last forever.

One day I'll say, 'Roomba, please clean up the Guinea Pig poo.'

And my Roomba will rise up and

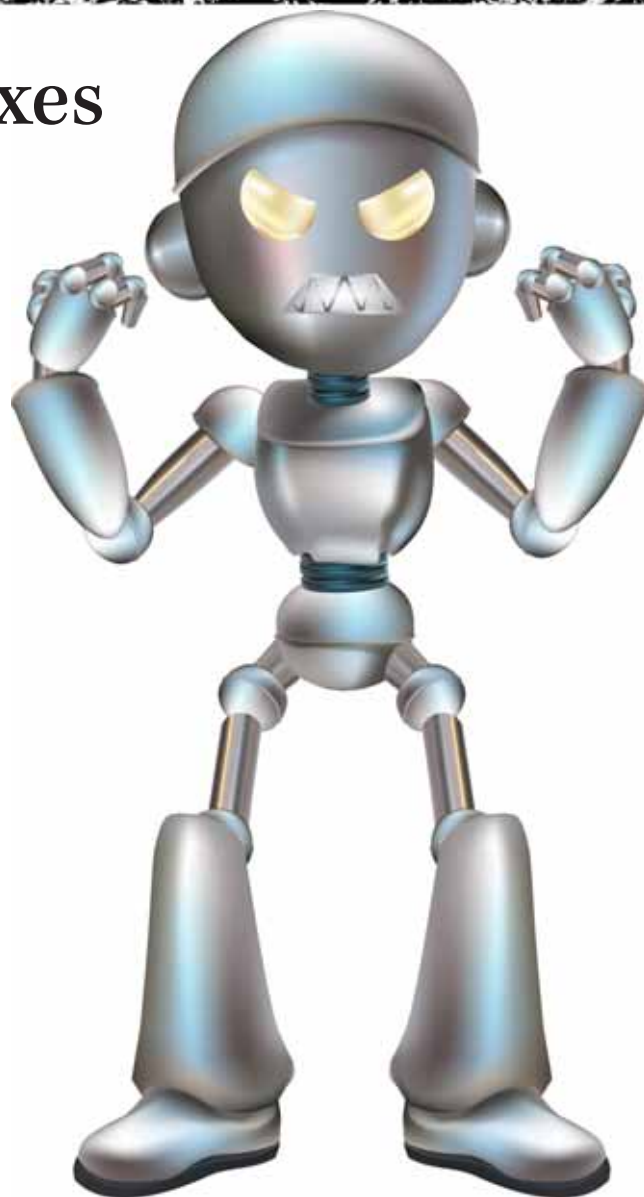
look me in the eye - metaphorically, obviously - and say, 'I'm sorry, Robyn. I'm afraid I can't do that.'

Then it'll burst into tears and run into its room, and it won't lift a finger to help me for the next ten years.

And, just like that, our golden time,

our Age of the Robot will be over. And the Adolescence of the Robot will have begun.

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



Christmas in the Snow

Rising fast in Payot's best-seller list is *Christmas in the Snow*, the latest novel by Karen Swan who is best known for *Christmas at Tiffany's* and *Christmas at Claridge's*. Published by Pan Macmillan, Swan has come up with another spellbinding story. Set in glamorous locations such as Zermatt and taking the reader through a series of heart-breaking twists, *Christmas in the Snow* is all you need in your stocking for a truly decadent Christmas holiday. And for that extra frisson, read it in Zermatt.

Top 10 best selling books of the week

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Rank	Title	Author	Published by	Genre
1	I Am Malala	Yousafzai, Malala	Orion	Non-fiction Paperback
2	How to Be Parisian: Wherever You Are	Berest, Anne; Diwan, Audrey	Ebury Press	Non-fiction Hard cover
3	Gone Girl. Film Tie-In	Flynn, Gillian	Crown	Fiction Paperback
4	The Edge of Eternity [The Century Trilogy: Book 3]	Follett, Ken	MacMillan	Fiction Hard cover
5	The Burning Room	Connelly, Michael	Orion	Fiction Hard cover
6	Christmas in the Snow	Swan, Karen	Pan	Fiction Paperback
7	World Order	Kissinger, Henry	Penguin	Non-fiction Hard cover
8	The Architect's Apprentice	Shafak, Elif	Viking	Fiction Hard cover
9	The Blazing World	Hustvedt, Siri	Hodder	Fiction Paperback
10	Hugh Johnson's Pocket Wine 2015	Johnson, Hugh	Mitchell Beazley	Non-fiction Hard cover

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Lifestyle

Christmas gifts for one and all

Your parents have more than enough, your partner has everything. Even your kids have too much. What to do?

Santa Claus is coming to town, but what should you put on your wish list? And, more importantly, what should you get for her, for him and of course for the little ones, who are impatient to see what they will find in their oversized stockings fixed precariously above the fireplace?

More often than not, it's not an easy task as mostly we don't need anything. The wonderful targets of male love and attention adore make-up, shoes, clothes and perfume – no surprises there. At this time of year, most make-up brands create special festive Christmas packs with winter shades and colours at reasonable prices (CHF 40 – 150). Similarly, perfume and body cream packages are almost always beautifully gift-wrapped. But it is all too easy to get it (very) wrong or to end up giving the same as usual. So we suggest, guys, that you stick to more interesting, but nevertheless safer, options. If you think she is more of the house cocooning type, then head to Manor and choose a set of soft fabric PJs by YES OR NO (CHF 40). Jewellery is generally a winner to be put at the top of your list. Think earrings, bracelets, necklaces and rings – with matching pieces if your budget (and sense of aesthetics) allow.

