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Pepe Lienhard



It was a long time ago, in spring 1977, that the Pepe Lienhard Band entered the Eurovision Song Contest with a pop ode to the alphorn and finished in sixth place. The position represented a triumph that Switzerland could only dream of in today's Eurovision Song Contest. The song title was "Swiss Lady". It was an homage to his homeland, clichéd but insouciant and fresh-sounding – a catchy tune that has survived the years remarkably well. The song still has something. Perhaps it is the refrain? In any event "Swiss Lady" became a Swiss pop classic and still remains the nation's only entry in the competition to have topped the charts.

Forty years on and the musician and arranger from Lenzburg is primarily known as a big band leader. He has been filling concert halls for years and appears at galas and events. He has also accompanied Sammy Davis Junior and Frank Sinatra with his orchestra. In particular, Pepe Lienhard has been in the spotlight over the past three decades as the musical companion of Udo Jürgens. His orchestra played with the German entertainer until his unexpected death two years ago.

Pepe Lienhard has recently also featured more frequently in the media's celebrity columns. He celebrated his 70th birthday this year and explained in various media how he enjoys working in his garden but prefers to leave the weeding to his wife Christine. His concerts today are more swing than pop, but "Swiss Lady" remains unmatched.

MARKO LEHTINEN

11.11 billion for development aid

The funds available for Swiss development aid for the next four years amount to 11.11 billion francs. In its autumn session the Swiss Parliament approved this framework credit for international cooperation. The development aid is to be linked strategically with immigration policy. The National Council agreed with this proposal, which was presented by the Council of States.

Extremism prevention office starts work

Urs Allemann has started his work as the head of the new "Extremism and Violence Prevention" department in Winterthur. The city government decided in May to create this office when numerous cases of radicalised young people came to light. The aim of the department is to reinforce the network of integration promotion, youth employment, schools and city police. A specific aim is to recognise early on when a person is becoming radicalised.

Europe's highest wind park

On the Nufenen Pass in Valais four wind turbines were recently erected at 2,500 metres, making them the highest in Europe. The turbines produce 10 gigawatt hours per year, enough to supply 2,850 households. The cost of the wind park was approximately 20 million francs. Photo: Keystone



Binningen wants to keep the night dark

The commune of Binningen in Baselland has launched an initiative to combat light pollution. In future, street lights and other lights must shine downwards and advertising lighting must be switched off late at night. Spotlights shining into the sky will be banned. The redrafted SP initiative for the "prevention of unnecessary light emissions" was originally submitted in 2012, but an objection to the initiative delayed its processing. It has now been approved at the ballot box with a vote of 2,434 in favour and 2,019 against.