**Editorial**

*Dear Readers in the United States*  

Like everywhere in the United States, the first Christmas decorations on the houses go up during Thanksgiving weekend. And then every day there are a few more. It’s the first sign that Christmastime is arriving. But for many of us, the real Christmas season starts at Swiss Park when the Matterhorn Young Swiss Society has their Samichlaus party with lunch, followed in the afternoon by the Christmas Concert from the Swiss Singing Society Harmonie. For once, we would like to tell you more about it on pages 6-7.  

More than 20 years ago I saw Goldi’s model train masterwork for the first time. For several years now I had been telling him that I would like to write an article and take some pictures for Swiss Review. Last week I called because I had realized that I was going to have enough space. Unfortunately, Goldi said that a large part of the set was being dismantled, that I was too late. I was so sorry that I had procrastinated and went on and on lamenting, until Goldi said he did have a lot of pictures, so here goes. Read it all on page 8.  

And last but not least I want to make you aware that Swiss Review has modernized its layout. I hope you like it as much as I do.  
Wishing all of you a very Happy and Healthy New Year!

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**Colorado**  
*Swiss, not Swedish*  

As part of coming up with ideas for fundraising for our Swiss Club, we came up with this t-shirt. Well, it’s turned out to be a great one and people love it, so I thought that other Swiss might be interested. Since there is no Colorado Springs specific notation, it would work anywhere. The pictures attached are of myself, and I’m wearing a small, and I usually wear a size 6. Price $ 20.00. For more info contact:  

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Washington, DC
5th Annual Manufacturing Summit 2011 on High Tech Skilled Jobs and Apprenticeship

Jobs Summit on Attracting and Maintaining a Highly Skilled Workforce and the Swiss Model for Competing on a Global Level in the Manufacturing Industry, joined by the White House & U.S. Army Reserves

Concerned for the future of manufacturing jobs, Swiss and US industry leaders of small and medium sized enterprises joined together with the White House, U.S. Army Reserves and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation at the 5th Annual Manufacturing Summit in Washington DC, organized by Switzerland Trade & Investment Promotion.

More than 150 businesses, community college, and workforce development leaders attended. Speakers addressed standards to increasing and investing in standardized certification programs for apprenticeship in the U.S. – like those created by The National Institute for Metalworking Skills and endorsed by The National Association of Manufacturers – will help alleviate the skills shortage here and shore up the jobs pipeline within the manufacturing sector.

An example of the Swiss apprenticeship model being used in the U.S. is the N.G. Hayek Watchmaking School in Miami, Florida. It subscribes to a new program for returning veterans called “The Veteran Watchmaker Initiative: Educating Soldiers, Securing Futures.” At no cost, accepted students undertake a two-year WOSTEP certified program that provides all of the required elements to obtain a watchmaker certificate and potentially a well-paying job for life.

One strong advocate for apprenticeship is Jane Oates, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of Labor. At the Manufacturing Summit, she was pleased to report that in the past year 112 new apprenticeship programs were established across the country, and renewed her call to action to promote the truly sophisticated nature of manufacturing today and its “rebirth in the 21st Century.”

Collectively, conference attendees recognized that reaching out to America’s youth and providing training opportunities at an early age are key factors in the effort to rebuild and maintain a highly skilled workforce.

Martin von Walterskirchen, Director Americas of Switzerland Trade & Investment Promotion, said “We must work with the student, the company and the parents to ensure success in training and skills.”

Speaking for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Dr. Margot Daniels-Tyler emphasized, “The talent is here. It is a matter of finding it.” The Gates Millennium Scholars Program provides scholarships to do just that, discovering and investing in youth. Dr. Tyler issued a challenge to the audience by asking, “How many of you are mentoring other Swiss Gateways: Los Angeles, Chicago, Newark, Boston, Miami. You may fly from one city, return from another (same in Europe). Book early – Lots of $-saving on combinations and children’s rates in 2012, available NOW with Jason Travel. We handle ALL Airlines – economy, business and consolidator rates. Beat the NET.

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In light of the thousands of returning veterans, Major General Keith Thurgood, Deputy Commanding General, Support of the U.S. Army Reserves, addressed the growth of public-private partnerships to connect businesses with results-oriented skilled veterans from all branches of the military. Major General Thurgood urged manufacturers to join a new initiative to facilitate these connections, The Employer Partnership of the Armed Forces. “Find ways to build the future,” added Don Graves, Executive Director of the President’s Council on Jobs and Competitiveness. As he offered a report from the White House, Graves said “The issues, the ideas you are discussing, are of the utmost importance. Without growing the manufacturing sector, without growing jobs, this economy will fail.” Graves further explained 17 recent tax cuts for small businesses, where manufacturing companies are the target for state credit initiatives. Given the urgent demand for high tech skilled workers and the potential economic impact, one industry leader asked Mr. Graves if the White House would establish a cabinet-level Secretary of Manufacturing. Why is Switzerland interested in the U.S. manufacturing sector? As Daniel Küng, CEO of OSEC Business Network Switzerland explained, “As the second largest foreign investor in the U.S. manufacturing sector, Switzerland is firmly committed to supporting American manufacturing. We believe our expertise in creating apprenticeship can be a successful model for generating the skills needed to fill manufacturing jobs in the U.S.” Apprenticeship supports a healthy manufacturing sector, which in turn supports a healthy economy and creates jobs.