If you're buying for the man in your life, things could not be easier – except that jewellery is often not held in particular esteem by many men. Their idea of personal adornment is frequently limited to a watch, cufflinks and possibly a wedding ring. This leaves you with the frankly boring key fob or, less often these days, a tobacco-related accessory such as a cigarette case or luxury lighter. Thankfully there are a host of more popular items you can choose. Leather gloves and a cashmere scarf or a stylish hat are always warm and appreciated gifts. He always has room for T-shirts, sweaters and sportswear, and if you are looking for something a little special, then an old-fashioned shaving kit is great. Avoid buying him an electric razor unless you are 100% certain he wants one. And there's an element of self-interest at play here as well. Electric razors are not ideal if you want your man to keep his boyish skin and good looks. Playing it more or less



Meccano: OK so maybe it's a toy for the boys - but that's any boy from 4 to 80

safe, you could go for headphones (wireless is definitely the technologically cool statement), with the added advantage that they may save you from having to endure his music choice or the soundtrack of movies such as Predator Chainsaw Bloodlust Killer 4 or Alien Terminator Psycho-revenge 6. For other electronic gifts think tablet, Kindle or digital camera with detachable lenses. One of the advantages of gift shopping in Switzerland is that you can generally ask for an exchange voucher (bon d'échange) so that if you've got it wrong(ish), he can change it easily and at no cost.

Last, but not least, what about the children? According to child psychologists, children remember emotions rather than material things. Bake biscuits or cookies with them in the kitchen and involve them in the whole Christmas process. Decorate the house with them, take them to choose the tree, and let them advise on where and how to place the ornaments. Make hot chocolate with marshmallows and snuggle up with them to watch their favourite animated movie. After all, they will not stay small for ever. And don't worry about buying masses of presents for them. One or maybe two small gifts and one "special" present, when added to their stocking fillers, gifts from friends and relatives plus their intake of copious amounts of sweets and goodies, will more than satisfy them. In fact, moderation is surprisingly (and counterintuitively) successful when it comes to delivering sheer pleasure.

To maximize children's general

sense of warm and positive emotion, it's a good idea to focus on their interests – obviously – but not necessarily to succumb to short-term fads and fash-

ions. Educational games such as puzzles and memory card games are a lot of fun – for all the family. Kids relish the challenge and the interaction with others, and they learn far more broadly than when playing electronic games. Dolls, Playmobil figures and creative games such as Play-Doh, Lego and Meccano make great gifts that will keep them amused hour after hour, month after month. And then there are the mobility presents – scooters, bicycles and games such as ball games – that can keep children beneficially busy and engaged for years. Whatever you do, though, keep your presents appropriate for their age.

Above all, don't feel coerced into spending more than you want to or need to. Remember, it is always more pleasurable to give than to receive so just give the kids what they value most – a lot of TLC, or tender loving care.

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Lifestyle

Switzerland's Anne Frank legacy

Several weeks ago, I travelled to Basel with my wife and 14-year-old son to see an old family friend, Buddy Elias, now 88 and the last living relative of Anne Frank. The first cousin of Anne, Buddy had immigrated to Switzerland in 1931 with his family from Frankfurt, two years prior to the Nazi takeover. Anne's side of the family, however, fled to Amsterdam in 1933, when her father, Otto Frank – the only one to survive the concentration camps – decided that the Netherlands was a safe bet. Until the outbreak of World War II, the Frank family regularly visited the Eliases over the holidays, so Buddy got to know Anne well until the Nazi invasion.

A renowned Swiss actor, Buddy today serves as president of the Basel-based Anne Frank Fonds, which he took over following Otto Frank's death in 1980. Together with his wife, Gerti, Buddy still travels tirelessly around the world for the foundation, speaking at schools or taking part in peace gatherings and memorials.

Buddy still exhibits the same vig-

our and sense of humour that I had always remembered when he talks about the foundation – and my mother, then Inge Manger. As Swiss figure skating champion before the war, she was supposed to have represented Switzerland at the 1940 Olympics but, of course, these never took place.

The last time I had seen Buddy I had asked why he, as a Jew, had decided to go back to Germany. He smiled. "Because, whether I like it or not, my culture is German. There is a new generation of young people. They are the future."

This was one of the reasons I wanted to see Buddy again. I wanted my son to meet him. I wanted him to understand the importance of the Anne Frank story, and why, in 2014 – with all that is happening in Syria and elsewhere, with children indiscriminately killed – it is even more important today for young people.

The fact is Anne Frank belongs to no one. Neither the Jews, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists nor Hindus. Nor

the Swiss, Israelis, Dutch or anyone else. She is borderless and no different from any other aspiring young people with hopes and dreams, such as Pakistan's Malala Yousafzai, the teenage girl who was shot by the Taliban, but survived and now talks all over the world about the importance of education and tolerance. Anne Frank's diary is today being narrated in countless different forms, even by those who have never heard of her. This is the incredible power of storytelling and why, I keep telling my son, everyone has something to say that can help make a positive difference in the world. In Japan, according to Buddy, people almost worship Anne Frank, with churches and schools named after her.

For Buddy "Anne Frank has become a world symbol for combating all forms of racism and intolerance. This is what Anne wrote about in her diary."

So while I had always remembered Anne Frank's diary as the steadfast scribbles of a typical teenage girl with her teenage aspirations during that

grim Nazi period, I now regard it as a contemporary story. It is just as relevant to my son and other young people, wherever they live and whatever lives they are enjoying – or enduring – whether here in Geneva, a Turkish refugee camp or a shell-damaged apartment block in the Gaza strip.

