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# REGIONAL NEWS

## UNITED STATES

### Editorial

Dear Readers in the United States,  
I hope you all had a good start into the New Year!

It often comes with lots of resolutions on what we would like to do better this time around. And the government introduces new laws. Here in California as of January 1<sup>st</sup> we have a lot of happy chickens. The new law requires that each egg-laying hen must have room to walk around and fully extend her wings. So for quite some time our egg producers have started modifying their chicken coops or diminishing the number of hens. We are of course happy for the happy hens and don't mind too much if the eggs are going to be a bit more costly!

Chickens were not the only birds getting a break: The California Fish and Game Commission approved an emergency listing of the Tricolored Blackbird under the California Endangered Species Act. You probably know just as little as I what these birds look like, so here is one. And finally, the New Year brings a new layout for Swiss Review. I hope you like it and enjoy the varied articles.



WAL BAUR  
wbaur@roadrunner.com



WAL BAUR,  
EDITOR REGIONAL NEWS USA

### Washington D.C.: New Swiss Ambassador

Martin Dahinden assumed his position as Ambassador of Switzerland to the United States of America in November 2014. Prior to that, he served as Director of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) from 2008 to 2014 and headed the Directorate of Corporate Management of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) from 2004 to 2008.

During his long career in the Swiss diplomatic service, Martin Dahinden has served as Director of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian De-Mining, as a member of the Swiss Delegation to GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), at the Embassy of Switzerland in Paris, as Deputy to the Swiss Ambassador in Nigeria, and in a temporary posting at the Swiss Mission to the UN in New York. In addition, he worked in the FDFA's Service for Disarmament Policy and Nuclear Issues, as Head of the OSCE (Organization for Security

and Cooperation in Europe) Service of the Directorate of Political Affairs, and held the position of Deputy Head of the OSCE Coordination Unit during the Swiss Chairmanship of the OSCE in 1996. The following year, he was sent abroad as Deputy Head of the Swiss Mission to NATO in Brussels.

Martin Dahinden was born in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1955. He earned a Ph.D. in Economics (Business Administration) from the University of Zurich. Before joining the diplomatic service, he worked as a post-graduate assistant at the university, and was then employed by a bank and a publishing house. Ambassador Dahinden is married to Anita Dahinden. They have two children, Robert and Andrea.



On November 18, 2014 Mr. Martin Dahinden presented his credentials to United States President Barack Obama and has now formally assumed his position as Ambassador of Switzerland to the United States of America.

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**Texas:** Anne-Joelle Galley, Artist

Artist Anne-Joelle Galley likes working with vibrant colors. It's an affinity, she says, best explained by Matisse in his Notes of a Painter: "The chief aim of color should be to serve expression as well as possible. I put down my colors without a preconceived plan. (...) I discover the quality of colors in a purely instinctive way. (...)"



What she does: Galley calls herself a print-maker, painter and colorist. She now has added wearable art to her resume.

Why she likes it: The great-niece of famed European painter/composer/writer Pierre Alin, Galley says she enjoys the process of building work, of making creative choices as she goes along rather than following some pre-determined plan. "I am very lucky to be artistic, yet, unlike my great uncle, I was not born with the [ability] to approach a canvas or plate and be done from the very beginning. I really have to work at my art and re-visit each project over and over again. That process is what creates the passion for me, as [I'm] 'working' a piece.

Inspired by the intense colors of Mexican art

Galley says she enjoys the process of building work, of making creative choices as she goes along rather than following some pre-determined plan. "I am very lucky to be artistic, yet, unlike my great uncle, I was not born with the [ability] to approach a canvas or plate and be done from the very beginning. I really have to work at my art and re-visit each project over and over again. That process is what creates the passion for me, as [I'm] 'working' a piece.



Impressions of New York

What inspires her: Having been brought up in Mexico, Galley is strongly influenced by the intense colors found in Mexican art. Her own work - from paintings to prints - reflect her taste for bright, brilliant colors.



