

# le News

WEEKLY SWISS NEWS IN ENGLISH

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**GENEVA** The UN's acting head in Geneva is pushing for a complete renewal of the region's global image.

Michael Møller, the Danish diplomat and former aid worker appointed last November as acting director-general of the UN in Switzerland, would like to see a vibrant new International Geneva that includes not only the UN agencies and

NGOS, but also multi-national corporations, Swiss businesses, donors and the local population. "We need to act together to put a spotlight on the extraordinary things that this region represents and their impact on the planet," he said at a breakfast briefing this week.

"For the moment, many regard International Geneva as an expensive place with lots of meetings. We need to

change this. There is an enormous amount of stuff happening. It's important to put the substance on the table. It's about doing things differently," Møller argued. This means a complete rebranding of International Geneva. One problem, he noted, is that the UN has proven "genetically incapable" of selling itself to the public. "We need to consider the impact on the lives of ordinary people."

**Continued on page 2**

### Easter Holidays

Le News is back after the Easter break on Thursday 1 May. You can stay in touch with events in the region by signing up for our Newsletter: [lenews.ch/newsletter](http://lenews.ch/newsletter)



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**EXTENSION ST-LÉGIER 2014**



## This Week in Switzerland

Soon after **Montreux Jazz Festival** tickets for the Pharrell Williams and Stevie Wonder concerts went on sale, the website experienced **technical problems** and most users were unable to buy tickets. After a few hours, tickets were being offered on several black reseller sites for at least **double their face value** of CHF 450. Tickets on the festival's official site were all gone after only seven minutes.

Recently captured in the **Jura** vaudois, two **lynx** were transferred this week out of the region to a new secret location. The move was coordinated by Canton Vaud, **KORA** – the organization tasked by the Confederation to monitor large carnivores – and the federal office for the environment. The action is part of **Concept Lynx Suisse**, which permits individual animals to be captured and relocated from areas with large populations to less colonized areas in Switzerland or abroad.



Switzerland spent CHF 2.9 billion on **official development assistance** (ODA) in 2013, a rise of 3.4% compared with the previous year. The main reason for the increase is Parliament's decision to augment funding to reach **target spending** of 0.5% of gross national income (GNI) on ODA for disadvantaged countries by 2015. With an ODA of 0.47% of GNI in 2013, **Switzerland ranks 8th** among the 29 member states of the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD.

A Federal inquiry into a Swiss Islamic convert's involvement in jihadist activities in Syria has been confirmed by a spokesperson to both the *SonntagsZeitung* and *Matin Dimanche* newspapers. Having allegedly converted to Islam in 2013 after attending religious services in a Vaud-based Mosque, the man is thought to be the first documented case of a **Swiss citizen being recruited by Syrian jihadists**.

The **International Inventions Exhibition** in Geneva saw 790 exhibitors take part in the five-day fair at Palexpo. Some CHF 50 million worth of deals were struck. Over half of the inventors were from Asia and the Middle East, with China topping the list of exhibitors. More than **60,000 visitors** attended the event at which creative inventions related to energy, ecology and safety were presented to the public.

Switzerland's Federal Court has ruled that all **Swiss universities** must operate under the same model when **accepting foreign students** with equivalent qualifications in their native country. The decision came following a court case in which a German student claimed he should have been accepted to Lucerne University. The Federal Court's decision establishes that, in future, all universities will have to **adhere to** the terms of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in Europe – the so-called **Lisbon Agreement**.

Eating dark chocolate helps protect against harmful stress and cardiovascular diseases. The discovery, made by research teams at Bern and Zurich universities led by Dr Petra Wirtz, will need further research to better understand the mechanisms involved. The studies showed that **half a bar of dark chocolate** with high cocoa content substantially **reduces bodily reactions to acute psychological stress** two hours after consumption.



The government department coordinating the fight against internet crime (SCOCI) has disclosed that about **38,000 e-mail accounts** in Switzerland have been **hacked** from Germany, where unknown criminals have got hold of 18 million e-mail addresses and passwords. After accessing users' e-mail accounts, cyber criminals send unsolicited e-mails without the knowledge of the owners, asking victims to change their access data by clicking on a link. Internet users are advised to **change passwords** and **update their anti-virus software**.

## International Geneva

**Continued front page 1**

The bespectacled Dane, who was brought out of Greek retirement to head the UN in Geneva (a position normally reserved for ex-Soviets), is widely regarded as a much-needed breath of fresh air who has nothing to lose. His "out of the box" thinking is already being dubbed the "Møller effect". With the UN in urgent need of overhaul and greater transparency, previous heads have sought not to rock the boat of an institution often caught up in member-state agendas and in-house politics. "We need to show what International Geneva can do with global input," Møller said.

Møller is developing a strategy with an array of committed and potential partners, including the "Geneva Group", the world's 16 biggest international donors, plus five or six other concerned nations. He is also seeking to involve sectors such as local business, benefitting from the CHF 5.4 billion that International Geneva brings in every year.

For this to happen, Møller said, the UN will need to communicate far more effi-

ciently to the public-at-large, country decision-makers and its own employees. The new branding needs to focus on themes that the UN and Geneva know best, notably "peace, rights and well-being". Appealing for innovative ideas, the UN head wants to involve traditional and social media, plus initiate projects such as planned TV drama and docu-drama series. "This will have to be a very broad collaborative effort," he stressed. With both Bern and the Geneva governments already firmly committed, there has been an enthusiastic response from private corporations, foundations and other players.

Part of this broad, multi-national initiative over the next 15 years is a CHF 15–16 million project to renovate the Palais in an exemplary "green" manner, and to make it more accessible to the "people". "Unfortunately, the UN is completely out of touch and is more like Fort Knox or Baghdad," he said. Møller would also like to see the historic Palais building, in 1929–36, declared a World Heritage site.

Edward Girardet

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## Regional

# le News

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## Editor's comment

## Social media is not journalism



As many countries are finding, you're only as good as your media. The killing of Geneva-based German photographer Anja Niedringhaus in Afghanistan brought it all home. Here was a world-class photographer who laid down her life (unintentionally) to bring back the images that so many of us have come to take for granted, or for free. We assume that just because such reporting can be found on the internet, it's there for us to benefit, like

Google, Facebook or Twitter. But as AP's John Heilprin maintains in the tribute to Niedringhaus, quality journalism is not a commodity. It is the basis for both democracy and open society. Without good reporting, they would not exist.

