

# le News

WEEKLY SWISS NEWS IN ENGLISH

Hebdomadaire gratuit N°9

Lake Geneva region 9 - 15 January 2014

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# Security: tax payer pays?

**GENEVA** The prospect of hosting two major international conferences at the same time – the World Economic Forum in Davos and Syria II in Montreux – threatens to overload Switzerland's security capacity. Another issue is who pays for all this? Last July's G8 meeting in Northern Ireland cost the British and Belfast governments £80 million (CHF 112.7 million). When the G8 was held in Evian in 2003, it was Switzerland that

bore the brunt of the security costs given that US president George W. Bush stayed with friends outside Lausanne provoking local protests.

The annual meeting of the WEF, which has been held toward the end of January for over 40 years, attracts 2,500 politicians and business executives from all over the world, thus posing an enormous security risk. Nevertheless, the Swiss have fine-tuned their operations

in a manner that is now highly efficient, ranging from fighter aircraft overflights and helicopter monitoring to military commandos, dog teams and cantonal police coupled with private security firms. Yet when high profile leaders bring their own entourages of security support teams, the Swiss have to contend with added coordination challenges.

Continued on page 2

## Losing just about everything

Last year passengers left over 68,000 items on board trains. Mobile phones top the most forgotten list, which includes wheelchairs and prosthetic limbs!



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## This Week in Switzerland

After announcing a partnership with **Dukascopy Bank** a few months ago, the **American International Club of Geneva (AIC)** has since launched **new social channel AIC TV**. Weekly interviews hosted by AIC president Ed Karr will cover topics such as finance, law, marketing and philanthropy. Karr stated that "with AIC's access to the business leaders of Geneva along with Dukascopy's desire to better inform their audience and clients, it really makes for a win-win situation."

Despite having lost out to the Future and Emerging Technology Flagship €1 billion subsidy from the European Commission, the **Guardian Angels** project still aims to roll out a prototype of its **zero-energy electronic body-monitoring chips** by autumn 2014. Based in EPF Lausanne and ETH Zurich, the project involves developing wearable, integrated chips that will pick up biological signals, evaluate health and provide wearers with information through a user interface.

The Zurich-based **Swiss Society of Common Good** has launched a competition that invites anyone to submit a new rendition of the **Swiss National Anthem**, as it is currently dubbed old-fashioned and sad and in need of being revived. Entries will be accepted until 30 June 2014 after which the winning tune will be presented to the Swiss cabinet. The criteria include involving a lyrical reflection of democracy, neutrality and liberty, having a similar melody to the current one and being easy to learn and sing. It also should be easily translated into four different languages.

Nature protection organisation **Pro Natura** has anointed the European field cricket (*Gryllus campestris*), characterised by the male's loud, far-reaching chirp, 2014's animal of the year. The strategic choice aims to promote more biodiversity in the cricket's field and meadow habitat, which is being shrunk by building and farming developments. The European bullhead was dubbed fish of the year by the **Swiss Anglers Federation**, and the **Swiss Association for the Protection of Birds** will announce the bird of the year in January.

Through a series of genetic experiments involving mice, **Professor Luc Pellerin** and his team at the University of Lausanne have identified a gene that allows mice to **resist diet-induced obesity**. After 12 weeks, the group of mice deficient in MCT1, a transporter of lactate, increased their body weight by only 7.7%, compared to the wildtype mice that grew by 16.7%. The results point towards a new therapeutic target MCT1; however much research remains to be done and Pellerin urges that a healthy lifestyle will always be paramount.

In response to requests set out by the Federal Assembly, among them to "Secure jobs by making Switzerland a global leader in research, development and production of medical products" the Federal Council intends to introduce a range of measures to create an optimum environment for **biomedical research** and technology as global competition becomes tougher. The measures include improving the price-setting system for medicines, setting up a **Health Technology Assessment Agency** to evaluate the performance of medical services and improve methods to protect against counterfeit and illegal medicines. The Human Research Act, coming into force this year, aims to establish a new framework for research on humans and clearer procedures for approving research projects.

This year **Tamedia** will acquire the majority of **Doodle**. It acquired 49% stake in 2011. IT specialist and manager of several German websites, Michael Brecht will take over the website planning platform on 1 February. Founders of the online scheduling tool Michael Näf and Paul Sevinc will gradually wind down their management roles.

2014 promises to be an exciting year for **astronomers**, with many planets making an appearance on our night skies. **Jupiter** appeared in early January, **Mars** will pay a fleeting visit in March though only visible through a telescope, whilst **Mercury** and **Saturn** will come into view in spring. With a telescope you will even be able to spot some of Saturn's moons!

## Security: tax payer pays?

Continued from page 1

Syria II, which is due to start on 22 January, is not only being convened at the complete opposite end of Switzerland, but will move to Geneva two days later. This means preparing security details for the luxury Montreux Palace before transferring to the United Nations. Regardless of whether the talks take place or not, they have to be figured into Switzerland's overall security plan since Montreux will bring in high-level officials, such as US Secretary of State John Kerry.

The main concerns are terrorism and civil disruption. Anti-WEF protests are a regular Davos phenomenon. While police check trains and cars, some opponents have sought to ski in from the other side. The Swiss authorities are imposing a 46-kilometre security cordon around the Graubünden resort, and civil aircraft are being asked

to stick to designated corridors. The Swiss Air Force, which commands some 72 combat jets and tactical fighters, fears that the grounding of even one plane could throw its preparations into disarray. "With both Montreux and Davos, we will be at the limit of our capabilities," a defence ministry source told the Tribune de Genève.

Security measures at Davos are normally paid for by the WEF, Bern and various cantons. With costs estimated at hundreds of millions of Swiss francs, some countries also contribute for their own leaders. Security expenditure for meetings such as Syria II is largely borne by the Swiss, but such gatherings are being lambasted by some who do not feel that local taxpayers should bear the burden. Others argue that this is Switzerland's responsibility as a neutral arbiter and enhances its role in the international arena. *Edward Girardet and Christopher Woodburn*

## Le News

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## Regional

# le News

WEEKLY SWISS NEWS IN ENGLISH

## Editor's comment

## Beyond Peoria: Making News Relevant

As a journalist who used to report for a major American newspaper with an emphasis on international news, I was never tied to the burden of most mainstream US media, notably: "Will it play in Peoria?" This supposedly determined whether a story was relevant or not to the prototypical American. My editors assumed that since our readers were interested in foreign affairs, we did not have to cater to "domestic only" interests.

It was a different matter for most US newspapers, and also for Broadway and Hollywood. A city of nearly 120,000 people, Peoria, Illinois, became the yardstick for what Middle America was interested in. If it didn't "play" in Peoria, there was no point in doing the story, play or film.

The challenge with reaching out to the Lake Geneva region is that there is no Peoria. There is nothing "prototypical" or "middle" about Swiss, French or expatriate audiences wishing to read an English-language newspaper. We know that most rely, whether in print or online, on newspapers such as the *New York Times*, *Financial Times*, and *Le Temps*, for their global information. Or they listen to or watch Swiss, French, British and other broadcasters.

So why bother with *Le News*? While it takes time for any publication to establish itself, it is already clear that the bulk of our readers consist of an informed and highly diverse community of relatively affluent, internationally-oriented people who travel for business, place an emphasis on good education, go abroad on holiday, appreciate the outdoors and sports, enjoy shopping and are concerned by global issues, such as the environment and human rights. They're an extraordinary mix of entrepreneurs, business people, financiers, humanitarians, academics, scientists and innovative thinkers. They're also critical and do not take lightly to being walked over.

Apart from being a free weekly, how is *Le News* relevant? What sort of information does or should it provide to "play" effectively? As the new year gets underway, distribution is expanding with nearly 25,000 copies reaching over 300 points, including, companies, UN agencies, shops, NGOs, universities, schools and cafés. It is also available electronically. People are getting used to it. They're complaining when they cannot find a copy.

Most feedback suggests that coverage about Switzerland and neighbouring France is crucial, particularly if it offers good reporting and insight that are relevant to their lives, for example about schools, real estate and jobs. A few have complained that *Le News* is a newspaper run by "expats" for "expats". As the Swiss editor of the newspaper, I do not agree. Up to 40% of our readers are Swiss or French, who appear intrigued by the different perspective we offer.

