

le News

WEEKLY SWISS NEWS IN ENGLISH

Hebdomadaire gratuit N°21

Lake Geneva region 3 - 9 April 2014

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French elections: the new reality

Marine Le Pen's far right Front National gained 1,200 council seats.

GEX The disastrous showing of France's socialists against the conservative "blue wave" could lessen the threat of President François Hollande's government to impose new constraints on foreign residents, including Swiss.

It also promises to promote greater transparency in the way local councils

are run. Faced with the loss of more than 150 major towns, primarily to the conservative opposition, Hollande will need to show that he is not "deaf" to voter concerns. In neighbouring France, both Ferney-Voltaire and St Julien-en-Genevois switched to respective conservative and centrist coalitions. Annemasse, a traditional left-wing stronghold, remained unchanged, while Annecy re-elected its right UDI-UMP

council. Elections for the country's more than 36,000 mayors, are often a means for expressing discontent with the ruling party. Not only did 38.5% of French not go to the polls, but Marine Le Pen's far right Front National (FN) gained at least 11 municipalities and 1,200 council seats.

Many ballots are seen as "frustration" or "punishment" votes for the way Hollande, whose **Continued on page 2**

Next Week: Building a more effective UN in Geneva. Interview with Michael Møller, Acting UN General Director.



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This Week in Switzerland



An agreement to enforce cooperation between the **European Space Agency** and **CERN** was signed in Geneva in the presence of State Secretary **Mauro Dell' Ambrogio**. The two organizations, pioneers in their respective areas of research, will work in **synergy** to improve their efficiency and competitiveness at the international level and develop new **innovative materials**, for instance for use in extreme environmental conditions.

Following the **sentencing** of 529 members of the **Muslim Brotherhood** to death in Egypt, Switzerland has stated that it is **unlikely** to return **CHF 700 million** in frozen assets stashed in Swiss banks. The money is thought to have been **stolen** by ex-president **Hosni Mubarak** and was subsequently frozen by Swiss authorities in 2011. Though Switzerland plans to return the money, it must make sure that human rights are respected before proceeding with negotiations.

From 2015 onwards, the Swedish fashion retailer **H&M** will **increase** its hourly pay to CHF 22 in Swiss shops, taking the **minimum wage** for an employee working 42 hours per week to **CHF 4000**. In an effort to attract and retain the best possible staff, German supermarket chain **Lidl** has also raised the minimum wage paid to its employees to the same level.

The **IPCC's** fifth report paints a dire picture for the future. On top of increased **flooding** in Europe and Asia, Africa will have to deal with evermore severe **water scarcity**. Agricultural yields are predicted to decrease, increasing migratory trends around the world. Often defined as a threat-multiplier, changing weather trends could lead to **violent conflict** in certain regions if mitigation is impossible.

The number of people who ended their lives via the **assisted-suicide** organization **Exit** rose to 459 in 2013, **100 more** than in 2012. Since 2008, the average age of those ending their lives has increased by three years, from 74 to 77. In **Switzerland**, assisted suicide has been legal since the 1940s, as long as patients carry out the act themselves. The other main organization operating on Swiss soil is **Dignitas**.

The 25th session of the UN Human Rights Council, opened on 3 March 2014 by the Swiss President Didier Burkhalter, adopted a **resolution** proposed by Switzerland about protection of **human rights** during peaceful demonstrations. Criticism was made by Switzerland and 27 other countries about security forces' extensive use of **violence** during demonstrations in **Egypt**. The Council also discussed the human rights situation in Syria, North Korea, Myanmar, the Central African Republic, Sri Lanka, Iran, Mali and the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territory.

According to Federal Statistical Office, latest figures show **bankruptcy** increased by **3.9%** in 2013 with 12,478 proceedings opened under the Federal Act on Debt Collection and Bankruptcy. At the same time, **financial losses** resulting from bankruptcy settlements **declined** by almost CHF 330 million in 2013, reaching the lowest level since 1994.



A fisherman caught a **piranha** in the **river Aar**, near Münsingen in the canton of **Bern**. According to cantonal experts, this is not the first time this exotic fish has been seen in the area, and the main cause is possibly **tourists** from Brazil carrying specimens in their bags before getting rid of them into Bernese river. This predator, which lives in schools, seems to be getting **acclimatized** and is multiplying quickly.

French elections

Continued front page 1

popularity is at a record low, has been managing the economy. On Monday, official figures showed that France had only reduced its public deficit to 4.3%, rather than the 4.1% promised. The European Union, which granted Paris a two-year extension, is demanding 3% by the end of 2015.

While the FN has done well in small towns in the south of France, it did not achieve the surge some had predicted. It failed to gain a single mayoralty in the Haute-Savoie despite high expectations in places such as Cluses.

"The French are fed up with Hollande's pie-in-the-sky promises" noted a UMP frontliner with a Swiss company in Vaud. "People want jobs and less red tape." For the Rhône-Alpes region, continued access to the Geneva area's job market is crucial. There is also the hope that Hollande may be forced to renege on plans to impose new inheritance taxes, including on resident assets in Switzerland. This has already had a profound impact on foreign-owned

properties throughout France, resulting in a noticeable slow-down of local construction and other services.

One key aspect is that EU citizens, who can vote and stand in local elections, took part so strongly. French mayors are among the most powerful in Europe with numerous municipalities over the past decades indulging in conflicts of interest, favouritism and corruption.

According to Judith Hebert, the new mayor of Grilly in the Pays de Gex, voted in as part of a "non-political" council (nine women and six men), "people want to have a say in the way things are run. They want transparency and informed debate." The previous regime sought to hide real-estate projects with obscure notices or a failure to highlight them on the communal website. "We're not against development, but we want to retain our rural atmosphere with initiatives that make sense".

Edward Girardet

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Regional

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Editor's comment

Hedgehogs, wolves and climate change



Following last year's disastrous spring, our current warm weather has been marred by this week's UN Intergovernmental Climate Change report warning of more extreme conditions and food insecurity unless we take action. Normally I rely on the disappearing mountain snows to herald the

advent of spring, coupled with that other more unfortunate indication, the number of hedgehogs emerging from hibernation killed on the roads. Even the exciting glimpses of a lone wolf in the Jura have not mitigated the strident nature of this new IPCC alert.

The 772 scientists involved maintain that we have only a few years to reduce carbon emissions to avoid catastrophe. Sea-level rises and temperature shifts are already disrupting human life and ecosystems with wildfires in North America, the spread of disease in Africa and decreased food production in South America. In the Alps, climate change is altering the composition of permafrost that holds rocks together. Mountaineers say that it is no longer safe to do mixed summer climbing on snow and ice as glaciers retreat and snow-bridges disappear. All this affects tourism, economic infrastructure and agriculture.

Our response has to be immediate. Genevois are proposing that city transport be free to reduce car use. But there will have to be a far greater, more integrated approach, including cycle paths, accessible Park & Ride areas, and cheaper rail travel. Why should it cost less for two people to drive from Lausanne to Paris than take the train? This is where more effective outreach is crucial. So why not use the revenue from traffic fines to fund better public awareness?

Edward Girardet, Editor@lenews.ch

Geneva councillor reassures expats

GENEVA Expats living in the region received assurances from Geneva's State Councillor for the Economy, Pierre Maudet, that the results of the 9 February vote against mass immigration will not affect those already living or working in Switzerland. Nearly 300 expatriates, many long-time residents in Switzerland, came to the Hotel Metropole on 26 March to attend an event organized by the Geneva social website glocals.com to hear what the vote might imply.