While the New York Times and Financial Times are committed to quality reporting, most newspapers are struggling to find the right business model. This means fewer journalists are able to provide the coverage we need. Some media, such as the BBC, Radio France or SBC, survives because of public-licence support. Others, such as the Christian Science Monitor, are non-profit or rely on donations. Le News seeks to back community outreach with events such as last week's Horizon debate on closed migration.

As the UN's Michael Møller notes, the media needs to report the planetary themes, such as climate change, that UN agencies represent. Unfortunately, most news groups can't afford this. Support will have to come from the public. But for this to happen, people need to realize that they need trusted and reported content, not a social platform.

*Edward Girardet, Editor@lenews.ch*

## Swiss salt market liberalises

The Grand Council of Vaud voted unanimously this week for the Bex salt mine and the United Swiss Salt Works on the Rhine to merge. To date, neither company has been able to sell its salt in the other's territory, but now the market will open up.

Bex, which supplies around 30,000 tonnes of salt per year, will focus on high-end products for both culinary and wellness purposes; its counterpart in Basel-County, with an annual production of 500,000 tonnes, will continue to provide salt for industrial uses, principally keeping the roads clear in winter. The director of the Bex mines said that none of the 40 or so jobs at the works are under threat.

The new company, Salines Suisses SA, will be legally incorporated the cantonal parliament has to lend CHF 5.6 million to the Cou United Swiss Salt Works (all the other cantons already have shares in the company). Vaud will also have to repeal an 1804 law on the illegal trade of salt, according to which the punishment for contravention is confiscation of the salt and a fine of ten times its value.

*Jane Duncan*

## Museum renovation on track

Geneva City Council has approved a proposal for the renovation and expansion of one of the city's most respected institutions, the Art and History Museum (MAH).

The project entitled "MAH + Geneva" must be approved at a Council plenary session at the end of the month. If approved, it will still take several months before a final vote to be held, as appeals filed by opponents to the renovation, Patrimoine suisse Genève and Action Patrimoine Vivant, need to be heard.

The final cost of the project has been evaluated at CHF 139 million of which about CHF 132 million is earmarked for actual construction. About half of the funding will be provided by private donors,



Projet de rénovation et d'agrandissement du Musée d'art et d'histoire.  
© Ateliers Jean Nouvel/Architectures Jucker/B. Jucker-Diserens

including the Foundation for the expansion of MAH and Gandur Foundation pour l'Art.

From 9 April onwards, the general public will have the chance to examine a model of the renovated museum, and an information booth will be open to answer questions about the project. Designed by the architect Jean Nouvel, the model illustrates the architectural innovations of the future

building, including design features planned for the restaurant, the mezzanine and exhibition spaces.

Five open meetings where people are invited to participate actively and discuss the proposed renovation and expansion will be held between 17 April and 12 June at the Museum.

*Cristina Odera*

## Begging banned by Nyon

**NYON** The town has arguably become one of the favourite beats for street beggars who station themselves at parking machines and along the main thoroughfares in the town centre. Though behaving little differently here to any other town in the region, the Conseil communal (town council) has now decided to ban begging outright within the municipality. Local politicians were originally going to debate, at a council meeting last Monday, a motion that would have restricted begging close to cash machines, banks and post offices in the town. This solution would have been similar to measures introduced by Lausanne to minimize problems associated with street beggars. An uncompromising amendment was proposed however, by le Parti libéral radical to ban begging outright. Supported by other right-wing parties – le Parti indépendant nyonnais, les Verts libéraux and by the UDC, the motion was carried after three



The ban was resisted by the left-wing parties.

hours of debate despite strong resistance by members of the Green party (Les Verts) and the Socialists (PS)

*Jeremy McTeague*

## IMPRESSUM

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## National

# Anja Niedringhaus: An exceptional professional

**GENEVA** The uniqueness of the Lake Geneva region is that few really know the full extent of its human assets, whether in the arts, sciences, humanitarian or entrepreneurial domains.

Even at the Palais des Nations, many did not realise that this was where the Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer Anja Niedringhaus of the Associated Press, who was shot dead in Afghanistan last week, was based. She was travelling so much.

"Anja was a world-class professional. An exceptional photographer," recalled AP bureau chief John Heilprin at the Palais. "When she first came here, I couldn't believe how privileged I was to be sharing an office." Shaking his head sadly, Heilprin indicated her now-abandoned desk with photographs

pinned on the wall. Nearby was her rear-room studio with lenses, tripods and bags still hanging. "She exemplified why good reporting is not a commodity, but rather a crucial aspect of society. People imagine that journalistic commitment comes free with social media, but these are people who risk their lives to obtain the information we need." This supports Niedringhaus' own assertion that "if I don't photograph, it won't be known". She also maintained that she covered wars not to depict the military, but rather the human beings caught up in them.

An Afghan police commander killed the 48-year-old German instantly and severely injured Canadian veteran reporter Kathy Gannon as they sat in a car as part of an election convoy. Niedringhaus, who had covered Afghanistan and the



Anja Niedringhaus, right, and reporter Kathy Gannon, centre, together with moderator Barbara Basting, at the KEYSTONE photo agency during a talk about war photography on 27 August 2013. (Photo by KEYSTONE/ Walter Bieri).

Middle-East won a joint Breaking News Pulitzer Prize in 2005. She also received the Courage in Journalism award from the International Women's Media Foundation in the same year. The fact that both Niedringhaus and Gannon were deliberately targeted in the name of Allah is another indication of how respect for unarmed civilians has deteriorated. For some observers, Muslim leaders, who claim that such actions are not condoned by the Koran, need to

be far more outspoken in their condemnation of those who kill in the name of Islam.

Niedringhaus' photography epitomized artistry and dedication. Ironically, the Coalmine cultural centre in Winterthur was already planning "War", a photo exhibition of her work. According to the organizers, with the permission of her family, the exhibit will open this week on 10 April, and run until 11 July 2014. *Edward Girardet*

## Asylum reforms: Planning for more refugees

**GENEVA** Despite protracted conflicts in Syria, Eritrea and Afghanistan pushing growing numbers of refugees to flee war and repression, Switzerland's asylum curve is dipping. While asylum is on the rise in other European countries, 2013 saw 21,465 people seeking refuge in the confederation; this is 7,166 fewer than in the previous year. Still ranking fourth as the end-location for asylum seekers in Europe, Switzerland tops the list in terms of ratio per 100,000 people.

Given the significance of this last statistic, Justice Minister Simonetta Sommaruga has questioned the flawed "10,000 per year" policy implemented by right-wing politician Christoph Blocher in 2006. Promising a maximum administrative delay of only four months by the country's federal process centres, her proposal calls for an additional 4,600 places to be created if 60% of the predicted 25,000 yearly applications are accepted. The project seeks to improve existing standards by



Justice Minister Simonetta Sommaruga.

increasing procedural efficiency coupled with more centres.

