



HELVETIA BULLETIN

SOCIETY FOR COLLECTORS OF SWITZERLAND

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SEASON'S GREETINGS

We regret that because of technical difficulties this BULLETIN reaches our Members with a considerable delay. But we do not want to omit, even at this late date, our expressing sincerest wishes for a HAPPY, HEALTHY and Prosperous New Year to all our MEMBERS, READERS, FRIENDS and, last but not least, to our faithful Contributors.

ANNUAL MEETING

Our ANNUAL MEETING and DINNER will be held at the LIEDERKRANZ CLUB, 6 East 87th Street, New York City on Saturday, January 23, 1954.

The Annual Meeting and the Election of Officers for the year 1954 is reserved to Members in good standing and will begin at 4 o'clock, P. M.

The Dinner will follow at 7 o'clock in the Main Dining Room of the Club and will feature the traditional fine food with all the trimmings. We have made arrangements for the usual musical entertainment with the same musicians of last year, that contributed so much to the enjoyable evening. - Therefore, make your reservations for you, your family and for your friends with the Chairman of the Dinner Committee, Mr. George Wettach, sending him at 17-20 Well Drive, Fair Lawn, New Jersey your check in the amount of \$4.50 per person.

A separate INVITATION is being sent out with the BALLOT for the election of Officers for 1954. Please fill in your vote either for the nominated members or for your personal choice and return the BALLOT to the Chairman of the Credentials Committee, Mr. Karl Posch, 620 Sixth Street, Union City, New Jersey using the stamped envelope, that you will find under the same cover with the ballot.

Just another inducement for attending our Dinner will be the appointment of our eloquent and witty member and good friend, William (Bill) C. Webb of Newark, New Jersey, as Master of Ceremonies. No further comment on this point will be necessary.

REFERENDUM

In accordance with our announcement in our October issue of the BULLETIN we are submitting to our Members an important question on the BALLOT. We ask you for your frank opinion on the question: "SHOULD OUR MEMBERSHIP-LIST BE PUBLISHED?" and ask you to fill in your YES or NO. This question will come up for discussion at our Annual Meeting, but because of our widespread membership over the 48 states and abroad, we need your final opinion on the matter.

CONSTITUTION
and
BY-LAWS

Under separate cover we are sending to our Members a reprint of our Constitution and By-Laws and ask you for suggestions as to amendments that will be submitted to the Annual Meeting. However, if many important changes should be suggested, we shall appoint a special COMMITTEE for the REVISION of our Constitution, so that an up-to-date Constitution will be available. (Reprint through the courtesy of Emil Spinden.)

MEMBERSHIP
DUES

The Dues for the coming year 1954 are due now. Those Members who should not yet have done so, are asked to send their check to our Secretary, Mr. George Wettach, 17-20 Well Drive, Fair Lawn, New Jersey. Thank you for your prompt cooperation in this sometime overlooked but necessary formality.

REPORT of BRANCH ACTIVITIES

NORTHERN N. J.
BRANCH

The last meeting for 1953 followed the well established tradition and was held as the Annual Christmas Party at the Red Lion Inn in Hackensack, New Jersey on Saturday, December 5, 1953, thus ushering in the Christmas celebrations on the eve of the fest of St. Nicholas.

Without going into details of this enjoyable evening, we can simply state that it was a complete success. About forty members with their families and their friends gathered for an early but festive dinner and had a wonderful time in harmonious fellowship around the horseshoe table arrangement that had been decorated with inspiring Christmas greens.

After the dinner had been enjoyed, our traditional "SANTA CLAUS", Jack Brupbacher (this time in civilian attire) and a few volunteering helpers distributed the gifts from the "grab-basket" to the holders of numbers that had been appropriately prepared. Great fun accompanied the display of the diversified but non-philatelic gifts by the recipients.

Thereupon we enjoyed a special treat. Our member Martin Neumunz showed many picturesque slides from pictures that he had recently taken in Switzerland and in Italy. It was a real vacation-trip in the armchair.