DANIEL BANGSER
Trade Commissioner and Director North America - Investment, Switzerland Trade & Investment Promotion, Consulate General of Switzerland in New York.

For more information, go to: www.TheManufacturingSummit.com

All pictures by Keri Douglas

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On a sunny Sunday, December 4th was our family afternoon with Santa Claus at the Jetton Park in Cornelius. Santa was busy giving encouragements or reproaches to the children but at the end, Schmutzli and he were handing out the long anticipated “Gritibänze” together with clementines, candy and nuts. Everyone enjoyed the traditional barley soup and hot chocolate. A big thank you goes to the board and volunteers for doing an excellent job.

For further information on upcoming events and to see more pictures, visit us on our Website: www.swisscharlotte.com. We are all looking forward to seeing you at one of our activities and would like to hear from you.

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New York Sustainable Hospitality: Green Innovation in Practice

Sustainability and green solutions are topics of high interest to many businesses in the 21st century. The same applies to the hospitality industry. On both sides of the Atlantic, many experts in this field are working on innovations which can reduce the carbon footprint of this industry. This is why on November 11, the École Hôtelière de Lausanne (EHL) together with the Tisch Center for Hospitality, Tourism, and Sports Management of the New York University and the Swiss Consulate General in New York organized a panel discussion with the title “Sustainable Hospitality: Green Innovation in Practice” in New York. The aim of the event was to bring together experts from the US and Switzerland and to discuss the important challenges that the hospitality industry faces today.

Approximately 150 professors, students and entrepreneurs attended the event. Speakers on the panel were representatives of universities, professors and students of EHL and NYU. Next to discussing different ideas and approaches to sustainable hotel business, the panelists and the audience agreed that making the industry more green and sustainable was the right and necessary path. Not only because of social responsibility, but guests also increasingly care about an ecological way of traveling.

This event followed the recent creation of EHL’s New York-Lausanne Society. The aim of this association is to promote academic and economic collaboration and exchange in the fields of innovation and entrepreneurship in the hospitality industry between Switzerland and the US.

COSIMA BADER
ACADEMIC INTERN
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Photo: NYU-SCP Tisch Center

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Southern California     Christmas in Los Angeles

Matterhorn Young Swiss Club
Samichlaus Party
The Santa Party has been a long standing event for the Matterhorn Young Swiss Club, trying to keep a Swiss tradition of Samichlaus who arrives on December 6th, sometimes with a donkey and in some parts of Switzerland with Schmutzli, reminding the children that Christmas is coming. He also knows a lot about each child, good and not so good habits and Schmutzli (the enforcer) will threaten the really unruly boys with a trip deep into the forest, or he may leave a switch instead of treats. Gifts on that day are not part of Santa’s job, only a bag with peanuts, walnuts, “Manderinli,” some chocolate candy, a “Gritti-bänz” and maybe a small toy are given to good children.

For many years we were lucky to have the perfect Samichlaus, Freddy Burri, who is well known for having been the Disneyland Matterhorn Yodeler when it opened. The children adored him as he had just the right touch of sternness and kindness. When he was unavailable due to family reunions in Switzerland, we had to look for substitutes. Most were o.k. One was a big disappointment, especially when he paid no attention to the notes that the parents had submitted and kept asking the children what they wanted for Christmas, just like the mall Santas.

Well, luck was on our side when one of our Matterhorn members offered to be Santa and with Urs Pesko we hit the jackpot. He too has just the right touch, talking to the children about their shortcomings, praising their accomplishments and never embarrassing them. He can speak to the children in English or Swiss German and several of them will have a song or a poem to recite for him.

I dare say that many of our members and friends look forward to this event as it really puts you in the Christmas spirit. Of course the beautiful homemade cookies baked by the ladies add the festive touch and the Christmas carols, in German and English make everybody feel a little nostalgic. Most of the children are grandchildren of our members and we have had as many as four generations enjoying the great buffet lunch and a visit from Samichlaus at Swiss Park.

Swiss Singing Society Harmonie
Christmas Concert
With a group of about 80 Senior Citizens bused in by a Tour company, the Matterhorn Room at Swiss Park was nearly bursting at the seams! 310 persons made their way past the three raffle tables laden down with prizes and more prizes! The hall was decked in its Christmas finest with Christmas tree, table center pieces, pine twigs on each table, peanuts and mandarins so the guests would not starve. The bar was doing a booming business and there was a real traffic jam by the raffle tables.