Five processing points are currently taking the brunt of past miscalculations, which have sometimes caused incidents. The new model would decentralize existing facilities through the creation of smaller satellite units linked to the main ones. Both the confederation and cantonal authorities have until the end of the year to decide how many purpose-built zones would be needed to accommodate the new centres, and where to locate them. *Christopher Woodburn*

## An emblem to protect journalists?



By courtesy: Press Emblem Campaign





**GENEVA** With the tragic shooting of German photographer Anja Niedringhaus in Afghanistan, there is renewed debate as to whether an international convention for the protection of journalists, including a press emblem similar to the Red Cross, would serve members of the media better in war and crisis zones.

According to the Geneva-based Press Emblem Campaign, some 27 journalists were killed during the first three months of 2014 with three, including Niedringhaus, already dead this month.

While a new convention might enhance the protection of journalists in a manner similar to humanitarian workers, who are also being killed by governments and guerrilla factions

alike, an institutional emblem remains questionable. As experienced journalists often point out, it may actually encourage belligerents or rogue elements to target them.

Hence, while an emblem might be more widely recognizable than "TV" or "Press" taped onto vehicles or flak jackets, its use should remain optional. The blurring of lines with partisan "citizen journalists" is also making it more hazardous for real reporters to operate. *LeNews*

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## Business & Economy

# Multinationals open their doors

**GENEVA** The Groupement des Entreprises Multinationales (GEM) comprises 81 member companies that employ more than 30,000 people in the region.

Responsible for more than 40% of GDP in the cantons of Geneva and Vaud, they account for one in three jobs and 75% of national investment in R&D. "Thanks to a diverse economy, with small and medium enterprises operating alongside multinationals, the region has developed a dynamic ecosystem. Each job within a multinational generates one-and-a-half jobs in the rest of the economy," said Frédérique Reeb-Landry, GEM chair.

Reflecting this sentiment, Antonietta Frangi, chair of NODE (Nouvelle organisation des entrepreneurs), noted the interdependence



GEM is keen to communicate meaningfully with the public. Credit: GEM

between SMEs and multinationals: "Our businesses benefit every day from what multinationals and their employees bring. Tens of thousands of jobs depend directly on them." GEM wants both local and foreign residents to better understand the role multinationals play in the Lake Geneva region. Although planned some months ago, the initiative is timely, now that the need for open EU immigration is being questioned by a narrow majority of Swiss.

Announcing the wide-ranging public information initiative, GEM deputy

chairman Patrick Schriber said, "We want to open up to the public through open-door sessions to create a friendly platform for broadening discussion on topics that are important to us." The initiative is organizing five evening events featuring key individuals from multinationals and members of the Council of State of Geneva from Monday 5 to Friday 9 May. The discussions, site visits and workshops will offer insight into different aspects of their members' operations.

For further information: [www.gemonline.ch](http://www.gemonline.ch) *Le News*

### Vaud unemployment falls

The canton of Vaud reported that unemployment in March fell by 0.2% to 5.1%. The number of unemployed fell by 815 during the month to 18,965. Cantonal authorities noted that there was no age bias in those regaining employment.

### Swatch set upon by US

Swatch has come under US pressure to open its factories in Switzerland to anti-terrorism experts, its CEO has revealed. "They no doubt wanted to check if it was possible to conceal explosives or poison in the watches," Nick Hayek told the *Schweiz am Sonntag* paper. "They spoke about the threat of terrorism."

Hayek refused point-blank, and the US representatives warned that Swatch "could face import problems" as a result. Swatch responded saying the US would have to "explain that to the tens of thousands of employees in the US." According to the CEO, no export issues transpired. *Swissinfo*

## Insight

# "It's not the end of the world!"

Geneva's MP for the conservative Swiss People's Party (UDC), which launched the 9 February referendum against mass immigration, tried to reassure a gathering of internationals organized by *Le News* on 3 April: "The end of the world has not come," said Yves Nidegger.

In his introductory remarks, Ed Girardet, the moderator and *Le News*' Managing Editor said that *Le News* "decided to have this discussion because many in the international community in Switzerland and across the border in France are not particularly aware of what is going on". Many don't know how the vote may affect the international community and those who have lived here for a long time.

The more than 230 people present listened intently to the debate among the three panelists, who included Frédérique Reeb-Landry, President of Groupement des Entreprises Multinationales (GEM), which represents 30,000 jobs in the Lake Geneva region. It was she who addressed what was probably their main concern. "For the time being the situation is status quo for those who have a work permit," she said.

Reeb-Landry went on to note, "Today one out of two Swiss francs is earned abroad, and we need to keep these constructive relations with foreign countries, especially our neighbours." For Nidegger that is the crux of the issue. In his party's opinion, Switzerland is paying too much attention to the EU. "Switzerland is not a member of the EU and there is no mechanism for the Swiss to decide who comes to their country. It's Europe versus the rest of the world. I am fighting to get permits for qualified workers from around the world not just Europe. More than Polish plumbers, we need Indian computer scientists."

Professor Vincent Chetail, director of the Global Migration Centre at the Graduate Institute, where the conference was held, reminded the audience that EU citizens make up about 60% of Switzerland's foreign population. And while officials of UN organizations may be exempt under Swiss law, Chetail said that foreign employees of international sports federations and retired UN officials living in Switzerland could be affected.

But Nidegger stuck to his point that only new EU immigrants will be



Cooperation is the key.

directly affected because non-EU country applications come under a quota system that has been in effect since the 1960s. But this quota system for other countries has been impacted by the necessity of Switzerland to abide by the EU treaty on open borders. "The point is that we are a good neighbour but we are NOT a member of the EU."

Chetail took exception to that. "It is up to Switzerland to find a solution. It is not an EU problem. We cannot say Switzerland ratified a treaty and then refuses to abide by it. The referendum was written in extremely vague terms which no doubt helped in its adoption."

The vagueness of the referendum may also explain the unexpected

results of an informal *Le News* reader poll. As Girardet noted at the beginning of the conference, "More than one third of foreigners we questioned supported the vote against immigration."

