

le News

WEEKLY SWISS NEWS IN ENGLISH

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Gripen: Whose truth?

Gripen D flying over the Swiss mountains

Photo courtesy of Swiss Air Force

BERN With the planned 18 May referendum to decide whether Switzerland should purchase 22 Swedish Gripen fighter aircraft, how transparent is Bern with regard to cost and feasibility?

Both the Swiss Federal Council and the Department of Defence are pushing a plane that the Norwegian government

rejected five years ago based on two studies because of "high cost" and "inappropriate effectiveness."

The 2008 Norwegian studies, one military, the other civilian, compare the Saab Gripen NG with the US-built Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II, also a multi-role fighter. According to the reports, which are publicly accessible on the Norwegian government website, the Swedish plane per-

formed less effectively with regard to cost and defence capability. Swiss defence department spokesman Renato Kalbermatten, however, argues that citing the 2008 reports is not appropriate given that the Gripen has been perfected to the newer E version and that the CHF 3.1 billion purchase price is fixed.

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**Le News
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This Week in Switzerland

The installation of a 30-metre-high rusty **maritime crane** on the banks of the Limmat River in Zurich is stimulating a debate on "what is art"? Saved from scrap, it was brought from Rostock 1,000 km away. The crane is intended to bring a feeling of the sea to landlocked Zurich. The project, which cost the taxpayer **CHF 600,000** will be inaugurated on 10 May. It will be dismantled after 9 months – not a moment too soon for its detractors who successfully lodged a "no to harbour cranes" people's initiative in December 2012 which has yet to be voted on!



Swiss Economics Minister **Johann Schneider-Ammann** launched a campaign against the proposed minimum wage of **CHF 22 an hour** as the country prepares to vote in a referendum on 18 May. At a press conference, he said that the plan would have a damaging effect on the job market in Switzerland as it could lead to job cuts and even threaten the existence of smaller companies, notably in retail, catering, agriculture and hospitality. If approved, the proposal will mean Switzerland has the **highest minimum wage in the world**, beating the current record holder – Australia at A\$16.37 per hour (CHF 13.31).

The canton of **Vaud** attracted 36 new companies in 2013, slightly down on the 39 companies that set up in the canton the previous year. The newly installed organizations plan to create **557 jobs** over five years, according to the cantonal Department of Economics. The canton has already supported 486 projects set up by 195 companies active in the technology and industrial sectors in Vaud, representing 2,2338 jobs. Despite this stability, **Philippe Leuba**, head of the Department of Economics and Sport, said that prosperity remains fragile.

Switzerland is the **most expensive country in the world**. According to the International Comparison Program report published last week by the **World Bank**, Switzerland ranks ahead of Norway, Bermuda, Australia and Denmark in the listing, which assesses the real cost of living, or purchasing power parity. The report compared 177 countries using as a base the 2011 cost of a basket of goods and services, including luxuries. Canada just squeezes in to the top ten, with the US, coming in at 25, lower than most other high-income economies, including France, Germany, Japan and the UK.

A record sum of **CHF 819 million** was invested in basic research in 2013 by the **Swiss National Science Foundation**. It approved more than 3,400 research proposals involving some 14,000 researchers. About 40% of funding went to biology and medical projects, 33% to life and engineering sciences and 27% to social sciences. Funds also went to support PhD students, postdoctoral researchers and 1,100 young researchers.

Roger Federer's wife **Mirka** gave birth to a second set of twins on 6 May. **Leo and Lenny** join their four-year-old twin sisters, Charlene and Myla. Federer withdrew from the Madrid Open on Tuesday in order to be with his family. He had earlier indicated he would miss the French Open, which begins at Roland Garros on 25 May, if necessary. He may yet be ready to take his place among the top seeds.



Work currently under way in the attic of the apse of **Lausanne cathedral** has revealed that the wooden beams in the transept towers are more than **700 years old**. Even more remarkably, those in the south tower have never been restored. The dating was carried out by counting the rings in the wood; this has revealed that these wooden structures are among the oldest ever recorded in Switzerland.

Buying Gripen

Continued front page 1

"We have a contract with the Swedish government, not Saab, so we will pay no more than what is agreed, whatever happens," said Kalbermatten. Any cost overruns would, in effect, be borne by Stockholm.

The Swiss are seeking to replace their aging F-5 Tiger while the Norwegians were looking for a fighter to bolster their F-16s Falcon. As asserted by Bern, which has been lobbied heavily by the Swedish embassy, the new Gripen will be paid in CHF 300 million annual instalments over 10 years. Kalbermatten, who claims that critical reports are often triggered by rival interests, says that "the Gripen is the best plane for Switzerland." Earlier this week, the Financial Times noted that Saab had dangled a sweetener for Switzerland to vote in favour of the Gripen deal by offering CHF 405 million worth of contracts to Swiss companies.

It is these assertions, however, that are being disputed. According to Swiss

Oslo-based international lawyer Maurice Hartmark, one of the Norwegian report authors had drawn his attention to Oslo's assessment. "As a (Swiss) citizen, I considered it a problem that our country was pushing for a plane that is of less quality and costs far more. I don't care who makes the plane," Hartmark said.

Concerned that Bern was not aware of the Norwegian reports, although public in Norway, Hartmark had initially contacted Jakob Baumann of Armasuisse, a branch of the Swiss Defence Department in December 2008. Baumann appeared particularly interested by the methods of the Norwegian experts and had the studies translated. These clearly stated that the Gripen did not respond to Norway's requirements. They also maintained that the Gripen was expected to cost 25% more than the F-35 at purchase, and 15% more over the life period of 30 years.

Continued on page 4

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WEEKLY SWISS NEWS IN ENGLISH

Editor's comment

Are referendums for the best?



With diverse constituencies (Britain, Scotland, Russia, Quebec...) dabbling in the need – or threat – to hold referendums as long as it suits their purposes, the Swiss model has proved the most successful, but also questionable. Exploring the Gripen affair on our front page, one is left wondering whether a popular vote is such

a good idea.

Given that Swiss politicians and experts, some fuelled by outside agendas, cannot agree on whether the Swedish fighter is the right choice, how can ordinary citizens be expected to decide? How many will bother to go through the morass of parliamentary, technical and media accounts, including all the disinformation that aviation specialist Pascal Kümmerling believes has infiltrated the debate? Perhaps, similar to the 2008 Norwegian evaluations, an independent group not linked to parties, lobbies or commercial interests might come up with a better option for what the country really needs.

This year's Geneva Book Fair gathered some 800 authors, plus 750 publishers and booksellers from Switzerland, France and elsewhere. But the purpose, as this year's president Isabelle Falconnier noted, was how to make literature more attractive to young readers. Although better than previous years, the salon still focused more on selling than inspiring. We still have far to go to bridge the gap.

Edward Girardet, editor@lenews.ch

Reaching new heights



The Patrouille des Glaciers took place last week, with a record 5,400 participants. Unstable weather and significant snowfalls at the beginning of the week delayed all departures by a day, but in the end everyone was able to compete.

