

President's report

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Have you ever wondered who and what you are? I guess the readers of the Helvetia are Swiss, or have close affiliations to Switzerland or a Swiss. Many of us hold a New Zealand passport, too, so we are Swiss and New Zealanders, and - except for the odd yacht race - there is little conflict and we can be loyal to both countries.

But that's not what I am after. Nationality is not our whole being. I can be Swiss, **and** a farmer or chef or hairdresser, **and** catholic or protestant or Jehovah's witness or Jewish, **and** belong to one of the many parties, **and** belong to one of the even more numerous societies and groups. I can be part of a family, be a child, a parent, a grandparent, or single and live on my own. I might be a student, a worker, self employed, unemployed, retired. I might suffer from arthritis, asthma, have failing eyesight- in short, there are so many components I can define myself with. It reminds me of those toys where you can change a bird's feet, body, wings, head and beak. Some of the birds you can assemble in this way wouldn't have much chance of survival, but we can have diverse features and lead an interesting life in diverse communities. Irrespective of our nationality we feel accepted - or should feel accepted - in a parents' association or in the beekeepers' association. Vice versa, parents and beekeepers are valued members of the Swiss clubs, and we might draw on their experience in other associations. Most members of the Swiss clubs are parents, and while only a few will be beekeepers, this is an uncontroversial hobby. But how about more marginal groupings? I find that whenever I leave my own comfort zone and am prepared to meet somebody who fundamentally differs from me I gain a new perspective. Let's try and make everybody feel valued and welcome in the Swiss club.

Trudi



Es isch wider dä Monet wo de Presidänt vo Wellington nid darf z grossi Wort bruche..

Mir heinis doch so Müi ggä, aber im Jasse si die Bure eifach di beschte.

It is always a challenge to bring a team together to participate in the competition. A considerable amount of time is spent on the telephone confirming everyone's potential participation, and really, you are never sure until the Saturday morning of the event. I have been involved in these events over the last few years and it is always very pleasing to see how everyone is enjoying him- or herself over a glass of 'grape juice', and new friendships are made. The cowbell competition is a good opportunity to bring people closer together, and create a bond.

Admittedly, promoting traditional cowbell activities to the younger generations is not easy. A suggestion perhaps would be the development of a junior section, with a "Wanderpreis". If someone has another idea, please let me know. I will take those ideas to our executive meeting. My aim is to involve a bigger cross-section of club members in our club activities and to make the cowbell competition attractive for families with young children and also for families where only one parent is of Swiss heritage. We need to make a concerted effort to cater to the changing needs of our youth and provide a means for them to learn and retain their cultural ties and knowledge.

*Uf Widerluege
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