Reeb-Landry encouraged those present to look forward. "The point is the Swiss people have made their decision to control immigration and now we need to discuss how to implement this decision." She also warned that collaboration between businesses and the political establishment was vital if the measures were to be implemented successfully. "Will you cooperate with us?" she asked Nidegger directly. His response: "absolutely". *Pamela Taylor*

## Insight

# Switzerland at 14 million – with no towers

**LAUSANNE** The people have spoken: the boat is full and cannot accept any more!

“Not so,” says a noted Swiss architect who has done a comprehensive study showing that Switzerland could accommodate as many as 14 million inhabitants over the next three decades, with no decline in lifestyle and without building more towers. Basel architect Harry Gugger, who worked on London’s Tate Modern gallery, compared his country to Greater London because both have populations of eight million.

London is expected to exceed 12 million by around 2031 and Gugger’s study, *Swiss Lessons*, published in English in cooperation with students at Lausanne’s EPFL, claims Switzerland’s population will reach 14 million by 2048.

*Liberals say the western Lausanne project is being pushed by speculators while select conservatives say it will ruin views of their city*

“The official figure is 10 million by 2050, but we chose a higher symbolic figure to illustrate that such an increase is possible and we chose 2048 as a symbolic year – the 200th anniversary of the Confederation.” The study is a scientific examination of how further densification can be achieved without detriment to the beauty, ecology or economic benefits of the country. It was done before the 9 February vote, which Gugger acknowledges may slow population growth in the short term, but he believes that Switzerland will continue to attract immigration.

On 13 April, voters in Lausanne will vote in a referendum to address their own population problem – a proposed 85m-high tower block called the Taoua. Some liberals say the western Lausanne project is being pushed by speculators while select conservatives say it will ruin views of their city. Lausanne Mayor and Green Party member Daniel Brélaz believes it is a

good example of “sustainable development and quality densification of urban space”.

“Towers are not the answer,” maintains Gugger. “They are very expensive and cause more problems for society.” Some property developers agree. The residential property agency, home.ch, notes on its website that “multi-story buildings for purely residential use are no longer up-to-date. Buildings which ideally cover the whole spectrum of human activity are more popular.” It goes on to cite the difficulty of finding suitable tenants, who can afford apartments or even offices “at such dizzy heights.”

Switzerland’s love affair with skyscrapers began in the 1960s, when they began popping up all over the German-speaking part of Switzerland. Zurich has its Prime and Mobimo towers; Basel, the Trade Fair Tower.

But the creation of high-rise residences in satellite suburbs, such as the Tour de Lignon in the Geneva outskirts, tarnished this image in Suisse Romande. In addition, Swiss building regulations mean that constructing towers is both difficult and expensive. Tall buildings must have a certain amount of open space around them, so the surface area of a plot dictates the height limit.

The EPFL study favours low-rise buildings of five to six floors on average and building in spaces between cities and towns, in places like Olten, a rail hub half an hour from Bern, Zurich, Basel and Lucerne. “Olten is a medium-sized town with a lot of open space that is neither park nor agricultural land that could be built on,” notes Gugger, adding that other medium-size towns, such as Lenzburg and Nyon, could also accept more density.

Gugger says that even in Geneva, the so-called villa zone could be better used to accommodate low-rise density. “Traffic and costs are the problem in Geneva, not density. It is not even a city in the fullest sense. We are talking about creating a better mix of work, home, cultural and recreational services.”

Pamela Taylor



The Taoua is a source of great local controversy. Photo: Courtesy of the Commune of Lausanne

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## Lifestyle

# A maritime canton?

Landlocked Switzerland might be interested in a 16 February regional election in Sardinia, which included a quasi-serious initiative demanding that Italy sell the Mediterranean island to Switzerland as its 27th canton.

A group of Sardinians formed the Canton Marittimo, calling on Rome to allow their ruggedly beautiful island, with a population of just over 1.6 million, to be annexed to a country seen by them as a better "example of autonomy and democracy".

The Facebook page for Canton Marittimo has so far registered more than 4,000 fans and attracted media interest from Japan to the UK. When the group's leaders have names like Andrea Caruso and Enrico Napoleone, who could resist? With tongues firmly in cheek, some have suggested that landlocked Switzerland might be interested in a sea outlet for its Navy, which currently patrols the borders formed by Lakes Constance, Geneva and Maggiore.

So far the proposal has been met with bemusement in Switzerland,



Sardinia – the 27th canton?

although in an online poll asking Swiss-Germans if they would accept a Sardinian canton, 93% said "yes". Closer to home, historical reasons exist for taking the proposal seriously. Ties between Geneva and Sardinia go back to the founding of Carouge in 1786, when the King of Sardinia built the town after the embarrassing loss of the city in the 1602 Escalade. Today's visitors marvel at the unusual architecture of Carouge, so unlike Geneva, prompting one recent visitor to the weekly Saturday market to wonder "Are we now in Italy?"

*Pamela Taylor*

# Playing creatively

## Cully Jazz Festival kicks off with big names and young artists

The Cully Jazz Festival opened on 4 April with concerts at the main Festival IN concert hall and the many cafés and wineries that are venues for the Festival OFF. Performances take place every night until 12 April on the shore of Lac Léman in the heart of the Lavaux wine country. Choices range from legendary musicians such as pianist Randy Weston and saxophonist David Murray to new artists notably Ibrahim Maalouf, a trumpeter from Lebanon and oud player Dhafer Youssef.

Among the big names appearing on opening night was US drummer and singer Vinx, performing in Cully for a second time following a more than 20 year hiatus. "When I came to Cully for the first time in 1992, I found European audiences more open to unconventional music and experimentations



Photo: Courtesy of Cully Jazz Festival.

than American audiences," he said.

Vinx, who was launched by Taj Mahal, has worked with Sting, Bill Evans and Stevie Wonder – who once said that Vinx's voice was "a gift you give to someone you really care about". As for Vinx, he believes that "The amazing thing about jazz is its freedom; it has no rules. It's music that always pushes you to play with your creativity."

Today's Cully Jazz Festival is not only about jazz. Wandering around the various caveaux and cafés, you can enjoy music from Africa to South America and electronica to hip-hop, as well as three Swiss pianists playing in separate concerts. Take your pick from a packed programme: [www.cullyjazz.ch](http://www.cullyjazz.ch)

*Cristina Otero*

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## Property

# Housing – scarcity explained

Some statistics on Geneva housing may help explain the lack of housing in the area.

A housing market is considered to be fluid when it has a vacancy rate between 1.5 and 2%, depending on who one speaks to. The vacancy rate column in the table to the right sets the stage. Geneva has been in a severe housing crisis since 2000, the first year since 1992 that the vacancy rate was lower than 1% (0.8%).

*The vacancy rate plummeted to a terrifying 0.15% in 2006; today it hovers between 0.3 and 0.4%.*

This means that at any one time there are only between 600 and 900 residences available for rent or for sale in Geneva (villas, apartments and studios

of all sizes included). This situation is partly explained by another statistic – since 1999 Geneva's population has increased by 73,000 people, yet the number of residences has only increased by 21,251 units.