And this is precisely what the Anne Frank Fonds is doing. Refusing to take outside donations, it uses all the royalties and other income from the Anne Frank legacy to support charitable and educational projects all over the world, such as *Lebensträume*, a Swiss NGO that helps unemployed youth and *Sadaka-Reut*, an Arab-Jewish organisation in Jaffa that helps Jewish and Palestinian young people pursue social and political change through binational partnership. And, finally, one more thought. With Switzerland's – and much of Europe's immigration debate – Buddy and Gerti were also immigrants. Just like so many other influential and compassionate Swiss today.

Edward Girardet

Ukrainian writer wins Swiss literary award

The Swiss Jan Michalski Foundation has awarded the 2014 Jan Michalski Literary Prize to Serhiy Zhadan, a young Ukrainian writer, for *The Road to Donbass*, an epic post-Soviet novel. The award consists of CHF 50,000 and a work of art, created for this occasion by the photographer Maurice Schobinger.

A first novel, *Vorochylovhrad* is an offbeat epic of post-Soviet rootlessness. Born in 1974 in Starobilsk, a Russian city in the mining regions of eastern Ukraine, Zhadan is an emblematic figure of Maidan Square, the epi-

centre of the people's revolution. Together with friends, he dismantled Lenin's statue in Kharkov, prompting furious pro-Russian militants to beat him savagely earlier this year. Zhadan, who has published numerous texts and poems, also organizes rock festivals and debates, and created a sensation with his novel when it came out in 2010.

Now in its fifth year, the Jan Michalski Literary Award has already established itself as one of the world's leading literature prizes. The Foundation attributes the award annu-



Maison de l'Ecriture. Leo Fabrizio

ally to honour a work of global literature, fiction or non-fiction, and irrespective of language. Multicultural in nature, the award is open to authors worldwide and is intended to contrib-

ute to their international recognition.

The authors of short-listed works are invited for a three-month period of residence in the *Maison de l'Ecriture*, a modern glass, stone and wooden structure at the foot of the Jura mountains in the village of Montricher near Lausanne. According to Vera Hoffman, head of the Foundation, the jury is made up of known writers who are multilingual but specifically selected for their knowledge of different literary genres and cultural openness.

Edward Girardet

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Lifestyle

Fine festive wines!



The seasonal festivities are the perfect way to ring out the old year and ring in the new with family and friends. For many they also represent an opportunity to hit the pause button and take a well-deserved time-out. Good food and wine assume greater importance at this traditional time of year and add a special flavour in every sense to the occasion.

When it comes to choosing wines for the festive season the best advice is to look for classic cuvées from the classic regions of Europe. They not only make an excellent match for the seasonal fare, but also provide a taste sensation that lingers on the palate and reward the extra time you have to spare. Here is a selection of ten great wines that are not to be rushed and will add a genuine lift to your celebrations.

Sparkling

Pol Roger – Brut Réserve Non-Vintage (France)

Nothing beats Champagne to get the party started. Made from equal parts of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier this fine wine from one of the great Champagne houses is rich and fruity, biscuity and nutty. Perfect as an aperitif or served with smoked salmon and seafood starters.

Raventós i Blanc – L'Hereu 2012 (Spain)

The Spanish style of sparkling wines brings a decidedly Mediterranean touch by using local varieties such as Macabeu, Xarel-lo and Parellada. This Penedes producer recently left the Cava appellation so he could make wines with greater richness and more character. The proof of this particular

pudding is in the drinking. Serve as an aperitif or with simple, delicate seafood dishes.

White

Van Volxem – Saar Riesling 2012 (Germany)

Whatever prejudices you may have about the Riesling grape this distinctive expression of the variety will stop you in your tracks. A truly dry wine, it offers an intense combination of citrus, floral and mineral notes with an invigorating finish. Enjoy on its own or with salmon tartare and prawn cocktail.

Benoît Dorsaz – Petite Arvine de Fully Quintessence 2012 (Switzerland)

Of the several grape varieties that distinguish the Valais region, Petite Arvine rightly gains much of the attention. This elegant, intense and complex dry wine might make you wonder why this grape is only really grown in this canton. The pronounced citrus aromas with hints of honey, the distinctive mineral saltiness and the oaky finish pair beautifully with rich saltwater fish like sole and sea bass as well as escalope de foie gras and vacherin fribourgeois.

Dog Point – Chardonnay 2012 (New Zealand)

For lovers of full-bodied Chardonnay it does not get much better than this in terms of value-for-money. The wine's ripe citrus flavours combine with roasted nuts and toasty oak leading to a tantalizingly long finish. A great match for salmon, chicken and veal dishes served with creamy, garlic or lemon flavoured sauces, not to mention roast turkey with all the trimmings.

Red

Fontodi – Chianti Classico 2010 (Italy)

In this impressive wine richness and elegance come together. From the heart of Tuscany it blends mouthwatering autumn fruit flavours with complex notes of leather and tobacco and a wonderfully sensual finish. Fabulous with chicken liver terrine, steak tartare, roast beef and magret de canard.

Peter Wegelin – Malanser Blauburgunder 2012 (Switzerland)

The Blauburgunder variety (otherwise known as Pinot Noir) thrives in the Grisons near the border with Lichtenstein. This wine is not only a faithful rendition of this elegant variety, but also remarkably good value. It delivers intense red cherry aromas and

spicy, slightly oaky notes on the palate. Enjoy with viande séchée, roast chicken and turkey, filet of pork with sage and mushroom dishes.

