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## EDITORIAL

We Swiss are certainly a lucky lot. Whilst everyone else in the world has only a place of birth, we Swiss have a place of birth plus a place of origin (Bürgerort). This leads to all sorts of very interesting situations.

For instance when, at a party, someone asks you: "where exactly in Switzerland do you come from?" and you reply: "I was born in Nuglar-St Pantaleon in the canton of Solothurn, yet I am a citizen of Locarno in the canton of Tessin but lived most of my life in Yverdon in the canton of Waadt", this profound announcement is sure to make all conversation at the party stop dead and everybody to look at you in awe as if you were some sort of blue blooded aristocrat.

However not many of us can pool such a high class combination such as Nuglar-St Pantaleon (it exists, look it up on the map), Locarno and Yverdon. Most of us have to be content with a much more prosaic combination like your Editor for instance who can only muster: born in Winterthur, citizen of Schaffhausen and lived in Geneva in that order.

Nevertheless, it is still a formidable asset compared to all those poor people who only have one single place of birth to show for throughout their lives.

Of course there are those unfortunate Swiss who, because of poor planning by their parents, were born in the same place as their place of origin and

so will never be party stoppers when asked where they come from. However, we can give them a piece of advice: Invent a place of birth such as Bümpliz for example, so you can announce that you were born in beautiful Bümpliz, but that you are also a proud citizen of Appenzell Innerhoden. It will do wonders for your ego, for your status amongst Kiwis and your popularity with the opposite sex. It never fails, believe us, we can vouch for it.

The fact that you and all your ancestors are recorded in one place only (your place of origin) makes it also much easier to reconstruct your family tree if you are interested in that sort of thing.

Your Editor for instance discovered many years ago that one of his ancestors had been the guardian of the Munot (the castle high above the city of Schaffhausen). Pity the guy did not buy the place at that time when real estate was still cheap and affordable. If he had, your Editor, as owner of a real medieval castle, could have added the title of "Von Munotshausen" to his surname and thus be allowed to rub shoulders with all the other rich or mostly impoverished European feudal families that still try to survive anachronically in this modern world.

Your Editor is also the proud descendant of the first man in history who climbed the rock in the middle of the Rhine fall near Schaffhausen and planted the Swiss flag at its summit. This was no small feat as no jet boats

existed at that time. He had to row all the way to the rock against the mighty current of the river, dodging the treacherous whirlpools that lay in his path. Pity that there was no Guinness book of records at that time otherwise he would have had a prominent place in it.

If you have not opened it up lately, have another look at your good old Swiss passport. It only shows your place of origin (Bürgerort). Contrary to all other passports in the world, it does not show your place of birth. That fact alone sets all us Swiss aside from anyone else in the world and we should all be very proud of this distinction.

But whenever you have to fill in an arrival of departure form when travelling to various countries, one of the questions on the form is invariably your place of birth. If you fill in this form truthfully, even a half-awake customs officer will spot the discrepancy between your form and your passport and this could lead to lengthy acrimonious arguments. So the Swiss Embassies suggest that to avoid such situations, you simply fill in your place of origin on the relevant form in order to tie in with your passport. Problem solved! Well, not exactly. The situation becomes more complicated when you acquire a double nationality and apply for a second passport (a NZ passport for instance). That passport shows your place of birth.

Since it is slightly bordering on the impossibility for a person to have been born in two different places, the authorities of countries that keep an electronic track of your overseas trips (such as New Zealand and Australia for instance) will soon come to the conclusion that you must be two different persons. Great, so you can now play Dr. Jekyll and Hyde at will with the

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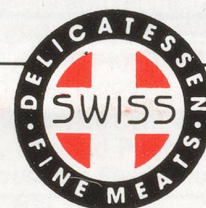
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authorities as long of course as the Inland Revenue Department does not get wind of it and decide to tax each of your two personalities separately. That would really clean you out in no time at all.

So enjoy the double play as long as you possibly can. And if one day one of your two lives becomes too much for you, when everything goes wrong and nothing seems to work, just swap passports and, presto, you are another person without a care in the world.

If only life could be as simple as that, it would then really be worth living.

