

Minutes

10th Presidents Conference of Swiss Organizations in Western Canada

University of Victoria
Sunday, May 6, 2007

Recorded by Karen Brühlhart
Edited by Rolf Brühlhart and Hausi Müller

9:30: Welcome and Introductions

- **Hausi Müller, Conference Chair and Past President of Victoria Swiss Society:**
Opening remarks. Welcome to all the Swiss clubs of Western Canada. Thank you to the Choir of the Swiss Society of Vancouver for last night's fantastic performance, for the members and friends of the Swiss Society of Victoria for hosting this event, and the Participants in today's Presidents Conference for traveling to Victoria from Western Canada and from Switzerland.
- **All attendees:**
Brief introductions around the room by all attendees.
- **Ric Fischer, President Victoria Swiss Society:**

Welcome speech on behalf of the Victoria Swiss Society. He also thanks Hausi Müller for chairing the 10th Presidents Conference and the many volunteers and participants of the Swiss Society of Victoria.
- **Mr. and Mrs. Walter and Siegrid Deplazes, Consul General of Switzerland in Vancouver:**
Mr. Walter Deplazes welcomes all the participants of the 10th Presidents Conference and thanks to organizers and Vancouver Swiss choir. He provides a personal introduction as the new Consul General of Switzerland in Vancouver. He and his wife just arrived in Vancouver four days earlier. Speaks of how Switzerland has changed and affects of globalization; of computers and the convenience of technology; changes which shall take place between now and the future to become more oriented with computers (e.g., E-voting and E-government).

- **Dr. Rudolf Wyder, Director of the Secretariat of the Organization of Swiss Abroad Bern, Switzerland:**

He is optimistic for the future of Swiss institutions in Western Canada. The purpose of his visit is to establish contacts. He congratulates Swiss clubs of Western Canada for their organization and pride for Switzerland. He speaks of a global community; over 10,000 Swiss are registered abroad yearly and the growing presence and influence of Swiss living abroad. He comments on the changes in emigration: 30,000 are leaving Switzerland annually and only 25,000 entering annually. Dr. Wyder will present his keynote address after lunch.

- **Phillipe Goetschel, Honorary Consul of Switzerland for the Seattle area:**

He talks about the business scene in Switzerland right now and how to attract major corporations to Switzerland: focusing on having Switzerland as a home base for major corporations such as Amazon, Starbucks, and Microsoft. He also talks about the five Swiss clubs in the Seattle area and their challenges.

- **Patrizia Franza, Swiss Info, Bern, Switzerland:**

She introduces her colleague, Jakob Tschanz and their exhibits, which are set up in a corner in the conference room. She starts her lively presentation by presenting their new web portal Swissinfo [<http://www.swissinfo.org>] to initiate and stimulate the dialogue between the Swiss abroad and the different political parties in Switzerland. The Organization of Swiss Abroad (OSA) and Swissinfo will set up a special discussion forum on the Internet starting next month. The Swissinfo platform is disseminated worldwide in nine different languages. The Internet-based services include an up-to-date overview of Swiss issues: politics, culture and travel, music, sport, international issues, science and technology, business, and social affairs. There are two main goals: to inform Swiss living abroad and inform people in Switzerland itself. Over 645,000 Swiss are currently living abroad. Swissinfo produces short videos for CNN and Swissinfo Digest among other segments. They are financed by broadcasting associations and in part by the Swiss government.

10:25 Keynote on Conference Theme: Rolf Brühlhart

- First, Rolf Brühlhart thanked Hausi Müller and the Presidents Conference, also on behalf of Peter Schälle, for the “Outstanding Leadership Award” both of them received the previous night during the Concert of the Vancouver Swiss Choir for their long-term contributions to the Swiss Community in Canada.
- ***The 10th Presidents Conference Theme is: “Integration of 2nd and 3rd Generation Swiss-Canadians and Newcomers from Switzerland into local Swiss Organizations”***
- Rolf Brühlhart's basic reflections could be summarized as follows: “It must not be the purpose of our Conference to dwell on the many known problems and challenges related to intergenerational and intercultural coming together. The goal of our Conference is to work towards concrete solutions to take home and to articulate benefits accruing from these solutions for 2nd and 3rd Generation Youth and Swiss-Canadians.”