In the last quarter of 2013, there were 42,310 residential buildings in Geneva, 24,688 (59%) of them individual villas and properties. The 17,622 remaining buildings contain 198,351 residences two-thirds (67%) of which comprise small residences (studios and one-bedroom apartments); this, combined with the extremely low vacancy rate, helps to explain why it is not always easy to find residences with two or more bedrooms in Geneva.

It also explains the city's high property prices and the rents charged by landlords. Rental costs do not include utility charges (hot water and heating) or parking. Increasingly, properties for sale come with parking places as an additional purchase.

The purchase cost per square metre

in Geneva is expensive. Add to this the following requirements made of a purchaser and it becomes clear why only 35% of Swiss residents own the property they live in.

*Charles McHugo is the owner of Real Estate Advisory Service & Relocation c.mchugo@advisory-service.ch*

Year	Number of buildings	Number of residences	Population	Vacancy rate
1996	34,716	198,158	400,399	1.50%
1999	37,062	204,620	408,350	1.33%
2002	38,402	209,011	427,705	0.24%
2005	39,436	21,775	440,982	0.19%
2008	40,544	216,702	453,439	0.20%
2011	41,736	219,419	466,918	0.25%
2013	42,310	223,118	476,024	0.36%

Source: OCSTAT/OCP

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## Travel

# Les Voies Vertes: Recycling France's rail and tow routes

**BEAUNE** One of the most impressive cycle routes in France is the almost completed circuitous 800km Saône et Loire Voie Verte in Burgundy, built along abandoned railway lines and canal towpaths.

Less than two hours from Geneva, this *voie verte* was begun in 1997 and follows a route away from car traffic through staggeringly beautiful countryside, past historic chateaux, quiet villages and terraced vineyards. It has dramatically transformed the region by enabling cyclists and roller-bladers to start their journeys from points such as Mâcon, Cluny, Chalon or Dijon. There are no steep gradients and it's possible to hire bikes in most towns. On beautiful days, particularly along the canals

and wine routes, the cycle lanes are packed.

The project has brought much-needed vigour, imagination and jobs to the area with the opening of new restaurants, cafés, B&Bs and *terroir* shops, making it an ideal weekend or Easter getaway. Some travel groups offer planned itineraries with transport for your luggage as part of gastronomic or wine-tasting tours. You can also rent a canal barge and do biking side tours.

A more recent *voie verte* is the 700km ViaRhôna from Geneva to the Mediterranean. Here you can bike along a 2,000-year-old route tracing the Rhône River and 19th-century canals and former railroads down to the Camargue.

While the Lake Geneva region may boast an impressive network of cycle routes, both the Pays de Gex and Haute-Savoie have much to learn from their Burgundy



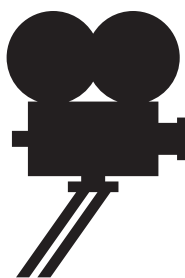
Chalon sur Saône in Burgundy.

counterparts. There are plans to transform the old St Genis to Divonne railway route into a *voie verte*, or at least a combined tram-bike route, but no one is making any decisions. Small portions have been gravelled, but these are a far cry from what the Burgundy or Rhône initiatives have already achieved.

For the moment, you can bike from Geneva to the other end of the lake following the "L'Ain à vélo" signs to Divonne, and then travel along clearly marked Suisse Mobile routes to Lausanne and the

Lavaux wine area and on to Montreux. The itineraries are numbered – No.1 for Geneva to Andermatt and No.5 from Lausanne to Romanshorn. You can complete the 180km lake circuit via the Haute-Savoie, but many roads are positively dangerous, particularly for kids, given the lack of designated cycle lanes. On the French side, they have been debating for years over whether to turn the old St Gingolph to Évian railway into a bike trail or a tramline.

LeNews



## FILM REVIEWS

By Neptune

### NEBRASKA ★★★★★

For me, this was the best film at the Cannes film festival last year. It's about mid-America and this dishevelled old man (a monumental Bruce Dern) who thinks he's hit a million dollar jackpot and starts to walk to another state to collect his winnings. His son tries to dissuade him, but ends up driving him there, even though he knows it is only junk mail intended to entice the gullible and elderly. And there's the biddy of a wife who nags the old man incessantly. On the ride to the illusory winnings, the father and son bond in unexpected ways, meet odd relatives, and strangers in bars. The mood is grey, the film is black and white and the feelings are more authentic than we've seen in a long time. This is an Alexander Payne film – like his others, *About Schmidt*, *Sideways* and *The Descendants*, superbly human and highly intelli-



gent. Nominated for six Oscars, it's a work of art that is also an entertainment.

### CAPTAIN AMERICA – THE WINTER SOLDIER ★★★★★

Zowie! Zap! Crunch! That's what this is – an old-fashioned superhero yarn, from the unending treasure trove of Marvel cartoons. Sort of like a beefed-up version of *The Roadrunner*, beep, beep! The one who never gets killed, whatever the calamity. There's the earnest, courageous face of Chris Evans, who plays Captain America with verve and decency, the curvaceous Scarlett Johansson as his kick-ass sidekick, Samuel L. Jackson as the steadfast head of S.H.I.E.L.D. and a creepy-looking Robert Redford (why ever did he do his eyes?!) as a power hungry politico. There's a lot of exciting action and collateral damage in trying to save mankind, but it's all in good, clean fun, with a strong moral thread running through it, like Redford's old river... It gives you the retro feeling of what America used to stand for in the 40s and 50s – all things aboveboard and full of hope

and faith... at least on the surface. This is a super popcorn film, so if you're into testosterone entertainment, see this one rather than *Divergent*.





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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:

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Congratulations to Michael Schwartz, winner of the Le News weekly photographic competition "On the wild side".





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## Regional Events

# le News

## PICK OF THE WEEK IN COLLABORATION WITH



### Canton Vaud. Circus Nock

Lausanne: 11-23 April, Place Bellerive, Ouchy  
Vevey: 25-27 April, Place du Marché  
Geneva: 30 April-18 May, Plaine de Plainpalais  
Nyon: 20-21 May, Place Perdtemps

Come and wonder at the magic of circus in a show that draws on two-centuries of circus tradition. Nock Circus run by the 6th generation of the Nock family, the 2014 tour features an excellent line - up of artists and animal acts from all over the world. Tickets from: CHF 15-65; available on site an hour before the show, also Ticketcorner. See website for times. [www.nock.ch](http://www.nock.ch)



### Montreux. Pâques en Musique

14-21 April

Thurs: 20h00-23h00  
Fri-Sat: 11h00-23h00  
Sun: 11h00-22h00  
Mon: 11h00-20h00  
Le Kiosque à Musique (bandstand) de la Rouvenaz offers a programme to please all ears, with rock, blues, folk, reggae, jazz, country, funk and pop. For children, there are clowns, storytelling and many creative and amusing activities including Mr Flake, a giant rabbit, who will entertain them to celebrate Easter with music. Free entry

Kiosque à Musique de la Rouvenaz  
1820 Montreux and long the lake.