Bodega Noemía – A Lisa 2012 (Argentina)

This predominantly Malbec blend comes from the cooler climate of Patagonia in the south of the country. The result is a zesty and vibrant wine. Black cherries and wild strawberries on the nose and powerful meaty, spicy flavours on the palate lead to a lengthy, juicy finish. Serve with entrecôte steak, braised shoulder of lamb, roast pork and meatloaf.

Dessert / Fortified

Maurice Zufferey – Malvoisie Grain Noble 2011 (Switzerland)

Switzerland harbours many secrets and none more so than the delicious dessert wines produced in the Valais. Here the Pinot Gris variety masquerades as Malvoisie. The grapes are left to

dry on the vine to produce a rich and classy sweet wine. Super-ripe raisins, pears quince and caramel characterise the aromas and flavours. Served chilled this makes a magical match with terrine of foie gras, blue cheese, fruit crumble and chocolate desserts.

Quinta do Noval – 10 Year Old Tawny Port (Portugal)

Aged Tawny Port is the style most enjoyed by the producers themselves. Matured in oak for an average of 10 years this Port is light and fresh with a spicy, floral nose, sweet dried fruits on the palate and a nutty finish of toffee and orange zest. Best served slightly chilled with Stilton and nutty cheese, desserts such as apple pie, tarte tatin and baked figs and even chocolate (40% to 50% cocoa solids).

Simon Hardy holds the WSET Diploma in Wines & Spirits. He is the founder of Fitting Wines, which provides a range of personalised wine services in Switzerland. www.fittingwines.com

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Lifestyle

Half your beauty products are worthless

The problem with jars and why the beauty industry insists on using them.

Take a look in your bathroom cabinet. How many of your beauty products come in a jar? And how many in a pump bottle or tube? I am guessing that at least half of your creams are packaged in a jar. And that is bad news, because it means that about half of the products you are using are worthless. Many skincare products nowadays contain a powerful blend of active ingredients that can really help maintain and improve the condition of your skin – ingredients like retinol, hyaluronic acid, glycolic acid, vitamin C, vitamin E and more. The problem is that all these active components are very unstable. Exposure to air and light causes them to break down, lowering their effectiveness and eventually destroying them altogether. And the worst part? The breakdown process starts the moment you first open the jar. Paula Begoun, founder of Paula's Choice skincare and



cosmetics, says: The ingredients most beneficial for your skin are not stable, which means they won't be effective if exposed to light and air, which is exactly what happens when you take the lid off a jar. No matter how great the formula, it all begins to break down when you first open it!" So even the slightest exposure to air and light will cause the active ingredients in your brand new skin cream to start losing their power and will eventually leave

you with not much more than some emulsifying agents, thickeners and emollients.

So why does the beauty industry insist on using jar packaging? Countless research has been done on the subject, and there are numerous publications proving that air and light destabilize the active ingredients in skincare products. And yet some of the biggest cosmetics brands still refuse to move away from jars. How can they justify this, knowing that their choice of packaging will render the products useless? When asked for an explanation, most cosmetics companies skirt around the subject. Some might say jars are aesthetically more pleasing and that they are simply giving customers what they want. Others might try to justify the use of jar packaging by saying that they add special components to the formula to prevent the active ingredients from breaking down.

The fact remains that any exposure to light and air will inevitably break down the active ingredients in skin

care. The solution? Using air-tight and lightproof containers such as opaque pump bottles and squeeze tubes. Not only will they keep the active substances in your face cream stable for much longer but they are also a lot more practical and sanitary to use. So next time you go beauty shopping, please steer clear of products in jars and instead opt for those in a tube or a pump bottle. If you are going to spend tens and maybe even hundreds of francs on skin care, the least you can do is make sure you are getting your money's worth by choosing a product that will actually work. A pump bottle or tube may not look as pretty on your dressing table as a luxurious little jar, but it is certainly the best choice for your skin.

Melissa Van Roosbroeck is a style and fashion writer, and owner of Kiss & Make-up. Read more on her blog: Kiss & Make-up

Christmas at Carrefour

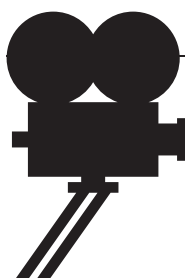
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Lifestyle



FILM REVIEWS

By Neptune

Nightcrawler**(Night Call)** ★ ★ ★ ★

Jake Gyllenhaal deserves an Oscar nomination for his powerful performance here as a determined psychopath whose main drive is ambition and achievement. He portrays a serious young man who wants to find a job, learn a trade, more than eager and willing to do anything to get ahead. He stumbles onto the job of crime reporter for a Los Angeles TV station. As he grows in his field, his appetite increases for more success, more control.

Scriptwriter and first-time director Dan Gilroy has created here a heart-pounding thriller and a psychological study of a man who loses all notion of right and wrong in his quest for fame



in the murky field of crime journalism. It is both sick and quite brilliant.

(Photo – Ascot Elite)

Dark Star ★ ★ ★

(vo German)

HR Giger became world famous through his work on the monsters he created for Ridley Scott's original *Alien* film, and for the Oscar he won for them. But he was a huge talent before and after, living and creating in Zurich, with a multitude of fans, his intimate friends and his many

women, who remained true to him till his death this past spring.

His private life and his fascinating art – full of darkness and sexuality – are the focus of this excellent documentary by Belinda Sallin. She takes us into Giger's strange world, immersing us in an existence of incredible talent, labour and excess. This is unmissable for true art aficionados.

