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Marriage between Der Bund and NZZ

The threat of a media monopoly in Berne has disappeared. Berner Zeitung was attempting to establish cooperation leading to merger with Berne's other main newspaper, Der Bund. Instead, however, the latter has a new main shareholder, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, which is taking over both management and publication. Thanks to this support, Der Bund hopes to come slowly back into the black: in 1994 its deficit came to about Sfr.5 million. The NZZ and Ringier media groups now each possess 45% of shares, while the Stuber publishing family, which until now had a 10% proportion, has dropped out altogether. The financially stricken Bernese newspaper particularly needs strengthening in the national advertising field. To



maintain genuine competition in both reporting and management, Der Bund will remain editorially separate and independent. ■

Point of view

"Switzerland's tragedy is confusing independence with freedom. Independence can be a prerequisite for freedom, but we have got stuck there. We have become a national defence fixation state while forgetting actually to defend the state".

Peter Bichsel, writer, Soleure

Nelly Silvagni-Schenk is dead

Nelly Silvagni-Schenk has died at her birthplace of Neuchâtel at the age of 81. She emigrated to Paris in 1946, was director of «Messenger suisse» from 1955 to 1989 and was also a member of the editorial committee of Swiss Review for many years. ■

Space research in Berne

In future, missions to the solar system will end up in Berne. The council of the European Space Agency (ESA) has unanimously decided to set up a space institute at Berne University. Half the finance for the new International Space Science Institute (ISSI) will come from ESA, and the other half will be shared between Canton Berne, the Federal Office for Education and Science and Swiss industry. For the first three years the annual budget will amount to Sfr.2.6 million, but this should later increase to Sfr.3.6 million. Scientists working at the ISSI will be given grants. The main objective is to improve scientific evaluation of flights into the solar system. Later expansion into the fields of astronomy, astrophysics, earth observation and research into weightlessness is possible. ■

The first Swiss bookshop on the Internet

From now on readers resident anywhere in the world can order by computer from Switzerland new scientific publications in almost all fields of knowledge, as well as any other book currently in print. The scientific bookshop and distributor, Freihofer AG, is the first Swiss bookshop to possess a home page on the interactive WorldWideWeb, the gigantic information library with 7,000 sites around the globe. This means that all users of the Internet, the information superhighway, can order on-line any book which is in print from Freihofer AG in Zurich even before it appears in a catalogue.

An extra curiosity is that you can also bring skeletons, skulls and other medical paraphernalia from the Freihofer's WorldWideWeb URL address is: <http://www.eunet.ch/freihofer/>. At present there are 30 million information-hungry people surfing on the Internet, and this number will probably increase to at least 180 million by the end of the century. Experts estimate that 31% of the information superhighway is used for doing business. There are already a total of 20,000 shops on the Internet at which you can order directly, make reservations and pay. ■

National press agency 100 years old

A hundred years ago a couple of dozen newspaper publishers launched an organisation which is still flourishing. The Swiss News Agency (SDA) was founded as a solidarity bulwark

against foreign agencies and still guarantees independent overall reporting about Switzerland from a Swiss point of view. It also provides the media with news and comment from abroad. In 1895 ten permanent staff served 54 newspapers, while today about 160 journalists in 18 different locations write for 250 newspapers. SDA has successfully lived through many periods of turbulence and restructuring in the media market, as well as two world wars. Today it produces 75 million words a year. But, more important than this statistic, the Swiss News Agency knows no cantonal or linguistic boundaries and continues to be an important binding element in a society which is becoming increasingly pluralist. ■



The founding of the Swiss News Agency (SDA) was a self-help act with the aim of building up an independent body to obtain news. During the war years information was picked up by short-wave radio.