### Nyon. Easter Market

13 April

Enjoy a day dedicated to local products, Easter fare and crafts. Wander around the town and admire the fountains decorated to celebrate the end of winter. You can see the fountains until 27 April.

[www.quartierderive.ch](http://www.quartierderive.ch)



### Nyon. VdR International Film Festival

25 April- 3 May. 10h00-22h00

Movie buffs will be spoiled for choice take your pick of 175 films from 51 countries shown in different venues around the town. Love is the theme of the festival, which also features a "best of" section of documentaries from around the world. Season tickets CHF 155; day pass CHF 40-5 [www.visionsdureel.ch/](http://www.visionsdureel.ch/)



### Nyon. Vacances à la Romaine" at Musée romain

22-25 April. 14h00-16h00

Children from 7 to 12 will enjoy four days at the Nyon's Roman Museum where they can participate in a series of workshops and instructive games. From the discovery of Roman architecture to an introduction to the art of mosaic and decoding secret messages. Tickets: CHF 16  
To register: call +41 22 361 75 91 7 or [musee.romain@nyon.ch](mailto:musee.romain@nyon.ch);

Rue Maupertuis  
1260 Nyon

[www.mrn.ch](http://www.mrn.ch)



### Rivaz. Exposition sur les narcisses à Lavaux

17 April-15 June

Thurs-Fri: 17h00-20h00  
Sat- Sun: 11h00-13h00 & 16h00 to 20h00 (19h00 on Sunday)

An exhibition of the «Winter Snow» narcissus flowers in full bloom. Bacchus Vinobar, run by the winemakers of Rivaz hosts the Narcissus Riviera Association and offers visitors a good glass of wine.

Free entry.

Bacchus Vinobar  
En Bons Voisins  
[www.narcisses.ch](http://www.narcisses.ch); [www.rivaz.ch](http://www.rivaz.ch)



### Rolle. City Tour

13 & 27 April

Come and discover a delightful medieval borough in Vaud right on the shores of Lake Léman. Enjoy a tour of the ancient city, go back through eight centuries of history to its birth and the construction of the castle, and learn more about the personalities who built the town.

Registration for the tour is required. Min 5- max 12 people.

[www.tourisme-rolle.ch](http://www.tourisme-rolle.ch)



### Vernier. Festival Vernier Classique

4-13 April

Fri & Sat: 20h00, Sun: 16h00  
A new festival dedicated to classical music. Performing on stage will be the prestigious Guarneri Trio Prague playing works by Hadyn, Shostakovich and Dvorak. Also look out for: Fabrizio Chiovetta, a talented pianist from Geneva; Henri Demarquette, cellist; and Charlotte Müller-Perrier, soprano. The Quatuor de Genève, Geneva Quartet accompanied by pianist Didier Puntos, will close the Festival. Tickets: CHF 30  
Concessions: CHF 20  
Place du Lignon,  
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### Vevey. Homage to Sidney Bechet

13 April, 16h00

The most famous songs of one of the greatest masters of jazz. Interpretations VIII performed in conjunction with Rammer Ink. Wolfgang Hanninger, saxophone; Jérôme Jeanrenaud, piano.

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### Romont. "Les pleureuses"

Good Friday, 13 April, 15h00

In a tradition dating back to the 15th century, following Good Friday mass, a cross bearer covered in black cloth and 20 veiled women, also all in black, process through the town in sombre fashion to commemorate the Passion of Christ. Known as "Les pleureuses", or the wailing women, they carry scarlet cushions with the instruments of the crucifixion on them - crown of thorns, hammer, nails, birch sticks and a whip. Along the way they stop to pray at the fourteen stations of the cross.

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## Regional Events

# le News

## PICK OF THE WEEK IN COLLABORATION WITH



### Canton Vaud. PâKOMUZé

12-27 April

Over 60 events – from workshops and films to games and other entertainment – will cheer children and adults alike over Easter. The annual programme of the Museums of Lausanne, Pully, the Vaud Riviera – and, for the first time, the Maison d'Ailleurs and the Musée d'Yverdon et région offers an opportunity to discover the worlds of science and history. Registration is necessary for most of the events.

For more info: [www.pakomuze.ch](http://www.pakomuze.ch)



### Divonne, Lausanne, Morges, Grand-Lancy. Easter Concerts

12-18 April

Sat 12: 20h30, Esplanade du Lac, Divonne-les-Bains  
Sun 13: 17h00, St-François Church, Lausanne  
Thu 17: 20h30, Temple, Morges  
Fri 18: 20h30, Eglise Notre-Dame des Grâces, Grand-Lancy (Ge)  
Musicians from around the region perform Joseph Haydn's "Seven Last Words of Christ" and J.M. Nunes Garcia's "Requiem". With the choir of the Maîtrise du Pays de Gex, directed by Julian Villarraga. Tickets from CHF 25 available at the door, or on [www.amabilis.ch](http://www.amabilis.ch); [www.maitrisedegex.fr](http://www.maitrisedegex.fr)



### Léman. Swiss Navigation Day

27 April

Cruise around the lake all day on a paddle steamer or modern speedboat for the exceptional fare of CHF 20 per adult (CHF 15 with demi-tarif) and CHF 10 per child (6 to 16). Enjoy the Lavaux vineyards from a different perspective, or stop off for lunch in the medieval town of Yvoire in France. Tickets available on the day at CGN ticket offices and on board. To book a table for lunch on the boat: infoline 0848 811 848 or [info@cgn.ch](mailto:info@cgn.ch). For more information: [www.cgn.ch](http://www.cgn.ch)



### Clarens. Spectacle du Centre de Danse de Montreux

17-18 April, 20h00

Around 130 professional dancers from the Centre de Danse will perform several choreographed dances, from classical to modern and contemporary. For the younger ones, don't miss the story of the misfortunes of Petrushka, a marionette who, under a magician's spell seems to have been given a human soul.