## NEWS FROM THE SWISS EMBASSY

We have just received the following information from the Swiss Embassy concerning holiday camps in Switzerland for Swiss children. In order to give you the exact information, we print the report in its original language:

Seit vielen Jahren finden jeden Sommer Ferienkolonien der Stiftung für junge Auslandschweizer statt. Die Stiftung möchte damit den im Ausland lebenden Schweizer Bürgerinnen und Bürger die Möglichkeit bieten, ihr Heimatland besser kennenzulernen und mit den Sehenswürdigkeiten und Attraktionen, die die Schweiz zu bieten hat, aber auch mit andern Schweizerinnen und Schweizern in Kontakt zu kommen.

## ALLGEMEINE HINWEISE UNSER ANGEBOT:

Im Sommer 1997 finden zwischen Ende Juni und Ende August acht verschiedene kleinere Ferienkolonien mit ca. 25 - 35 Kindern statt, die sich über das ganze Land verteilen.



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## TEILNAHMEBEDINGUNGEN

Teilnahmeberechtigt sind alle Kinder mit Schweizer Bürgerrecht, die in einem ausländischen Staat wohnen sowie alle Kinder, deren Mutter oder Vater Schweizer und bei der zuständigen Schweizer Vertretung immatrikuliert ist.

Die Teilnehmerinnen und Teilnehmer sind zwischen 7 und 15 Jahren alt. Eine weitere Bedingung für die Anmeldung zu einer Ferienkolonie der Stiftung für junge Auslandschweizer ist die Freude am Ferienlagerbetrieb und am angebotenen Programm und eine gewisse Selbstständigkeit - immerhin leben die Kinder ja während zwei oder drei Wochen weit weg von den Eltern mit vielen unbekanntem Gesichtern zusammen.

## UNTERKUNFT

Die Ferienkolonien werden in einfachen aber gut eingerichteten Häusern stattfinden. Die Kinder werden je nach Haus in Zimmern mit zwei bis sechs Personen wohnen und gemeinsam mit der ganzen Lagerfamilie essen. Der Ferienlagerbetrieb erfordert auch eine Mitarbeit der Kinder bei den täglichen Pflichten, beispielsweise beim Abtrocknen oder beim Sauberhalten der Unterkünfte.

## PROGRAMM

Hauptziel der Ferienkolonien der Stiftung für junge Auslandschweizer ist es, dass Auslandschweizerkinder ihr Heimatland erstmals oder nach früheren Besuchen noch besser kennenlernen. Dazu werden wir verschiedene Sehenswürdigkeiten, Städte, Landschaften, Berge, Schluchten, Höhlen, Seen, Flüsse, Schlösser, Burgen, Museen usw. besuchen, besichtigen oder bei einer kleineren Wanderung geniessen.

## LEITUNG

Jedes Lager wird von einem erfahrenen Lagerleiter oder einer erfahrenen Lagerleiterin organisiert und geführt.

Die Schweizer Botschaft in Wellington verfügt über Zusatzinformationen über die einzelnen Lager und auch der Anmeldetalon kann dort bezogen werden. Die Anmeldung sollte spätestens Ende Februar 1997 bei der Botschaft eingetroffen sein.

So anyone interested in sending their children to one of these camps, get in touch with the Swiss Embassy in Wellington without delay.

## NO SEAPLANES ON SWISS LAKES

Franz Weber, probably Switzerland's best known conservationist and environmentalist, recently presented in Berne a petition with 125,000 signatures against the use of Swiss lakes for the "landings" and takeoffs of sea planes and amphibian aircraft. His initiative was prompted by a project which would have set aside two areas on Lake Geneva in front of both Lausanne and Montreux for the use of these types of aircraft.

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## MIGROS DEBACLE

Three years ago, Migros decided to expand its activities into neighbouring Austria by taking over a chain of 32 retail outlets which operated under the name of "Familia-Läden". This move had cost Migros some 130 million Swiss Francs.

Unfortunately for Migros, the venture turned out to be a big flop. First of all the relatively small chain of only 32 outlets was unable to meet the ever increasing competition from much larger retail chains. Secondly, Migros largely underestimated the Austrian customers' loyalty to brand names. Contrary to what happened in Switzerland, Migros was unable to persuade many Austrian customers to purchase the products that Migros tried to sell under its own brand name.

And so the losses were piling up year after year until Migros eventually decided to turn around and quit the Austrian market.

It sold its holdings in that country to the Austrian company "Handelskette Spar" for an undisclosed sum which apparently made the total debacle slightly more bearable for the Migros management.

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