The men's favourites, a Swiss team, who set the patrol record in 2010, had to pull out due to injury. This gave an all-Italian team the opportunity to win in an impressive 6 hours and 1 minute (a mere 10 minutes more than the record). A Franco-Swiss team won the women's race in 7 hours and 27 minutes, breaking the record by 14 minutes.

Daniel Ahlers, a co-founder of Le News, took part in the 26 km "petite" Patrouille, leaving from Arolla. He described the whole experience as a unique moment of team sharing, not only during the race but also during the training. "The race itself was quite uplifting. The sense of ritual contributed by the army's organization of the event generated a gravitas that gives the Patrouille a special atmosphere."

Jonathan Bischoff

Swiss freeze Ukrainian funds

Switzerland has blocked at least CHF170 million in assets belonging to former Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich and about 30 of his associates as part of money laundering probes.

The Federal Prosecutor's Office confirmed last Tuesday the amount of the confiscated funds held in Swiss bank accounts. Two of Viktor Yanukovich's sons as well as former Ukrainian government ministers and their families have been targeted by the measures.

The office in March opened five investigations



Yanukovich and his sons are under investigation.

against people suspected of money laundering. A separate probe against Yanukovich and his entourage is underway in Geneva.

Swiss officials said the office did not act upon a specific request by the interim government in Kiev, but because of a reasonable suspicion of money laundering.

Two of Viktor Yanukovich's sons as well as former Ukrainian government

ministers and their families have been targeted by the measures.

The Ukrainian government has said loans worth CHF32 billion disappeared from state coffers under the Yanukovich regime. Some of the funds were allegedly sent out of the country during the former president's three-year rule. But it is not clear how much of that money disappeared illegally. *Swissinfo*

Le News is going fortnightly as of 22 May

We carried out an extensive reader survey earlier this year. Many readers asked for a better website and more in-depth and events-related content. To deliver this we have decided to publish the paper fortnightly and invest more time and resources in our website and digital content. Readers can already sign up to receive our weekly newsletter by email.

We're launching our new website in the next couple of weeks. Watch this space for the launch date!

Fewer trains this summer

daily round-trip TGV trains running between Geneva and Paris and five making the connection between Geneva and Marseille. The InterRegio trains will not serve Geneva-Airport during this period, but a shuttle bus service will be provided between Bellegarde and Cornavin.

According to the CFF, the interruptions are necessary to upgrade the 50-year-old electric infrastructure on the 23km track. The work is expected

to cost Switzerland an estimated CHF 161 million, with France paying EUR 69 million. Service is expected to be back to normal by 25 September.

Jonathan Bischoff



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National

Swiss Post: Cheaper across the border

While Swiss Post claims it offers attractive prices for top service, many find it cheaper to do their mailing from France.

A standard 20g letter from France to the EU, including Switzerland, costs CHF 1, while the same letter from the Swiss side is CHF 1.40 (overnight), or CHF 1.30 economy (4–8 days). A French domestic letter costs CHF 0.80 – 20 centimes cheaper than the standard CHF 1 stamp in Switzerland. Economy mail costs CHF 0.74 in France and CHF 0.85 in Switzerland. To post a letter from France to outside the EU costs CHF 1.19, while Swiss Post charges CHF 3.70 for up to 100g priority (2–3 days) or CHF 2.90 economy (4–8 days).

It is even cheaper to send books and pamphlets (*Livres et Brochures*) from France, a discount the Swiss don't provide: CHF 3 for a book (1kg) to anywhere in the EU, including Switzerland. The cost of sending the same book within Switzerland is CHF 7.00, making it a third less to hop over the border and send it from France to Geneva. To send your book to the US or India from Switzerland costs a blanching CHF 32, compared to CHF 5 from France. Such prices are evidently not reflected in Switzerland's 2014 Letter Post Index, which compares Swiss services with those in 15 other European countries, giving adjustments for purchasing power. Swiss Post claims that it performs "outstandingly well" quality-wise. Curiously, France's *La Poste* argues exactly the same.

Le News



Swiss Post's prices soar above those of France

Normalizing CH-EU relations

BERN Despite concerns arising from February's controversial immigration referendum about Switzerland's growing isolationist tendencies, recent developments point towards a more optimistic future for EU-Swiss relations. Wednesday saw an important step forward in normalizing relations with Brussels, which had become even more strained after Bern's post-referendum decision to suspend free-movement agreements with Croatia. Worried that such a move by Bern would set a precedent, Brussels was forced to intervene with a warning combined with punitive measures.

Although far from being cowed by the EU's strident warnings of exclusion from EU funding and educational accords, Switzerland still seems to be coming to terms with the immediate and long-term repercussions of the referendum.

The country's standing within a complex bilateral arrangement with the EU remains ambiguous at best, despite recent agreements with Brussels which show that cooperation is still a must if healthy political-economic relations are to be maintained. On 1 July, the original agreements between Switzerland and Croatia will be reinstated under the watchful eye of



Croatia will now get 1,000 work permits.

EU diplomats. For Croatians, this means that 50 resident permits will be allocated annually, in addition to 1,000 short-term work permits. The reopening of the Swiss market to Croatians was in fact a precondition set by the EU to revitalize cooperation programmes put on hold following the Swiss anti-immigration vote. Furthermore, the Federal Council has also announced that Switzerland will donate CHF 45 million to Croatia as part of the EU's enlargement package.

Christopher Woodburn

Gripen: Whose truth?

Continued from page 1 & 2

While Norway's defence needs are not necessarily the same as the Confederation's, and hence the Gripen's allegedly inferior capabilities might not prove detrimental in the Swiss context, the cost struck a nerve.

Gripen could cost taxpayers up to CHF 11 billion and not CHF 3.1 billion as officially cited

Baumann was replaced shortly afterwards, but Armasuisse's own evaluation reportedly showed that this earlier version of the Gripen was not the best aircraft. Evi Alleman, a leading centre-left Social Democratic parliamentarian, argues that the latest Gripen E version remains "untested and nobody knows how it will perform." She further says that Switzerland does not need to spend money on more fighters. "We have enough to police the skies and the money would be better spent on necessities such as education." Pascal Kümmerling, an aviation expert, however, said that a group of Swiss pilots recently travelled to Sweden to test the

Gripen E and returned with glowing reports. "It performed vastly better than the earlier version," he said.

As aviation specialists point out, costs are not simply based on purchase price, but rather upkeep over a 30-year period. For the Swiss, this means that the Gripen could theoretically cost taxpayers up to CHF 11 billion and not the CHF 3.1 billion officially cited. "How do they plan to pay the rest, a good CHF 8-9 billion more as per the Norwegian calculations? This is a serious deficit in information to the people," said Hartmark.

For Kalbermatten, maintenance costs will not exceed an additional CHF 3 billion. He denied that it would be the CHF 8-9 billion suggested and said that this was part of a strategy to confuse voters. He also referred to various favourable aviation magazine reports, such as a 2012 Jane's Information Group study, noting that the Gripen has one of the lowest operational costs among similar fighters. In what Kümmerling referred to as a "dossier packed with misinformation," both performance and cost clearly remain heavily disputed among experts and politicians alike. One wonders how ordinary voters will make their decisions.