10:55 Workshops to Develop Concrete Ideas to Take Home

- **Workshop 1:** Programs for Youth 13-30
Leader and recorder: Peter Schälle, Valentina Bernardis, and Karen Brühlhart
- **Workshop 2:** Programs for Families with Children between 1-12
Leader and recorder: Hausi Müller and Karin Rüger-Thomi
- **Workshop 3:** Programs for Sandwich Generation 45-65 and Seniors over 65
Leader and recorder: Rennie Warburton and Werner Rutishauser

12:25 Lunch

- **The excellent breakfast and lunch was sponsored by Consul General of Switzerland in Vancouver, Mr. Walter Deplazes. Thank you very much!!**

12:55 Swiss Society Reports

Brief Reports from each Swiss Organization represented at the 10th Conference of Presidents of Swiss Organizations in Western Canada: Past successes and challenges as well as Present and Future Innovations

- **President of Edmonton Swiss Society (ESS): Walter Hildebrand**
 - The year began with our AGM and with an election, not much attendance.
 - Organized a brunch in the spring for members and non-members, very well attended.
 - Welcomed the Swiss World Curling team, April 29, 2007.
 - Landsgemeinde in Stettler, June 9-11, intended to bring non-members and members together.
 - 2009 Edmonton Swiss Society will be 50 years old; an inaugural meeting to form the Edmonton Swiss Society was held on February 25, 1958, at the Edelweiss Club; we are working on a Celebration event for 2009.
 - Web site: <http://www.edmonton-swiss.ca>; username and password are required to view the newsletters
- **President of Victoria Swiss Society: Ric Fischer**
 - 65 paying members (i.e., families are counted as one); approximately 130 individuals
 - hard to recruit new members, many are not interested
 - several families with children 1-12
 - quite an active society with many activities including bowling, camping at Qualicum Beach, Swiss National Day celebration with quizzes for all

generations and members playing alphorn, annual Jass tournament, monthly Jass game at different homes, hikes, seniors outings, invited talks and guest speakers (e.g., India, British Columbia, Ghana), car rally, bike rally, raclette night, executive dinner, talent shows, painting night, games night, folk dancing lessons, and Christmas party with over 140 participants.

- Successful Goodwill Ambassadors' program to support people in need.
 - Excellent newsletter which appears six times a year; newsletter editor is Ken Sohm (sohm@ii.ca)
 - Website: under construction
- **President of Seniors, Swiss Society of Vancouver: Werner Rutishauser**
 - Informal network organization; has representation as a 'Committee' on the Board of Directors of the Swiss Society of Vancouver with voting right.
 - Very successful "Filmnachmittage für Seniors" at the Alpen Club. It created over the years a group of 35-45 individuals who always participate.
 - The Annual "Seniors' Christmas Luncheon," will be held again at the Vancouver Golf Club in Coquitlam. The Vancouver Swiss Choir is every year an integral part of this large event where up to 115 seniors attend. The event is subsidized by the Swiss Society of Vancouver.
 - The Seniors Committee has created a new network for needy, lonely, or sick seniors—including members or non-members of the SSV—who would like to get a friendly telephone call or/and a visit. At the moment, the network is visiting seniors in the areas of Greater Vancouver and the Fraser Valley.
 - Website: <http://www.swiss-society.ca> go to "Cubs/Sections"
 - **President of Swiss Choir, Swiss Society of Vancouver: Erna Schäfer**
 - Marvelous audience at our performance last night, thank you all very much for having invited us.
 - Friday June 1, Annual Spring Concert and Fundraiser of our Choir at Alpine Club in Vancouver with the Austrian *Melody Choir* as guest choir
 - The Choir will perform again at this year's 1st of August Celebration at the Swiss Chalet of the Swiss Canadian Mountain Range Association in Coquitlam on Saturday evening, July 28
 - Presently the Choir is preparing for next year's "26th Pacific Coast Swiss Yodeling and Singing Festival" in Portland, July 17-20, 2008.
 - The Choir is a Section of the Swiss Society of Vancouver (SSV) with voting rights on the Board of Directors of the SSV. Its members practice weekly with a break in July and August.
 - Website: <http://www.swiss-society.ca> go to "Cubs/Sections"
 - **President Swiss Society of Vancouver (SSV): Rolf Brühlhart on behalf of President Peter Schälle**
 - The SSV will celebrate its 60th Anniversary next year for which a greater party is planned for October/November 2008. Presently the Society has two Sections (Choir and Outdoors Club) and three Committees (Children, Youth and Seniors) all of them are represented on the Board of Directors of the SSV

with voting rights. Members of the Sections and Committees must be members of the Society.