Glocals founder Nir Ofek said they decided to convene the event after their website was flooded with alarmed comments from members.

Maudet told the audience, "I will fight for the rights of foreign residents." He noted that current laws remain in effect during the three-year transition period provided in the initiative. He also said there has been a huge wave of renewals of B and C permits as well as requests for full naturalization.

Pamela Taylor

Delays for CEVA

The CEVA railway project linking Cornavin in Geneva to Annemasse has been delayed as engineering complications hinder the construction of the Champel tunnel.

Expected to be setback by 21 months, the predicted 2017 completion of the project now seems unattainable. Both the Champel and Pinchat tunnels are central to the successful completion of the development which, despite delays, is still respecting the initial budget of CHF 1.567 billion. The confederation is covering 55% of the costs with the remaining 45% covered by Geneva canton.

French side construction is expected to cost EUR 234 million, and will span over two of the total 16 kilometres. Swiss concerns, however, go beyond engineering technicalities and cost-disparities.



CEVA is described as the hyphen between Geneva and Annemasse

The new Geneva State Councillor for Transport, Luc Barthassat, favours installing the future maintenance centre on the French side in the Haute-Savoie village of Velleiry. This would benefit the Zurich-based train constructor Stadler Rail. Right-wing parties have been quick off the mark to define such a proposal as scandalous given that finan-

cial benefits emanating from the 15,000 m² complex are expected to create 300 jobs and will benefit France as opposed to Geneva. Potential worker strikes are also a concern for Swiss lobbyists who see the move as an affront to their interests.

Christopher Woodburn

Champ-Dollon therapy for women

Visitors to the Terres d'Islam exhibit at Geneva's Ariana Museum are in for a double treat. The main exhibit is a breath-taking collection of ceramic and tile work from the ancient and new Arab world, much of it from Persia/Iran. And just inside the entrance is a beautiful wall of tiles, made by female prisoners at the Champ-Dollon maximum security prison in Puplinge, notorious for its overcrowded conditions for male prisoners. Women evidently fare better here, especially those able to take part in a project created by local ceramic artist Anouk Gressot in 2001. The project

aims to give women in trouble a chance to find redemption through art and to learn a skill.

Gressot said that the women do not work for money or fame, but for themselves. "It is not only rehabilitation but also a chance to find out what they can do and to express themselves." Their mural of perforated tiles covered with a turquoise glaze and set into mirrors is not the women's first work on display at the Ariana. "We have participated in art exhibits from Egypt to Colombia and Australia. This time we happily joined one about Islamic art."

Cristina Odero and Pamela Taylor



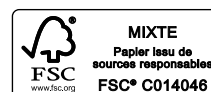
IMPRESSUM

le News
LOCAL SWISS NEWS IN ENGLISH

Le News: ISSN 2296-6641
Tirage imprimé: 24 000 exemplaires
Lectorat estimé: 40 000 lecteurs
Parution: tous les jeudis
Rédacteur en chef: Edward Girardet
Impression: Centre d'impression
Lausanne

Directeur en charge de la publicité: Daniel Ahlers
Régies publicitaires: SPN SA; Publicitas SA; Bab-Consulting Global Solutions Sàrl; Swiss Media Press (F)
Edité par: Le News Sàrl
Contact: <http://lenews.ch/contact>
Le News Sàrl, WTC, Ave Gratta-Paille 2, 1018 Lausanne
Classifieds: <http://lenews.ch/classifieds>
Distribution: <http://lenews.ch/how-to-get>
Editeur: Jeremy McTeague

Directeurs: Jeremy McTeague, Daniel Ahlers, Phillip Judd
Mise en page: SPN SA, Département PréPresse
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National

Vote on stopping mass immigration

LAUSANNE A recent informal Le News poll seeking to determine the attitudes of readers regarding the 9 February referendum indicated that a third would vote to stop mass immigration.

Respondents were first asked for their nationality: (Swiss; EU; Other) and then asked: "Your vote: stop mass immigration into Switzerland? Yes/No".

The results (see table) initially appeared counter-intuitive. While the majority (65%) of all foreign respon-

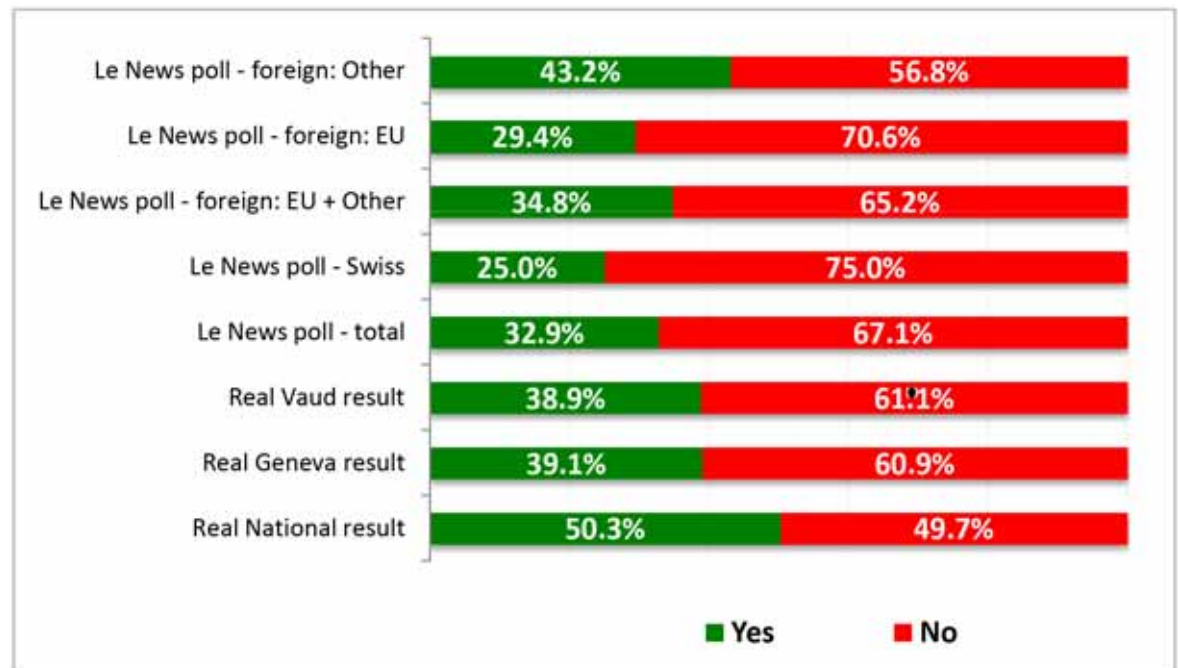
Poll highlights

All foreign respondents (EU and Other) voted "Yes" more often than Swiss respondents.

Non-EU respondents voted "Yes" more than actual Swiss voters in Vaud and Geneva.

Only 25% of Swiss respondents voted "Yes" – half that of the actual national Swiss vote.

140 readers responded to the survey. While every effort has been made to ensure the veracity of the results in this report, Le News does not claim that this survey is an accurate representation of readers' attitudes.



dents stated that they would have voted 'No', those who said they would have supported the ban made up a higher percentage than those of Swiss origin who voted likewise in the poll.

"I'm OK, I'm in, so let's close the door now."

Forty-three percent of foreign, non-EU respondents voted 'Yes' – 4 percentage points more than the 39% of Swiss voters in Vaud and Geneva cast

'Yes' ballots in the referendum on 9 February.

