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Team Farewell



Anita Zuber

I have very much enjoyed my time during the four years that the Hamilton Club had to carry out the duties for the Swiss Society. Saying that, I'm very grateful to the Auckland Club for changing it from five years to four as I think it is just the right length of time. To start with I was very nervous about carrying out all these new tasks: updating the database, sending out the on-line Helvetias, liaising with the printers and mailing-house etc and we certainly had our share of hiccups along the way. I think the most enjoyable part was catching up with the rest of our team either via email or at meetings. We always had great discussions and not always agreeing but still great outcomes in the end. I think we have been very fortunate to have a great and dedicated team. Our editor Heidi took her role very seriously and was motivated right until the end. I also enjoyed working with our treasurer Sandrine who was always very quick and precise with her responses and tasks. I think it has been a great learning curve and I have had to carry out technology type tasks that I wouldn't otherwise have done but I'm sure I will continue along these lines in future. All the best to Taranaki for the next four years and we are always here for advice if needed.

Covid 19: We are now towards the end of our level four covid-19 lockdown and my thoughts at the moment are whether level 3 will be any different for us and definitely looking forward to level 2. So far, we have coped well in our bubble which includes my parents Joe and Helen in their nineties (both with birthdays 93 and 94 in April) and my husband Walter. We would normally be heading off to Whitianga every 10-14 days so it's a big change for us staying put for seven weeks! My motto from day one was to try and ring someone each day, and also take a photo with my phone each day and send via Whatsapp to family. Our daughter and her family live in Switzerland so we are used to doing this anyway and chatting via skype or Whatsapp on a regular basis, but this has now extend-

ed further to our NZ siblings and family. I think it has made us very grateful for our surroundings and neighbourhood and I have done a walk and bike-ride on alternate days for up to two hours each day. It has made us explore streets in our neighbourhood that we don't usually venture down and along the way bump into people who like to chat as well from the 2-metre recommended distance. I have also done shopping duties and figured out the times and places with the least queues. There's also been trips for flu jab, collect medicines for family and drop off to Pathlab during this time and it has been interesting to see how the different organisations are coping with the new rules. Fingers-crossed we will get the outcomes everyone wants and that over the months our lives can get back to some normality, especially the ones in the workforce and businesses who have been badly affected.



Doris Rust

I have been one of the proof readers for the Helvetia Editing Team for the last four years. I feel my job has been small compared to what the Editor, Secretary etc. have been doing. But like all operations every small contribution helps to produce the end result i.e. a great Helvetia magazine! I enjoyed being able to proof read at home in my own time, generally with plenty of time to get it back to Heidi. It was a bit of a test to my spelling/grammar skills and I referred quite a bit to the online Dictionary. I enjoyed getting a sneak-peek at some of the life stories, many of the people I knew well and it was very interesting to read about their lives in Switzerland and how they came to the decision to make the move to New Zealand, and their success stories once they settled in New Zealand.

We are now into our third week of lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Some days seem to drag with nothing new happening and other days fly by with lots of phone calls to loved ones, walks in the sunshine and even the occasional Jass! As we are hoping to be able to move I have been kept busy sorting through unpacked boxes from our

last few moves! Now that most of that is done I have started knitting and sewing dolls clothes for my 2 grand-daughters. What I have really missed the last few weeks is spending time with my parents, children and grand-daughters. I look forward to lock-down ending and being able to catch up with family again.



Belinda Cooper

Thank you Helvetia readers for allowing me, in my small way, to be part of your reading lives these past 4 years. It has been a pleasure! As I've proofread articles I have learnt a lot about a wide range of fascinating places in Switzerland, inventions, customs, festivals and people. The greatest joy has been learning about Swiss in the Waikato, many of whom I grew up with seeing them at the annual Swiss picnic, Christmas programmes, visiting my parents' home socially or working on the Helvetia around our dining room table. My job back then was packing magazines into envelopes! Now, over 40 years later, I have found myself on the Helvetia committee. It's been a pleasure sharing some personal stories and although challenging at times, writing articles on leads and links that our fabulous editor has passed on to me. Even the occasional translation from German to English. I've been enriched by the whole experience and especially enjoyed the company of the folk on the committee – a great team!

We were also asked to share our experiences under COVID19. I'm a Secondary School teacher so like many teachers, am looking at creative ways of engaging students online. This takes many hours of preparation and screen time. To get a break from all the sitting, I get out for an hour's walk each day and spend time on my other interests: playing piano, bassoon and clarinet and improving my German and French by reading novels. The garden has had a work-over and the pantry is filling with preserves. There's been more time to enjoy our beautiful autumn weather and colours, to greet fellow walkers with a smile and to catch up with family and friends through tech

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nology. We have so much to be thankful for really and let's hope that when life returns to "normal" we continue with the good things we have all learnt during this time of lock down.

So, dear readers, take care, Tshüs! Ciao! Danke!