Edward Girardet

Business & Economy

Minimum wages

The Swiss will vote on a controversial minimum wage proposal of CHF 4,000 per month (CHF 22 an hour) at the next nationwide referendum on 18 May. The Swiss Trade Union Federation, which launched the initiative, is also calling for both Bern and the cantons to ensure that minimum rates become part of collective agreements. The retail sector is well-known for its poor pay and the unions are claiming that several companies, including fashion chain H&M, have already upped their basic minimum rate.

Employers argue that if the measures are introduced, they will be hampered by an uncompetitive burden

employers, especially farmers and hoteliers, who rely on seasonal labour. Farmers state that they cannot pay more. Their union, Suisse des Paysans, claims that most farmers themselves do not earn CHF 4,000 a month. Swiss employers argue that if the measures are introduced, they will be hampered by an uncompetitive burden. They may have a point. Recent minimum-wage proposals in the United States (CHF 9), France (CHF 11.50), and Germany (CHF 10.25) all fall well short of the proposed Swiss minimum wage, which would make it the highest in the world.

Yet the recent vote restricting excessive executive pay packages shows that the Swiss maintain a sense of balance and proportion when it comes to the best interests of nation's economy. There are strong indications that the initiative will not succeed.

There is wide resistance to the proposal from both government and

Jeremy McTeague



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Insight

Will a robot replace you?

GENEVA As the recent Inventions Fair in Geneva showed, the brave new world of robotic technology continues to astound with developments only previously imagined in science fiction.

Robots can already run assembly lines, fly aircraft, control cranes, herd and feed farm animals, serve as waiters and cooks and even help with surgery. While this may be a welcome development for some, others worry about whether their jobs will be replaced in the not-so-distant future.

The subject was discussed earlier this year at a meeting in Geneva organized by the Lift Conference, which connects experts exploring the social impact of new technologies. Professor Andrew McAfee of the Center for Digital Business at MIT in the United States told participants that, according to Oxford University's *The Future of Employment* report, 47% of total American employment was in the "high risk" category of becoming automated.

According to the 2013 report, the jobs most at risk will be in low-skilled categories such as transportation, ,

and service sector jobs, where most US job growth has been. The good news is that those with higher degrees and specialized skills are unlikely to find R2-D2 sitting at their desks. The key ingredient for keeping your job in the new robotic age, according to experts, is creative intelligence rather than rote intelligence, such as the careful manual dexterity of a brain surgeon or watchmaker, the social intelligence of a top-level business or diplomatic negotiator, or the emotional skills of health workers and therapists.

Roland Siegwart, a professor of robotics at Zurich's prestigious Institute of Technology (ETH), sees robots increasingly replacing repetitive, dangerous or heavy-labour jobs in mining, construction or farming. He believes people should not be unduly concerned.

Siegwart said ETH filed a patent last month for a robot-operated aircraft, which can help farmers view their fields to help identify problems such as pest infestations. "Today's farms waste about 30% of what they produce because it remains in the fields." "If you look at history, there have always been new technologies that give rise to wor-



Robots are becoming more intelligent and able to do work impossible for humans.

ries that jobs would be killed. People thought computers would replace secretaries while in fact they have created millions of new jobs, and robots will do the same," he added.

The way to avoid being replaced, according to the Oxford report, is to recognize what's coming and to retrain or refocus on work that is less susceptible to automation such as jobs that require creative originality, greater academic and emotional intelligence or entrepreneurial thinking. "These changes are not going to happen overnight," said Siegwart, "It's a very slow

process. It's an expensive technology and in the meantime society has time to adapt and deal with new ways of working."

According to Siegwart, the question is not so much that robots will replace humans but rather that robots will do jobs that are not good for humans. "Humans will always be needed to supervise, repair and control robots and even do their thinking for them." He agreed, however, that this brave new world probably means that more young people should be getting a higher education. *Pamela Taylor*

Who are the Yéniche?

BERN The neighbouring towns of Nidau and Biel/Bienne agreed this week to accept 50 caravans from the Swiss travellers' group known as the Yéniche until the end of August. It is a temporary arrangement and a reminder that no long-term solution has been found to accommodate this persecuted group, most of whom are Swiss citizens. When some 70 caravans arrived in Nidau, at the extreme end of Lake Bienna, in late April, they were turned away. Following several meetings between cantonal officials and Yéniche representatives, an agreement was reached by the two municipalities to allow them to use the grounds of the former site of Expo.02 until more permanent locations are found.

Amnesty International (AI) has pressured Swiss authorities to find fixed places for both Yéniche and Roma communities, noting that Switzerland has failed to honour a 2003 court ruling that all travellers be provided with places to live that respect their cul-

tures. AI is also calling for an independent investigation into a police crackdown on the Yéniche who went to Bern in late April demanding a place to stay. "It was a perfectly peaceful demonstration yet the police detained 100 Yéniche in a school gym for several hours," said Denise Graf of AI's Bern office. "They stamped their hands with indelible ink and used dogs to guard them." The group is now back in Nidau awaiting a decision by cantonal authorities on where they can go. "They need places to stay," said Graf, "otherwise they sleep in their cars".

An estimated 35,000 Yéniche are legally registered as citizens in Switzerland, most of them in Canton Graubünden. Although Yéniche are often confused with Roma, some ethnologists believe they are descendants of the Celts. Others hypothesize that traces of Yéniche in Switzerland dating back to the 11th century connect them to groups from the Middle Ages who spoke Rotwelsch, a so-called "thieves'



The Yéniche are finding it increasingly difficult to find camp sites.

argot". This group reportedly descends from Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazi merchants, beggars and bandits. Today the Yéniche represent the third-largest nomadic people in Europe, living mostly in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Belgian Wallonia and parts of France. Most are practising Catholics.

For nearly half a century, up until the 1970s, Switzerland had a settlement campaign for the Yéniche to combat "vagrancy". This included a policy known as *Kinder der Landstrasse* (Children of the road) that forced their children to be adopted by "ordinary" Swiss citizens in an effort to eliminate Yéniche culture. Other children were put in orphanages and even prisons.

Today the Yéniche are an official national minority and most have become citizens, with about 5,000 remaining semi-nomadic.

Those who continue to pursue seasonal wanderings are often confused with Roma, partly because they live on the margins of society, but also because they pursue similar jobs as weavers, scrap dealers or tool grinders. The Yéniche say their language is different and that their encampments are well off the main roads, unlike the Roma who prefer to be near highways.

Pamela Taylor

Education & Technology

Let's talk about sex

Some of the conservative parties are seeking to make it an electoral topic. Their concern: sex education is introduced too early in school and is in danger of corrupting innocent minds.

Sex education continues to be a delicate, if not difficult, issue in schools. At the same time, it is one that regularly appears on the political scene as it speaks to the public's emotional, social, moral and religious mind-set. This year, it is Switzerland's turn. If one takes the Geneva model, however, sex education is delivered in public schools by a team of specially trained professionals. They follow a gradual programme that aims to raise awareness of one's body and, more importantly, one's right to privacy. This builds up to answering any questions teenagers might have, later touching on wider issues such as sexual identity, tolerance, health and safety.