The referendum affects only Swiss – EU immigration, so respondents from other countries may not feel the issue is of particular relevance to them. This begs the question as to whether their high level of support for the ban is an indicator of strong integration, or, as some commentators believe, it is due to foreigners adopting an attitude of "I'm OK, I'm in, so let's close the door now." One British reader, a recently

naturalized Swiss who participated in the poll favouring a 'Yes' vote, privately acknowledged that she was not against immigration per se, but felt that Switzerland was becoming too overcrowded. Another, an American citizen living here for nearly two decades, thought the 'Yes' vote should be directed more at non-skilled "second-tier" Europeans, notably from Eastern Europe.

Le News

Switzerland's terrorism security dilemma

The involvement of Swiss citizens in terrorist or foreign insurgent activities may not be a new phenomenon – scores of Swiss took part in the Spanish civil war during the 1930s – but numbers are growing according to intelligence reports. On 20 March a Swiss citizen, originally from Kosovo, killed three people in Turkey before being apprehended. With conflicts in countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia and Syria attracting ever-more eclectic groups of outsiders, Switzerland is finding itself increasingly involved in international predicaments that have little to do with its interests. Reports show that the Turkish attack may not be a one-off. The number of Swiss passport holders tracked by the confederation's secret services has increased 20-fold since 2011.

Switzerland may have to redefine its policy for dealing with home-grown terrorism, a phenomenon affecting other European countries. Legally speaking, Switzerland is behind many of its EU counterparts given that it has almost no anti-terrorism laws. Terrorism is not considered a Swiss "thing", despite growing right-wing anti-immigrant rhetoric. Nor does conservative discourse help an otherwise relatively successful integration process, compared to the Muslim ghettos in France or the UK providing ardent recruits, some of them European, for extremist causes. Intelligence reports estimate that a dozen Islamic Swiss combatants are involved in fighting in Syria.

Christopher Woodburn



Switzerland may have to define its policy for dealing with home-grown terrorists.

Business & Economy

Indian complaints

The Swiss finance minister, Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf, has received a letter from her Indian counterpart complaining about an alleged lack of cooperation over funds stashed by Indian citizens in Switzerland's banks.



Swiss finance minister, Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf.

A finance ministry spokesman confirmed to the *Sonntagszeitung* newspaper that the letter had arrived and that the Indian finance minister would get a reply "soon".

Palaniappan Chidambaram wrote to Widmer-Schlumpf on March 13, stating that Switzerland had failed to provide administrative assistance in an investigation into suspected tax evasion.

According to the *Sonntagszeitung*, the Indians are believed to be looking at 782 names culled from a list of HSBC clients provided to foreign authorities by former bank employee Hervé Falciani.

The Indians have been frustrated by the perceived lack of cooperation, especially after Widmer-Schlumpf rebuffed their request last year. The finance minister stuck to her guns in January, stating that assistance could not be provided on the basis of stolen data.

"Switzerland's refusal to provide information to India and other countries on the grounds that the source of

the information requested is based on 'stolen data' means that, in practice, Switzerland still believes in bank secrecy and is therefore not in tune with the modern era," Chidambaram wrote in the letter, whose contents were released to the Indian media a few days ago.

The Indian finance minister threatened to take his complaints to the G20, whose leaders declared in 2009 that the "era of bank secrecy is over."

Given that the G20 has accepted that that sanctions can be implemented to protect public finances and financial systems, Chidambaram warned that if information was to be denied to India under Double Taxation Avoidance Convention with Switzerland, "the Government of India will be constrained to take a position in the global forum."

The letter's contents were revealed as India readies itself for general elections in May.

Swissinfo

Basel World

Basel World, the world's largest watch-making and jewellery fair, takes place this week. Organisers report that they are hosting 3,500 exhibitors and welcoming over 100,000 visitors. Addressing the press, François Thiébaud, President of the Swiss Exhibitors' Committee maintained that overall the Swiss watch industry in 2013 recorded an increase in exports of 1.9% to CHF 22 bn. The Swiss watch industry has seen massive growth in recent years, especially in China which has proved highly receptive to Swiss luxury products. In the last year, however, there has been a 12.1% reduction in sales in the country as the government's anti-corruption measures have taken effect.

Publicitas sold off

Vaud-based Publigruppe has announced the sale of its advertising sales arm, Publicitas, to Aurelius for more than CHF 10 million.

Insight

Fusion: Creating a star

LAUSANNE Switzerland is punching above its weight in its participation in a project to build the world's largest fusion reactor.

The project known as ITER, for International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor, is expected to demonstrate the scientific and technological feasibility of fusion on earth. It will be the first of two steps, the second one being DEMO (Demonstration power plant), leading to the long-awaited jump from fusion experiments to a full-scale electricity-producing power plant sometime in 2050.

Switzerland's participation, both financial and research, makes it one of the largest fusion players in Europe. "Switzerland's contribution is proportionally larger than its size in quality and quantity," maintained Ambrogio Fasoli, director of the EPFL's plasma research centre in Lausanne.

Europe itself has a much larger part of the fusion programme than the US. In fact, the EU is contributing 45% of the costs with the other six parties add-

ing 9% each. The seven ITER partners include the EU, China, Japan, India, Russia, South Korea and the US. Switzerland is considered part of the EU partnership via the Euratom.

"We have one of the most important Tokamak experiments in the world," Fasoli added, explaining that, in the simplest terms, a Tokamak is a cage using magnetic fields to trap plasma and confine it long enough to produce energy. The results obtained in the Swiss experiment will be used to optimize the operation of ITER, the largest Tokamak reactor ever built, currently under construction in southern France and expected to go online by the next decade.

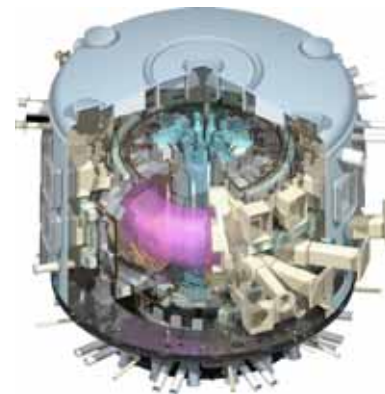
Fusion technology is often confused with fission, a misconception used by politicians reluctant to spend the billions needed for fusion reactors and to abandon less expensive energy projects such as fracking. "What we are trying to do is produce and tame a little star here on earth in order to obtain virtually limitless energy with no environmental harm," said Fasoli. And despite its lesser contribution, James Van Dam

of the US Department of Energy was adamant about fusion's importance. "It is 14 million times more efficient than coal, 7 million times more efficient than oil and 4 million times more efficient than nuclear fission."

It is the clean aspect of fusion that should prove of public interest. Nuclear fission produces highly radioactive particles, while fusion creates only creates low-level radioactive elements, restricted to the reactor's structure, and is a naturally occurring, unlimited phenomenon like the sun and stars.

Last May, at an EPFL conference on the plasma centre's progress thus far, EPFL Vice-President Philippe Gillet said: "Following the 2011 Fukushima nuclear reactor disaster, Switzerland has confirmed its commitment to fusion research while gradually stepping out of nuclear fission." Part of the EPFL project includes training nuclear engineers to safely decommission nuclear fission facilities.

The EPFL project has the full support of Bern, despite some grumblings in German-speaking cantons that such an important centre is located in Suisse



The fusion fuel is contained in a doughnut-shaped vessel - the world's largest tokamak.