NECROLOGY

We have the regretful duty to inform our members of the sudden death of the President of the Northern New Jersey Branch of HELVETIA, Alvin Henry WALTERS, who died at his home on December 30, 1953. In many years of friendly association with Alvin we have always appreciated his cooperation and sincerity. His soul may rest in peace. We shall always keep his memory and are expressing to Mrs. Walters and to the whole family our deepest sympathy.

EDITOR'S NOTES

The Annual Meeting of HELVETIA on January 23, 1954 at the Liederkrantz Club in New York, as already announced, will give me the opportunity to present to our Members a REPORT on our activities during 1953 in my capacity as President of our Society. Therefore, I shall not go into details at this time, but limit myself to some remarks concerning our BULLETIN.

When I took over the editorship of our BULLETIN, I considered it as the "SPOKESMAN" of our National Society, that is, as the organ at the disposal of our organization and of its members for the discussion of all matters concerning our philatelic interests in the many diversified fields of our hobby if related to Switzerland and to Lichtenstein.

On many occasions I have brought to the attention of our membership the opportunity that was thus afforded for the practical cooperation among our members. Contributions and suggestions have been solicited repeatedly in order to give our BULLETIN the rightfully deserved place among the many publications of its kind.

Unfortunately this goal was not achieved because of a series of circumstances. We are, however, grateful for the valuable contributions that we have received from time to time, especially through the effort of our faithful member, Dr. Max Kronstein.

Because unforeseeable absences curtailed substantially my time, I was not able to fill in with my own articles or translations, while the lack of information from our BRANCHES limited our reporting almost exclusively to the Northern New Jersey Branch of Helvetia.

Under the circumstances we had to combine occasionally the publication relating to two months into a single issue as in the present case. This is especially regrettable because of the delay with which sometimes interesting news reaches our readers. On the other hand, there arose some technical difficulties concerning the publication that caused unforeseen postponements.

This frank exposition of our difficulties is made to prepare our members for a discussion on this subject during our ANNUAL MEETING. Among the various solutions that may be considered, there are two of practical value: 1. the appointment of a professional editor; and 2. the serious promise by some ten members to supply one article each in the course of the year. Individual research, translation of an interesting article appearing in a foreign magazine, constructive new ideas - all these are topics of general interest that will stimulate other contributions among our members.

Please send any communication concerning this BULLETIN to your editor, Henry A. Gieffers, 283 Union Street, Hackensack, N. J.

THE SWISS AIRPOST ARCHIVES AT BERNE (SWITZERLAND)
E. RICKLI, LIBRARIAN OF THE GENERAL
SWISS DIRECTION OF POSTAL, TELEGRAPH & TELEPHONE SERVICES

(Translated by Dr. Max Kronstein, New York)

In 1913 a number of special flights took place in Switzerland which were organized for the benefit of the Funds for the Military Aviation. These pioneer flights arose much interest among the population. It was under this influence that Dr. Robert Paganini, a chemist at Basle (later in Zweisimmen and in St. Gallen) decided to assemble all the material as referred to these and similar air transportation flights: such as programs, newspaper reports, and - last but not least - the flown cards and covers with any available vignettes, stamps, and cachets. He understood already at this early date, that the airplane was going to play an important part in the postal transportation of the future.

The few items of 1913 became the basis for a large collection which is today unique in its kind throughout the world and which is known as the "Dr. Paganini Airpost Archives" or as the "Swiss Airpost Archives."

Dr. Paganini maintained relations to aerophilatelists in many continents. An enthusiastic collector and an excellent expert himself, he was a well known writer also in the field of airposts and a personality known and liked around the world. Numerous organizing committees of philatelic exhibitions and conventions were anxious to have him as a member of their honorary committees. He was an honorary president, an honorary consul, honorary member, corresponding member, et cetera of 33 organizations in 17 different countries. Medals and diplomas of exhibits give a testimony of the rank of his own collection.

He succeeded in assembling - in nearly 40 years - a remarkable collection. His efforts to find more and more additional material, the inquiries by his philatelic friends and the friendly organizations or - to say it short - all the correspondence about the development of the airpost archives is well assembled in a chronological order and fills 20 volumes. Among the thousands of letters are not only these inquiries and presentations; there are the letters of thanks from these pioneers of aviations who found personal and financial assistance by Dr. Paganini.