Heidi Fransen

When I was asked to be a proofreader of the Helvetia I was a bit worried about the time I would have to commit to the job. Once I realised I was one of a group of around 6 proof-readers, it was very easy to accept the challenge. Split between so many of us, and being able to proof-read from our homes without attending meetings made the task very easy. I had the privilege of reading the articles before they were published, and when the Helvetia arrived in my letter box, I had the heightened excitement of seeing the published articles with the added splendour of pictures and colour. I am in awe of the amazing work done over the past 4 years of our Editor and her team who achieve such a high quality magazine. I am also a little embarrassed by the few hours I contributed comparatively and would like to extend my thanks to the team at the top for their hard work and dedication. Sharing the publication of the Helvetia between the clubs ensures there is no burn-out from those in charge and promises enrichment from the flavour of the club in command at the time. Thank you to everyone in our committee who gave the Helvetia their flavour, and thank you to those who are taking over for the next term.

Currently we are in our fifth week of lockdown, and dare I say it, for me it has been great! I have been able to do my work as Finance Officer at Sport Wai-kato from home, have continued my exercise by going for runs and walks, and doing Les Mills on-demand classes in our rumpus room. My husband Paul has also been working from home, and has had the weekends to cross some jobs off his continuous to-do list. Our second daughter who lives in her own house with flatmates decided to come

home for the duration, and could also do her work for the Regional Council from home. It has been nice to have three girls at home again, with the other two continuing their studies online through Uni and Wintec. We have been playing a lot of card and board games, the girls sometimes under duress! I suppose it won't be long until we are back into the rat-race, rushing everywhere and stressing about things that have become trivial over this period of isolation.



Heidi Wehrle

My husband Richard shared my bubble. I made my first online shopping order 5 days before we had NZ's 1st coronavirus case (Feb 28th) and 26 days before Level 4 lockdown started on March 25th. I placed the order in Tairua while looking after grandchildren and the day I arrived home on 28th February it arrived as did the announcement of first verified coronavirus case.

During 1st week of Level 4 we ventured out once with mask and gloves to get flu injections. Since then we have stayed in our rural subdivision only going for a walk by our lovely Lake Karapiro. A Whatsapp 14-day family challenge set up by 9-year-old granddaughter Petra where daily postings were required from all households – 2 in Auckland, 1 in Tairua and us from Karapiro, kept us very busy. Some of challenges such as making a video miming to a song, making friends with an object in your house (I chose Mr Toilet) – these all needed a lot of time to set up and learn new skills. The challenge "Walk like an animal" and rest of families have to guess what animal, had me in fits as Richard practised and practised, popping his head into the potplants: Penguin? Pukeko? Meerkat? etc finely he relented and told me and I said "you will have to go outside and nibble on an overhanging tree branch" ...which he did and all agreed it was the final 3 seconds of that video that gave it away: a giraffe!! Our family say they have enough crazy stuff on us to have us certified!

As I write this, NZ has moved from Level

4 to the first week in Level 3 and in general us two superannuitants enjoyed the slower pace of life, the silence on our walks and knowing that no one would come and catch me in my pyjamas with uncombed hair!! Richard ceased shaving which many men in our area seem to have done!!!

However, we are very aware that we are lucky and not all boats that are sailing through this Covid 19 storm will survive.

Heid Wehrle, editor



Kathy Sanders (-Weidmann)

As a professional photographer I've enjoyed the last four years of voluntarily taking various photos for the N.Z. Helvetia Magazine at some of our Hamilton Swiss Club local events.

In my line of work, I'm very used to taking lots of photos to cover all the happenings at any event, and the fact that there's only space in the magazine for 2-3 small sized photos per club in any edition, and some may come from other sources, has sometimes been a challenge for me. I've had to restrain myself at times from taking a lot of photos, something near impossible for me, when one enjoys so much capturing photographically (also for posterity) the general scene and activity moments of many in attendance including children. Choosing which photos to go in the next edition I've generally left up to those collating the magazine and our local Club Secretary has a copy of all images.

I've sometimes wondered what could be done with the multitude of great photos taken at the club events over the years, especially also with some older club folks having passed on and are sadly no longer with us.

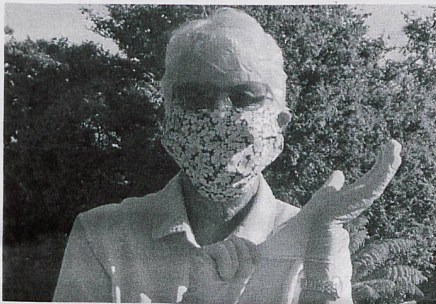
I thought about perhaps having images on the Swiss Society website for downloading by participants, or perhaps a 'Swiss Club Members only' special online Facebook for photos? But then one is faced with the fact that perhaps there is a need to "protect peoples' privacy

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and image?" So, at this time they remain in digital storage.

If you have any ideas about this and can offer to organise something where the photo images can be shared safely, something which perhaps is privacy sensitive, perhaps you could contact me.

I strongly encourage those who attend the Swiss Club events to take photos of family, friends and guest visitors with your own cameras, because as the years go by, you'll be happy you did, while also helping to keep and perhaps share a photographic record of the Swiss culture currently very much alive and enjoyed in New Zealand.