We have learned so far that what readers want in addition to news is information about what is happening in the form of local and regional events, whether recreation, the arts, culture or sports. They want to know what to do on weekends, and where to go with the kids. We are keen to receive more formal feedback about what you really think about *Le News* and would therefore value your thoughts by email to [editor@lenews.ch](mailto:editor@lenews.ch). We look forward to finding out whether *Le News* is meeting your expectations and that we're "playing" it right.

By Edward Girardet

## Isolating asylum seekers

**COINTRIN** Proposal to increase asylum seeker housing

A proposal is under consideration in Bern to house asylum seekers arriving by air at Geneva's Cointrin airport in an expanded dormitory facility at the end of the tarmac. A Geneva NGO that provides legal assistance to asylum seekers, Elisa-Asile, objects on the grounds that the proposal from Geneva airport authorities and the Federal Office of Migration (FOM) has displaced asylum seekers arriving at Cointrin while a new international terminal wing is under construction.

At other international airports, such as Kloten in Zurich, asylum seekers are remanded to a transit terminal outside the Schengen zone where there are restaurants, shops and other facilities. "At Geneva's airport, the zone where international flights



How asylum seekers are treated is a concern for many NGOs

arrive and depart is particularly poor in this regard and clearly there is an important commercial opportunity being lost," said Michel Ottet of Elisa-Asile. "This means it is necessary to demolish the present terminal where asylum seekers are currently housed."

The FOM has said it will now bus asylum seekers to a transit terminal following complaints from the Elisa-Asile, UNHCR and the com-

mune of Meyrin. It also points out that the new facility will have 42 beds as well as bathrooms and a kitchen. Furthermore, it has announced that each demand for protection will now be decided within 20 days instead of the current 60-day period.

The Federal Administrative Tribunal will make the final decision regarding the development of the new facility. *Pamela Taylor*

## Vaud limits youth boozing

**LAUSANNE** Vaud's Conseil d'état is proposing a plan of action to combat excessive alcohol consumption by young people. The unanimous view within the government is that the youth consume too much alcohol, especially during evenings and weekends in Vaud's cities. Since the ban on the sale of alcohol to minors under 16 and 18 years of age is not always heeded by bars, clubs and shops, the canton will propose to the Grand Council a series of legal changes aimed at reducing consumption, especially of beer and spirits.

The main goal is to protect the youth against alcoholism and the trauma resulting from excessive consumption. Proposed strategies include restricting the hours during which alcohol can be sold, and banning the sale of distilled spirits and beer from 20h00 to 06h00 in shops, bars and restaurants. Also in the pipeline is a crackdown on aggressive marketing tactics by

producers of alcoholic beverages as well as higher penalties for vendors who do not comply with liquor and labour laws. Commercial vendors will have to learn the terms of the new Act and additional training will be required for those vendors who breach them.

*Jennifer Rose*

## IMPRESSUM

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## National

# An avalanche of Ski accidents



Technologies to calculate risk of avalanches are available to skiers.

**SION** The holiday season has brought a renewed influx of winter-sports enthusiasts to Swiss ski resorts.

This is good news after the hard times noted in recent years. Sadly, however, the season has seen a rise in ski accidents, as well as nearly a dozen deaths caused by avalanches in the Swiss Alps, with further casualties on the French side. The dramatic skiing accident of Formula One racing driver Michael Schumacher has highlighted the dangers of skiing off-piste.

Valais mountain professionals agree that skiing off-piste and not wearing proper headgear are major causes of accidents. Some 15% of skiers and snowboarders refuse to wear helmets, leading to calls for insurance companies to refuse coverage. "I am stunned by the number of people who ski without helmets because they think it's cool or because they've always done it," said Roger Hampton, a British-Swiss ski operator. Mountain doctors say

they have seen more ski accidents in the past 40 years than car accidents. Today, the injuries are mainly cranial and vertebrae trauma and fractures of the pelvis or femur, compared to the simple leg fractures caused by inadequate boots or bindings in previous decades.

Snow levels over the holidays were half that of last year, exposing rocks and creating fragile conditions above 2,000 metres. These conditions are particularly dangerous for skiers who fail to respect avalanche alerts, which have been at level five in many areas since before Christmas. Resorts are urged to do more, including publishing accident statistics, something Verbier has been doing since 2000. According to avalanche expert, Robert Bolognesi of Meteorisk in Sion, 90% of avalanches in recent years are caused by the sudden increase in numbers of off-piste skiers, and exacerbated by extreme skiers and free-riders who follow each other too closely. He also counsels against skiing alone and says groups of three to four are ideal.

Even experienced skiers seem to be taking more risks. In recent times, there are reportedly more skiing deaths of snow professionals and experienced amateurs. "Clearly there is a problem with avalanche education," said Bolognesi, adding that he fully understands humans are risk takers. He is one himself. However, he believes risk must be calculated and he has developed a system for assessing a given itinerary, taking into account snow and weather conditions as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the group.

His NivoTest is used to calculate risk on the 30-degree slopes on Swiss and French 1:25,000 series maps. It consists of a card with a rotary dial containing 25 questions. If the answer is yes to any of them, you add the points indicated on the dial to your score. Once the user has completed the test, the reverse side gives the risk the user is assuming. The higher the score, the higher the risk. And for those with smart phones, an app "White Risk" also helps skiers better assess avalanche risks.

Pamela Taylor

## Better prices and retail profits



**ZURICH** The Swiss retail sector can expect sales to grow 1.5 percent in 2014, according to an annual report published by.

A Credit Suisse survey of 218 decision-makers in the retail sector and its supplier industry in collaboration with consultancy firm Fuhrer & Hotz, indicates that retail trade is heading into 2014 with great confidence, with three out of four companies budgeting for a year-on-year increase in sales.

*Consumer electronics and home furnishing are already at comparable prices to those across the border*

Swiss retailers have grown more competitive compared to neighbouring countries since the introduction of the ceiling against the euro. Over the last two years, the difference between food prices in Switzerland and those of neighbouring countries has narrowed from 46 percent to 37 percent.

In areas such as consumer electronics and home furnishing, they are already at comparable prices to those across the border. Retailers are also benefiting from "shopping tourism." Credit Suisse economists estimate foreign tourists spent more than CH1 billion on watches alone in 2012.

Another factor that will spur growth is that net migration in 2013 amounted to 80,000 people, and 2014 is likely to record a similar figure, bringing retailers tens of thousands of new consumers.

Moyette Marrett



## Business & Economy

# It could be your money

**BERN** An estimated CHF 6.3 billion is waiting to be claimed in "forgotten" national pension accounts, with more than half of that amount belonging to foreign workers who have since left the country.

Some 855,000 job-related pension accounts, unclaimed for more than two years, have been transferred to a special fund charged with finding the beneficiaries, the Swiss public broadcaster, SRF, reported last week.

"On average each account holds 7,500 Swiss francs but there are also individual accounts with more than 1 million," said Max Meili, head of the Substitute Occupational Benefit Institution, according to the report. He added that some 70% of the account holders could not be traced. The funds are often "forgotten" by employees when they change jobs, go on maternity leave or move from Switzerland.



When someone changes employment or stops working in the country, it is their responsibility to transfer their pension to their new employer's pension provider or into a vested benefits

account. The forgotten pension accounts fall under the second tier (deuxième pilier) of the national three-tier pension system.

*Moyette Marrett*

### Coffee capsule war

Nespresso, Nestlé's quality coffee subsidiary has failed to secure a German court ruling in its favour to stop competitors marketing capsules that work with its machines. The company can appeal.

### Online sales boost supermarkets

The Coop Group said net retail sales rose 1.7% to CHF 18.1 billion last year as strong growth in its online shops and organic products division helped offset the impact of falling prices and competition from rivals, the Basel-based retailer said. Total net sales in its online shops business jumped 15.4% to CHF 906 million.. Posting similar news, Migros reported that its online supermarket LeShop.ch posted record sales of CHF 158.1 million in 2013, an increase of 6%. Purchases made from mobile devices accounted for 32% of sales.