Yves Cencin of Artanes, a sex education association in the Suisse

Romande, emphasizes the importance of reinforcing self-esteem in order to prepare children for peer pressure. The programme starts in primary school with abuse prevention for eight-year-olds; it then moves on to how it works for 10-year-olds before opening up to answering any questions 12-year-olds might have. The idea is to de-mystify an issue that some parents are unsure how to approach, while debunking playground myths.

Contraception and safe sex are only introduced in secondary school where, as before, there is an emphasis on sexual health. So far, this approach appears to be working. One indicator is that Switzerland has the lowest rate of teenage pregnancy in Europe.

As an education professional, I recognize the importance of informing children and teenagers in order to prepare them for adult life. This is why I feel there is cause for concern. This is not because sex education may be introduced too early. On the contrary, it is because

among the expatriate community with kids attending private schools, students may not be given an adequate level of education when it comes to sexual health and other matters.

Often, these students are not francophone. The result is that they have restricted access to government and other established institutions, such as helplines or free medical aid and advice. Anglophone students may find themselves isolated, with their school the only source of guidance and information outside of the family.

Dr Michelle Wright of HealthFirst believes that spot sessions are not sufficient to educate youngsters fully. Nor are they nearly enough to raise awareness on varied topics, such as peer pressure or sexual harassment. Dr Wright indeed suggests that sex education should be incorporated into the curriculum, so that it accompanies children through puberty and helps them cope with age-related concerns.



Some supporters of the initiative to change Switzerland's sex-education programme argue that it is the parents' responsibility. Unfortunately, not all families provide the right environment for such conversations, due to emotions, embarrassment, taboos, or lack of information. Given that the Swiss population will soon be voting on this continuing debate, perhaps now is a good time to open a dialogue with schools as to what form sex education should take.

Helplines in Geneva exist in French, although English is widely available. Anglophone children can also benefit from advice from: ciao.ch; sos-enfants.ch; Helpline 147.

Sabine Hutcheson, Academic Director and Educational Consultant at TutorsPlus

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Lifestyle

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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

Top 10 best selling books of the week

PAYOT
LIBRAIRIE

Rank	Title	Author	Published by	Genre
1	A Delicate Truth	Le Carré, John	Penguin Books UK	Thrillers
2	Dust	Cornwell, Patricia	Sphere (Time Warner UK)	Thrillers
3	Swiss Watching: Inside the Land of Milk and Money	Bewes, Diccon	Brealey, Nicholas	History
4	The Son	Nesbo, Jo	Harvill Secker	Thrillers
5	I Am Pilgrim	Hayes, Terry	Corgi Bantam Paperback UK	Thrillers
6	Buried Angels	Lackberg, Camilla	Harper Collins UK	Thrillers
7	The Truth about the Harry Quebert Affair	Dicker, Joel	Quercus Publishing	Fiction Hard Cover
8	A Game of Thrones, Book 1. Song of Ice and Fire	Martin, George R.R.	Bantam Books USA	SF
9	The Goldfinch	Tarrt, Donna	Little Brown UK	Fiction Hard Cover
10	The Target	Baldacci, David	MacMillan Publishers	Thrillers

Caves ouvertes

Genève / 24 May

www.geneveterroir.ch

- Clos des Pins, 1283 Dardagny
- Domaine des Curiades, Lully, 1233 Bernex
- Domaine Villard & Fils, 1247 Asnières

Valais / 29-31 May

www.lesvinsduvalais.ch

- Benoît Dorsaz, 1926 Lully
- Simon Maye et Fils, 1955 Saint-Pierre-de-Clages
- Domaine Cornulus, 1965 Ormône (Savièse)
- Domaines Rouvinez, 3960 Sierre

Vully (Région des Trois-Lacs) /

6-8 June. www.vin-vully.ch

- Cru de l'Hôpital, 1787 Môtier-Vully
- Javet & Javet, 1789 Lugnorre

Vaud / 7-8 June

www.cavesouvertes.ch

- Les Frères Dutruy, 1297 Founex
- Domaine du Daley, 1095 Lutry
- Château d'Eclépens, 1312 Eclépens
- Caves des Rois, 1844 Villeneuve

The Swiss wine marathon

Just in case you have nothing planned for four out of the next six weekends, the majority of wine producers throughout Switzerland are throwing open their doors for the annual 'Caves Ouvertes' season. If you have enough stamina, inclination and spare time, you can embark on a wine tour round Switzerland and visit hundreds of wine cellars to sample the best Swiss wines on offer.

Alternatively, you could stay close to home in the Suisse Romande or go farther afield to discover the Italian or German-speaking wine regions. The Valais and Vaud regions have a certain advantage as their events coincide with the long holiday weekends of Ascension and Whitsun in late May.

Your ticket to endless wine enjoyment is a souvenir glass sold by each region. It is up to you how many times and in how many places you have it refilled. To make your journey from vil-

lage to village as easy as possible, several regions organize free shuttles and, in some cases, discounted rail travel to different parts. There is usually a tasty selection of local food products on show, not to mention live music and activities for children.

With so many producers to visit, the challenge is to know which ones to choose. For each region, it is worth highlighting a few whose wines definitely merit a detour. To help you get the most out of the day, it is worth checking information on the various regional websites shown below.

Bon voyage et bonne dégustation!



Simon Hardy holds a Diploma in Wines & Spirits. He is the founder of Fitting Wines, which provides a range of personalised wine services in Switzerland.

For more information please write to contact@fittingwines.com.

How the Swiss lost Mont Blanc

GENEVA At 4,810m, Mont Blanc is Europe's highest mountain. It is to Switzerland what Mount Kilimanjaro is to Kenya or Mount Ararat to Armenia. They are all often portrayed as key touristic or historic landmarks, with the fact that Mont Blanc is in France, Kilimanjaro in Tanzania and Ararat in Turkey beside the point. And yet Mont Blanc, including the northern Haute Savoie, could have been part of Switzerland had the Swiss not dithered.

When France under Louis Napoleon Bonaparte III moved to

annex Savoy in 1858, the French ruler toyed with offering part of it to Switzerland. As a youth, he had been raised in Switzerland and sought political asylum on at least two occasions following failed coups in Paris. Despite French extradition demands, the Swiss refused, claiming that he was not only a Swiss citizen but an army officer. Louis finally became president following the 1848 revolution and then emperor.

Handing over the Genevois, Chablais and Faucigny areas, including the Lake Geneva shore, St-Julien and

the Arve Valley, was intended to be Napoleon III's gesture of gratefulness. Bern, however, was reluctant to have more French-speakers, while Geneva was uneasy with more Catholics. With the Swiss unable to make up their minds, and the Emperor rapidly cooling on his idea to hand the territory over, Paris forced a plebiscite in April 1860. Despite many Savoyards voicing interest to merge with Switzerland, Paris declared – amid allegations of vote rigging – that more than 99% had opted to join France.

The Swiss lost their chance for a new canton. They also lost Mont Blanc. The territory would have provided Geneva with crucial hinterland. Geneva might also have avoided its current housing and transport crisis through a more unified urban vision, which both sides are now struggling to incorporate. All that France gained was a now meaningless "zone franche" allowing local products to sell tax-free in Geneva.