- The SSV had its AGM on March 26, 2007 and a new Board of Director was elected with a large amount of not only new Directors, but also many of them from younger generations.
 - In addition to the events/programs/services, which the Sections and the Committees provide, the SSV is the umbrella organization directly responsible for all Financial transactions, the National Day Celebration, the Annual Children's Christmas Party, the "*Swiss Herald*" newsletter, the website of the SSV, and networking with other Swiss Organizations.
 - The "*Swiss Herald*" prints 1,000 copies per issue, four issues per year. Articles from other Swiss Organization are welcome. Newsletter Editor is Alex Joehl.
 - The SSV works closely with the Swiss Canadian Mountain Rain Association (<http://www.scmra.ca>), the Swiss Canadian Chamber of Commerce (BC), Inc. (<http://www.swisscanadianchamber.com>), the Vancouver Dorfmusik (<http://vancouverdorfmusik.com>), the Consulate General of Switzerland in Vancouver (<http://www.eda.admin.ch>) as well as the Deputies on the Council of Swiss Abroad, Rolf Brühlhart and John Bartlet (<http://www.aso.ch>).
 - Website: <http://www.swiss-society.ca>; Webmaster: Konrad Iten (vicePresident@swiss-society.ca)
- **Vice President Edmonton Men's Choir (ESMC): Peter Johner**
 - The Edmonton Swiss Men's Choir is a group of approximately 40 male singers based in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. They practice once a week. It was formed in 1980 by a group of the "Swiss abroad". Elizabeth Lesoway Anderson has directed the ESMC since 1987.
 - Every year since 1990, Elizabeth presents the Director's Award to a member of the choir who has distinguished himself in service to the choir over the previous year.
 - It has become traditional for the choir to join three other Edmonton male choruses: the Ukrainian Male Chorus of Edmonton, the Liederkranz German Choir, and the St. David's Welsh Male Voice Choir - for the annual Men Making Music concert.
 - The Edmonton Swiss Men's Choir has strong links with two North American choral federations—the North American Swiss Singing Alliance (NASSA), of which ESMC is a full member, and the United Swiss Singing Societies of the Pacific Coast.
 - They work every two to three years at casinos to raise funds.
 - Winzerfest (wine festival) in October with a big buffet; sold 450 tickets.
 - Montevideo Choir from Uruguay is visiting us in September; we were there in 2003.
 - Recording a Christmas CD (4th) is planned
 - Slight problem with participation because children don't want to come anymore.
 - Used to have soccer games but no more.

- 15 members of the Choir are Swiss; the rest Germans, Austrians, and Ukrainians.
- Website: <http://www.esmc.ab.ca/music.htm>
- **President Prince George Swiss Society: Hans Ruch**
 - Hans Ruch came to Canada in 1988
 - Swiss National Day party on the farm, extra money pays for sausages and the rest people bring themselves.
 - The society may end in 5 years from now because the money may run out.
 - The club is definitely over age people.
 - No more AGMs
 - Not much future for the club
 - Website: no website presently
- **Conference Chair: Hausi Müller**
 - Warm greetings from Major General Urban Siegenthaler Swiss Defense Attaché to the USA and Canada; he was very helpful and sent a couple of messages personally.
 - Apologies and best wishes from Louise Grassman from Saskatoon; she is very interested in participating in future events.
 - Apologies and best wishes from Fraenzi Stephen and Fritz Gosteli, Calgary Swiss Club.
 - Apologies and best wishes from Alex Gyger, President Jodlerklub Heimattreu
 - Apologies and best wishes from Sabine Lifart, Coordinator of informal Meet-up Group “Schwiizertütsch” (wutaa@hotmail.com)
 - Apologies and best wishes from Rene Zollinger, President of Swiss Canadian Mountain Range Association-SCMRA (<http://www.scmra.ca>)
 - Apologies and best wishes from Urs Fricker, President of Vancouver Dorfmusik, who is presently out of country (<http://vancouverdorfmusik.com>)
 - Greetings from Lilly Senn, President, Interior Swiss Club, Vernon