# SNB loses CHF 9 billion on gold price plunge

**ZURICH** The Swiss National Bank said the plunge in the gold price would result in a CHF 9 billion loss, leaving it unable to make its payment to the government for 2013. In a statement on Monday, the SNB said that the 28% drop in the price of gold had led to a CHF 15 billion loss in the value of its gold holdings, wiping out a gain of about CHF 3 billion on its foreign currency positions and a profit of more than CHF 3 billion from the sale of the stabilization fund it established at the height of the financial crisis to prevent UBS from failing.

The SNB, one of the world's biggest holders of gold, said the loss would force it to cancel dividends to shareholders for the first time since it was founded in 1907. The bank also said it would not be able to make payments to the country's 26 cantons, its biggest shareholders, and the federal government for the first time since 1991. In 2012, the SNB made profit distribution payments of CHF 1 billion to the cantons and federal government.

"We've warned the budget chiefs over the past two years that we have a big balance sheet with lots of risk," SNB President Thomas Jordan said in an interview with Swiss television SRF. "And that it's to be expected that we



SNB's loss on its gold holdings is reported to be CHF 15 billions

have years with big profits and years with big losses – and that it's entirely possible that we aren't able to make a payout." Gold suffered its biggest decline in more than three decades in 2013 as Western investors shed their holdings of the precious metal amid concerns of an end to loose US monetary policy and the strong performance of other assets.

The SNB's loss on its gold holdings will likely fuel an ongoing political controversy in the country. Members of the right-wing Swiss People's Party want a

national vote requiring the central bank to hold at least 20% of its assets in gold. The initiative would also block the sale of such holdings and require all SNB gold to be located in Switzerland. Jordan said in April that the initiative could limit the central bank's ability to manage monetary policy. The measure could force the SNB to buy more gold or reduce its holdings of other assets such as currencies. A date for the national vote on the issue has not yet been decided.

*Moyette Marrett*

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## Business Comment

# Creating talent intelligence

Boost the bottom line. Avoid hiring, firing and promoting at random.

Organizations succeed when they have the right people in the right roles: hardly a controversial statement these days. We know that companies that outperform their peers at talent management also return significantly more value to their shareholders – around 22 % more than the industry average. We also know that good hiring and promotion decisions have a bigger impact on market value than creating a customer-focused environment or having good union relationships.

Why, then, do so many companies struggle to get talent management right? Because they simply don't have the talent intelligence required.

Talent intelligence is the understanding that businesses have of the skills, expertise and qualities of their people. It is the basis of every people decision that companies make; without it, they would be reduced to hiring, firing and promoting people at random. The problem is that most organizations' talent intelligence isn't that intelligent.

### Gather the right information

Talent intelligence boils down to one simple idea: companies can only make good talent decisions if they



Professor Shlomo Ben-Hur

know what they need, what they have and what is available. There are a number of impressive talent management software tools that will help companies to clarify this but, like all systems, they are only as good as the data they are given.

This gives the first challenge facing organizations that want to improve their talent intelligence: knowing what data to gather. At the moment most talent data relates to workforce composition – demographics and distribution. This sort of administrative information has its uses but is inherently limited. What is more relevant and valuable is talent assessment data that covers the skills, attributes and characteristics of an organization's workforce.

### Know how to use your data

Information and analysis do not automatically create intelligence. The next step – one that many firms struggle with – is knowing how to use it. For example, assessment data can be used for much more than making decisions about individual people, such as whether to hire or promote someone. One of the easiest wins is using the results of talent assessment to inform and support processes such as onboarding and development, but only 19 % of firms actually do this.

*Most organizations' talent intelligence isn't that intelligent.*

In researching for our new book, Talent Intelligence, we spoke to many companies about how they used their talent assessment data and we found not a single one that was extensively, consistently and effectively using this data to shape their people strategy. This is just crazy. It is like buying a sports car and then only ever using it to drive the kids to school.

### All you need is a spreadsheet

Data analysis may sound complicated but it does not require specialist expertise – just a basic comfort with numbers and a spreadsheet. Start by identifying how connected the differ-

ent types of talent data you collect are, both with each other and with other sorts of information. For example, knowing the average competency ratings of new hires can be useful. Yet if you also know the performance scores of new hires one year after they have joined, you can see which competencies are most predictive of initial success. If you know who is still employed three years later, you can work out which factors are most predictive of retention. And if you know who is later promoted, it can provide insight into the types of talent valued in your business and the qualities predictive of longer-term success.

### Talent intelligence in action

A few years ago, a large global business in the energy sector asked us to help it establish assessment processes to support three key people decisions: recruitment, promotion, and the identification of high-potentials. The processes created were not complex, but led to lasting, significant changes in their people strategy.

First, we looked at the competency ratings of new hires in each division to check whether some divisions were attracting stronger candidates and whether the qualities of new hires were aligned with each unit's business objectives. As a result, all three divisions were able to make improvements to their attraction and hiring activities.

Next, we compared the average competency ratings of new recruits with those of current employees. We found that the new hires had an uncannily similar pattern of strengths and weaknesses to the current employees. This kick-started a debate in the business about whether it was "just employing clones," which in turn led to changes in hiring practices.

Then we looked at the qualities that distinguished people who were identified as high-potentials and those who were actually being promoted. We found that the people labelled as high-potential were generally more outgoing, more entrepreneurial and better performers – all characteristics that the business was seeking. When we looked at the qualities most likely to



lead to promotion, however, we found that the key factors were good performance and being viewed as team players. For all the encouragement the business was trying to give people with the qualities it thought it wanted, the people actually being promoted were different. As a result of these findings, new criteria for promotion were implemented.

Finally, we looked at the average competency profiles of the various groups measured and fed the findings into the learning and leadership development functions. As a result, specific development programs were created to address key competency weaknesses in particular groups of employees. The measurement data thus enabled better targeting of learning investment.

These were all simple steps, accomplished with simple data and without resorting to expensive systems, but they led to powerful findings that ultimately helped the business deliver its growth strategy.

This is the key, critical difference between talent data and real talent intelligence: intelligence makes a difference, adds value, and helps you to improve the bottom line of your business. Everything else is just data.

*Shlomo Ben-Hur is Professor of leadership and organizational behaviour at IMD.*

*Nik Kinley is a consultant in talent measurement and behaviour change.*





## Insight

# The Russians are coming...



Switzerland continues to attract Russia's affluent citizens

**GENEVA** The arrival this week of Moscow tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky in Basel is yet another indication of Switzerland's growing popularity with Russians.

This trend is hardly surprising given the country's historical ties with the Russian Diaspora, whether Lenin or one of Rasputin's killers, or White Guard Russians fleeing the 1917 October Revolution. Maxim Artamonov, secretary-general of the Swiss-Russian Business Association, iterated that Switzerland's status as a safe and financially stable country provides "many Russians a quality of life untarnished by the security burden that would be the accepted status quo in their home country".

Switzerland has always attracted Russia's affluent citizens, be they ex-communist oligarchs, entrepreneurs or tourists seeking to spend quality time in the Alps or urban hotspots such as Zurich or Geneva. "Wealthy people opt for what will ensure protracted affluence and success," continued Artamonov. This explains the significant intake of Russians, often accompanied by their bodyguards, in Swiss boarding schools, and why banks such as UBS and Credit Suisse benefited from exceptional growth as a consequence of Russian oil and gas investment in the 1990s.

*"Made in Switzerland" represents the driving-force behind this migratory trend.*

"It is the unique quality of life, combined with high standards of medical

care and education, that attract Russians nowadays," said Artamonov. In Lugano, Russian-speakers have more than doubled since 2001. Though overall figures remain opaque, many Russians are setting up businesses, especially commodity trading. There are now four flights a day between Moscow and Switzerland with more in winter, plus Russian churches in Geneva, Lausanne and Vevey. At the same time, it is becoming increasingly difficult for Russians to establish themselves full-time unless they are ready to part with hundreds of thousands of francs a year in fees. Previously, too, Russian students could simply extend their visas into work permits and even naturalisation.