Daniel Wermus

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2 bedroom flat

Interior designed attic
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2 bedrooms
About 190sqm living space
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Spacious reception room with fireplace
Triple garage
Wine cellar

Price on application



CROIX-DE-ROZON

End of Terrace Cottage

3 spacious bedrooms
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Living/dining room with fireplace
182sqm living space
472sqm garden space
Swimming pool, pergola, terrace and built-in bbq
Single garage

CHF 2'500'000.-



LA RIPPE (VD)

Existing house + barn
&
New Property Development
Please contact us for further information



CHAMPEL

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Balcony
Spacious reception rooms
168sqm living space
1 bathroom,
2 separate toilets
1 office/small bedroom
Fully fitted kitchen

CHF 2'400'000.-



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2 bathrooms
236sqm living space,
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17sqm patio
Fully fitted kitchen
60sqm reception room

CHF 2'200'000.-

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Route de Drize 2 – CP 1852 - 1227 Carouge
info@regies.ch / 022.704.19.00

uspi genève

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Building on the Rock and not on the sand

If you are considering buying a place to live in Geneva or its environs, be aware that the purchase cost per square metre is expensive. Add to this the following requirements made of a purchaser and it becomes clear why, as we reported in a previous article, only 35% of Swiss residents own the property they live in despite very low interest rates.

Financing the purchase of a property in Switzerland is more challenging than in most countries. Buyers must provide 20% of the purchase price from personal funds; 50% of this capital (10% of the purchase price) can be drawn or pledged from

Type	PRICE CHF - * All types/sizes			PRICE per m ² ** Estimate required size		
	Low	High	*Average	Low	High	**Average
Land (per 500 sqm)	500,000	1,500,000	1,000,000	1,000	3,000	2,000
Apartments (PPE**)	1,000,000	3,500,000	2,250,000	7,000	15,000	11,000
Villas	1,500,000	5,000,000	3,250,000	9,000	18,000	13,500

Geneva average real-estate prices

**Propriété par étage (co-ownership by floor)

a Swiss pension plan (2nd and/or 3rd pillar). An estimated 4% of the purchase price must be provided from personal funds to pay notary fees, transfer duties and property taxes. A further estimated 2.5% of the total amount must be also provided to finance the mortgage note.

Buyers must provide 20% of the price from personal funds

Buyers have to pay charges and for the upkeep of their property, which in an apartment in an old building can cost as much as CHF 1,500 per month. Estimates for annual charges are gen-

erally based on 1% of the purchase price. And if you are buying an apartment, it is possible that you will have to factor in the eye-watering cost of a buying or renting a parking space as well.

The Swiss real-estate process is a relatively unique one because it splits your mortgage into two ranks (rank 1: 65% and rank 2: 15%); rank 2 has to be repaid by your retirement date, rank 1 can remain open. This means that a lot of Swiss property owners never actually finish paying for their properties in their lifetime. Why? Tax optimization – mortgage interest is tax deductible.

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



Geneva properties continue to rise in price relentlessly.

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Chez Vous

Games for change: Another option



NEW YORK Speaking to Asi Burak, the NY-based president of Games for Change, an organization that “catalyzes social impact through digital games”, it is clear that alternatives to mainstream gaming do exist. “The beauty of games is that they are interactive and certain games have the potential to make people think critically about themselves and the world that surrounds them,” he said. This certainly differs from what many parents and teenagers accept as the nature of digital gaming.

One of the most illustrative examples of this atypical form of gaming is ‘Peacemaker’, published in 2007. The game focuses on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and enables players to pick sides. Through exploration and understanding, right or wrong becomes almost irrelevant – the main message being the inherent complexity of the situation, as opposed to the end-result. Using reality footage, the game incites a greater reflection on actions taken in real-life scenarios. “Though enhancing ‘social good’ is part of the agenda of many of the creators, Peacemaker

enables players to understand complex geopolitical dynamics through a personal decision-making process.” Used in various communities, Burak offers a touching example of Palestinian and Israeli students playing together, catalyzing dialogue and perhaps a less superfluous, one-sided vision of their conflict. The pedagogical reach of such digital media is game-changing indeed by anyone’s standards.

Christopher Woodburn

Cracking up

Baby steps

Ever since we arrived in Switzerland my husband and I have been fantasizing about the outdoor adventures we could have, if only our children would walk.

In true Johannesburg-child fashion, they seem to believe that feet are things meant for pressing accelerator pedals. Not that they’re lazy. They’ll run around in the park forever, bounce on the trampoline for hours... but ask them to actually walk on the actual ground and they cannot cope. At the mere thought, both children begin to wail as loudly as if we’d just... I don’t know... pushed them straight down an icy mountain on two waxed planks. Oh wait, that’s me I’m thinking of. The children love hurtling down slopes. It’s only when the ground is flat that they complain.

The smaller child, particularly, is prone to sudden and debilitating attacks of Short Legs.

“I can’t go on,” she sobbed recently, falling face down on the dusty ground and clutching her ankles. “I have Short Legs! Carry me!”

“We’re still in the parking lot,” I pointed out. “Get moving!” For the rest of the walk (all two kilometres of it) she

wept pitifully and shuffled along like a cross between La Belle Dame Sans Merci and a woodland zombie.

I’ve only seen the children walking with any enthusiasm once, and that was when we were stampeded by a herd of cows. Delirious with joy at being let out of their barn, the herd immediately broke into a gallop.

“Crikey!” I shrieked, as 30 tonnes of grass-fed beef hurtled down the hill, straight towards us.

“Calm down,” my husband said, pointing to a flimsy piece of wire strung between a few wooden poles. “There’s a fence.”

Sure enough, the cows got to within 10 metres of the wire, veered sharply to their left and stampeded on in an orderly fashion. Swiss cows. Amazing. If we’d been back in South Africa, not only would we have been trampled to death but one of the herd would also have stolen my sunglasses.

By the time we caught up with the children, they were halfway home and still going strong. It was quite difficult to slow them down, actually. But seeing how fast they can move when motivated didn’t solve my problem. I can’t



employ the services of an overexcited cow every time I want a stroll.

“Let the reluctant little walkers lead the expedition,” the parenting book said. So one sunny day I packed sandwiches and juice into a backpack and told them we were going for a hike.

They screamed and fainted for a while, but the promise of a picnic lunch eventually got them out the door, up the road and into the forest. Then disaster struck.

“Where are the juice bottles?” I asked, reaching into the backpack and finding nothing but a giant soft toy. “Where’s the food?”

“At home,” the bigger child answered. “I took everything out so I could fit Big Monkey in.”

The children immediately began to howl with hunger, fatigue and Short Legs, and the trip home was not a happy one. As soon as we got inside I slammed the door and swore we’d never travel anywhere on foot ever again.

Not long afterwards we were driving down Germany’s lovely Romantic Road and my husband said, idly, “Maybe one day we could do a walk along here.”

“Great idea,” I answered, ignoring the horrified screams from the back seat.

My memory, it seems, is as short as their legs.