1:40 Keynote

- **Rolf Brühlhart introduces Keynote Speaker Dr. Rudolf Wyder, Director of the Organization of the Swiss Abroad (ASO)**
 - Rolf Brühlhart has known Dr. Rudolf Wyder since 1995 when Director Wyder visited Western Canada the last time.
 - Dr. Wyder starts with a warm appreciation for the invitation. It is a great pleasure and honour for him to be here today for the second time.
 - OSA, the Swiss-based Organization of Swiss Abroad in Bern, of which Dr. Wyder is Director since 1987, is the umbrella organization of some 750 Swiss clubs and institutions from all over the world.
 - ASO is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in the form of a private-law foundation. Its aim is “to promote relations among Swiss Abroad and between Swiss Abroad and the home country, and to advocate their interests.” This formulation of the aim is closely resembled in the article of the federal constitution approved by voters in 1966, which reads as follows:

- *“The Confederation shall encourage links amongst Swiss citizens domiciled abroad, and their links with Switzerland. It may support organizations which pursue this goal. It shall legislate on the rights and obligations of Swiss citizens domiciled abroad, in particular on the exercise of political rights at the federal level, the duty to perform military or alternative service, assistance to needy persons, and social security.” (Art.40)*
- Representatives of organized Swiss communities abroad form the majority of the 170-strong Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA). Canada has five representatives in this assembly, three delegates (Rolf Brühlhart, Vancouver; Rene-Claude Favarger, Toronto/Montréal; one position is vacant) and two substitutes (John Bartlett, Vancouver/Basel; René Wälti, Toronto). The CSA meets twice annually in Switzerland.
- In addition, a number of representatives of Swiss-based institutions sit on the Council. For instance, there are representatives of the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation (SBC), Pro Helvetia and OSEC, as well as the traditionally Swiss magic formula of major political parties. Currently there are nine National and State Councillors working with the CSA and ensuring a link to the federal assembly. In addition, a parliamentary group for Swiss Abroad has recently been created to serve as an extended network of parliamentary contacts. It is made up of 85 Members of Parliament, representing both chambers and all major parties.
- Several specialized organizations under the same roof: Committee for Swiss Schools Abroad (CSSA); Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA); the Association for the Promotion of the Education of Young Swiss Abroad (AJAS); and the Swiss Abroad Solidarity Fund (Soliswiss).
- Annually, the Congress of Swiss Abroad is held in a large city in Switzerland; this year’s event was held in Geneva.
- OSA is funded in part by federal authorities.
- OSA performs three main functions:
 - Information: keep Swiss Abroad informed about important development in Switzerland and informing them about their right and obligations as Swiss citizens
 - Services: from general information to legal and educational advice and the organization of holidays in Switzerland for young Swiss Abroad
 - Advocating the interests of the Fifth Switzerland in their country of origin; the OSA is a lobbyist for the Fifth Switzerland and is perceived as such by authorities, media and the public of Switzerland
- OSA is funded in part by federal authorities.
- Major successes of OSA:
 - Introduction of an option to allow Swiss Abroad to contribute to the Swiss Old Age and Invalidity Insurance scheme voluntarily (AHV/IV).
 - The setting up of a system of social assistance for Swiss Abroad.
 - Creation of constitutional basis for Swiss Abroad policy (Article 40 of the new Swiss Federal Constitution), mentioned above.
 - Creation of government-guaranteed insurance against loss of livelihood (now Soliswiss) easing of citizenship criteria.