Wearable art: Silk scarves, one for every day of the week!

If not this, then what: Asked what other profession she might enjoy, Galley steps completely out of the visual art world. "I would love to be a cellist or a baritone. There is a deep resonance to [that] instrument and voice that enchant me."

If not here, then where: "If not Houston, then London, a vibrant artistic city. Houston is home base for now, a wonderful and welcoming city, where I can easily develop my art ideas..."

What's next: "The newest project involves re-creating my paintings and mono-types into a series of limited edition luxury silk scarves, each scarf becoming a piece of art in its own right. The next endeavor - already in the works - involves the incorporation of paper collage with oil on canvas."

For information, visit [anneioelle.com](http://anneioelle.com).

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**Indiana:** Activities of the Swiss Club of Central Indiana

This year again we participated in the Nationalities Council of Indiana's International Festival at the Indiana State Fair Grounds in Indianapolis. With 50 plus participants, the theme of this years Festival was "Traditional Dress/Clothing/Fashion Around the World", our club elected to show the costumes that represent the



Several club members were volunteers at the Indiana International Festival: Katherine Desmeules, Claude Desmeules (club president), Marceline Hammer, Terese Jochum

26 Cantons of Switzerland in traditional clothing with the costumes adorning dolls purchased by the club.

Our own member Marceline Hammer-Augui, having emigrated to the U.S.A. 46 years ago and having apprenticed as a seamstress in Zurich, was tasked with the project of dressing the dolls for the festival. They were displayed in our cultural booth, while we also had a booth dedicated to selling chocolate imported from Switzerland. Our thanks go to Therese Jochum for purchasing and shipping and all

the arrangements necessary for getting the chocolate to us. Both of our booths were staffed by club member volunteers and assisted by student volunteers during Thursday and Friday between 10 am and 2 pm while many communities brought busloads of students to the Festival. The Festival ran from Thursday through the weekend until 6 pm on Sunday. The highlight on Saturday night

was a parade of nations of festival participants led by a Chinese Dragon followed by an awards



The Swiss booth, with all the dolls dressed in typical Swiss costumes.

show. Our club received a 1st Place Blue Ribbon for creativity for our doll display.

We also participated with a choco-



Marceline Hammer, a Swiss seamstress, created all the cantonal costumes that dressed the 26 dolls.

late booth at the Columbus, Indiana, Ethnic Expo, which is an annual 2-day event, staged the second weekend in October. Although that Friday was a rather cool and very much rainy day, the attendance was only slightly off. The Saturday event, being pleasant weather wise, certainly made up for it with a good attendance and the club managed to sell our usual average amount of Swiss chocolate to the grateful throngs

getting "real Swiss Chocolate". We only have the two events selling chocolate that finance the annual Christmas dinner and 1st of August party which are held at St. Thomas Moore Catholic Church in Mooresville, IN.

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## Book Reviews

### Drops on the Water

Eric G. Müller and Matthew Zanoçi Müller

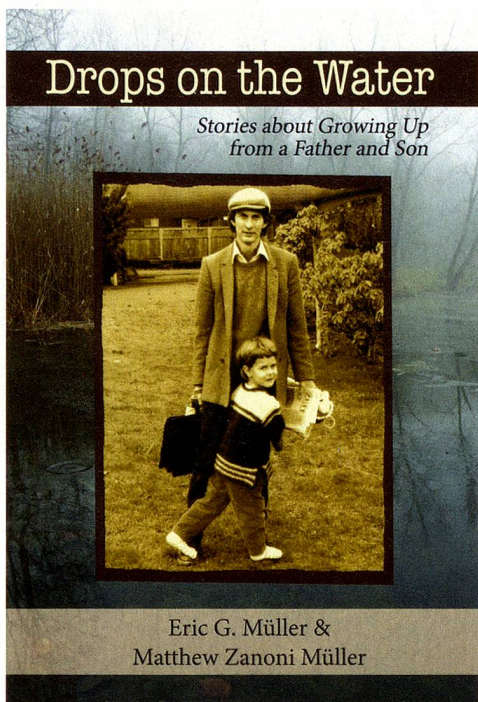
This book is about the childhood experiences of a father and son. It traces