*Switzerland has always attracted Russia's affluent citizens, be they ex-communist oligarchs, entrepreneurs or tourists*

Whereas the definition of a "visitor" or "resident" may be ambivalent, Switzerland's recognition of the tourism potential is clear-cut. The spa town of Leukerbad is a prime example. Russians are now the second largest group after the Swiss with Cyrillic shop signs often coming before English. Nevertheless, the Swiss have struggled with the "fatal" attraction they seem to have for Russians, notably a whole slew of costly justice cases, such as the detention of alleged Mafia boss Sergey Mikhailov, alias "Mikhas" or the millions paid out for the investigation of the Kremlin restoration "Mabetex" corruption affair.

Christopher Woodburn

# For a Fresh Start ...

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## Lifestyle

# Seeking the “perfect” fondue

Ten years ago, desperate to find an affordable holiday rental, I eyed a last-minute opening on the Wengen tourism site for a rustic chalet with wood-burning stove and stunning view.

I dusted off my rusty German, called the owner and then packed up the kids and dog for the Bernese Alps.

At 1,300 meters, Wengen is my favourite resort. Despite numerous visits, I have always loved riding the slow, cog-wheeled mountain train to this magical car-free village. A certain shared awe emanates from those experiencing the Alps for the first time and those, like me, yet again, as the snow-capped peaks broaden and expand. Laden with boots, skis and packs, the passengers lumber off, clamouring for a look at the station map. I try to find our chalet. My eyes finally settle on a small dot far off to the right, on the edge. Booking a chalet before Google Maps meant that we had a nearly hour hike along a steep wooded lane hemmed in by snowy fields. The chalet was all that was promised, but so isolated that I had visions of being snowed in until spring.

But we did venture out, including a bid to enjoy the inevitable fondue in one of Wengen's traditional restaurants. We dutifully took our place at the wooden table. Responding to the guttural “Grüessech” of the waitress, I

asked with expectation which cheeses they used. She adamantly ignored me, so I repeated the question, innocent of the fact that I had just breached some irrefutable rule of Swiss fondue decorum. Such information, she declared, could not be revealed. My husband asked to see the owner. A barrel of a woman, she stormed in, barking angrily that she would never reveal her secret. If we didn't like it, we could leave. This we did, despite the three-kilometre trek home in sub-degree temperatures, and then nothing memorable to eat.

The reason for our principled stand? I can't stand fondue with Emmentaler cheese. Stringy, gluey and bland with the taste augmented by lashings of cherry liquor: this is my memory of all too many restaurant fondues. I was determined to avoid the same in Wengen. The combination of cheeses that go into a fondue are as varied as the local dialects. Gruyère, Cantal, Appenzeller, and Munster are just some of the mixtures I have tried and invariably disliked. They are either too pungent or too staid. I wondered whether I would ever find the right tanginess and creaminess of a perfect fondue.

But then I stumbled onto a small inn near Gruyère. The owners wouldn't disclose the exact portions, but they did tell me the secret to the “perfect fondue”, notably a blend of salty Gruyère and milky Vacherin. And no Emmentaler.

### My fondue:

3 garlic cloves  
½ bottle of Fendant wine  
500 grams of aged, salty Gruyère (grated)  
500 grams of Vacherin Fribourgeoise (grated)  
6 cl of cherry liquor (kirsch)  
1 tbsp corn starch (maizena)

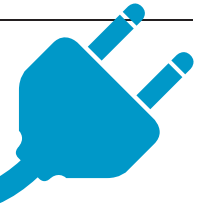
Chop the cloves of garlic finely and place in a dry fondue pan over medium heat. When the garlic starts to sizzle, add the white wine. When the wine starts to bubble, add the grated cheeses. Stir in figure of eight circles until melted. In the meantime, stir the corn starch into the cherry liquor until dissolved. Pour into fondue until the cheese is homogenous and creamy. Place on burner and enjoy!

Amelia Alexander is a Lake Geneva-based food writer.



No Emmentaler please!

# Plugged in



## Smart uni choice

So far my years spent at university have been great: it is not only an education but also an experience. University is the chance to learn about a subject you love and it is the place to forge relationships that will span a lifetime. So make sure to choose the place that is right for you.

Two years ago I was unsure about where I would end up and was considering both British and Swiss universities, before deciding on my pathway and plumping for Glasgow University. So maybe the best approach is to consider only courses that you will enjoy. Awareness of course content and the different modules that make up the course is vital, so that you know exactly what is in store for you when you start.

Although when they apply to university many people are still unsure about what they want to do afterwards, you should still be thinking about what you could do with your degree. Look at the course descriptions on the university's website, which often outline career prospects for each discipline. Once you have decided on a course, you still have to choose a university. This can be the hardest part, but here are some things to consider.

It pays to be aware of the social and sporting opportunities on offer. Do they meet your needs? In addition, is it a university with a good reputation? To gauge reputation you should look at university rankings. The ranking provides insight into the quality of teaching in general, but you can also search the university rankings based on subject area to assess the teaching quality of your specific course.

The location of the university can be equally important. The place you will be spending the next few years has to meet your requirements for social life and things going on in and around the city. Over and above any fees, you also need to consider day-to-day costs and rent when you are planning to move to a new city to study.

Visit the city and look around, if this is feasible. Visiting Glasgow helped me to choose two years ago, but in a few weeks I face the deadline for my application to study abroad. So I have written this thinking about the choices that I need to make. These are decisions that always take a lot of thought and research, and as I do mine, I wish you good luck with yours.

Colin McDonald

## Cool in sites

[lenews.ch/coolinsites](http://lenews.ch/coolinsites)

Admit it, you've always wanted to master a Jedi light sabre. Now you can perfect all the cool moves needed to wreak havoc by deflecting enemy lasers into floating orb droids. Guaranteed fun with Jedi Trainer from [lostvectors.com](http://lostvectors.com)

If making animated videos is your thing, then [video.co](http://video.co) is a straight-forward way to create simple and effective animations. Choose from a range of backgrounds, shapes and clipart (and add sound effects and even your own music) to perfect your very own video.



## Property

# To buy or not to buy?

Continuing low interest rates for mortgages in Switzerland and rising demand for safe investments are encouraging Swiss and expats alike to step onto the housing ladder. Despite soaring real estate prices in areas like Lake Geneva and Zurich driven by population growth and accommodation shortages, the cost of owning your home has dropped overall compared to renting.

The ongoing housing costs for a new, medium-standard apartment (including the interest payments for a five-year mortgage plus maintenance amounting to 1% of the purchase price) have declined from about CHF 28'000 in mid-2008 to below CHF 17'000, according to a Credit Suisse real estate report published last year. This means that the average annual financial cost of an apartment for a new buyer is now less than half the annual rent for a comparable apartment.

"My advice to buyers is not to overpay for property by more than 10%," said Assimina Walther, an independent real estate evaluator and architecture expert. "With moderate inflation of less than one% a year, you are not going to lose any money if you stay invested in the property for a period of ten years. If you stay in the price range offered you are making a good investment."

But, as always, location is key. Very few houses, for example, are sold on the lakeside in the Lake Geneva region. "Therefore, even if you overpay for this type of property you are unlikely to lose money," Walther added.

Switzerland's real estate market buoyed by cheap mortgages is experiencing its biggest boom for years. Prices for apartments have more than doubled in the last ten years and family

home prices have increased by an average of 37%. Despite the economic slowdown and rising unemployment rates, real estate prices in Geneva, Lausanne and Zurich remain high.

*The average annual cost of an apartment for a new buyer is now less than half the annual rent for a comparable apartment.*

Swiss nationals tend to 'buy for life' and do not move house or apartment frequently.

Only 33% of the population own property in Switzerland compared to 46% in Germany, 52% in Austria and 65% in the rest of Europe.

"And as long as you have 0.5% vacancy rates in metropolitan areas, real estate prices are not going to go down," Walther said.

But if you are on a short contract or at risk of being suddenly transferred out of the country, a Swiss property may be a liability.

If you are domiciled in Switzerland and have a permit B for European Union/ EFTA origin countries or a permit C for non-EU/ EFTA countries, you are able to buy property in Switzerland. Swiss banks generally grant mortgages of up to 80% of the market value of a property, which means you pay a minimum deposit of 20% from your own resources and the rest is loaned to you from the bank. It is also possible to give part of your pension as security to the bank to secure your loan. New regulations introduced by FINMA in 2013 limit the amount you can take from your second pillar to 10%.

