

Mailbag

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Look at the USA!

I just received the June edition of "Swiss Review" and wanted to comment on Switzerland's immigration initiative. As an American by birth and a Swiss citizen by marriage, my advice to Switzerland is to look at the situation in the USA and take heed. We are fast losing our identity due to our immigration policies, or lack thereof. The USA was founded as an English-speaking country, and non-English speaking immigrants who came here early in the last century HAD to learn English, as did my Russian grandparents. Unfortunately, this is no longer the case. The strain on our medical, governmental, and educational systems is enormous. I'm not the only person who feels we are becoming a one-party state due to the situation here.

JOAN PELLATON, LONG ISLAND, NY, USA

Gurlitt – Germany has to attend to its duty

The Museum of Arts in Berne should not accept the Gurlitt collection. Switzerland already has a bad record with stolen art hidden in banks, museums, etc. It is not up to Switzerland to find provenance of all these paintings. Germany has to step up and provide each object with the proper paperwork.

CHRISTIANE JOHNSON, REDDING, CA, USA

A realistic impression

"A falling tree makes more noise than an entire forest growing," says the proverb. What a shame the "Swiss Review" (systematically) focuses on controversial issues, often contains provocative illustrations and shows political bias, not even to mention the "Quotes" section. How about some optimism! The editorial team seems to be very aware of environmental issues, which is great. But have they forgotten that our intelligence and capacity for thought have to be respected above all? The Swiss Abroad need to be given a realistic impression of their country. Help us, first and foremost, to see all of the "forest that is growing" – and not just a few dead leaves or branches that fall down. Thank you!

AURÉLIA LUGON, LITHUANIA

Grounds for celebration

As usual, I flicked through the "Swiss Review" and read some articles, including Barbara Engel's editorial. Not that I would have flown to Switzerland immediately, but when I reached the final inside page my heart jumped for joy. Blocher's resigned! Grounds for celebration indeed. Why not introduce a day of remembrance for the goat herders and their leader who try to pull the wool over the people's eyes? The rest is quite obvious... Switzerland is now once again an option as a place to live.

HANS HAEBERLI, GERMANY

"Der goalie bin ig." A Swiss film phenomenon by Sabine Boss



DER GOALIE BIN IG, (I Am The Keeper), by Sabine Boss (Switzerland, 2014), starring Marcus Signer, Sonja Riesen and Pascal Ulli. 1 hour 40 minutes. Also on DVD (fr,en,de), approx. CHF 22.00.

Directed by Sabine Boss, "Der Goalie bin ig!", which won the 2014 Swiss Film Award for best fiction film, is a phenomenon. This gem of a movie, which recounts in flashback the story of a former junkie let down by his childhood friends, has been seen by over 120,000 people since its release. The film touches the hearts of the Swiss for a number of reasons. First of all, there is the language, Bernese dialect which rolls in the mouth of Goalie, a phenomenal loser, conveying some great lines in the process. These aphorisms and wordplay were crafted by Pedro Lenz, the Swiss author with a Spanish mother who wrote the novel (also in dialect) that inspired the film.

The character known as Goalie, whose name we learn at the end is Ernst, is something of a Swiss anti-hero. He is both naive and virtuous, a Christ-like figure as he atones for the sins of others without seeking vengeance. As a child, he takes the place of a nerd put between the goalposts (a position given to those who do not know how to play football) to save the boy from a hammering. The Goalie takes a beating in place of the weak and accepts the consequences, even though it later earns him no solicitude from the person whose skin he saved. As an adult, the Goalie serves a prison sentence for people who were not worth it. He discovers that his old friends have used him as bait but he refrains from violence, preferring to seek exile in the city (Berne). So he says goodbye to Schummertal and Regula, who decides to stick with an idiotic ruffian.

Cinema-goers have greatly enjoyed this touching, powerful Swiss film which, like all good stories, possesses universal values. The goalie is a scapegoat but is strong enough to escape when the time comes. As for the Switzerland portrayed in the film, it is not the most appealing depiction as the movie's characters are limited and spineless, with the notable exception of the town cop and Regula, who opens her heart to the Goalie when he reveals the story of his nickname to her.

Sabine Boss' direction is subtle and supported by haunting and exhilarating steel guitar music. It is good to see the soundtrack featuring the band Zuri West, the stars of Swiss rock in the 1980s, which is when the action takes place.

STÉPHANE HERZOG