- Introduction of postal voting for federal elections and referenda.
- Youth related issues:
 - Young Swiss nationals abroad and their families can obtain advice from us through AJAS on studying opportunities in Switzerland and related issues such as finding grants for studying in Switzerland
 - Added to this, we through CSSA (Committee of Swiss Schools Abroad) serve the 17 government-recognized Swiss schools abroad. About half of these schools are in Latin America, two in Asia, one in Africa and the others in Europe.
 - Camps in Switzerland: The sports camps for 15 to 25 year olds offered by our Youth Service are very popular, alongside the holiday camps for 7 to 14 year olds organized by the FYSA.
- These offers have been stepped up significantly in recent years and extended to include language courses, family holidays, work experience in Swiss companies, seminars on study opportunities and attendance of the federal Youth Session. Details are published in the “*Swiss Review*” and on our website <http://www.aso.ch>
- Social Security:
 - Voluntary AHV / IV
 - Social and Health Insurance are a prominent area of our consulting service
 - Agreements with CH and the EU
 - Political co-determination for Swiss nationals living abroad:
 - Postal Voting: Problematic (ex. Postal delays, distance, etc.)
 - E-voting : Pilot trials in Process. Still a number of problems such as Swiss Federalist structures, security, and privacy issues. E-vote in place by 2007 hopefully. 12% of Swiss-Canadians are presently registered voters; in US 17%, world average 22.2%.
 - Next Federal Elections in Switzerland: October 21
- Information: political co-determination depends on it:
 - Naturally, the OSA has also an Internet presence with its website <http://www.aso.ch>
 - “*Swiss Review*” (<http://www.revue.ch>): published in five languages. Sent out six times a year. Four times a year it publishes country-specific information. Manuela Fuchs at the Consulate in Montréal is editor for the Canadian contributions
 - OSA is funded in part by federal authorities.
- Quantitatively, the Swiss Diaspora is not a static entity, but rather a highly dynamic one. Year after year, the total number of registered Swiss Abroad increases by around 10,000. On December 31, 2006, there were 645,010 Swiss abroad registered. That corresponds to the population of a large Swiss canton. In fact, it would be the fourth-largest after Zürich, Bern, and only slightly behind Vaud. The voting power of the Fifth Switzerland is greater than that of a major Swiss city like Basel.
- The qualitative importance of the fifth Switzerland far outweighs its quantitative significance.

- **Questions and Answers Session**
 - How do Swiss abroad ask for assistance if they are too ashamed to come forward? Dr. Wyder passed the question to Consul General Walter Deplazes. He suggested any such needs should be brought forward directly to the Consulate although their resources are limited.
 - How are the Swiss schools funded and how do they sustain themselves? Through fees parents pay, the federation contributes about 20-25%, but is going down. Swiss companies help set up infrastructure and helped their own staff in order for children not to have problems when coming back to Switzerland. The majority of students are local.
 - What is the real participation in votes? Dr. Wyder: Participation varies. For UN related issues, the participation was massive. International ties are an area where Swiss abroad vote in larger numbers, above average.

2:30 Nutrition Break

2:50 Workshop Reports Chaired by Rolf Brühlhart

- Workshop leaders will provide written reports to Rolf Brühlhart and mentions that “erhalten-pflegen-weitergeben” of Swiss Culture are some important pillars for our mostly culturally based organizations.

Report from Workshop 1: Programs for Youth 13-30

- Peter Schälle thanks all the newcomers, who participated in this workshop: Valentina Bernardis, Karen Brühlhart, Florian Gabriel, and Konrad Iten.
- The participants of this workshop decided that the motto for Newcomers is KISS (Keep-It-Simple-Stupid, which is a user interface design principle), or in other words informal, spontaneous, natural and unconstrained, and little planning.
- Here are some ideas:
 - Camping and other outdoor events (e.g., camping trip in 2008 to Prince George and stay at Hans Ruch’s range to celebrate the Swiss National Day there).
 - Better and more frequent use of the Cabin of the Outdoors Club of the Swiss Society of Vancouver near Mt. Baker: Skiing event together with Philippe Geotschel (i.e., Swiss Youth from the USA).
 - Soccer, including Soccer tournaments and other sports
 - Dancing: from folk dancing to ballroom dancing
 - For newcomers: language related activities/events combined with traditional Swiss “things” such as cooking, baking, dancing, singing, Trachten, which are still maintained by members of the older Generations.
 - Crossbow and riffle shooting
 - High tech communication avenues

Report from Workshop 2: Programs, Services for Families with Children between 1-12