In 1928, he donated the whole collection as the "AIRPOST ARCHIVES" to the Swiss Confederation. The Library of the General Direction of the PTT (Postal, Telegraph and Telephone Services) was appointed to administer this extensive material, which is to date under its care at the General Post Office Building at Berne.

The turning over of the material was in no way the end of the personal efforts of the donor. Up to his death in December, 1950 he assisted continuously in the further development of the Archives. And the Library did its share by acquiring books and periodicals and by turning over the official documents of the progressing developments to the Archives. In this manner a continuous stream of new additions continued to reach the Archives.

In reviewing its present state, it can be said: It contains about 3000 covers and cards of first and special flights, partially autographed by the pilots. It contains about 5000 books, periodicals, documents, photos, posters, aviation time tables, et cetera. 155 volumes contain assembled newspaper reports about the development of the air services and of the airmail. When the Swiss Pioneer of Aviation, Professor Robert Gsell, from the Federal

College of Engineering at Zurich, found his death in an air-crash, the text of his own lectures on the construction of the airplane, and his collections of documentary materials, of correspondences, and many aviation photos of the period from 1909 to 1945 were donated to the Archives. Dr. Paganini's own collection of air-leaflets of the propaganda was in both world wars became also a part of the Archives.

In this way the archives comprise historical material as well as philatelic and technical material. It is a shrine for friends and enthusiasts of the aviation to find what information they need. Students and Research workers are using it in their studies on the air services and on the aerophilately. As long as it has not become possible to prepare microfilms of the material, it is not possible as yet to send the material out to other places. But it can be reached by all who are interested in it at all times during the regular office hours of the Library of the Postal Direction. No appointment is necessary and it is possible to make photostats of any material which is especially interesting to the student. Visitors are welcome at all times, especially from abroad, also, since they will assist in spreading the news about this archive throughout the world. This valuable collection must be widely known, since it is not enough to make it available for use. It is necessary to continue in its enlargement wherever possible.

Some years ago the airmail services have been asked to send regularly all their propaganda publications, time tables etc. to the airpost archives. And quite a few of them agreed willingly to do so. This material arrived quite regularly from all parts of the world. Several times we have appealed to the General Postal Administration in Washington, D. C. and in London, to obtain their publications about airmail. A number of publishers and of Societies send their publications regularly without charge to the Archives, such as the Swissair Journal, Zurich; Le depeche de l'air, Lausanne; Sabena Revue, Brussels; Shell Aviation News, London; KLM Nachrichten, Den Haag; Jack Knight Air Log, Brookfield, Illinois. Some Periodicals from the USA are sent to the archives by way of the Swiss General Consulate in New York, such as "Stamps," which is complete since Vol. 3 (1931) except a very few missing issues. The Helvetia Bulletin also is reaching us in this way, but since No. 1, 1952 only.

The Swiss Aero-Review, The Interavia-Correspondence and the Interavia-Querschnitt is obtained by the Library for many years and is available in bound copies. Other magazines, such as the Airpost Journal is available in bound volumes from 1931 to 1950 and we hope to complete it further on.

We are in exchange with the Congressional Library in Washington, but very little is being received and Yearbooks and alike publications arrive in a very irregular and therefore incomplete manner. As a few examples: From the "Aircraft Year Book of the Aeronautical Chamber of Commerce of America" (published by D. van Nostrand Co., Inc., New York) the Archives have the Volumes of 1926, 1928, 1929, 1933 only. From the "Civil Aeronautics Board Reports" (Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.) the archives have only Vol. 4 (1942/44) and Vol. 6 (1944/46). And there are many other publications which would be of value to the Archives if more people would know about this institution to which they could address the material which they have available. We even have limited funds for the purchase of airpost documentary material, and would be glad to contact persons which might have it available, if we would hear about their addresses. We are trying to do our best to further improve this so important collection and to make it more and more enjoyable. We even participate in exhibitions in order to demonstrate the many aspects of the work of the archives. And we are grateful to all who assist us in these efforts in the memory of our respected founder, Dr. Robert Paganini.