Romande. Fasoli, an Italian physicist from Milan, who was at Oxford and MIT before joining EPFL, believes it makes sense to concentrate research in one place "rather than have one centre each in Zurich, Bern and Lausanne. But we try to involve the others as much as we can," he said. No one knows precisely how much the ITER project will cost. Estimates range between \$10 and \$20 billion as a result of raw material price increases and design changes. ITER is the most expensive scientific experiment in the world and, like the Large Hadron Collider at CERN, it is a project without end. *Pamela Taylor*

Education & Technology

American universities: Conquering the SATs

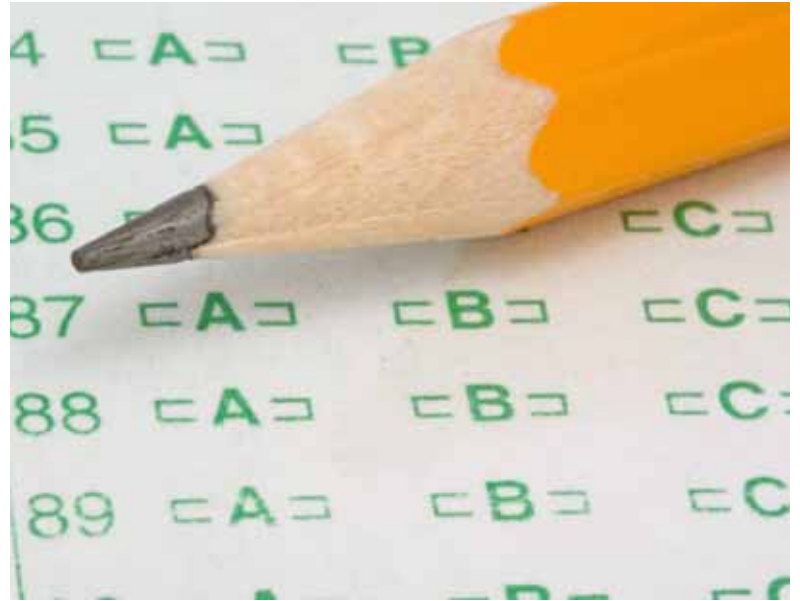
With few exceptions, Scholastic Assessment Tests (SATs) are required by all students, regardless of nationality, for entry into any university in the United States. Here are some thoughts on how to prepare.

Even if you have got the International Baccalaureate, Swiss Maturité, or British A-Levels, you need to take the SATs in order to apply for an American university. These are based on an assessment of both knowledge and problem-solving ability and skills, with roughly 30% of questions the former and 70% the latter. The exam itself is made up of three sections: reading, writing and mathematics, with each marked out of 800 points. The total highest score is 2,400 for the entire paper.

Students between the ages of 16 to

18 (years 11 to 13) can take SATs at specific times of the year, and with several tries. This is comforting if your first attempt is not your best. However, bear in mind that universities will often ask to see all of your test results, so it is best not to sit the exams unprepared or for practice.

Given that each university has its own entrance requirements, the SATs offer no standard pass or fail. Many US institutions will accept an average 65%, but Harvard and other Ivy League universities will push for up to 90% as their minimum. This means that an average of 450 points per section is sufficient for students to be admitted to many universities. However, good preparation can help provide an additional 50 points per section, which may prove enough to get into the more competitive colleges. There are more complicated score breakdowns for admis-



Good SAT scores alone may not prove sufficient for some universities.

sions in different places, so it is important to be aware of the full spread of results required by your chosen university.

Depth of knowledge does not usually constitute a stumbling block. Most students of a reasonable intellectual ability can tackle the comprehension and mathematics involved with their existing vocabulary and other skills. Nevertheless, two key factors can help decide between a high mark and an average-to-low result: firstly, knowing the most efficient ways for interpreting and solving questions; and secondly, mastering time pressure. These are skills that can be learned, primarily through specialist coaching and practice. Even adding a few marks to a consistently good average score through a better grasp of the format, or the style and tricks of the papers, can boost your chances for getting you where you want to go, notably the best university on your list.

In theory, the SATs represent everything you need in order to be considered by an American university. Yet US-based students will be completing their High School Diploma before sitting SATs if they plan to attend college. The reality is that the most prestigious US universities will also be looking for proof of aptitude in specific subjects. The all-round green light alone that good SAT scores can offer may not prove sufficient. The admissions' boards will most probably look at the results of your other exams, such as the SAT II, APs (in the American system), the IB Diploma, A-Levels or the Swiss Maturité.

So when selecting which exams you will be sitting in your final two years of school, be aware that a good SAT score may get your application looked at. But the more challenging final-year courses coupled with extra-curricular activities, such as voluntary work, theatre or sports, could prove your ultimate worth. In this competitive market, you need all the validation you can get.

More and more, the American College Testing (ACT) is being accepted and recognized in place of SATs across the US. As a result, you will need to consider the differences between these two exam systems when deciding which one is more likely to lead to success. For example, SAT wrong answers take away points, so guessing does not help. ACT, on the other hand, does not penalize. The structures of the two papers are also different: the SATs consist of ten short sections in place of the four long ACT ones; a third of the SAT reading section tests vocabulary, whereas the reading section in the ACTs is based on understanding the meaning of passages. All these differences can have important consequences. Students with learning difficulties who qualify for extra time, for example, often fare better sitting ACTs because further time is more valuable when completing comprehension-based questions, even in the scientific sections.

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Lifestyle

To text or not to text – that is the question...

So we asked it. And this is what we learned:



I see lots of people nowadays who have made socializing through mobile phones an integral part of their daily routine. Frequency is no longer the issue—24/7 use is. Be it when watching TV, doing homework or chatting to friends, I think teenagers especially seem to have developed an innate ability to communicate with real people while simultaneously staying in tune with their virtual contacts. I believe a few technology-free sanctuaries still exist: the dinner table (allegedly!), the classroom (hopefully!) and planes (theoretically!). Bewildered elder brother



For me the most selfish use of mobile phones is by pram-pushing mothers who walk around with those tinny white headphones jammed into their ears. They can't talk or interact with their infant whose main source of learning is from their mothers. It's a tragic badge of lazy stupidity and selfishness. Mr Grumpy



Smart phones have become the new third and four wheels. Or rather the new 475th, 678th and 234th wheels

depending on how many Facebook friends you have. Having a mobile phone at the table, over dinner or coffee, buzzing, beeping and flashing is so annoying! Even though I want to throw my phone in a cup of coffee every time it beeps I am guilty of the same – you have to keep up with everyone else's pace of life. #viciouscircle



I reckon the most self-deluded people on the planet are those who say they can text, email etc. while fully engaging in conversation with someone in person. Half the people I see (and almost all I bump into) in the street can't even walk and do this at the same time. Olivier



Groups of friends in restaurants all on their phones and ignoring each other is pretty sad. Live for the moment! Paulo

Agree or disagree?

"People now spend more time looking at their mobile phone than at their loved one": Agree or disagree?

Is mobile omnipresence a necessary evil? Yes or no?

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Send us your mobile phone-related pet peeves to editor@lenews.ch!

Let there be light



LAUSANNE Thanks to LEDsafari, you can try your hand at making your own DIY solar lamp at a workshop at EPFL. Using only five electrical components, the lamp can be assembled by anyone without any technical knowledge and is easy to repair. It costs \$2 to make – instead of the \$2 per week to fuel a kerosene lamp – which means it the cheapest solar lamp available.