In Switzerland, asking for a professional survey of the property is not common. However, as the seller is not required to notify you of any issues, a survey may give you advance warning of serious problems, particularly with older homes. In addition, local taxes vary enormously from commune to commune as well as canton to canton, so it's important to ask about the level of taxation.

Prospective buyers are advised to get an independent architect or real estate evaluator to accompany them from the first visit to a property and before making an offer.

"They will see problems that buyers may not see and buyers should ask their advice about the fiscal, technical, financial and legal aspects of the property. Often buyers think all they need to

do is paint but there may be lots of additional costs involved," Walther said.

It is important that people do not feel pressurised into making a quick offer by estate agents as banks now take a lot of time to give their answers on mortgages. Another potential pitfall to avoid is overdoing improvements to your new house or apartment.

"You could be throwing money out of the window if you have to sell within five to ten years," Walther explained.

In Switzerland, a notary, who is a public officer working for both buyer and seller, handles the property transfer. However, if you are unfamiliar with the area or do not speak French, you may wish to have your own legal representation to explain the details of the agreement to you.

Moyette Marrett



## Geneva's housing crunch

Free circulation within the EU and Switzerland has meant that 80,000 people come to work here every year. The result is a lack of accommodation and soaring property prices in both Geneva and Vaud. The dramatic housing shortage has in the past obliged many to seek more affordable lodging across the border. With France's current taxation crackdown on frontaliers, however,

residents see little option other than to return to the Swiss side. With numerous Genevois opposing plans for more building, this means an even greater dilemma: where to live?

For the past 15 years, France's Pays de Gex has served conveniently as Geneva's hinterland, enabling both Swiss and foreigners to rent or buy without problem. Prices have risen, but

France is still cheaper than Switzerland. Furthermore, while Swiss communes have managed to keep most of their areas relatively pristine, it is the French side that has witnessed often unrestrained construction to the detriment of the surrounding landscape. Le Temps maintains that available Geneva housing now stands at between 0.2% and 0.3%, when it should

ideally be 2%. According to Avenir Suisse, a Geneva-based think-tank, the canton's real estate market is among the most regulated in Switzerland, explaining why construction has been stymied over. The problem is endemic in the Lake Geneva region, which boasts the highest rents in Switzerland.

Christopher Woodburn

## Travel

# Leukerbad: Making a comeback

**LEUKERBAD** The Valaisan alpine resort of Leukerbad, whose calcium sulphate thermal springs were enjoyed by the Romans 2000 years ago, has been making a steady comeback since going bankrupt in 1999.

The positive twist of the financial disaster triggered by its ex-president, Otto G. Loretan, who wracked up CHF 320 million in debts, is that he left an ambitious vision for the 21st century. "We have an exceptional infrastructure, which is helping us diversify into the future," noted marketing director David Kerstens.

The town, which promotes itself as part of the "Lake Geneva and Matterhorn Region," offers quality facilities for young and old. The town is popular with well-heeled Russian families, who represent the second largest group after the Swiss. Later this month,

Leukerbad will host its first Chinese skiers. "This will be tailored rather than mass tourism," added Kerstens. With the slogan "Energize Your Life," Leukerbad is particularly attractive to weekend visitors coming for spa relaxation, good eating and the outdoors. While not as challenging as the descents of Verbier, this includes skiing, snowboarding, hiking, climbing, mountain biking, plus special events such as literary, music and even sheep festivals. Prior to the financial crisis of the 1990s, the town relied heavily on Swiss and Germans who came for health cures funded by insurance companies. Their hotels are no longer covered, said Kerstens, "so we have to be much more imaginative."

Switzerland's longest via ferrata is situated in Leukerbad. A via ferrata is a mountain route equipped with fixed cables and ladders wherever necessary. Veteran hill climbers with a good head for heights can enjoy an experi-



Leukerbad's via ferrata is world-class. Being able to relax in a spa afterwards is pure luxury.

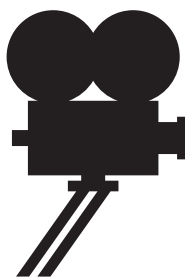
ence somewhere between rock climbing and all-out mountaineering.

216 metres of ladders and over 2,000 metres of steel cable have been installed in the rock face of the mighty Daubhorn which towers steeply above the town. This highly impressive via ferrata offers the fit and supple visitor a great opportunity to enjoy a

unique panorama of the Valais Alps.

After eight hours or so of climbing upwards for 1,000 metres you finally arrive at the summit. This via ferrata offers a courageous challenge and extraordinary experience for sports enthusiasts.

Edward Girardet



## FILM REVIEWS

By Neptune



### THE LUNCHBOX ★★★★★

(vo Hindi and English)  
Release : 25/12

Have you heard of the *Dabbawalas* of Mumbai? They are a lunchbox service that handles millions of deliveries per day from homes or cafés to the working corps of this massive city. And they

hardly ever get an address wrong, except in this delightful tale of mistaken delivery. A lonely office worker on the verge of retirement, a young woman longing for her husband's attention, and the sweet relationship that develops through the little notes accompanying the delectable food, make up this heart-warming film written and directed by Ritesh Batra.

### THE WOLF OF WALL STREET ★★★★★

Release: 25/12

When you walk out of this latest Martin Scorsese film you will likely be as high-as-a-kite from this crazy adrenalin ride. For this bombastic tale, based on the book by New York stockbroker Jordan Belfort about his own rise and fall in the late 1980s, is all about financial greed, sexual excess and the intoxication of money and drugs. The incomparable Leonardo DiCaprio inhabits Belfort's

character as though he was born to it, but then he has done that with every one of his roles (starting off with *This Boy's Life* in 1993), and has not yet received that elusive Oscar. In this fifth collaboration between Scorsese and DiCaprio, they may hit a dual jackpot, though this year quite a few other great films and performances will be in their way, as *12 Years a Slave*, *Captain Philips*, *Nebraska* or *Gravity*. In the meantime, go ahead and enjoy this just under 3-hour-long morality play that is both abhorrent and exhilarating.





## Employment

# “Old Boys” – Switzerland’s military-business network

**GENEVA** Since, historically, most Swiss men must perform military service, it should come as no surprise that many top CEOs in the country come from the officer corps.

In the face of a shrinking military, questions are being raised about the relevance of the informal Old Boys’ network that has been renowned throughout the country for decades (if not centuries) as a means of obtaining jobs, promotions and contracts. The importance of the military in Switzerland was confirmed last September when citizens voted for the third time in 25 years to keep the country’s compulsory military service for males aged 18 to 34 (women serve voluntarily). Defence Minister Ueli Maurer praised the outcome saying, “Abolishing military service would break the genuine link that unites the people and the army.”

The vote was no doubt decided on philosophical and emotional grounds, since Switzerland has not been invaded since the Napoleonic Wars of the early 19th century, and the Cold War’s end removed the need for large-scale forces. Switzerland’s history of neutrality means that the army uses its military for peacekeeping and humanitarian missions rather than armed conflicts. The country’s distinct militia-style requirement that every able-bodied man return for training every two years means that civilian

doctors, engineers and labourers may share the same barracks for several weeks at a time. Many feel that this contributes to preserving Switzerland’s much vaunted “cohesion”.

Swiss companies have realised the benefit of having employees who have experienced uncomfortable and stressful situations, trudging up mountain passes for example, while commanding a diverse group of men. Plans are now underway to restructure the armed forces, cutting back on the number of barracks and reducing basic training while at the same time increasing officer training.

Meanwhile, some companies have complained about the difficulties of dealing with the absence of key employees who must spend several weeks away from work on a regular basis to attend military training exercises, something that increases for officers. Others object to the fact women are left out of a network that is a fast track to advancement.

Daniel Warner, a long-time observer of Swiss politics and practice at Geneva’s Graduate Institute, believes that the results of this military-business relationship are beneficial for both sides. “The argument was that those selected as officers have certain leadership skills that make them good managers, such as directing people from all walks of life who speak different languages and have different cultures. It’s not just because someone served in the same barracks but rather that someone who is an officer pos-



The Swiss military’s old boy network: a force for good?

sesses certain leadership skills.” Warner added that this is something he admires.

