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Happy New Year to you all! I hope you had a good festive season and a great holiday. Even if you did not really have a proper holiday yourself the holiday mood might have rubbed off on you, and you have managed to spend some time with family and friends, feeling holidayish.

Many of us will have had visitors from overseas - and felt smug listening to the weather reports from Switzerland with freezing temperatures and snow. It will be a different story in six months' time - don't think of it and enjoy summer while it happens on our side of the globe!

Saying goodbye to good old friends is not easy; the time spent together here will have brought you even closer. Keep in touch by phone; it's almost cheaper than writing a letter - or write, if you enjoy writing. And maybe dream of a trip to Switzerland and visit them and other friends who cannot come to New Zealand.

The new year is not quite so new anymore; I hope the first month has gone well for you and you are not too badly infected with the doom and gloom the economists ooze. After all: What makes a good year? To me it is more the little personal achievements that make me happy and content: Do I make use of today's wonderful summer day to its fullest, go for a swim, have a slice of my melon (they were on special) in my garden in the shade? And have I written yet to my old friends who sent me a Christmas card with a whole long letter in it? I had not got round to write to them before Christmas, with one thing or the other, but now is the time, and it will be an hour well spent.

And now is the time to get serious with our New Year resolutions, too. Well, first we might have to review them. I heard an interview with a psychologist on that topic. He suggested that New Year resolutions must be attainable, need to have identifiable benefits for ourselves - and it helps if we have constant reminders and little rewards on the way. I especially like the reward bit. One of my New Year resolutions is not to accumulate more stuff but to use up what has accumulated (Note: it has accumulated all by itself; I haven't accumulated it - does it sound familiar?). The rewards are inbuilt: more room in my house - and delicious, though sometimes unconventional meals, as I'm trying to eat up the contents of my freezer, too.

*Inde*

This month I am taking the opportunity to review 2008 - and my new year's resolutions for the past year, outlined in the Helvetia of February 2008. It is only right to discuss what has been achieved (or not) during that year.

Health and fitness is an ongoing topic, particularly for some of us of a more advanced age. Unfortunately I found it difficult to fit the gym into my daily routine, despite gyms and fitness centres seemingly popping up at every street corner. The gym is still on my 'to do list'.

Recreational activities within the Swiss Clubs are coming to the forefront again, as the dates of our Cowbell Competition are coming closer. For those who are not familiar with the Cowbell Competition: The semi-final is between Auckland and Hamilton, and between Taranaki and Wellington. It encompasses a range of

recreational activities: Steinstossen (shotput), shooting, jassen (cards) and kegeln (bowling). As you can see, there are activities to suit different talents. I would like to encourage all age groups to participate in the activities around the Cowbell Competition or at the very least to come and support your team.

Furthermore, all Swiss Clubs offer social interaction and cultural evenings. I hope you take part in the cultural evenings and network with your compatriots.

Es isch ou wichtig, di schöne Sommertage u di länge Oebe z gniesse mit eme guete Barbeque und natürlech mit eme Glas Fäudschlössli, u de z ratiburgere, was d Zuekunft bringt.

Uf Widerluege

Roland

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