Robyn Goss is a South African writer, recently moved to Switzerland. You can read her blogs at www.robbygoss.com

Travel

Cruising around Switzerland

As summer moves into gear, why not take to the water to unwind and enjoy a calmer pace.

No one living in the region can be unmoved by the beauty of Lake Léman, Western Europe's largest lake. Taking one of the six Belle Epoque boats is a wonderful way to get a new perspective on the Lavaux region, cruising from Ouchy to Vevey or the Chateau de Chillan. The vines planted on their steep terraces form a criss-cross patchwork that changes from brown to green as the seasons progress. If you tire of the scenery, the well-oiled gleaming mechanisms of the paddle steamers are mesmerizing to watch. As well as being able to get from A to B on a boat, you can also enjoy dinner or lunch prepared by Michelin-starred chef Philippe Chevrier. On Friday evenings in winter and spring (till mid-June), you can enjoy a fondue cruise (cheese or Chinese fondue).

Moving in the other direction, you can admire the flower-decked quays in Morges, stop off in Nyon at the flea market on the last Sunday of every month, duck across the lake to the medieval village of Yvoire where you can enjoy a slap-up lunch in French style, or sail by Geneva's famous Jet d'eau. There are great family offers available – two adults and two children can travel all day for as little as CHF 49 with a half-price rail card.

At the other end of the country, on the border with Germany and Austria, is Switzerland's second-largest lake – Lake Constance, or the Bodensee. One of Europe's most beautiful lake and river cruises starts off at Kreuzlingen, leads through the Lower Lake to the medieval town of Stein am Rhein, and then continues along the Rhine to Schaffhausen, where you can take a connecting visit to Europe's largest waterfall – the spectacular Rhine Falls

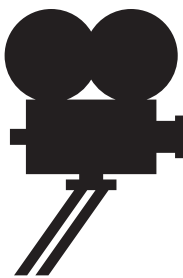
Between the extremes of Léman and Constance, Switzerland seems to



Taking a boat trip on any of the country's lakes is delightful.

go in for lake clusters. The Three Lakes area in the northwestern part of the county is home to Lakes Neuchâtel, Biel and Murten, which offer interconnecting boat travel and free bicycle transport so you can get some exercise as well. In the middle of the country, you can set out from Interlaken, the town literally "between the lakes" of

Thun and Brienz, which are distinguished by their stunningly contrasting colours – blue in Thun and turquoise glacial water in Brienz. With 60 or so sizeable lakes (and 1,500 in total), Switzerland offers a wealth of opportunities for sun basking, cruise and water-lovers. So what are you waiting for?
Cristina Otero



FILM REVIEWS

By Neptune

PAS SON GENRE ★★★

(vo French) The Belgian film industry is a small but rich one, and here is a fine example, starring one of their home-grown young stars, Emilie Dequenne, made famous by the Dardenne brothers. She carries this sad, gentle love story fully on her shoulders, playing a decent coiffeuse courted by an intellectual Parisian professor who fancies her but cannot bridge the social and cultural barrier that separates them. She shines in this tragic role, radiant in moments of love and crushed in her moments of humiliation. Even her Karaoke singing is surprisingly professional and touching. This social study, which reminds one of *Le goût des autres*, is Lucas Belvaux's most intimate and



moving film since his powerful works such as *Cavale* and *Rapt*.

A PROMISE ★★★

A moment of elegance, discretion and romance, that's what you have in this beautifully filmed period piece about a complicated love triangle. Its mélange of talents gels quite perfectly: the story is from the renowned Austrian writer of the early 20th century, Stefan Zweig; the director and co-scriptwriter is the French film master Patrice Leconte (of such varied works as *Les Bronzés*, *Le mari de la coiffeuse* and *Ridicule*); and he has filmed it in English with actors

Alan Rickman as the old industrialist, Rebecca Hall as his young wife, and Richard Madden (of TV's *Game of Thrones*) as the bright newcomer. The mood is of a more delicate yet socially-stratified time, the love is intense in its insistence on morality, and the acting, cinematography (Eduardo Serra) and music (Gabriel Yared) are simply sublime. Catch it quickly because, as often with intelligent gems such as this, it is not getting the distribution it deserves.



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Geneva area, France, Switzerland

LES ARTS

Artiswiss art gallery

If you are looking for a gift or souvenir of Lake Lemman or a Swiss region, then come and visit us at ARTISWISS ART GALLERY in 28b Grand Rue in Coppet. We offer a great choice of paintings by various Swiss artists. Meet the artist, Rita Mancesti, who paints on-site and who can explain her work to you. Also available : tailor-made projects. Opening hours: daily 9.30-12.30 except Wed/Sun, Sat open + upon appt. www.artiswiss.ch 079.216.55.99.



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LE MEET

Meet John Betjeman and Philip Larkin at the Village Players!!

Conversations - in which JB and PL chat about what they wrote and why they wrote it. Their 'inner spirits' come on stage to explain how they encouraged the poets to produce their works and add a few spicy reminiscences of the poets' private lives! The witty dialogue is richly illustrated by recitations of the works of Betjeman and Larkin. 15, 16, 17 May at the Centre Pluriculturel d'Ouchy Lausanne starting at 20:00. Tickets CHF 25 Tel: 079 219 02 29
www.villageplayers.ch



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Jackie**

LE PROPERTY

For sale in Crans-pres-celigny VD

Charming semi detached villa. 250m² living space, extremely well maintained. 4-5 bedrooms, large and bright living and dining room with fire place, high standard fully equipped kitchen. 1436 m² of an even level piece of land with a swimming pool and an equipped pool house. A closed double garage and 4 outdoors parking spaces are also part of this lovely property. CHF 2'850'000.00.
079 471 71 86. rqn@transaxia.ch



Looking for a flatmate in Crans-près-Céligny VD

Village Center, Charming Farmhouse Annex. Frequent traveler seeks female flatmate for 2 bedrooms home. Furnished with all amenities (including linens, laundry, fireplace, wifi, TV, fireplace, parking). CHF 2000 all inclusive (except shared cleaning/firewood costs). Easy access to public transportation. Available June 1st. 079 615 12 34
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LE MISCELLANEOUS

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Le News will be published fortnightly from 22 May

Regional Events

le News

PICK OF THE WEEK IN COLLABORATION WITH



Geneva. Jazz concert. Colin Vallon Trio

17 May, 21h30

As part of the launch of its new album "Le Vent", published by prestigious recording label, ECM, the ever popular Colin Vallon trio (Colin Vallon: piano, Patrice Moret: double bass and Julian Sartorius: drums) will perform compositions from the new release at the AMR, one of Geneva's best-known venues.