Punctually at 4 pm the lights were dimmed and with their Alphorns Nelly Wyss, her son Christoph and Franz Stadelmann made it known that the concert was to begin. When the curtains opened, the singers, all in their individual trachts, were standing on stage and Harmonie President Wal Baur was delighted to greet the large crowd, among them Swiss Consul General Bruno Ryff
and Tony Hartenstein, the long-time solo yodeler, accordionist and professional musician who, being over 90 years old, was for the first time just a spectator. The guest choir was the Corona del Mar Chancel Choir – our own director Rodger Whitten’s church choir.

For a change, Harmonie did not have a designated MC. This task was given to several of the younger choir members who did a splendid job. In the first part of the concert Harmonie sang Weihnachtsglocken - Daheim – O Holy Night – Wenn ich ein Glöcklein wär (Soloists Heidi and Helen Jakob) and ended with Weihnachtsfreude. As he does for every concert, Siegfried Heger had written a special poem “Children’s Eyes” which he read. Then it was the turn of the Corona del Mar Chancel Choir to sing Awake! Sing Gloria – The Most Wonderful Time of the Year – Festival Sanctus and Tiny Little Baby is Born. Intermission was the moment for the singers to mingle with the guests and for everybody to buy some more raffle tickets. Then the concert continued, with, to everybody’s delight and sur-

prise, a children’s choir, directed by Ursula El-Tawansy. While a girl played the violin and the children sang several well-known songs both in German and English, Christmas scenes and pictures were projected above their heads, thanks to a power point presentation by Max Bachmann and Alexander Bell. Before the singing continued, there was another surprise: Carina Smith, daughter of a Harmonie member, performed a tap dance called “It Snowed” – a splendid result after years of dancing lessons!

Harmonie continued with “Calypso Noel,” soloists Siegfried Heger and Sabrina Salata. We were quite proud of our performance of this song; because when we started rehearsing (in August!!!) the unfamiliar Jamaican rhythms were hard for us. Next on the program was a French song “Le Message des Anges” and the English version “Angels We Have Heard on High.” The guests were quite surprised when suddenly the Chancel Choir joined in, singing from high up on the balcony in the back. As one guest remarked: Singing in stereo!! Everybody then sang “Stille Nacht / Silent Night.” But that was not the end of the Concert. We had saved the best for last: Both choirs, now squeezed together on stage, with Rodger Whitten at the piano and at the same time directing, performed the Hallelujah Chorus from the Messiah by Georg Friedrich Händel. The standing ovation that followed proved that all the rehearsing had paid off!!

The children’s choir under the direction of Ursula El-Tawansy was a surprise.

The Chancel Choir and Harmonie squeezed onto the stage for the final song: Händel’s Hallelujah from the Messiah.
Southern California
Goldi’s trains were always on time
His real name is Gerold Merker, but to all of us he is simply Goldi, probably because of his always sunny disposition.

He grew up in Zurich where he got his first model train, a Märklin 0 gauge set at age 4. He obviously had no idea where that would take him. After an apprenticeship, a business school diploma and military service, his family sent him for six months to New York to learn English. He liked it, moved to LA, built. The contractor was a bit astonished that somebody in Los Angeles wished to have a 34 by 60 foot “hole in the ground.” Heidy said the neighbors probably thought they were building an atomic shelter, as this was in the sixties and the cold war was very much on peoples mind. But the basement couldn’t have had a more peaceful purpose. Over the years, all three rooms became a railroad wonderland – a miniature of a real railroad that knowledgeable visitors could recognize as based on specific areas in Colorado. Ray Spencer, an artist working for Disney, painted most of the backdrops. Every track was laid by hand, every building lovingly assembled, bushes and trees made.

Who wouldn’t want to spend some time at the Palace Hotel? because his older brother lived there, married Heidy, settled down, joined an O Scale club and started acquiring Lobaugh and Max Gray locomotives. After several years the Merkers decided to have their own house built. The contractor was a bit astonished that somebody in Los Angeles wished to have a 34 by 60 foot “hole in the ground.” Heidy said the neighbors probably thought they were building an atomic shelter, as this was in the sixties and the cold war was very much on peoples mind. But the basement couldn’t have had a more peaceful purpose. Over the years, all three rooms became a railroad wonderland – a miniature of a real railroad that knowledgeable visitors could recognize as based on specific areas in Colorado. Ray Spencer, an artist working for Disney, painted most of the backdrops. Every track was laid by hand, every building lovingly assembled, bushes and trees made.

Working on the rail tracks in front of various stores

People at the Durango Rail Station

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