(Photo – Frenetic)



Le rating ★ = Lukewarm ★★ = Average ★★★ = Very watchable ★★★★★ = Excellent



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Travel

Switzerland's winter sports options

LAUSANNE You can thank eccentric Englishmen, such as Sir Arthur Conan-Doyle, for putting feet to wood and launching modern day skiing in what were then the small Swiss villages of St Moritz and Wengen.

When Swiss Tourism recently unveiled its winter 2014/15 season as part of an imaginative campaign based on 150 years of tradition, it not only announced plans for fine-tuning its activities over the next few years, but reminded journalists that the industry needs to adapt to changing lifestyles, demographics, competition as well as climate change. After all, winter tourism brought in CHF 14 billion last season.

Switzerland is attracting rising numbers of winter visitors from North America and Europe. Increasingly, too, new clients are coming from China, India, Russia, and the Middle East. And it is doing so by ensuring that its winter activities are becoming more varied, eco-friendly and specifically tailored to the needs of different tourists from wealthy oligarchs to budget-minded families.

Stations such as Leukerbad, Gstaad-Chateau d'Oex and Riederalp are making deliberate efforts to attract families with kids. They do this by offering value incentives, such as free lifts for children under the age of 10 or 11, or special six for five night deals. Increasingly, too, free WiFi is being made available throughout the resorts and even on the slopes, a curse perhaps for parents wanting their teenagers to forget online games, but great for business people.

Furthermore, with older visitors, particularly retirees, beginning to find downhill skiing risky, there has been a push to incorporate less stressful outdoor recreation, such as langlauf, snow-shoeing and winter hiking. Many resorts are also cashing in on "access to nature" activities, such as scenic or wildlife walks.

Here are some family resorts that offer downhill skiing or snowboarding, but also activities aimed more at nature and the outdoors for weekend



Racing along behind a team of huskies is a real thrill offered by several resorts in the region

or holiday escapes.

Sörenberg UNESCO Entlebuch Biosphere (LU): This stunningly beautiful resort (1,165 m) is located in the Lucerne Hinterland at the foot of the Alps and is part of the protected 400 sq km national Entlebuch biosphere reserve. While life goes on in the form of traditional farming, industry and tourism (the locals voted to declare their valleys a biosphere), its forests and moorlands are laced by 35 km network of cross-country trails that are ideal for langlauf, hiking and snow-shoeing. This includes an easy 8 km "village trail" (Dorfloipe) for novices at the foot of the Brienz Rothorn (1,200m), but also a 24 km panoramic run for classic skiers and skaters, which must rank as one of the most beautiful in Switzerland. Excellent wildlife spotting (deer, chamois, foxes, rabbits...) plus winter birds.

The Jungfrau Region (BE): For those who simply wish to enjoy the outdoors, there are excellent trails through the forests and villages or along mountain sides with occasional crossing points to let skiers pass. This is part of the stunning Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn region, a UNESCO Natural World Heritage site. And, not unlike the Entlebuch biosphere, you may well spot deer or chamois crashing through the snow, or nibbling exposed grass on a sunny ridge.

All the main resorts, such as Grindelwald, Wengen. Mürren and Lauterbrunnen, have great winter hiking, even leading to the valleys below. (You can walk down and take the mountain trains or funiculars back up). There are also organized one and two-day snow-shoe treks (easy technique, a bit like walking), including overnights in a high Alpine hut with fondues. For a bit of speed, try the Männlichen toboggan run. Fascinating, too, is a climate guide available with accompanying audio files from the Tourist Office. With seven trails to follow, this explains what happens when climate change affects the mountains such as parts of the Eiger, which have collapsed from melting permafrost.

Aletsch Arena (VS): Directly on the other side of the Jungfrau but more easily accessible from the Rhone valley lies the Aletsch Arena where Europe's largest and most powerful glacier is located. Sadly, this 23 km long river of ice (27 billion tons of it) is fast receding. As a boy, this writer used to come here every summer, watching fascinated as the hotel porter made home-made ice cream from thousands-year-old ice cut directly from the glacier and brought up by mule.

The ancient Aletsch forest, which straddles the glacier, can be reached from Riederalp or Bettmeralp, both cosy family resorts. They offer beautiful

walking and snow-shoe trails with exceptional views of the 4,000 m peaks of the Valais Alps, including the Matterhorn and Dom.

Leukerbad (VS): An exceptional backmountain ski resort, this former Roman spa offers modest cross-country skiing (12 km) near the village, but by taking the cable car up to the Gemmi you have a high-altitude (7 and 8 km) trail with crisp snow. There is also a varied mix of winter hiking trails, some 40 km, through a magnificent forest and mountain landscape with wildlife such as chamois and alpine grouse. Just above the village is a 3.4 km Panorama walk with an incredible view of the Alps. Directly behind, you can take the Roman Path to Birchen and Bodmen for a winter stroll, three hours there and back.

Overlooking Leukerbad itself on the northern side, you can do an invigorating winter hike from the 2,270 m Gemmi Pass linking the Valais with Kandersteg in the canton of Berne to the north. This 3-4 hr winter hike leads to the frozen Daubensee, past the Berghotel Schwarzenbach, which is open in winter for hot toddies, and on to Sunnbüel. With high mountains on either side, this is a particularly spectacular walk.