Alexandre Vautravers, President of the Geneva Military Society, believes a military background is actually more valued today than it was 10 years ago. “It’s not only about leadership. When you think of the Balkans, Africa, earthquakes, tsunamis, a lot of the young soldiers have been overseas in different cultures. This is extremely important to multi-national companies that are sensitive to multi-cultural values.”

Another aspect coming under scrutiny is the fact that there are a disproportionate number of Swiss Germans among the ranks of company CEOs, partly because of their numeric superiority in the population. “Since those selected to be officers tend to come from German-speaking Switzerland,” said Warner, “it is they who land positions in banking and business. There is a much smaller number from Swiss romande who want to make a career of the Army as officers for long periods of time.”

Vautravers disagrees. “The officers’ societies are extremely active in Ticino and Vaud has over 5,000 members. Swiss romande is smaller in total population, so in absolute terms there are fewer going into the military, but six battalions are assigned to the canton of Geneva. In fact, the lowest rate of citizens serving in the military is in Zurich.”

Vautravers believes the idea that the link between business and the military may be weakening is more perception than reality. “The challenge may be inside a company’s human resources department where there might be less awareness of the skills that come from military service.”

Pamela Taylor



The Swiss military is recognised for its high quality of leadership training.

## Classifieds

### LE MOTOR SELL



#### Motorbike for sale

Yamaha Fazer 600 cc. Silver. 30,500 km, 1st registered in May 2008, expertisé in Dec 2011. Price CHF 3,000.  
Contact : [lan@scotskirklausanne.ch](mailto:lan@scotskirklausanne.ch) or tel 021 323 98 28

#### 4 Wheel-Mounted Winter Tyres for Sale

Michelin radial 195/60 R15. Used for 4 months only. 130 euros for all 4 of them. Pick up from Divonne, France. Contact Nick Jeffreys, 00 41 79 254 68 27

### L'EDUCATION

#### English tutoring

Experienced English native tutor for children and adults. Preparation for exams, conver-

sational practice or structured lesson plan possible. Rates negotiable.  
Email: [jacrose6562@gmail.com](mailto:jacrose6562@gmail.com).

### MUSIC & MOVEMENT CLASSES

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Contact Eliane George,  
Phone: 076 341 3888.  
[www.musictogetherriviera.com](http://www.musictogetherriviera.com)

### GENERAL

#### Lutheran Church of Geneva

Switzerland's only English-speaking Lutheran Church is located in Geneva's Old Town on the Place Bourg-de-Four at 20, rue Verdaine. Worship Sundays at 11h00. Worship, Bible studies, children's education, retreats and more. [www.genevalutheran.ch](http://www.genevalutheran.ch) 022 310 50 89 [pastor@genevalutheran.ch](mailto:pastor@genevalutheran.ch)



### LES POSITIONS VACANT

#### Sonographer wanted.

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### LE WANT TO BUY STUFF

Looking for a second hand flat screen TV for kids playroom.  
Please SMS details: 079-7027329

### LES PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

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[LeNews.ch](http://LeNews.ch)

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Le News is offering a Payot book token worth **CHF 20** and the chance to be published to the photographer who submits the best photo and caption on the subject of:

### "Best friends"

Email your entry to [competition@lenews.ch](mailto:competition@lenews.ch) by **14 January 2014**.

Congratulations to Timothy Goodman, winner of the Le News weekly photographic competition "Christmas in Switzerland".



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## Regional Events

### Cossonay, VD MARIE-THERESE PORCHET - 20 YEARS OF FUN

10, 11, 12 January

The 20th anniversary of local celebrity comedian Marie-Thérèse Porchet will celebrate with a show unveiling the road to her success that was nothing but fun! If you haven't met "her" yet, then this is your chance! Tickets Fr. 45.-, Fr. 98.- on Saturday only as it includes a light dinner.

**Location**  
Théâtre du Pré-aux-Moines  
1304 Cossonay  
[www.theatrepm.ch](http://www.theatrepm.ch)



### Satigny, GE, MON OURS A DISPARU, PUPPET SHOW

11, 12, 15 January

Puppet show for children (from 4 years old) by the Marionnettes les Croquettes. Tilly and Leo forget their teddy bears in the woods. Happily the two bears are crafty. Has your child ever lost their super special comfort object? All children can relate to this!

**Location**  
Salle Communale  
Rampe de Chouilly 17  
1242 Satigny  
022 880 05 16  
[www.lescroquettes.ch](http://www.lescroquettes.ch)



### Geneva WINTER CLASSIC 2014 - HOCKEY WITH PRE-MATCH SHOW

11 January

A unique occasion in the world of ice hockey in which players from the Genève-Servette Hockey Club and the Lausanne Hockey Club will come head to head in a classic derby, only the second of its kind to be staged in an open air football arena in Switzerland. The match will also be broadcast live on Teleclub and RTS2. In the event of extremely bad weather, the match will be postponed until the following day at 15h45. Buy tickets as soon as possible.

**Location**  
Stade de Genève  
Carouge, GE  
[www.gshc.ch](http://www.gshc.ch)



### Geneva, LUNA PARK

8, 9, 10, 11 12 January from 14h

Not only will the thrills of the rides, lights, and music enthrall you, but all your senses will be stimulated by the smells of deep-fried carnival treats, popcorn, sausages, and other temptations! Be prepared to spend a certain amount as it is easy to get carried away with one ride after another.

**Location**  
Geneva Plainpalais  
[www.geneve-tourisme.ch](http://www.geneve-tourisme.ch)



### Montreux, VD ART CENTRO

11 January

Kohlène Hendrickson is the founder of ART CENTRO and an award winning, internationally recognized artist represented in Switzerland by Plexus Art Gallery in Clarens/Montreux. A day of creativity for all ages: painting-drawing-collage-live models-music. Ateliers open from 10h-16h. Free entry including all activities.

**Location**  
Avenue des Planches 26, 1820 Montreux  
[www.kohlène.com](http://www.kohlène.com)



### Gruyères, Fribourg, GRUYERE CHEESE-MAKING ON AN OPEN FIRE

12 January

Why not take advantage of this special cheese-making-over-open-fire (every Sunday until 13 April). The milk is cooked over a wood fire that starts every Sunday at 12h30 and finishes at around 15h.

Any other day you can visit the normal factory and have a tour with tasting at the end from 9h-18h but make sure to be there between 9h-11h if you want to see the cheese being made (but check website as times change).

**Location**  
La Maison du Gruyère  
1663 Pringy, Gruyères  
[www.lamaisondugruyere.ch](http://www.lamaisondugruyere.ch)



### Geneva LE DINER DE CONS

14 January

This classic French film was made again in the US and now comes here in the form of a live play, in French. It is sure to please! The principal of the storyline is simple: every participant invited to dinner must try to bring the best "idiot" and they will be declared the winner for the event.

**Location**  
Bâtiment des Forces Motrices  
Place des Volontaires 2  
1204 Genève  
[www.lestheatrales.ch](http://www.lestheatrales.ch)



### Coppet, VD ELASTIC ARTISTO

15, 16, 17 January

This visual comedy show will have you slapping your knee with laughter! All ages will enjoy watching this comedian who transcends all languages, using the surprises of improv, and will have you in fits of laughter with his silly character. He is adored by many; maybe you caught him on TV a few times.

**Location**  
Théâtre de Terre Sainte  
Rte du Jura  
1296 Coppet  
[www.elasticshow.be](http://www.elasticshow.be)



### Lausanne, VDGROS-NEZ À LA CATHÉDRALE

Daily until 20 January

Photo expo in the Cathédrale de Lausanne. For the 10th anniversary of the new organs placed recently in the cathedral, a photographer and cartoonist collaborated in an unusual way. Using the technique of "light painting" they were able to put the cartoon character from Mix et Remix, Gros Nez, in various locations in the cathedral. The photos taken by Jean-Pierre Fonjallaz are immortalized on metal canvases and are on display for a few more weeks.