AMR-Sud des Alpes
Rue des Alpes 10
1201 Genève
www.amr-geneve.ch
CHF 20.00, Concessions: CHF 15.00
© Nicolas Masson



Geneva. The Choir of the University of Geneva

18 May, 17h

The University Choir will be accompanied by The Chamber orchestra of Geneva as well as soloists Charlotte Müller Perrier (soprano), Catherine Pillonel Bacchetta (viola), Valerio Contaldo (tenor) and Gilles Cachemaille (bass). Directed by Sebastien Brugière. Brahms - Nänie, op.82
Brahms - Schicksalslied, op.54
Mozart - Requiem, K.626

Victoria Hall
Rue du Général-Dufour 14
1204 Genève; <http://a-c.ch/>
CHF 21.00 to CHF 40.00
Credits: Leila Bouanani



Geneva, Lausanne. Cyclotour du Léman

18 May, Departure schedule:
Lausanne: 6h15, Evian: 7h45,
Genève: 9h30

Cycle around Lac Léman. One lake, two countries, three different itineraries: Lake tour (180 km), Evian-Lausanne (110 km), Geneva-Lausanne (60km). Superb scenery makes the effort more than worthwhile.

Booking required:
www.cyclotour.ch



Romainmôtier. Johann Sebastian Bach Recital

16 May, 20h30

A recital of the works of J. S. Bach for harpsicord by Patrick Montan-Missirlan at the Espace De Andrés-Missirlan in the picturesque medieval village of Romainmôtier. Pieces to be performed include several small preludes and fugues. A walk around the charming abbey and village makes for a wonderful way to start the evening.

Espace De Andrés-Missirlan
Place du Bourg 5
1323 Romainmôtier
www.espacedam.ch/
Reservation required, recommended donation CHF 25.00



Geneva. Exhibition. Ceramics of Islam: The Ariana Museum

Until 31 Aug. Tue to Sun: 10h to 18h

The Ariana Museum's exhibition "Ceramics of Islam". View not only masterpieces, but also more commonplace items including those of dubious attribution and even possible fakes. The museum has taken care to describe their meaning and background.

Musée Ariana
Avenue de la Paix 10
1202 Genève
www.ville-ge.ch/ariana
CHF 8.00, Concessions: CHF 6.00
Photo Mauro Magliani & Barbara Piovani



Geneva. Exhibition. All our history, a year in Geneva

Until 11 October

Geneva Library preserves the collective memory of the canton through the Legal Deposit, the official library. For the past 500 years, every publication printed in Geneva, from books, to posters has been stored there. Visit this fascinating three-part exhibition: Women's history: 8 March - 5 April. Politicians' history: 10 June - 12 July. Genevois' history: 9 Sep - 11 Oct.

Geneva Library
Promenade des Bastions 1
1204 Genève
www.ville-ge.ch/bge/
Free entrance.



Geneva. Free hiking on the Saleve (a gradient of 800 m, 3 hours hike-up)

Every Sunday, 10h

Every Sunday. Meet at 10.00 at the bus No 8 terminus at Veyrier-Douane, 100 m from the border. An excursion leader from the Association Genevoise des Amis du Saleve will accompany you whatever the weather. No registration necessary. Expect a 5 - 8 hour hike. Hiking boots, hat, sun screen, waterproof, passport, money, picnic, drink and good health are indispensable.

www.rando-saleve.net



Vevey. Exhibition. DETOX - thinking about nutrition

18 May 2014 - 30 April 2015

The big question "How to eat healthy?" has been answered differently in each period of history, creating many misconceptions about nutrition. Notions of a healthy daily diet have been shaped by the media, the medical profession and our peers over centuries. From the discovery of vitamins, to how our digestion works, the DETOX exhibition offers fascinating insights and puts science and belief in balance.

Musée de l'alimentation
Quai Perdonnet 25, 1800 Vevey
www.alimentarium.ch



Geneva. Spring book sale at the library in English

9 May, 10h00-18h00
10 May, 10h00-17h00
11 May, 12h00-16h00

The famous spring book sale is back with an astounding range of thousands of books covering all interests and ages at very modest prices. There is a tea-room offering delicious sandwiches and home baked goods when you need a rest from searching for all the books, DVDs and CDs you have missed and can now buy for a few francs. Come and enjoy with family and friends!

The Library in English
rue de Monthoux 3, 1201 Geneva
www.thelibrary.ch



Vevey, Montreux. Nuit des Musées

17 May, 17h-0h

Museum night on the Riviera. Visit museums in the region from 17h00 until midnight for free. There really is a magical and mysterious atmosphere when visiting museums in the evening. Each museum will host a special event (shows, music, demonstrations) and a shuttle bus makes it easy to move between the different venues in Vevey and Montreux.

List of the participating museums:
www.museesriviera.ch/



LA BODEGA DU TERROIR GALICIEN

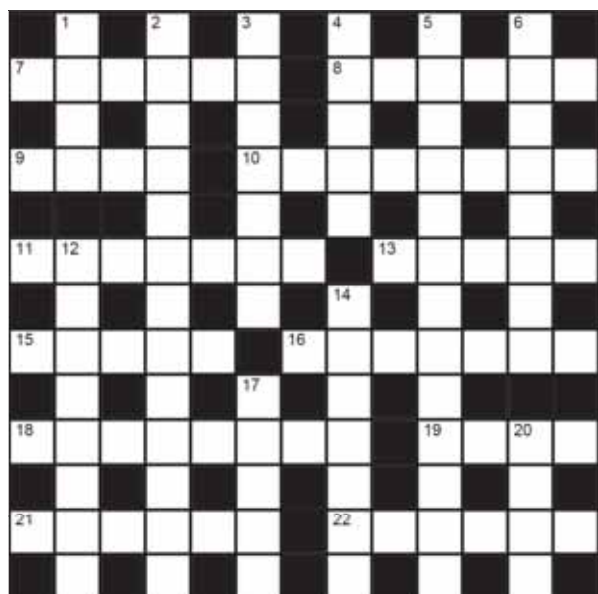
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Puzzles



QUICK CROSSWORD

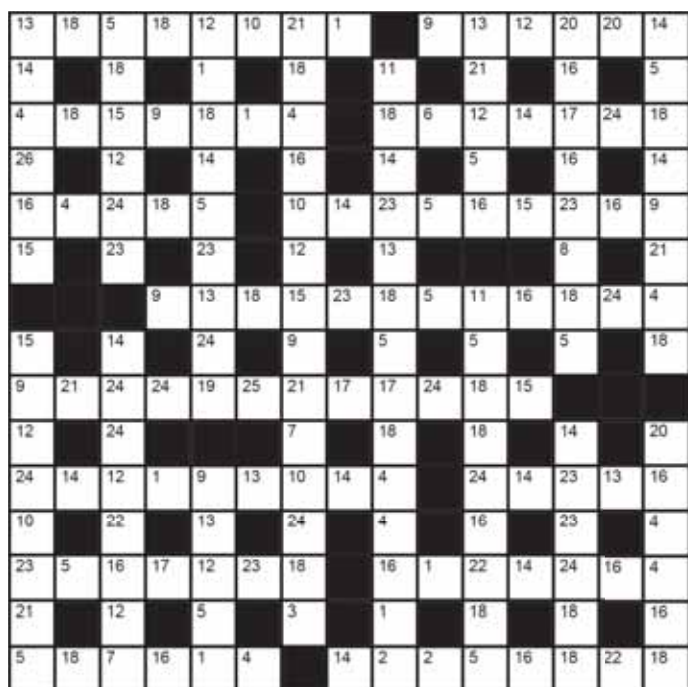
ACROSS

- 7 Comfort in Disappointment or misery (6)
- 8 The cardinal number that is the product of ten and nine (6)
- 9 Someone whose style is out of fashion (4)
- 10 A hypothetical discontinuity in the flow of time (4,4)
- 11 Anticipated (7)
- 13 Small three-masted vessel (5)
- 15 Engagement (5)
- 16 20th century reaction to Victorian poetic sentimentality (7)
- 18 Copious and profuse (8)
- 19 A domed or vaulted recess or projection on a building especially a church (4)
- 21 Tusked (6)
- 22 Be clear it's a cream puff (6)