- Karin Rüger-Thomi reports on the importance expressed by all 12 participants of involving families with young children in the activities/programs/services of the various societies.
- Understanding of Swiss culture and active involvement in traditional events, customs, habits and practice of little children provides the basic to secure the future of any Swiss organization abroad for the long-term
- Generally, social events for adults should be open to all families with children. Now, the *families need to know that they are welcome*. Important therefore is to mention this in the invitations. It would help to have a room set aside, where the kids can get together and enjoy themselves with games, etc. A babysitter would be helpful and there is a point that needs legal advice: At the moment, societies hesitate involving a babysitter due to liability considerations.
- Past successes of involvement of families with young children were:
 - Children's Christmas parties
 - Lampion parade on National Day Celebrations
 - Car rally, Schnitzeljagt, OL (Orientierungslauf)
 - Crossbow shooting for children
- Ideas of more events:
 - stroller gang
 - camping trip, hiking, skiing
 - children's choir
 - trips to heritage sites
 - Easter egg hunt
 - quiz afternoon
 - Räbeliechtli-afternoon in November
 - kite building afternoon
 - games afternoon/evening
 - Swiss movie afternoon/evening
 - Picnic
 - Disco
- The discussion further revealed that older kids do expect something for them at these Swiss events. Therefore, uniquely Swiss childhood events would be the key to have more youngsters participating in the Swiss Club events. Also, an enthusiastic young leader (i.e., age 18 to 25) would be great to guide the kids through those events. For the smaller kids, prizes and afternoon teas, (that the parents would bring along), need to be provided. Further, it is important that the Swiss kids would be able to bring their friends along, with no extra charge for the non-members.

Report from Workshop 3 “Programs/Services for Sandwich Generation 45-65 and Seniors over 65

- Rennie Warburton reports on the findings of this workgroup.
- Sharing live experiences among and between the generations: chat groups, profiles in newsletters or on the website where young people interview seniors and vice-versa
- Providing services: for transportation to medical appointments, social events, shopping, to church, etc. or a simple ‘Fahrt ins Blaue’
- Create some kind of participation possibility:
 - Single Event: three local artists within the Swiss Community present their work in “Wort und Tat”
 - Making a major event for the Community at large: Participation in a singular Swiss Club/Organization in a wider Community event (e.g., at a Parade with a ‘float’)
- Need for more/greater Communication:
 - Website
 - open up existing printed media (e.g., “*Swiss Herald*” of the Swiss Society of Vancouver) for other Swiss clubs/organizations in BC and Alberta.

3:25 What caught your eye chaired by Hausi Müller

- Everyone gives their impressions of how the weekend went for him or her.

3:40 Recommendation of the Plenum of the 10th Presidents Conference

- The plenary session made the following recommendations:
 - ❖ The regional umbrella organization “Presidents Conference of Swiss Organizations in Western Canada” will organize a weekend in 2008 of fun open to all members of their member organizations, if possible at the Swiss Chalet of the Swiss Canadian Mountain Range Association (SCMRA) in Coquitlam. The two day weekend shall be reasonably structured, providing something for families with small children, children, teens, young adults, adults, and seniors, including an evening with entertainment. The President of the Swiss Society of Vancouver, Peter Schälle offered to contact the SCMRA and report to all members of the “Presidents Conference.”
 - ❖ The regional umbrella organization “Presidents Conference” will create its own website. Hausi Müller and Konrad Iten offered to come up with an outline, including Webmaster Christoph Rohner from Edmonton.
 - ❖ The regional umbrella organization “Presidents Conference” reconfirmed John Barlett and Rolf Brühlhart as their delegation to the Council of Swiss Abroad of the Organization of Swiss Abroad in Bern for two more years and thanked them for their work.
 - ❖ It was decided that the next “Presidents Conference of Swiss Organizations in Western Canada” should be in 2009 in Alberta. It was suggested to approach *first* Calgary (Fraenzi Stephen) and then *second* Edmonton. The months of October or November were suggested as the best season for this event in Alberta. Hausi Müller offered to initiate the first contacts.

- ❖ We should involve Presidents and delegates from the State of Washington, USA for next Presidents Conference.