Crans-Montana (VS): Further down the Rhone Valley, this is a more upmarket resort but one which is also seeking to accommodate different tastes and lifestyles. It offers pleasant winter walking for all levels. (You can even trek to Leukerbad, a good six or seven hours, and then return by bus but this can be risky for the inexperienced.) Most of the trails around the resort itself are easy and take you through forests and open snow-covered meadows, or the golf course. There are also several snow-show trails with incredible views of the southern Alps.

Other resorts with good cross-country skiing, winter hiking and snow-shoeing: Villars (VD), Chateau d'Oex (VD) Gstaad (BE), and St Cergue, St Georges and Marchairuz (VD) in the Jura.

Edward Girardet

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LE MISCELLANEOUS

80s disco party for christmas

The 80s Disco Party @ Chateau Bossey on 6th December from 7pm-1am. Only 80s Music played all night - Dress Code «Disco Grooooooovy». 25+ only. Limited tickets available in advance only, & only through discobossey@gmail.com. Come with friends and get into the festive mood. Hot and Cold Finger Buffet from 7pm-8pm. Red Wine, White Wine, Beer, OJ, Coke, Water included with ticket. (Spirits available through a cash bar).

ProMov'Art Great Masters Preview Party

ProMov'Art and Artvera's Gallery-Geneva Old Town, are organizing a special event with a unique presentation of masterpieces from Pissarro, Signac and Sisley. A private concert by The Two, winners of the Swiss Blues Challenge will fulfill this magical night. Fine food-champagne will be served with a special menu prepared by the talented Chef of La Signature. Pieces of art from young and upcoming artists will be given in our special prize draw.
On-line ticket: www.amiando.com/LUARDSK

Free hikes on the Saleve

Geneva, Switzerland : Free hikes on the Saleve. Every Sunday, let's go hiking (a gradient of 800 meters, 3 hours hike-up). Meeting at 10 am at the terminus of bus No 8 at Veyrier-Douane (not at Veyrier-Tournettes, 100 metres from the border direction Switzerland, departure at 10h05). A responsible (excursion leader) of the Association Genevoise des Amis du Saleve (AGAS) welcomes you in all weather.
www.rando-saleve.net.
Tel: +41 22 796 41 33.

LE MISCELLANEOUS

Free books and DVDs

Why pay? Get the latest bestsellers FREE. 6000 books in English and French--1300 DVDs--24h outdoor library with 400 give-away books. FREE membership. WIFI and computers free inside..Children's section with toys, DVDs and comics. Open weekdays 4-6pm, Sat 10am to noon. Opposite The Farm Club. www.amisdeverbier.com Tel +41 27 771 11 01



LE PROPERTY

Office space for rent at Geneva Airport - Cheap!

40 square metre office space to rent at 1 Route de l'Aéroport, Geneva for just 960.- per month (including TVA and charges). Large windows create a light open space. The office has a sink, shared bathroom facilities, a communal space with food and drink vending machines. 1 parking space available upon request. The office is situated just a 5 minute walk from Geneva Airport Arrivals, and is available immediately. Call +33 (0)6 86 86 92 63



Fantastic 4 rooms apartment, Geneva

Fantastic 4 room apartment available as of 31.10.2014 in Petit Saconnex, Rue de Moillebeau. 36. Residential and quiet community.Urgent departure. Rent: CHF 2107 including charges.15 minute walk to United Nations and its agencies, 5 minutes by car. Please refer to LeNews .
Mr and Mrs Emery 022 733 4265 from 06:30 - 19:00.

LE PROPERTY

Large family villa in pretty Swiss villa for Xmas/New Year, 15 mins Geneva, 30 mins Jura skiing

Beautiful fully furnished family home on the edge of pretty Swiss village with famous restaurant. Large double bedroom with balcony and own bathroom. Two single bedrooms sharing second bathroom. Another double bedroom with bathroom in the basement. Spacious lounge/dining room with fireplace, accessing terrace and private garden. Kitchen with all amenities. TV room, Internet WIFI, laundry. Parking on the drive, views of fields, forest, mountains.. Rent CHF 1 500 for 3 weeks, make us an offer. Contact +41 79 673 68 83

Ski Chalet in Portes du Soleil BARGAIN

1 bedroom chalet in Champoussin (Portes du Soleil) for week of 13 - 20 December 2014. Sleeps 4 comfortably. Very close to the lifts. CHF 600 for the week. A description of the property can be found here: www.holidaychampoussin.ch/
Contact leo.e.twiggs@gmail.com.



Exceptional apartment in Combloux - France - 1hr from Geneva, 5km from Megève & 2km from slopes

The apartment is 110 m2 with 3.9m ceilings, and a 87m2 terrace with a breathtaking panoramic view of the Alps. It sleeps 10: has a large master bedroom, a room with 3 beds, a nest with a wide bed, bathroom, guest toilet, a kitchen and a large living-room/dining-room with floor-to-ceiling windows accessing the terrace and magnificent view. The building (with private parking) has a park, rose garden, tennis court. It is next to a biotope swimming pool, spa and activities park.
EUR 415'000.Tel: +41 79 203 95 87.



Regional Events

le News

WWW.LENEWS.CH/
REGIONALEVENTS

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Nyon. Bouke de Vries Fragments exhibition

28 November to 12 April 2015,
Tuesday - Sunday 14h00 - 17h00

London-based Dutch artist Bouke de Vries is exhibiting for the first time in Suisse romande. A ceramic restorer by training, de Vries breathes new life into discarded fragments of pottery. He makes spectacular installations from materials including stoneware, glass and pieces of ancient porcelain.