**Location**  
Cathedral of Lausanne  
Place de la Cathédrale  
1005 Lausanne  
[www.motiongraphics.ch](http://www.motiongraphics.ch)



### Sainte-Croix, VDAUTO-MATES MUSEUM

Guided tours Tuesday through Friday at 15h, weekends at 14h and 15h30

In 1796, the music box was invented. The Geneva watchmaker, Antoine Favre, created a little musical marvel that could play music automatically using a cylinder dressed with points that steel threads could dance upon. Now, you can see all the history of these special items, as well as other marvels such as singing automated birds, dolls, and more.

**Location**  
Musée CIMA  
Rue de l'Industrie 2  
1450 Sainte-Croix  
024 454 44 77  
[www.musees.ch](http://www.musees.ch)  
[cima.ste-croix@bluewin.ch](mailto:cima.ste-croix@bluewin.ch)



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## Local Community Groups & Associations

### CLUBS AND GROUPS

#### Vevey Little Arrows

Little Arrows is a group for pre-school children that gives young children and their carers an opportunity to enjoy creative time together. The group meets every Wednesday and Thursday (mornings and afternoons) in All Saints' Church Hall during school term. 10 CHF per session per child. Call 021 921 41 76 for more information or visit <http://www.allsaints.ch/chil-dren/arrows.asp>.

#### Montreux Centre de danse/Dance Center

This group offers dance classes in French for classical dance, modern jazz and stretching for children and adults. Well-established group. Call 021 963 02 39 or email [info@centre-de-danse.ch](mailto:info@centre-de-danse.ch) for more information.

#### Montreux Centre de Yoga & Naturopathie

Offers a flexible schedule of classes for all abilities, practice breathing and relaxation exercises, as well as specific postures that allow stretching and toning of the muscular system. Based at Av. du Casino 48, Montreux, with other classes available in Clarens, Prilly, Denges and Vevey. Phone 021 963 18 70 for more information.

#### Online Swiss Golf Network

Visit [www.swissgolfnetwork.ch](http://www.swissgolfnetwork.ch) to discover clubs in the area, tournaments, book tee time and discover the latest golf news.

#### Geneva Aqua Zumba

Aquatic fitness class based on the popular Zumba programme in a 34°C swimming pool aims to improve your cardiovascular fitness and toning. Choreographed to Salsa, Cumbia, Merengue, Chachachá, Samba, Tango, Flamenco, Calypso, Hip Hop, Reggaeton and Soca beats- this class promises an engaging and entertaining way to stay healthy! Classes held on Tuesdays from 19h30 – 20h20 at Avenue de Beauséjour 26, 1206 Genève. Visit [www.ecole-club.ch/Offre/Aqua-Zumba](http://www.ecole-club.ch/Offre/Aqua-Zumba) to sign up!

#### Geneva International Ski Club of Geneva

As well as offering all types of ski and alpine activities, ISC hosts ski fitness classes to prepare for the winter season to improve performance and reduce the risk of accident. Classes are held from 18h00 to 19h00 and 19h00 to 20h00 every Tuesday from September to March at the physical education school room Sismondi, avenue de France 30 1202 Genève. Subscription from January 2014 is CHF 90 and for one session CHF 10. Call Raffaele Moresino on 079336 82 28 or email [scigraffaele@bluewin.ch](mailto:scigraffaele@bluewin.ch).

#### Lausanne The Open-Minds: book club, creative writing, philosophy

This is a club for those who share the love of words, the love of stories and ideas in English. It hosts a book club, a writing workshop to practice and experiment with new writing techniques, and a philosophy cafe to debate interesting ideas over a cup of coffee. Based on the traditional concept of Café Philo by Marc Sautet. Visit [www.globals.com/groups/lausanne-open-minds-group](http://www.globals.com/groups/lausanne-open-minds-group) for more information.

#### Geneva Serve the City

Organization run by volunteers to serve the poor and marginalized. Partnering with homeless shelters, refugee centres and orphanages, Serve the City is looking for new volunteers. Visit [www.servethecity-geneva.ch](http://www.servethecity-geneva.ch) to get involved.

#### Lausanne English Speaking & Anglo-Swiss Club of Lausanne (ES&ASC)

A social club for all English speakers irrespective of nationality or mother tongue. A great way to practice English, meet new people, socialise and make new friends. Regular meetings include cinema, theatre, concerts, museum visits, outings, billiards and talks. Visit [www.esc-lausanne.ch](http://www.esc-lausanne.ch) for details or contact Ilze Condemi on +41 79 745 35 92.

#### Crissier Tennis Academy

Offers tennis and badminton lessons as well as other sports with English-speaking instructors. At 12 Ch. de la Gottrause, 1023 Crissier. Call 021 634 66 13 for more info.

### SUPPORT AND HELP

#### Website Depression Understood

This website offers a supportive network from those suffering from depression and anxiety. It provides a platform through which like-minded people can communicate and offer peer support to one another. Crisis hotline: 143. Visit <http://www.depression-understood.org> to get involved.

#### Geneva Au Cœur des Grottes

Provides support for women alone or with children facing difficult situations such as family problems, domestic violence, exploitation in the workplace or accommodation difficulties returning from abroad. Based at Rue de Zurich 40, Geneva. Support sessions on Tuesday to Friday from 10h to 18h30 and Saturdays from 12h to 17h. Visit [www.coeur.ch](http://www.coeur.ch) for more information.

#### Vaud Association of Diabetes

As a member of the Swiss Association of Diabetes, this group provides information that helps improve the quality of life of people with diabetes with special diabetes focused consultations and information sessions. Based at Avenue de Provence 12, Lausanne call 021 657 19 20 or e-mail [info@diabetes-vaud.ch](mailto:info@diabetes-vaud.ch) for more information.

#### Vaud abC Centre for Anorexia and ulimia

Provides specialty care and support for adolescents and adults with anorexia nervosa and/or bulimia and those with anxiety or obsession concerning food consumption. An interdisciplinary team tackles psychological, physical, nutritional and social aspects of these complex conditions to provide personal care. Call 0848 282 282 or visit [www.chuv.ch/abc](http://www.chuv.ch/abc) for details.B

#### Parspas Suicide Support

If you are in distress and looking to talk to someone or need information, the relative of a person in distress or have lost a loved one to suicide, Parspas provides support groups and a helpline. Call 0273212121 from 08h00 to 20h00 or email [aide@parspas.ch](mailto:aide@parspas.ch). Individual meetings on request. Visit [www.parspas.ch](http://www.parspas.ch) for more information.

#### Helpline Parents' and Children's Support Groups: SOS Enfants

Available 24/7 for children and adolescents in need. Call 147 or +41 (0)22312 1112.

#### Geneva ASK- All Special Kids

ASK is a new Geneva-based network for families with special needs children. It provides information relating to special needs issues through monthly support meeting and thematic workshops. The group focuses on helping English-speaking children. [www.ask.ch](http://www.ask.ch)

#### Morges Women's Support Group

Solidarité Femmes provides helps and support for women and their children suffering from domestic violence. It is opening a help centre in Morges in March and plans to offer consultation in English. Telephone 247 +41 (0)227971010.

#### Vaud Vogay

Association Vaudoise de Personnes Concernées par l'Homosexualité aims to objectively inform and support anyone concerned with homosexuality in the Vaudoise area with support groups and activities. French speaking, but welcomes all. Well-established. Email [ecoute@vogay.ch](mailto:ecoute@vogay.ch) or visit [www.vogay.ch](http://www.vogay.ch) for more information.

#### Prangins Fondation le Cube de Verre

Support and activity group, that provides advice and resources for parents of autistic children. French speaking. At: 1 Avenue de la Gare, 1197 Prangins or call +41 (0)22 367 26 24.

#### Geneva and Lausanne Overeaters Anonymous

Support group for those suffering or supporting persons with bulimia, anorexia and eating disorders. English-speaking meetings are held regularly in Geneva and Lausanne usually on Monday 18:45-19:45 and Saturday 08:30-09:30 at Emmanuel Church, 3 Rue de Monthoux, Geneva. Visit [www.oa.org](http://www.oa.org) for more information.