To increase trust in the lamp, LEDsafari has developed a specific training method which, combined with a community approach, gives people a real understanding of sustainability and the basic knowledge to build a solar lamp from locally available material.

The project started in India, where almost 30 people were trained. After improvements were made following feedback, a second pilot project was

run in Kenya and Tanzania. Around a hundred people attended, including unemployed youth, women and school children.

The five organizers – all under 30 – are passionate about sustainability and hope that participants will become part of the LEDsafari community and organize a workshop themselves when next they are on holiday in an emerging market. What are your plans this summer?

The workshop is at EPFL on Sunday 13 April from 10h00 to 15h00. Cost: CHF 5 to attend, CHF 30 if you want to take the lamp home. All proceeds will go towards LEDsafari activities in Africa and India. To register, e-mail LEDsafari@gmail.com by 9 April. <http://ledsafari.com/events>

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Lifestyle

Lavaux: A rich wine heritage

The Lake Geneva region boasts a proud wine tradition, with the native Chasselas grape taking centre stage.

Benefiting from the area's temperate climate, soil composition and southern-facing slopes, Lavaux's vineyards are indeed unique – a world heritage site, in fact, since 2007. When passing along the precariously steep terraces looking out onto the Alps, it's easy to understand the accolade for such a viticultural treasure. Blaise Duboux, a 17th-generation wine producer whose family started the trade in 1453, feels a deep attachment to the earth he cultivates. "For producers such as myself, it's not about competing with France or Italy. Lavaux offers a product which is inimitable because of certain climatic and geographic factors compounded by the region's winemaking history," he said.

For these small family businesses, competing with larger firms is point-



Lavaux vines benefit from what locals call the "three suns"

less. "Everything is done by hand," emphasized Duboux, who sees wine as a product made to be shared. Defying gravity, his vineyards benefit from what locals call the "three suns", a unique symbiosis of natural sunlight, absorbed

heat from the 400km of dry-stone walls, and the sun reflected from the lake. Duboux's clients visit his terroir to take in the landscape and the history – a dying trend in an increasingly mechanized and impersonal market. "Many of

my clients are Anglophones," added Duboux, who speaks English, Italian, German and French. As he said, it's all about sharing.

Christopher Woodburn

ACTION

from April 2nd to 6th 2014



BEEF : RIB WITH BONE FOR ROASTING OR GRILLING - Source : France
Category and racial type indicated at place of sale

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MAGNUM : DOMAINE RAMATUELLE COTEAUX VARIOIS IN PROVENCE (1) 1,5L bottle

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GARIGUETTE STRAWBERRIES
Category 1. Source : France
Punnet of 250 g.

2.59 CHF punnet
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Or 2,98 € instead of 4,98 € - Or per kg : 1,49 €		
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Or 3,73 € instead of 7,47 € - Or per kg : 1,24 €		

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Or 3,28 € instead of 5,48 € - Or per litre : 1,64 €		
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DANONE VELOUTÉ FRUIX
From France. Combination of red fruits and yellow fruits
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*For a selection of products indicated in the shop. The immediate reductions on "My Winning Formula" are limited to 6 per product, per offer and per household, to 3 for alcoholic drinks (except beer, ciders, wine & champagne: limited to 6).


(1) Alcohol abuse is dangerous to health. Consume in moderation. Exchange rate used: 1€ = 1.33CHF. The rate may change according to the shop. Non contractual photos, presentation

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Lifestyle

Confused by hotel stars?

GENEVA Whether travelling for business or pleasure, trying to figure out Europe's hotel star category system (often confused with the stringent Michelin restaurant stars) can leave many scratching their heads in confusion.

Switzerland was the first to institute a non-government form of hotel classification in 1979; this greatly influenced similar systems in Austria and Germany. In 2010, the European Hotelstars Union was created to harmonize the various rating guides. It currently has 15 members, including Switzerland – but not France.

Stars are normally awarded in ascending order depending on room size, view, noise and location. Critics say the system penalizes smaller, older hotels that may lack a critical element such as an elevator – perhaps one reason France has not joined Hotelstars.

According to Hotelstars, every

room in a one-star hotel must have a private bathroom, TV and public access to a telephone. In France, the focus is on room size (more than 9m², excluding bathroom), while lift access is only required for higher floors.

At the upper end, a "superior" rating for a four-star hotel is for amenities such as a sauna or gym. These are not

mentioned in the five-star rating, but probably taken for granted. The main perk of a five-star hotel continues to be its appearance. On this the French go one better, having introduced, in 2012, a "Palace" category within its five-star rating for "buildings of prestige". If you have to ask, you can't afford it.

Pamela Taylor

Hotel star criteria

European Hotelstars ratings:

* Private bathroom, TV, breakfast, table, chair, soap, telephone access

*** Bilingual staff, drinks available in room, internet access, heater in bathroom, hair dryer

**** Multilingual staff, 24-hour room service, PC/internet in room, safe, valet parking, minibar, ironing service, personal care products, flowers or gift in room

French government ratings:

* Room at least 9m², continental breakfast, public or private bathroom

*** Room at least 13.5m² including private bathroom, internet access, separate hotel salon

**** Room at least 24m², A/C, room service, TV with international channels, plus a variety of extras such as minibar, bathrobes and safe

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Chez Vous

Playing the game: Integrating through sports

GENEVA When my American wife and I first arrived in Geneva, one of our principal concerns was how to ensure that our four-year-old daughter would learn French and fit in. We sent her to a Swiss Montessori school where most of the kids seemed to converse in two or three languages. The teachers spoke French, but what was missing was contact with the local community.

A year later, we moved to France. We immediately placed her in the village school – one of our best decisions ever – and signed her up for various activities, such as music and dance, at the local community centre. She began meeting new friends, most of them French-speaking. Even when she moved on to the International Lycée in Ferney-Voltaire, she continued doing communal activities such as modern dance which brought her into contact with young people from the region. Our



Cessy playing in Annecy.

car was always full of girls switching from English to French depending on which boyfriend they were talking about.

By the time our son came along, we knew exactly what to do. He, too, went to the village school, but also joined the local football association. Many of his mates were French, but also Italian, Portuguese, English, American, German and Canadian. “The amazing thing about this region is that it is extremely diverse,” notes Jean-Christophe Leboulanger, a volunteer coach with Cessy-Gex, which runs a good half dozen teams for different ages. “Football is highly popular so we draw a lot of young people of different nationalities. They all speak French together. It’s amazing to see how they improve as they grow up.” Rugby is also popular, and most French towns and villages offer anything from judo and tennis to cycling, basketball and badminton.

“Local sports clubs are a great way to keep children active,” maintains Sarah Russell, whose two children play local football. “The French clubs are especially good value – considerably cheaper than Swiss ones – although each of the parents gets to wash the entire team’s football kit every few weeks. The Swiss clubs contract this out!”