the similarities and differences between distinct generations in their unique geographical environments. These stories jump between Germany and America, East and West coast, and the African continent. From the suburbs

and fairgrounds of the United States, to the majesty and beauty of the Swiss Alps, from a beach in Nicaragua to a gum plantation in Zululand, they trace the inheritance of World War II, of German nationality, of the shock of a friend's suicide to a classmate's overdose. The anxieties of early love and rural small town life are balanced against changes seen in the familial sphere across generations. Apartheid inequities, corporal punishment and strict prep schools, a friend's illicit affair with an African maid, hitchhiking barefoot, and a scheduled Ping-Pong match with the Prince of Liechtenstein, all coalesce in a book that brings to life the circumstances that bind its authors to history, family, generation, and place.

Eric G. Müller is a musician, teacher and writer living in upstate New York. He was born in Durban, South Africa, and studied literature and history at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. Müller continued his studies in England and Germany before moving to America. He has always considered himself to be Swiss, even though he has lived abroad most of his life. He has published three novels and a collection of poetry. [www.ericgmuller.com](http://www.ericgmuller.com)

Matthew Zanoçi Müller was born in Bochum, Germany and grew up in Eugene, Oregon and Upstate New York. He received his MFA from Warren Wilson's MFA Program for Writers and teaches at his local Massachusetts Community College. "Drops on the Water" is his first book. [www.matthewzanonimuller.com](http://www.matthewzanonimuller.com)



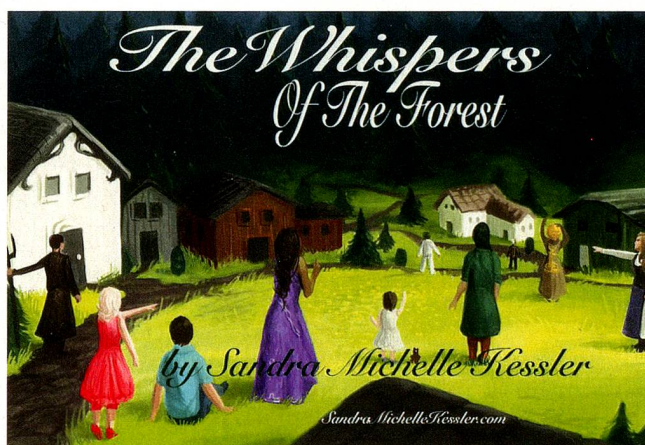
### "The Whispers of the Forest"

Sandra Michelle Kessler

The Children's book author Sandra Michelle Kessler has touched many hearts and young minds with her wise, enlightening and educational children's books. Her newest and most precious book will take you on a self-discovery journey through a mysterious forest where answers will be whispered to children if they are ready to let go of their inner fear. "The Whispers of the Forest" delivers tree messages to soothe, heal and most importantly to let go of fear of the unknown! Any parent, grandparent or educator who seeks to install the seed of letting go of fear of the unknown MUST purchase and read this mystical and heart-warming journey of this children's book.

Sandra Michelle Kessler is not just an amazing and talented children's book author, she also holds an MS in Counseling Psychology, and loves to teach children the importance of creativity, imagination and art. Each message in this book will touch your heart in many ways. One must purchase this book and see for themselves, as words cannot describe the beauty and wonder that answers questions from the depths of children's souls! This book makes a perfect gift for someone you love!

About Sandra Michelle Kessler: A mom, teacher and mental health counselor, currently lives in Jacksonville, FL



with her husband Daniel and their eight-year-old son Sean. Sandra grew up in Switzerland where an appreciation and deep respect for nature is in-

stilled in every child. Sandra has been writing short stories for several years now. Her son Sean has always been her main inspiration when writing her books.