Switzerland's healthy population

A good 80% of Switzerland's population describe their state of health as "good to very good". About one-third of the population smoke, and about the same amount drink alcohol more than twice a week. Only every fourth person takes enough exercise. These figures

Diary

Music and theatre

May 3-7

Berne: International Jazz Festival

May 6-7

Zug: International Accordion Orchestral Meeting

May 12-21

Schaffhausen: International Bach Festival

May 24-27

Bulle, Fribourg: International Theatre Meeting

May 26-28

Soleure: Soleure Literature Days

Art exhibitions

May 2-31 December

Aathal, Zurich: Dinosaur Footprints at the Dinosaur Museum

Until July 1

Zurich: Somewhere in Bhutan - Where Women have the Say, at the Ethnological Museum

Until September 3

Winterthur, Zurich: Play of Light at the Technorama

Festivals and folklore

May 7

Brienz, Berne: May Tree Dance, ancient custom, at the Ballenberg Open-Air Museum

May 14

Winterthur, Zurich: Yodelling Sunday

June 3-10

Mürren, Berne: Alphorn Week

June 10

Schaffhausen: City Festival, 950 Years

Congresses and fairs

May 22-25

St. Gall: International Management Meeting

June 15-18

Crans-Montana, Valais: Economic Forum

Sport

May 2-7

French-speaking Switzerland: Cycling, Tour de Romandie

May 6

Berne: "Grand Prix of Berne", city run

May 14

Zofingen, Aargau: Triathlon "Power WoMan"



The exception proves the rule: in Switzerland the majority of women live a healthier life than men.

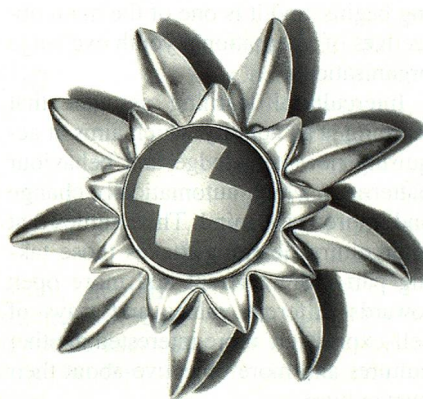
emerge from the first Swiss health survey, carried out jointly by the Federal Statistics Office and the Federal Office for Public Health. The general picture is that the majority of the population feel well and are health-conscious. But there are wide regional and social variations. In German-speaking Switzerland 90% of people consider themselves fit, while in the French-speaking areas only 77% bother about a healthy life. The Italian speakers come in between. On the whole women are more health-conscious than men.

Consumer behaviour and dietary knowledge depend largely on edu-

cation, income and social origin. The higher the level of education, the rarer are long hospital stays, the stronger the determination to give up smoking and the lower the consumption of medications. 21% of the population have given up smoking, while 49% never started. Substantially more men than women still smoke - 37% against 24%.

53% of the population drink alcohol twice a week at most, 31% drink it more often than that, and 16% abstain altogether. 34% of Italian-speakers consume alcohol every day, with 29% for French-speakers and 17% for German-speakers. ■

Switzerland Tourism: new job - new look



Selling not managing. That is the new direction of the old Swiss National Tourist Office (SNTTO). Marco Hartmann, the man now at the top of Switzerland's tourism publicity agency, is reducing red tape and increasing the marketing budget by 40% to Sfr. 23 million. SNTTO will concentrate on advertising abroad the attractions of Switzerland's tourism regions, emphasising cultural diversity, the excellent infrastructure and the high standard of Swiss hotels. The motto is "Holidays at last. Your Switzerland". A new logo called "Golden Flower" will play a role in

competing with other tourist destinations. This is a gold flower with the Swiss cross in a red field at centre. ■

Equal rights for homosexuals?

Lesbian and gay couples should in future have the same rights as married people. This is demanded in a petition which has been handed in at the Federal Chancellery with 85,000 signatures attached. Homosexual couples are discriminated against, particularly in matters concerning sickness, death and inheritance and in the legislation on foreign nationals. ■

Winter Olympics for Valais?

The International Olympic Committee has accepted the Sion-Valais bid to host the Winter Olympics in 2002. It is competing against Oestersund (Sweden), Quebec (Canada) and Salt Lake City (USA) in the race, which will be decided at Budapest on June 16. ■

Texts: Alice Baumann

Photos: Keystone