Like other parents, we find ourselves taking and picking up kids from practices and matches around the Rhône-Alpes region. This may disrupt many a weekend, but you get to know the community as well as new parts of France. You cannot imagine the number of tournaments that take place in the depths of Ain or the Haute Savoie. Since Switzerland has a different football association, only occasionally do

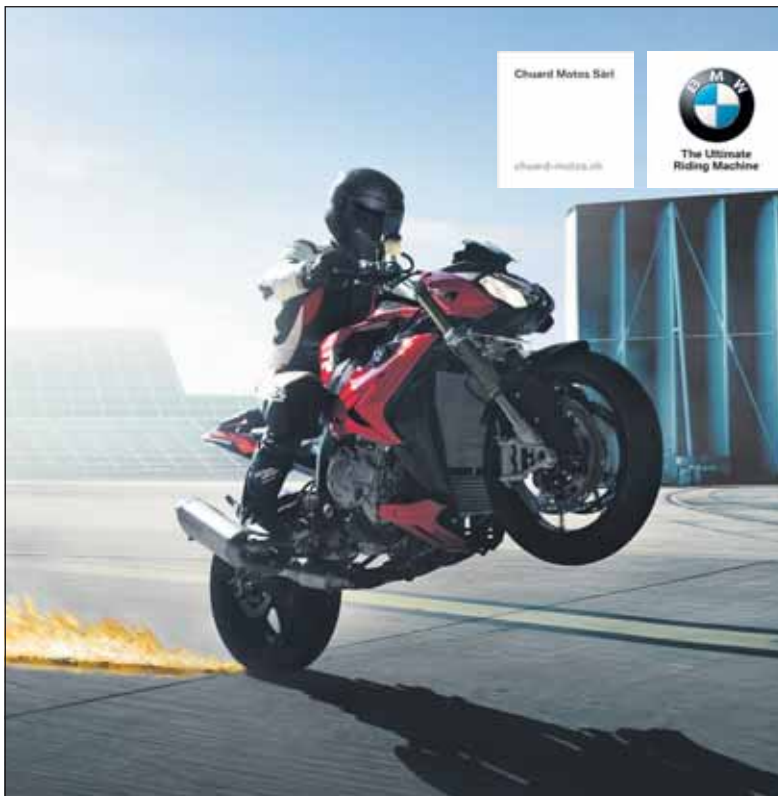
the French teams play “friendlies” with nearby Swiss villages, which is a pity given their proximity.

Now almost 14, our son goes to a Swiss international school, where he plays on the team, but insists on continuing with local football. The same goes for many others. “I like playing with the local team,” said Benji, a 12-year-old Irish-German boy. “It helps my French, particularly the *argot* (slang). And it keeps me in touch with my French friends.” Russell admits that sticking with the local teams can be a struggle, particularly if the children don’t speak French. “There are more international kids in the Swiss clubs, but that can lead to cliques,” she said. “My son played on a (French) team where the trainer fined the kids for speaking English because he felt strongly that they needed to speak one language if they were to play as a team.”

On both sides of the border, however, football is easier for boys than for girls. During the early years, most teams seem to have at least two or three girls playing with the boys. But from 11 onwards, the girls get fed up with being different.

German-speaking Switzerland has more girls’ teams than its French-speaking counterpart. Cessy-Gex had a girls’ team but not enough players. As a result, Russell’s daughter and two friends transferred to a Swiss girls’ team in Collex-Bossy. Two of the girls, one English, the other French, now play for the canton of Geneva and take part in Swiss national competitions.

Edward Girardet



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Chez Vous

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“We read a couple of other books about Switzerland before coming here. We did not get this one until after we were here for about a month, and I wish we had it before, as it would have made the first few weeks a lot easier for us.”

www.knowitall.ch

Le News photo competition

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:

“On the wild side”
Email your entry to
competition@lenews.ch
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Congratulations to Zoran Glavnik,
winner of last week's photo competition
“Intelligence”.

“She_knows” - Zoran Glavnik



Cracking up

Keep it real

Things have been a little dull in my family since the snow melted and we put away our skis, so I'm going to suggest that we have a season of Reality TV competitions to see us through to the summer holidays.

We'll kick off with a few episodes of This Family's Got Talent, just to warm us up. My money is on the seven-year-old. She's been belting out “Let it Go” from Frozen every afternoon for over a month now, and I think she'll blow the judges away. Literally. She has quite a set of lungs, for a small girl. Her little sister can only get through the first two lines of “In and Out the Dusty Bluebells” before losing interest, so the only real competition is going to come from my husband, who'll be demonstrating his amazing sitting skills: after months of practice, he can watch three rugby games in a row, and not move a muscle.

After that, we'll move into a short

round of MasterChef. My husband and I will each be presented with a tin of borlotti beans, some wilted broccoli, two apples and a stock cube, and tasked with making a delicious three-course meal. The children will judge, and I can tell you now that whoever is stupid enough to actually use that broccoli is going to lose. (I think I have an excellent chance of winning this one because it's a challenge I face at least twice a month, when I've been too lazy to go grocery shopping.)

This should get us to the Easter holidays and the thrilling Survivor Switzerland. The children and I will be stranded at home for 14 days, most likely in torrential rainstorms. My strategy is to get myself voted off Hell Island early, then retire to my bedroom with a pile of books. Only when things downstairs are threatening to head towards a Lord of the Flies scenario will I



emerge, bribe everyone with sweets and declare myself the winner.

After the holidays we'll enjoy an exciting double bill: The Great Bake Off and Fear Factor. In the first round the children will compete to bake the most original cake. Past entries have included the Cake Made of Nothing But Six Eggs and Balsamic Vinegar; and my personal favourite, the Unbaked Sugar and Milk Cake With a Carrot in the Middle. In round two, the judges try to taste each entry without retching.

Then we'll be running the ever-

popular Big Brother, Parents, Cousins and Friends over the first half of the summer holiday. In previous years we've had up to ten people spending a week together, sharing only two showers and one washing machine. Housemates will be given a number of challenges, such as getting six giant duvets into six duvet covers without breaking down in tears; inflating air mattresses while small children jump up and down on them; and getting my mother's 50 kilo suitcase up a flight of stairs without swearing.

And at the end of this thrilling week, any housemates left standing will cram themselves into two cars and head off for an episode of The Amazing Race: Tuscany, armed with only their swimsuits and a GPS that doesn't recognize Italy. Exciting times ahead, so stay tuned!

Robyn Goss blogs at www.robbygoss.com

Travel

Salève cable car back in business

GENEVA One of Geneva's most popular tourist attractions – taking the cable car to the top of the Salève for a panoramic view of the Jet d'Eau – reopens on 5 April after a shutdown of three months to overhaul its cable system.

The two cable cars, which each carry 60 passengers, are the same as before. Upgraded in 1983, they replaced the cars that were originally installed in 1932. "The old cable cars are in excellent condition, even technically," said Patrick Roxo of the system's operator RATP Development. "It was the huge cables that needed changing. And they were very expensive – three million euros."

Last year, the ascent to the top of the Salève, at 1,100 meters, attracted some 200,000 passengers, some to enjoy a picnic at the top, others to dine at the l'Horizon restaurant which, despite its 1930s décor, opened only five years ago.



Reopening on 5 April after a 3 month and EUR 3 million overhaul.

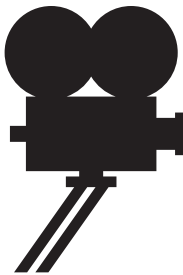
Roxo said that the joint venture between France's RATP and Geneva's TPG (Transport Public Genevois) expects the number of users to grow by 18% this year. Locals on both sides of the border are justifiably proud of the *téléphérique*, which 80 years ago

replaced a cogwheel train built in 1890 that took two hours to make the trip from Geneva. Now passengers can make the same trip in five minutes.