SANDRA MICHELLE KESSLER  
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**California**

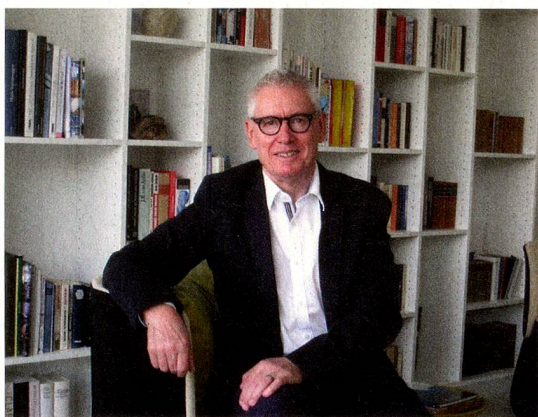
**New Consul General in San Francisco**

Dear Reader,

It is great to be back in San Francisco after so many years and numerous postings in Barcelona, Bern, Manchester, Cape Town, Genoa, and Rio de Janeiro! Together with my team at the Consulate General, swissnex San Francisco and the Swiss Business Hub, it is my utmost pleasure to represent Switzerland and promote its interests in the City by the Bay and the Northwestern United States.

I am looking forward to a productive stay and wish you and your family a prosperous New Year filled with joy and good health.

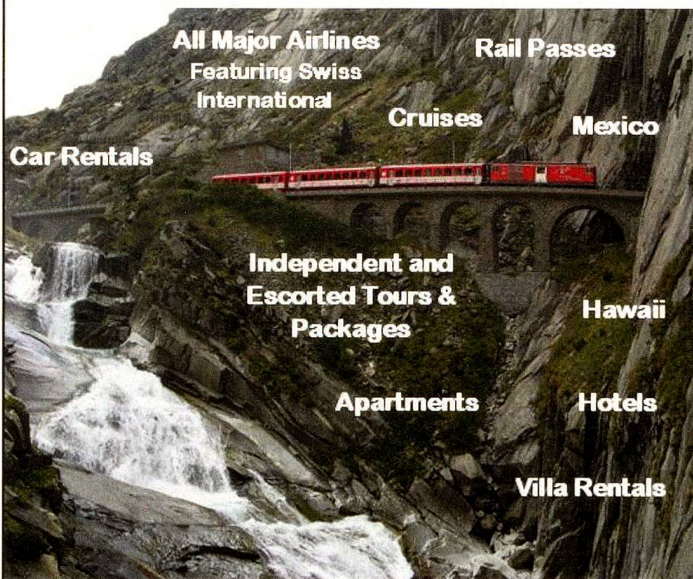
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Hans-Ulrich Tanner is back in San Francisco, this time as Consul General

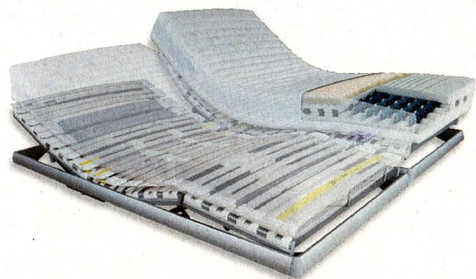
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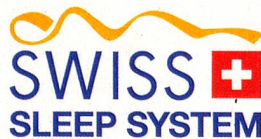
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## California

Remembering the Past –  
Enjoying the Present –  
Looking to the Future  
Sängerfest 2017

The San Joaquin Valley Swiss Echoes will be hosting the 29th United Swiss Singing Societies of the Pacific Coast (USSSPC) Sängerfest, June 22-25, 2017. The 4-day event will take place in Modesto and Ripon with venues at the Modesto Double Tree Hotel & Convention Center and the Gallo Center for the Arts. Saturday's Festival will be held at the Ripon Swiss Hall.