Rae Achermann

Being a proof-reader for the Helvetia for the last 4 years was not such an onerous job as I originally thought – it would probably have been a bit harder for those whose 1st language was not English. But a couple of things did bug me somewhat and that was the overuse of exclamation marks and groups of 3 dots in articles from a certain area – but Heidi left the damn things in any way! Also a perk of the job was that I got to read 1st hand some very interesting articles and at times we had to scan through the whole magazine for possible missed errors, so that gave me an insight of just how it would be like to read the Helvetia online instead of receiving a hard copy – no problem at all as it happens!

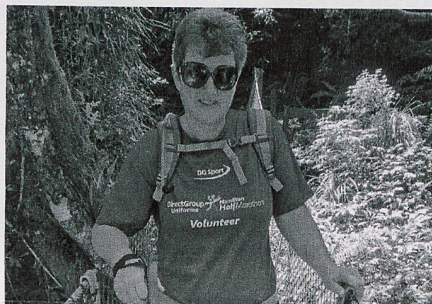
Covid 19 Lockdown activities at the Achermann household (aka "Hotel Achermann on Cooper"). From 22 March we had four visitors from Switzerland and Peru staying with us at the end of their tour of New Zealand when things turned to custard. COVID-19 started to rear its ugly head throughout the world and was beginning to hit New Zealand. So then our "bubble" consisted of 6 adults. Instead of enjoying the beauty of the Coromandel, our visitors were in Hamilton, frantically trying to get flights home. Finally, 10 days later two of them were able to fly to Switzerland. It would

be another 10 days before there was a chance of the Peruvians leaving us.

So our daily activities included early morning exercises, then after breakfast a long walk in suburban Chedworth & Chartwell. The upside of all of this will (hopefully) result in us being fitter and slimmer!

The house has been cleaned from top to bottom, garden tidied, cupboards re-organized & I made some fashionable face masks to wear to the supermarket. Needless to say, another daily activity was numerous games of Jass, morning, afternoon & evening!

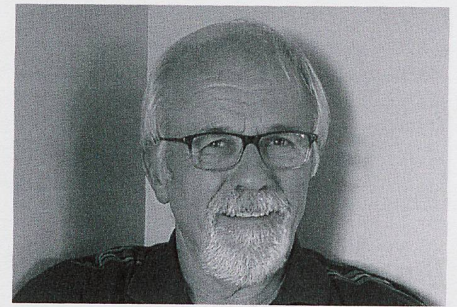
Thankfully, to date, everyone has stayed safe and well.



Sandrine Smith

These last 4 years have passed quickly and I am pleased I could help the Swiss Society by being their Treasurer. The highlight of my time in the committee was when we decided to donate money for Eli's assistance dog. After all, one of the objectives of the Swiss Society is to provide for the moral and the financial support of Swiss citizens living in New Zealand. I am delighted to have made new friends on this journey and would like to take the opportunity to thank the committee members and partners who have graciously hosted the meetings in their house and served us amazing food.

With Covid-19 in our present life, the handover to the Taranaki Club will have its challenges, however I am sure we will manage. At home, not much has changed. My husband and I are both essential workers. Mark is doing an amazing job as a nurse and EMT, where I have the chance to work 100% from home. Our daughter came back from Christchurch prior the lockdown and our kids study online. My passions are hiking and nordic walking with a group. I can't do that in Level 4. I have therefore let my creativity take over. I am making soy candles and I crochet small stuffed animals aka amigurimi. Let's all do the right thing. Stay Home and Save Lives. Take good care.



Hans Vetsch

Just as I was going to sit down and write about the good things that happened during our time at the helm of the Swiss Society as well as looking forward to a descend handover and celebrating with a few Swissies, along comes Covid-19. What a sudden and significant change of life this virus causes for a very big part of the World's population. It is hard to comprehend the significance this event has now and will have for a long time to come.

How are you coping with these restrictions so far? I hope you are all well and your income source has not been hit too hard.

We were on the way south for a two weeks adventure to the South Island when it all started. After the first night away, we decided to come home again on the Prime Ministers advice. Two days later level 4 lock down was announced. I rushed down to Mitre 10 to get some paint and painting accessories to keep me occupied. The lockdown started and we quickly established a pattern of going out for a couple of hours in the morning on foot or bikes. It killed the morning and the afternoon was there to work. We thought it was great biking down town with no cars in sight and the town was just so quiet. The biggest drawback was not being able to see family and friends.

I am sure a lot of people got on to those jobs that have been hanging around for a while, we certainly did. Our upstairs bedrooms and hallway are as good as new, the deck is re-oiled and a lot of rubbish has been disposed of. Now, it's the 1st week of May and we are really waiting with baited breath for the restrictions to be lifted. We have had enough of it and I am sure we are not alone?

I think New Zealand will come out of this worldwide disaster pretty well. There will be increased unemployment short term and some big debt mountains will have to be repaid long term but it will happen. I hope you all came through this pandemic well.

All the very Best and stay safe