Pamela Taylor

JUST THE TICKET

A new website under construction in French and English will have a 24-hour webcam and a smart-phone app to purchase tickets online (www.telepherique-saleve.com). During the summer, the service runs every few minutes, seven days a week; the winter service is less frequent. Tickets can be bought in either euros or Swiss francs and are free for TPG pass holders. Fares have increased only slightly, according to Patrick Roxo. "It used to be €10.80 (CHF 13.15) for one adult and now costs €11.30 round trip (CHF 13.75) with a special rate for families of €6.30 (CHF 7.67) per person, including children over three."



FILM REVIEWS

By Neptune

HER ★ ★ ★ ★

It had to come, this computerized love story. And it is quite enchanting – there is so much in this delicate film. The writing, by director Spike Jonze of *Being John Malkovich* and *Where the Wild Things Are*, which is both light and deep. The scenario took the Oscar and Golden Globes for original screenplay and is the kind that makes you want to scribble down the words that work so well: "Love is socially accepted insanity", "I thought I've felt everything I'm ever going to feel...", "The past is just a story we tell ourselves..." Then there is the tender portrayal of Joaquin Phoenix as the loner who falls for this OS – operating system - an entity in his ear, melodiously voiced by Scarlett Johansson. She whispers phrases like "things that I want hurt – are they just programmed..?" The music is haunting and the views of a modern city, which



could be anywhere, (stay for the credits to find out where it is) are moody and beautiful. It's innovative, bewildering and yet so recognizable, for it's all about our innermost feelings and longings – possibly the ultimate narcissism. This is a film to discover, to savour and not to miss.

PUPPYLOVE and PELO MALO

Just a warning – try to MISS these two terribly mediocre and depraved (the first) and depressing (the second) films. The title of *Puppylove* (Swiss/Belguim film) might sound sweet and tempting – don't fall for it. It is the worst kind of "modern" social commentary – free sex, complete

carelessness (*je m'en foutisme*) and stupidity all around. Here's a vision of the utter lack of self-respect which seems prevalent among some of today's youth. *Pelo Malo* (Bad Hair), from Venezuela, is an awfully sad portrait of an unloved child (the excellent Samuel Lange Zambrano). These films will make you feel dirty and miserable. It's your choice.



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le News

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5 April

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4-12 April

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Various venues in Cully
www.cullyjazz.ch



Canton Vaud. Journées Européennes des Métiers d'Art

4-6 April

Various locations, from Lutry to Château d'Oex. Enjoy a weekend dedicated to craftsmanship in the canton of Vaud. Visit 26 local artisans in their workshops where they will demonstrate and explain the finer details of their art, from stone and metal work to paper, lace making and musical boxes. See the website for details and times; it is essential to sign up (click on the big purple dot on each artist's page). French necessary for maximum enjoyment.
www.journeesdesmetiersdart-vaud.ch



Lausanne. Opération Bus d'Or: découvrez l'univers des tl

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Place de Bellerive, Ouchy



Geneva. Echo Danses Festival

3-6 April

Doors open 19h, performance starts 20h30; workshops at various times in afternoon and early evening. The aim of this festival is to create a bridge between contemporary dance forms from Africa and Europe. Performances each day and "Café Concerts" after the show. Also workshops on African dance led by well-known dancers. Check the festival's Facebook page for the full programme and details of how to sign up for workshops.
Salle Centrale Madeleine – SCM
rue de la Madeleine 10
1204 Geneva
www.sallecentrale.ch



Morges. Potterz among Tulips

12-13 April, 9h00-18h00

More than 80 potters will be displaying their wares against the backdrop of more than 120,000 bulbs of 380 different varieties of tulips. Covering an area of 30,000 square metres, the Tulip Festival is a real harbinger of spring. Continues until 11 May, with various special events.

Parc de l'Indépendance, On the lake shore, near the Château



Lausanne. 20 Km de Lausanne

26 April- sign up by 13 April

Join more than 3,500 runners in the Vaud capital's signature race, starting along the lake and running up – with the emphasis on up – to the Old Town and back. If you're feeling less energetic, opt for the 10km or a 2 or 4km fun run ("courir pour le plaisir"). Kids of 5 and up can also enter over the shorter distances. Sign up online before 13 April!

Pierre de Coubertin Stadium and Juan-Antonio Samaranch Stadium
Vidy
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Countrywide. Cirque Starlight: New Show "Octavius"

14 March- 20 July, 14h00, 18h00, 20h00

Welcome aboard the imaginary ship Octavius which lost its way in the Arctic for 13 years. This original and magical show by the dynamic Jurassic circus company features 15 international artists trained in the best-known circus schools around the world. You can see it in 30 communes in several cantons, including Geneva (4-21 April) and Neuchâtel (23 & 25-27 April).

See website for details.
www.cirquestarlight.ch



Nyon. Coquillages & Crustacés: That's All Funk

12 April, 22h00-04h00

Another in the popular series of "Coquillages & Crustacées" themed dance evenings with resident DJs. Held down by the lake at the Usine à Gaz, Nyon's official permanent cultural and music venue (and it was once a "gas factory"). Tickets CHF 5.

Usine à Gaz
César Soulie 1
1269 Nyon
www.usineagaz.ch



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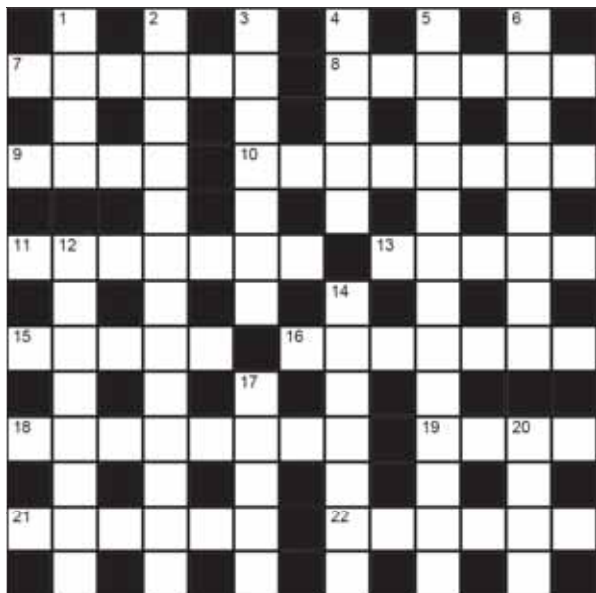
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GENEVA RELOCATION

Puzzles



QUICK CROSSWORD

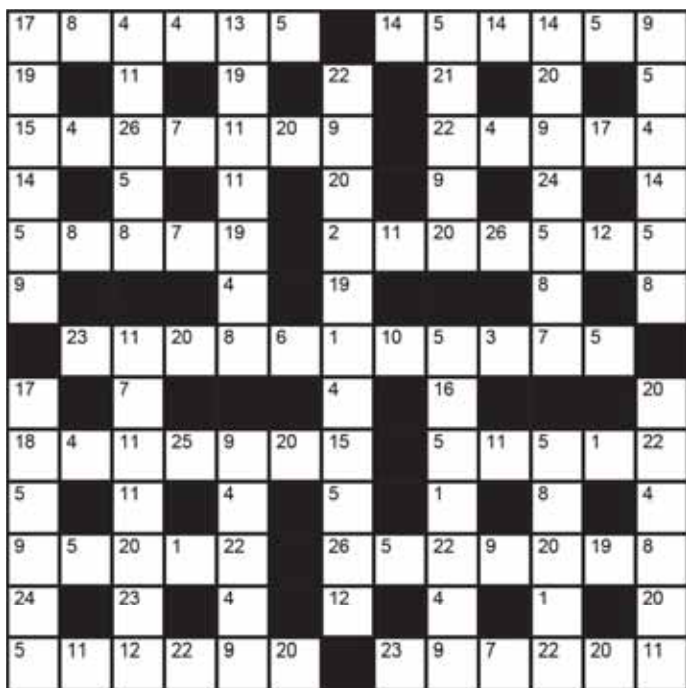
ACROSS

- 7 Gilbert and Ellice are now independent (6)
- 8 Wrist decoration (6)
- 9 Rip (4)
- 10 Let us be clear, it is soup (8)
- 11 Exhibiting actinism (7)
- 13 Mix of an acid and an alcohol (5)
- 15 Aggressive ambition (5)
- 16 A small amount (7)
- 18 With strength (8)
- 19 Hollering (4)
- 21 A specific identifiable position in a series (6)
- 22 In or of the month preceding the present one (6)