#### Geneva Narcotics Anonymous

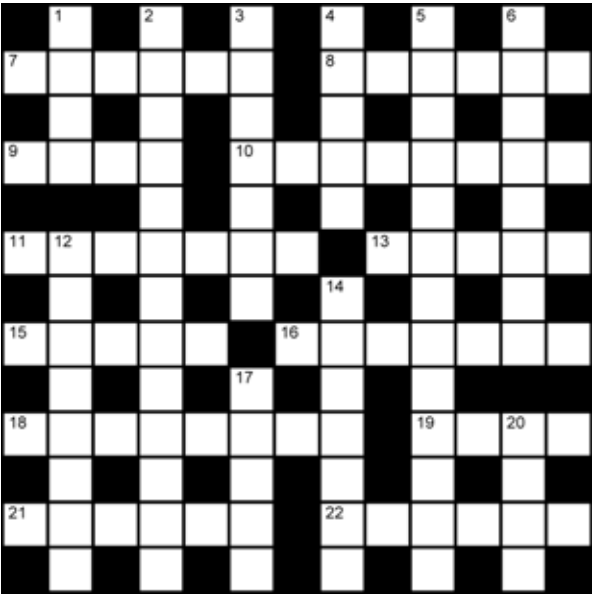
has introduced an English-speaking meeting as well as in French. Meetings take place regularly at Maison de L'Ancre, 34 Rue de Lausanne, Geneva. Call 24/7 to 0840121212.

#### New Groups and Associations

Any group that wishes to raise its profile is welcome to submit an entry for free to Le News on a first come first served basis. Only entries from charities and not-for-profit organizations will be accepted. Entries must be no more than 50 words long and they must not fundraise, sell or promote events. Priority will be given to new organizations.



Puzzles



QUICK CROSSWORD

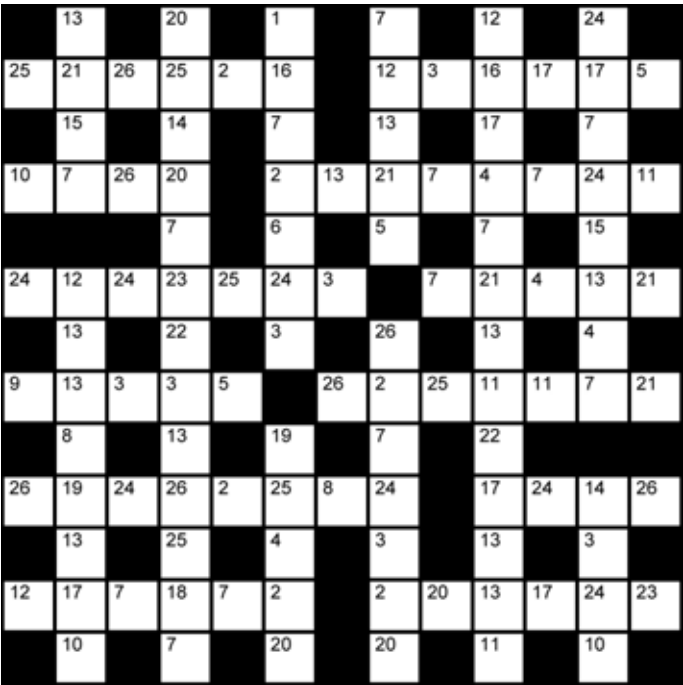
ACROSS

- 7 It is child's play (6)
- 8 Middle (6)
- 9 Articulation genus (4)
- 10 Exhaustive (8)
- 11 Bad tempered closed (7)
- 13 Dazes (5)
- 15 Unfolds (5)
- 16 Incorrectly (7)
- 18 Fasten by sewing (8)
- 19 Yarn (4)
- 21 Thinkers linked by a similar style (6)
- 22 Influence or bias (6)

DOWN

- 1 Press (4)
- 2 Firmness of purpose (13)
- 3 Focuses (7)
- 4 Player (5)
- 5 Unluckily (13)
- 6 Fresh and unusual (8)
- 12 Lip rouge (8)
- 14 Obtained by multiplication (7)
- 17 Sudden numbing dread (5)
- 20 Gaudy (4)

Last week's solution



CODEWORDS

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

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

What's On

Black Movie Festival

The 15th Black Movie Geneva International Independent Film Festival is on from 17 to 26 January; yet another example of Switzerland's promotion of unusual if not exceptional film festivals. Showcasing 125 films, including 63 Swiss and 13 European premières, Black Movie promises to be a rebellious and passionate festival. The organisers have pulled together some fabulous independent films that will "dent the blond blandness of Hollywoodian formatting". On the menu is an extraordinary array of options.

The latest opuses by famous directors as well as new recruits includes one from Jia Zhangke (A Touch of Sin), which won the Cannes Prize for best film direction and which is censored in China.

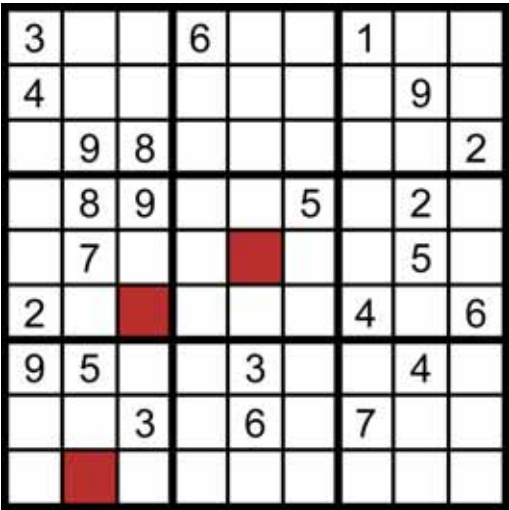
There are also some notable discoveries: Iranian Anahita Ghazvinizadeh, this year's darling, who captivates with her two short films When The Kid was a Kid and Needle (Cinéfondation Prize at Cannes 2013) and Dieudo Hamadi, whose Atalaku offers a gut-wrenching, heat-of-the-moment report on elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Then



there are touching films by masters including Noaz Deshe (White Shadow) and Juan I Fernández Hoppe (Las flores de mi familia).

Because independent cinema is threatened elsewhere, one section is designed in unequivocal support of directors whose films, and sometimes lives, are threatened. Among the five films screened in the solidarity section are Ai Weiwei's Ping'an Yueqing and Chen Changqing's The Son of Adam.

Le News has a couple of free tickets courtesy of Black Movie. Email prizes@lenews.ch and we'll send them to the first film buff to ask.



SUDOKU

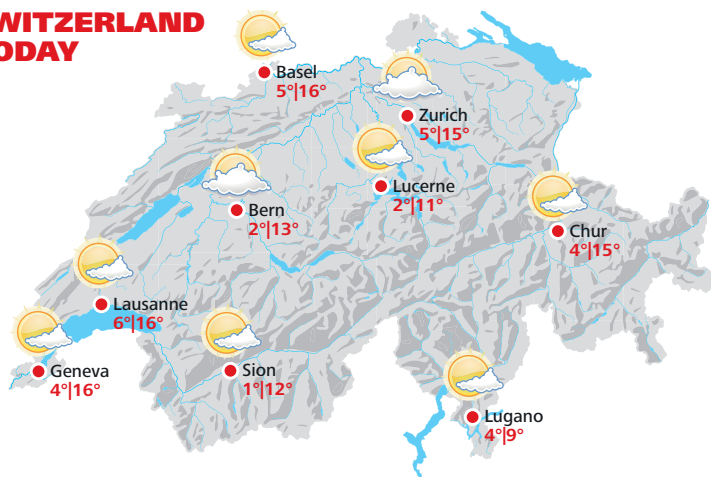
Easy

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 10.00. The first correct answer drawn will win. Email: prizes@lenews.ch  
Codeword: Send us the three letters in the shaded squares for a chance to win CHF 10.00. The first correct answer drawn will win. Email: prizes@lenews.ch

# Weather

## SWITZERLAND TODAY



## ARC LÉMANIQUE FOR THE WEEKEND

| Thursday | Friday  | Saturday | Sunday  |
|----------|---------|----------|---------|
|          |         |          |         |
| 4° - 16° | 4° - 9° | 2° - 9°  | 2° - 6° |

## SKI & SNOW REPORT

|         |       |               |        |             |       |
|---------|-------|---------------|--------|-------------|-------|
| Verbier | 50 cm | Crans Montana | 150 cm | Les Rousses | 20 cm |
| Villars | 90 cm | Château d'Oex | 50 cm  | Chamonix    | 40 cm |



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