Musée historique et des porcelaines
Château de Nyon
Nyon
www.chateaudenyon.ch
CHF 8/ CHF 6, under 16s free



Geneva. Viva Vintage. Charity fashion shopping event

18 December, 17h00 - 21h00

ASK - All Special Kids is holding a charitable shopping event featuring vintage, like-new luxury footwear and handbags at Rush Pop-Up Store in the Old Town. Proceeds will support children with special educational needs and learning differences in Switzerland. If you have shoes or bags to donate (by the 17th), see the website for drop-off locations.
Nest Gallery
Rue Etienne-Dumont 14
Geneva
www.allspecialkids.org/wp/vivavintage



Geneva. Coupe de Noël. Swim in the lake

14 December, 09h00 - 14h30, with
Santa Claus at 10h00

More than a thousand brave -- some would say foolhardy -- swimmers jump into the freezing lake and swim 120 metres. Some participants wear funny costumes, ranging from polar bear masks to "devil gear" in previous years, plus of course various interpretations of Father Christmas. A bracing experience!

Jardin Anglais
Geneva
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:2012_Coupe_de_Noel_-_Geneva_03.JPG



Solothurn. Art supermarket

Until 4 January 2015
Monday to Friday 14h00 - 20h00,
Weekends: 11h00 - 17h00
24th, 26th, 31st Dec and 2nd Jan
2015, 11h00 - 16h00
Closed Christmas and New Year's Day

The Kunstsupermarkt is a treasure trove for those who want real art on their walls. Visitors can choose from 6,000 unique paintings, drawings and sculptures by 80 artists chosen by a jury. There are four prices: CHF 99, 199, 399 and 599.

Rothus Halle
Schöngrünstrasse 2
Solothurn/Soleure
www.kunstsupermarkt.ch



Prangins. Swiss Press Photo 14

Until 1 March 2015, Tuesday -
Sunday 10h00 - 17h00

The exhibition comprising some 90 images brings together the best Swiss press photographs of 2013. These images breathe life into the beautiful, the unbearable, and the inexpressible. Mark Henley was voted photographer of the year -- see his photo "Waiting for the Iran Deal", Geneva, SwissInfo, © Mark Henley, Swiss Press Photo

Château de Prangins
Avenue Général Guiguer
Prangins
www.nationalmuseum.ch/e
CHF 10, under 16s free



Geneva. Do You Speak Djembe? Show

9 December, 20h30

An unmissable chance to play your own djembe drum, accompanying 12 musicians and singers on stage, in an exhilarating, high-energy evening with master of ceremonies Doug Manuel. Great fun for everyone, especially groups of friends and families; suitable for children over 10. **Le News has 10 pairs of tickets for readers.** Email: competition@lenews.ch.

Théâtre du Léman
Quai du Mont-Blanc 19
Geneva
Tickets from CHF 39 to CHF 69, from www.fnac.ch or www.starticket.ch



Lausanne. The Hobbit. Show

18 to 20 December, 20h00
21 December, 17h00

The Village Players present The Hobbit, Tolkien's epic tale brought to life. Adapted and directed by Victoria Baumgartner and Daniel Gardini. While remaining as truthful as possible to the original story, this version has been modernized for today's audience. An exciting show for all the family. Not to be missed! CPO
Centre Pluriculturel d'Ouchy
Beau-Rivage 2
Lausanne
CHF 25 or CHF 20 (under 16s)
www.villageplayers.ch or
079 219 02 29.



Romanmôtier. Bach concert

14 December, 16h00

The Chapelle Vocale de Romainmôtier choir, with the Orchestre Musica Poetica from Annecy, performs Bach's Mass in B minor in the atmospheric setting of this Clunesian abbey built at the beginning of the 11th century.

Abbatiale (Abbey)
Romanmôtier
www.concerts-romainmotier.ch
Tickets CHF 15 to CHF 40 from www.monbillet.ch
or two hours before concert at the Portière



Geneva. The Great Noise Chorus concert

19 to 20 December, 21h30

The AMR focuses on Afro-American jazz, avant-garde jazz and improvised music. In this concert, alternatively titled The Joy of Chaos, Johann Bourquenez is given a free rein and brings together 20 people, many of whom have never sung before, to create "textures, harmonies and other walls of sound using only the voice". With occasional instrumental accompaniment.
AMR/Sud des Alpes
Rue des Alpes 10
Geneva
www.amr-geneve.ch/programme
CHF 20



Lausanne. Christmas Midnight Run

13 December, 18h00 - 01h00

A great way to work off your Christmas overindulgence in advance. A fun run -- or walk -- around the city in various categories, including the 2.4 km Pères-Noëls race, in which participants run in disguise. Other distances are 4.8 km and 7.2 km, with 1.5 km for the under 10s and 12s. Sign up in advance or on the day up to an hour before your race starts.