Tickets CHF 30; concessions CHF 15  
Salle omnisports du Pierrier  
Rue du Lac 115

[www.centre-de-danse.ch](http://www.centre-de-danse.ch)



### Geneva. Electron Festival 2014

17-20 April

Music, dance, contemporary arts and workshops. These are just some of the potent ingredients of the Festival des cultures électroniques de Genève. Live your passion for electronic music at 10 venues across the city. Enjoy a wide range of performances by artists from all over the world.

Tickets and information: [www.electronfestival.ch/en](http://www.electronfestival.ch/en)



### Geneva. Swan Lake Reloaded

8-13 April

Tues-Sat: 20h30; Sun: 15h00  
Swedish choreographer Fredrik Rydman offers a new, contemporary adaptation of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's most famous ballet. Taking the essence of the story, as the drama and the battle between good and evil, this futuristic version fuses classical ballet with hip-hop. The production mixes urban references with special effects, projections and lighting. Tickets CHF 50-95  
Théâtre du Léman Genève / ex-Grand Casino, Quai du Mont-Blanc 191201 Geneva  
[www.swanlake-show.ch/](http://www.swanlake-show.ch/)



### Geneva. Trans-mission

8-11 May

The Ateliers d'ethnomusicologie introduces a new generation of artists. Barafolly, a musical training project, developed in Burkina Faso by Souleymane Coulibaly; Lieskan, a work in progress by Erik Marchand to revive popular songs from Brittany; and finally Ras Varanasi (Benares flavor) with Ravi Shankar Mishra, who opens up kathak dance to young talent.

Cité Bleue  
Avenue de Miremont 46, Geneva

[www.adem-geneve.com/en/trans-mission-programme](http://www.adem-geneve.com/en/trans-mission-programme)



### Geneva. Contemporary creation and patronage, a sustainable alliance

16 April-16 November

Tues-Sun: 10h00-18h00  
Contemporary ceramics created by inventive artists, evolving at the intersection between applied arts, design and contemporary art. Tickets: CHF 5; concessions: CHF 3. The exhibition will be open from Tuesday to Sunday 10h00-18h00

Musée Ariana  
Avenue de la Paix 10  
Geneva



### Gland. Café-Concert: Marc Perrenoud Trio

17 April,  
afterwork from 19h00; concert 20h30

Come along after work to enjoy a drink, sample delicious tapas, listen to music by local musicians and soak up the atmosphere. Each "café-concert" event takes place in two stages: the first is free; the second part is a paying concert – tonight it's jazzrom. Tickets: CHF 30  
Concessions: CHF 20



### La Tour-de-Peilz. 1 journée 2 musées. "Eat and play like in Asia"

15-18 April

Take advantage of the Easter holidays to discover different culinary habits and taste typical Asian dishes. Let your children learn while they play and discover two museums in one day. Registration necessary, CHF 35. For more information: [www.museedjeu.ch](http://www.museedjeu.ch)

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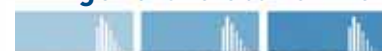
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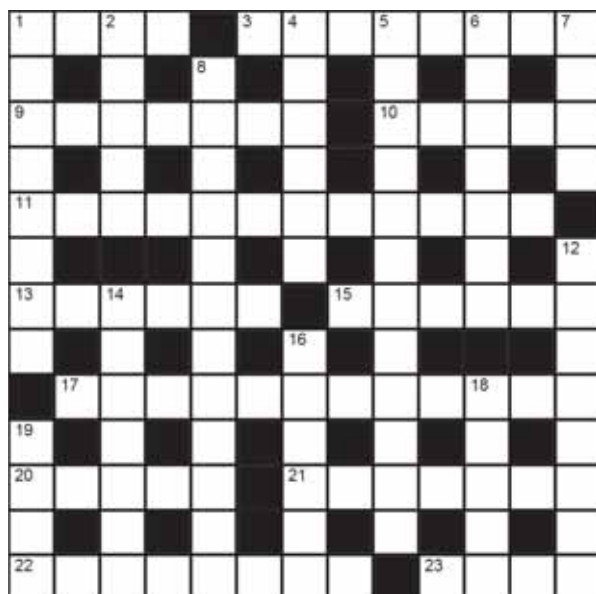


#ForPeopleOnTheMove

GENEVA RELOCATION



## Puzzles



### QUICK CROSSWORD

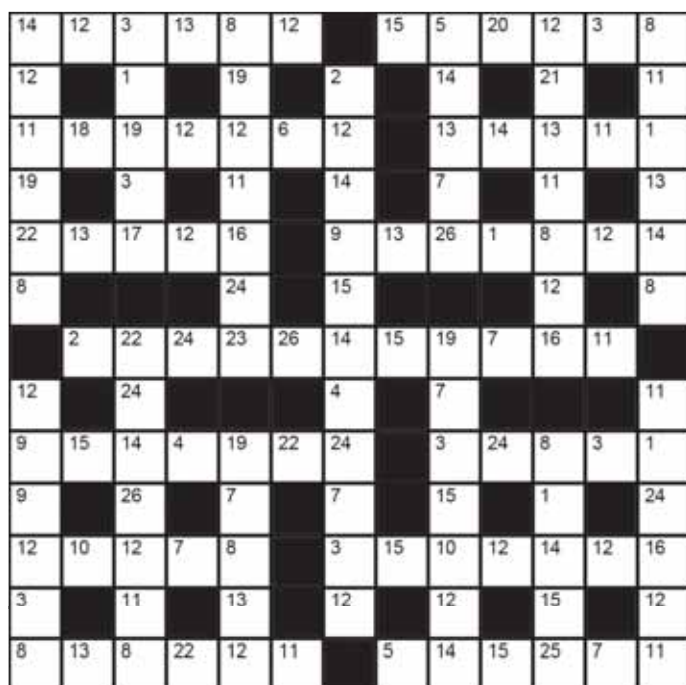
#### ACROSS

- 1 Cleansing agent (4)  
 3 Not exceptional in any way (8)  
 9 Sort of European country (7)  
 10 Founded upon law (5)  
 11 A state of mutual dealing between people or parties (12)  
 13 Express recognition (6)  
 15 Reverent petition (6)  
 17 Making somethings comprehensible (12)  
 20 More teetotal (5)  
 21 Wearing away (7)  
 22 All people (8)  
 23 Social insects (4) (0)

#### DOWN

- 1 Determining the direction (8)  
 2 Little darling (5)  
 4 Receivers that detect, demodulate and amplifysignals (6)  
 5 Artwork (12)  
 6 Irritatedly (7)  
 7 Not the white (4)  
 8 Especially (12)  
 12 Introduces (8)  
 14 Cloth (7)  
 16 Not perceived (6)  
 18 Chop it and weep! (5)  
 19 Not in action or at work (4)