3:40 Budget update by Peter Schälle

- Peter Schälle presents the 2005 budget.
- He presents a check for \$1,331.55 to the Victoria Swiss Society as surplus from the 2005 Presidents Conference in Vancouver.
- This 2007 conference was sponsored by the Swiss Consulate of Vancouver with \$1000 from Mr. Walter Deplazes.
- Everyone is in favour of keeping the fee at \$1 per member for the next conference.
- Peter Schälle asks for suggestions regarding funding mechanisms for the traveling expenses of our delegate to the Organization of Swiss Abroad in Bern.

4:00 Closing Session

- Presentation of flowers and wine to Consul Deplazes and his wife.
- Flowers for Consul Karin Rüger-Thomi.
- Flowers for Patrizia Franza from Swiss Info
- A bottle of wine for Jakob Tschanz, Swiss Info; Dr. Rudolf Wyder, ASO; Philippe Goetschel, Honorary Consul of Seattle Area; and Hausi Müller, Conference Chair.

4:05 Closing Remarks

- Conference Chair Hausi Müller thanks everyone who organized the conference and particularly Yvonne Camenzind-Kabata for her fantastic work and support. He also thanked Consul General Walter Deplazes, the Vancouver Swiss Choir, the Victoria as well as the individual societies for their financial support. It is greatly appreciated and without it, we would not have seen this event come to fruition.
- Closing remarks from Consul Deplazes
 - a great start to his posting here in BC
 - congratulates everyone for their participation and enthusiasm
 - Looking forward to being here for the next three years
 - Thanks to everyone

4:10 Finito and Group Photo

Appendix: Conference Participants

- Consul General of Switzerland, Mr. Walter Deplazes and Mrs. Siegrid Deplazes, Swiss Consulate in Vancouver
- Consul of Switzerland Mrs. Karin Rüger-Thomi, Swiss Consulate in Vancouver
- Consul of Switzerland Mr. Daniel Rüger, Swiss Consulate in Vancouver
- Dr. Rudolf Wyder, ASO, Bern, Switzerland
- Patrizia Franza, Swiss Info, Bern, Switzerland
- Jakob Tschanz, Swiss Info, Bern, Switzerland
- Philippe Goetschel, Swiss Honorary Consul, Seattle, USA

- Valentina Bernardis, Youth/Newcomers, Swiss Society of Vancouver
- Irma Bieri, for Outdoors Club, Swiss Society of Vancouver
- Gabrielle Bossy, Treasurer, Victoria Swiss Society
- Richard Bossy, Victoria Swiss Society
- Karen Brühlhart, Swiss Society of Vancouver
- Rolf Brühlhart, ASR Delegierter for Western Canada, Swiss Society of Vancouver
- Ric Fischer, President, Victoria Swiss Society
- Anne Friedinger, Secretary, Victoria Swiss Society
- Florian Gabriel, Membership, Swiss Society of Vancouver
- David Gsponer, Swiss Society of Vancouver
- Hansueli Häberli, Tenor, Dorfmusik, Swiss Society of Vancouver
- Walter Hildebrand, President Edmonton Swiss Society
- Ursula Horspool, Former Director, Victoria Swiss Society
- Konrad Iten, Vice-President und Webmaster, Swiss Society of Vancouver
- Alex Joehl, Swiss Herald Newsletter Editor, Swiss Society of Vancouver
- Peter Johner, Edmonton Men's Choir Vice President
- Irène Khurana, Vice President, Victoria Swiss Society
- Maria Logan, Swiss Choir/Seniors, Swiss Society of Vancouver
- Curtis Müller, Victoria Swiss Society
- Hausi Müller, Past President, Victoria Swiss Society
- Marcel Müller, Entertainment, Swiss Society of Vancouver
- Hansruedi Ruch, President of Swiss Alpine Club Prince George
- Werner Rutishauser, Seniors, Swiss Society of Vancouver
- Erna Schäfer, President of Vancouver Swiss Choir, Swiss Society of Vancouver
- Peter Schälle, President, Swiss Society of Vancouver
- Heidi Sohm, Victoria Swiss Society
- Ken Sohm, Newsletter Editor, Victoria Swiss Society
- Ulrike Stege, Victoria Swiss Society
- Rennie Warburton, Former President, Victoria Swiss Society