The "Swiss Echoes" are looking forward to greeting their singer friends and families once again in our beautiful San Joaquin Valley and are committed to ensuring that all will have a great time! Founded in 1947, a group of 28 singers joined as charter members with Mr. John Meyer as Music Director and first President. The new chorus became a member of the United Swiss Singing Societies of the Pacific Coast (USSSPC) and participated in their first Sängerfest in Los Angeles in 1948. They have taken part in every Sängerfest since. The highlights for the group were in hosting the first California Swiss Singing & Yodeling Festival in 1956, the 10th USSSPC Sängerfest in 1960 and the 16th USSPC Sängerfest in 1978 led by Sängervater Ken



Hafer with Music Director Bertha Davis. The 24th USSSPC Sängerfest in 2002 was presided over by Sängervater Fred Kaufmann with Music Director Heidi Brunk. Trudi Boesch was the accompanist for all three Sängerfests. Currently, the mixed chorus is directed by Agnes Litfin Olmsted with accompanist SaraRae Vanderhelm.

The USSSPC Executive Officers that will be coordinating the 29th Sängerfest along with the "Swiss Echoes" members are: Heidi Betschart, President; Marie Schallberger, 1st Vice-President; Tim Roos, 2nd Vice-President;

Margaret Higgins, Secretary; Lisa Roos, Treasurer; and Advisors Sängervater Ken Hafer and Sängervater Fred Kaufmann. A sponsorship donation (personal or business) program has been set up for those who wish to participate. Sponsorship donations can be made payable to "Swiss Song Festival 2017" (see address below), and will be acknowledged in the Souvenir Program Book. Thank you in advance for your consideration. Please look for updated information on the 29th USSSPC Sängerfest in the months to come. Mark your calendars for June 22-25, 2017 and join us for a memorable and songfilled Festival.

With Singer Greetings,

HEIDI BETSCHART, USSSPC PRESIDENT  
E-MAIL: H.BETSCHART@AOL.COM

SWISS SONG FESTIVAL 2017—P.O. BOX 583001, MODESTO CA 95358



The San Joaquin Valley Swiss Echoes are looking forward to seeing you at the Swiss Singing and Yodeling Festival in 2017



**New York:** A Visit from the "Swiss Machine" Ueli Steck

In November, the Swiss Consulate in New York had a chance to welcome the record-breaking Swiss mountaineer Ueli Steck. We hosted an event at the historic Explorers Club in NYC, where Ueli shared stories of his extreme expeditions all around the world and presented his experiences in a lecture. It was wonderful to listen to the tales of his rocky adventures and to meet the Swiss Superman in person! While Ueli was in town, he also ran the NYC Marathon and climbed Manhattan's highest peak: One World Trade Center. Check out our interview with him and the filmed recording of his lecture in our tumblr post! <http://ow.ly/Gcjl>

Ueli has also been nominated for National Geographic People's Choice Adventurers of the Year 2015! In particular for his "lightning-fast" solo ascent of Annapurna south face in 2013. We encourage you to support him by giving him your vote.

CONSULATE GENERAL OF SWITZERLAND IN NEW YORK



**Search for heirs:**

*In an estate matter filed with the Court in Vallemaggia, the Swiss authorities are looking for information about the following person hailed from Canton Ticino, district of Maggia, who arrived in the U.S.A (Ellis Island, New York) on March 11, 1911 and subsequently moved to California:*

**Camillo Severino CASAROTTI** born April 21, 1891, son of Elisabetta Casarotti, born February 19, 1851 died January 19, 1930.

*The existence of any descendants of this person must be established.*

*Descendants, or anyone who can give information about them, is herewith requested to contact the undersigned office by October 30, 2015.*

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 Review Readers a  
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 healthy New Year!***

***Wal Baur, Editor***



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**Regional News 2015**

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1/2015	December 22, 2014	January 19, 2015	4/2015	NO REGIONAL NEWS	
2/2015	February 23, 2015	March 19, 2015	5/2015	July 27, 2015	August 24, 2015
3/2015	April 20, 2015	May 15, 2015	6/2015	NO REGIONAL NEWS	