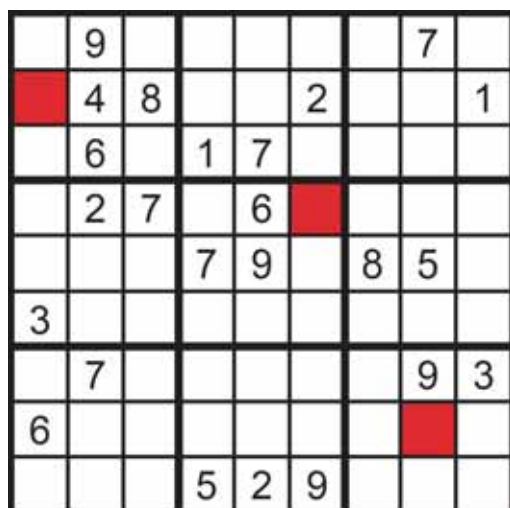
#### Last week's solution



### 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
		C						T		S		
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26



### SUDOKU

#### Easy

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

## What's On

### Allez-Retour: Japan-Geneva at Andata Ritorno

Andata Ritorno, 37 rue du Stand in Geneva, styles itself as a "laboratory for contemporary art." The gallery, which receives support from the City of Geneva, has been probing the frontiers of culture for more than three decades. On 29 April, it will highlight the work of three contemporary artists equally immersed in both Swiss and Japanese cultures. Yuki Shiraishi, whose work explores transportable memories and the holes that result, was born in Nyon and studied in both Switzerland and Japan. Tami Ichino, who was born in Japan and is now based in Geneva, investigates the journey between seemingly routine objects and the sky. Isamu Krieger, who is both Swiss and Japanese, plans a monumental mural, entitled "mauvais pente."

The exhibition, which runs from 29 April through to 10 May, is part of a year-long celebration of 150 years of

diplomatic relations between Switzerland and Japan. The title: "Aller-Retour-Japon-Genève" (Round Trip Japan-Geneva) refers to the artistic challenge of oscillating between two very different, but complementary cultures. An opening night vernissage begins at 18h00, Tuesday 29 April, at the gallery in Geneva's Rue des Bains art district.

Curators for the show are Michele Vicat, who previously worked with Ethan Cohen Fine Arts in New York, and now publishes an online magazine focusing on contemporary Asian art (<http://3dotswater.com>); and Andata Ritorno's founder and creative director, Joseph Farine. Farine, a well-known fixture on the Geneva art scene, has commissioned more than 300 exhibitions during a long and imaginative career.



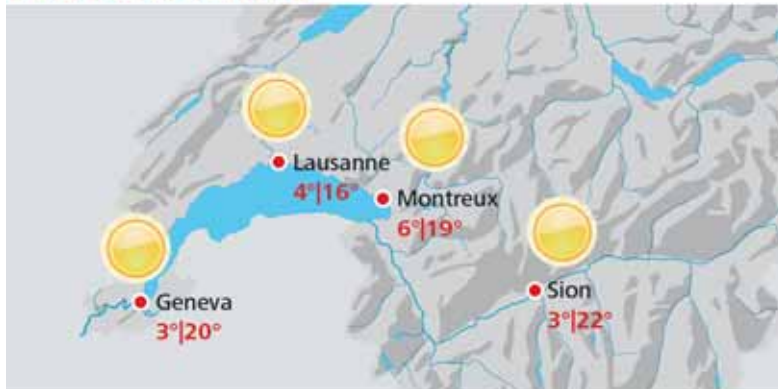
#### Win!

**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](mailto: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](mailto:prizes@lenews.ch)

## Weather

### SUISSE ROMANDE



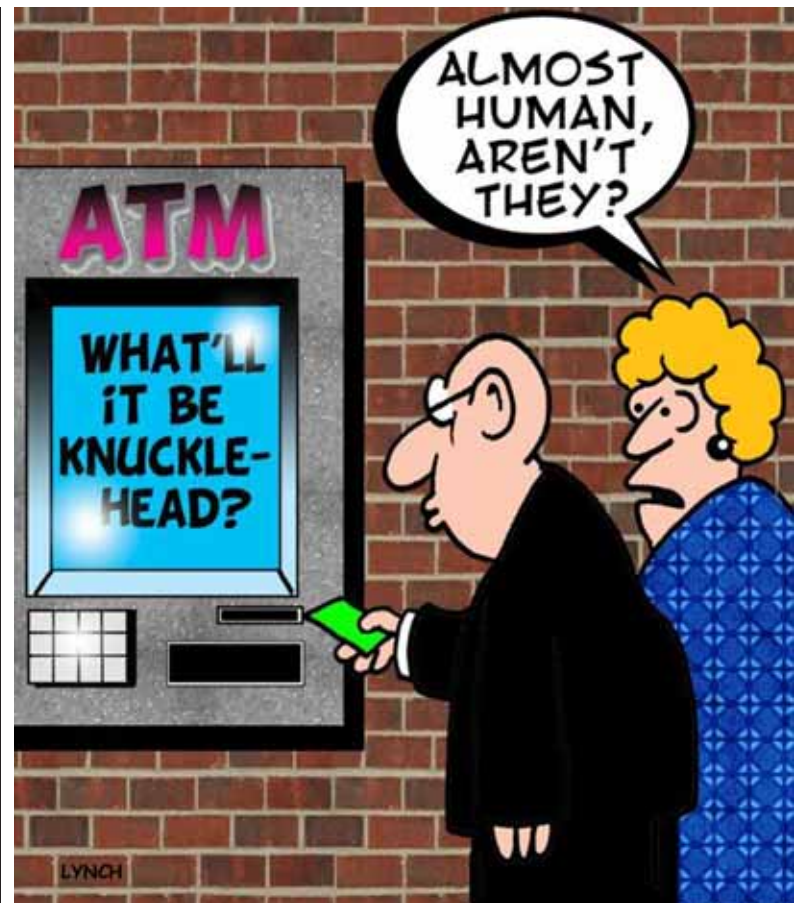
	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
GENEVA	3   20°	5   20°	8   17°	7   18°
LAUSANNE	4   16°	6   16°	7   13°	7   15°

### SNOW REPORT - ON THE SLOPES

Verbier	272 cm	Crans Montana	235 cm	Les Rousses	130 cm
Villars	100 cm	Château d'Oex	55 cm	Chamonix	200 cm
Leysin	204 cm	Les Crosets	120 cm	Morzine	180 cm



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