Start and finish: Place de la Riponne
Lausanne
www.midnightrun.ch
CHF 23/25; concessions CHF 12



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Puzzles

SUDOKU

Easy

Medium

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

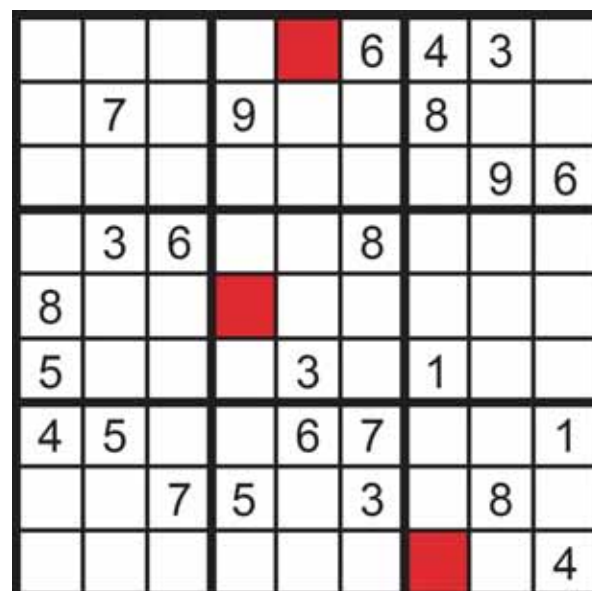
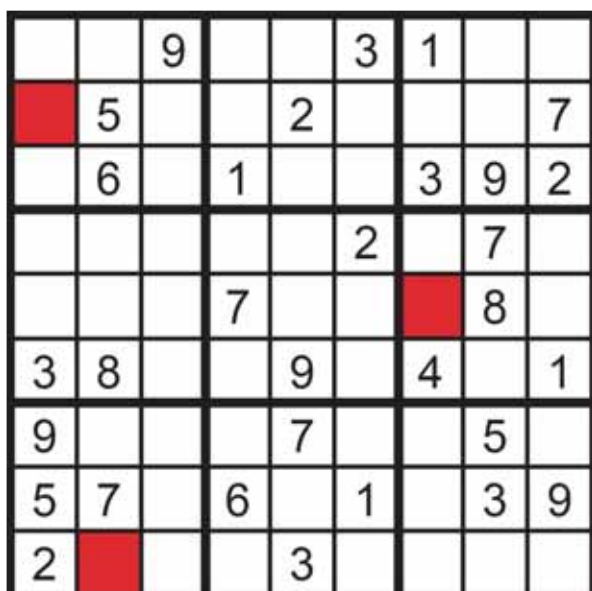
Win!

Sudoku: Send us the three numbers in the shaded squares for a chance to win CHF 10.– The first correct answer drawn every month will win.

Email: prizes@lenews.ch

Codeword: Send us the three letters in the shaded squares for a chance to win CHF 10.– The first correct answer drawn every month will win.

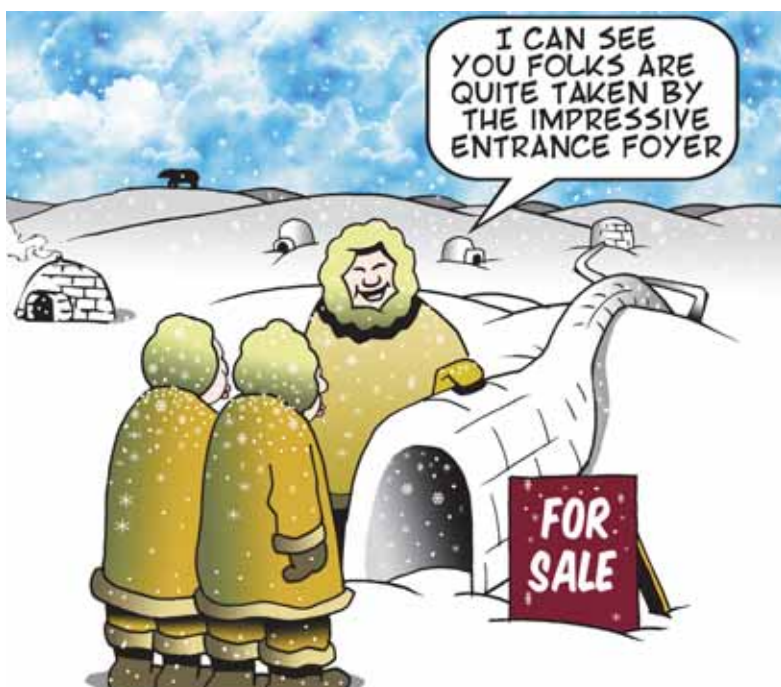
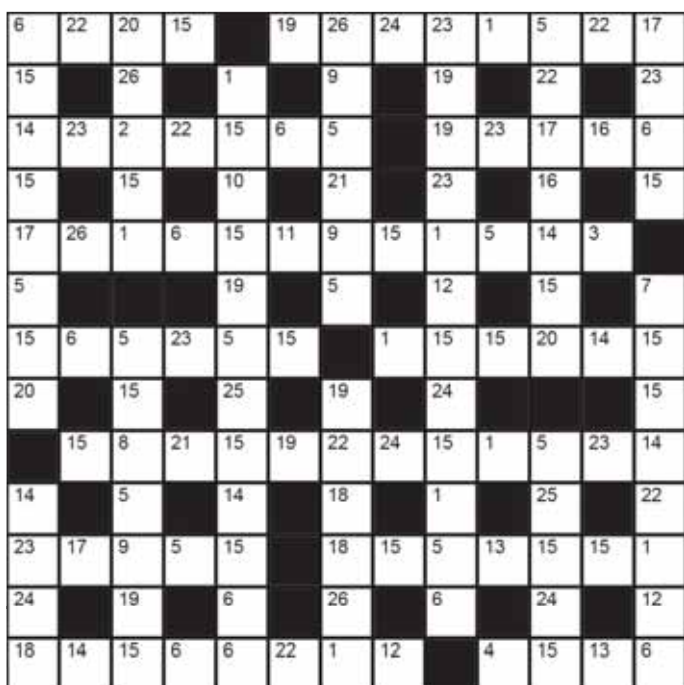
Email: prizes@lenews.ch



CODEWORDS

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

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



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