DOWN

- 1 Unusually great in size (4)
- 2 Two hinged signs (8,5)
- 3 Hurried action (7)
- 4 Of a very dark black (5)
- 5 Lacking regard (13)
- 6 A flaming torch (8)
- 12 Attendant at court (8)
- 14 Paper plant (7)
- 17 Long plumed stalker (5)
- 20 Land force (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
							N			L		
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
P												

What's On

Paléo Festival. Music and open air cool

Enjoy a unique blend of concert and carnival at Switzerland's largest open-air festival. This year's Paléo Festival runs from 22 to 27 July, with its six specially designed stages hosting a huge line-up of established stars and new talent.



From small beginnings in 1976, when an audience of some 1,800 people attended the "First Folk Festival" in the town assembly rooms in Nyon, Paléo has become one of Europe's most important musical events. Since 1990, Paléo Festival has been installed at l'Asse, a meadowland site of more than 15 hectares situated to the north of the town of Nyon.

Each year, more than 250 concerts and shows are on offer to the 230,000 members of the public who fill the outdoor stages and covered tents. The festival enables new artists and less well-known musical styles to reach a receptive audience. At the same time it offers a range of different shows including World Music and circus and street-performance.

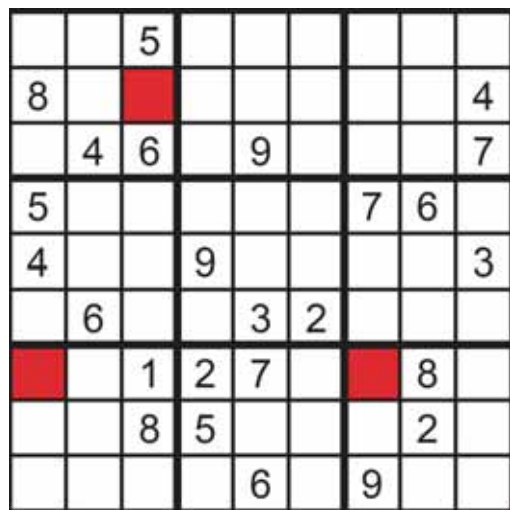
The Main Stage and Les Arches feature large-scale performances; The

Dome is dedicated to World Music; The Detour to urban music; The Club Tent to emerging artists; and La Ruche to circus and street performers.

The Paléo site is an extraordinary global village run by 4,600 volunteers whose presence contributes massively to the event's character. To ensure optimum viewing and listening quality, the Festival has, since 1996, limited ticket sales; it currently permits 35,000 spectators per day.

Tickets will be available from 9 April at 12h00, so it is essential to rush and get them. A good tip is to register online in advance and make sure you have all your log-in details to hand, as the tickets fly!

Cristina Odero



SUDOKU

Easy

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

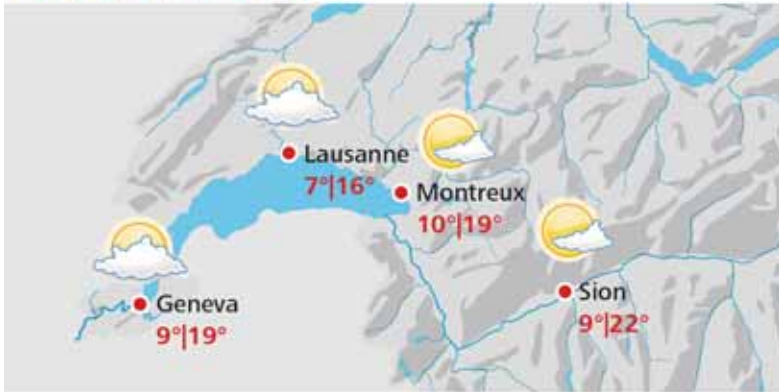
Win!

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

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

Weather

SUISSE ROMANDE



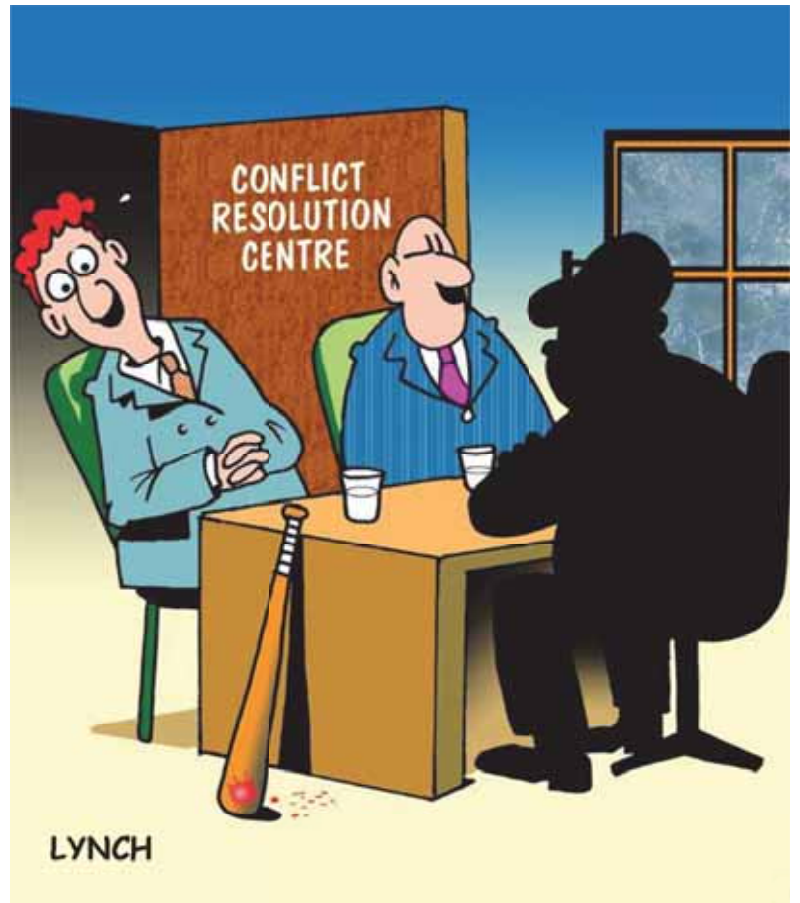
	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
GENEVA	9 19°	9 17°	8 17°	6 16°
LAUSANNE	7 16°	7 14°	7 13°	5 14°

SNOW REPORT - ON THE SLOPES

Verbier	272 cm	Crans Montana	247 cm	Les Rousses	150 cm
Villars	120 cm	Château d'Oex	55 cm	Chamonix	25 cm
Leysin	204 cm	Les Crosets	160 cm	Morzine	260 cm



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