DOWN

- 1 Hockey but played on horseback (4)
- 2 Undemanding, usually tuneful and soothing (4,9)
- 3 Not one or the other (7)
- 4 A hard resin derived from an African tree (5)
- 5 Well-read (13)
- 6 Appetisers (8)
- 12 A student's Booklet containing problems with spaces for solving them (8)
- 14 Besotted (7)
- 17 Witty amusing people (5)
- 20 Slide usually without control (4)

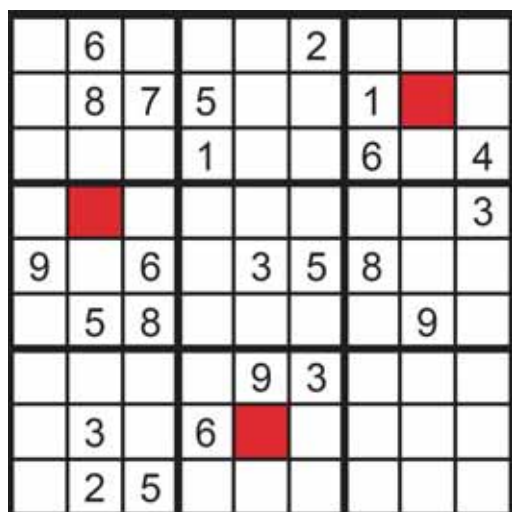
Last week's solution



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
	G								P			
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
								V				



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

What's On

Start purring!

The Geneva Amateur Operatic Society will stage the world-famous musical *Cats* in Nyon on 16–24 May.

Based on TS Eliot's Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats, *Cats* tells the

story of a tribe of cats called the Jellicles. The action takes place the night the cats make what is known as the "Jellicle choice" – deciding which cat will ascend to the "Heavside

Layer" before entering a new life. The songs comprise Eliot's verse set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, although the lyrics to the most famous song, *Memory*, are by Trevor Nunn.

Cats is the second-longest running show in Broadway history, clocking up an impressive 18 years on stage. It is also the fourth longest-running West-End musical, playing for 21 years. It has been translated into more than 20 lan-

guages and has been staged all around the world.

Presented in English by the highly proficient Geneva Amateur Operatic Society, it will offer the opportunity to



Cats, a legendary success.

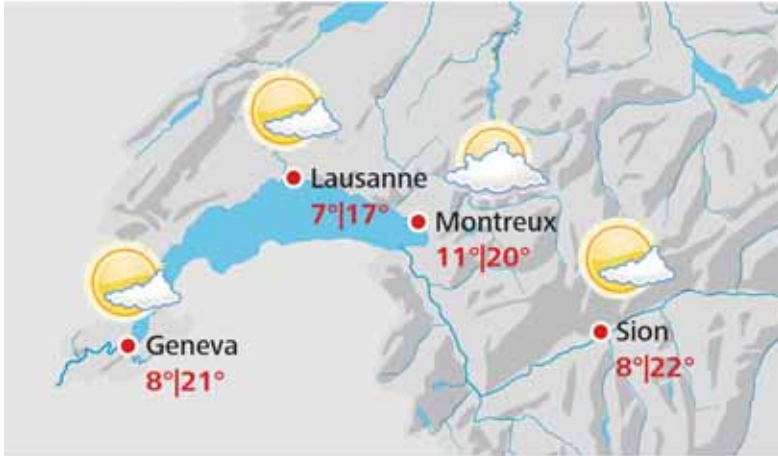
see a performance of this feline musical, which has never stopped gathering crowds since its original opening in London's West End in 1981.

Nyon. CATS by Geneva Amateur Operatic Society
 16–24 May
 Théâtre de Marens
 Route du Stand 5
 1260 Nyon
 Tickets CHF 36
 www.gaos.ch

Jonathan Bischof

Weather

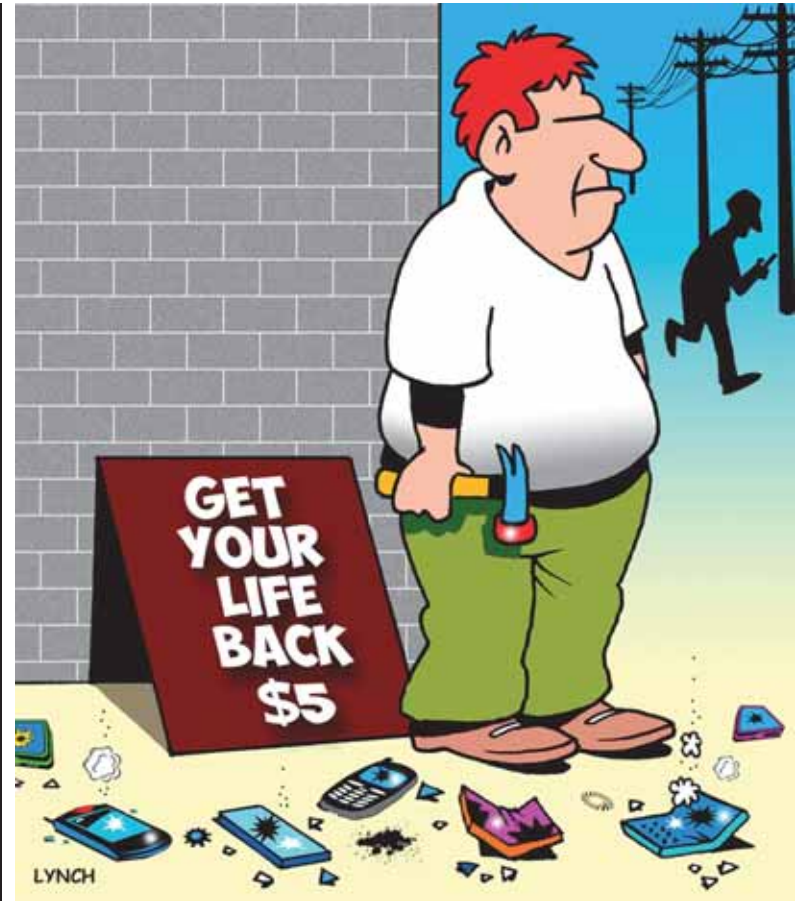
SUISSE ROMANDE



City	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
GENEVA	8 21° Partly cloudy	10 21° Cloudy with rain	11 18° Partly cloudy	11 19° Cloudy with rain
LAUSANNE	7 17° Partly cloudy	9 16° Cloudy with rain	9 15° Partly cloudy	9 15° Cloudy with rain



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