

*For everything there is a fixed time,
and a time for every business under the sun.
A time for birth and a time for death;
a time for planting and a time for uprooting;
A time for weeping and a time for laughing;
a time for sorrow and a time for dancing
(Ecclesiastes 3, 1 - 4)*

Annual Report (Franca)

The annual report 2015 was written, illustrated, printed and partly already sent. Then I received the news that my brother Andrea had been fatally killed in ice climbing. In the summer of 2015, Andrea invited friends to the 50th anniversary of the death of our father for a memorial service in the Ela Hut. In September 1965, Ricco Bianchi fell to death at the age of 46 on the Tinzenhorn. A few months after the celebration, my brother died. Andrea was 12 years old and a few months old when the father died. His son Carlo had 13 years and a few months when his dad died. Andrea, however, was 16 years older in his accident when our father was falling. Carlo has grown up since 2004 mainly in Scotland with his mother Claudia and Daddy Phil. In 2005 his sister Lucy was born, in 2006 Ellen. During Carlos preschool time he spent 80 days a year with his dad in Switzerland. After the schooling it was still 63 days. Andrea spent ten days in June each year in Scotland.

I received the most comforting condolences from my father's cousin Olga. She referred to the words of my annual report 2015. The gist of what she wrote was: „As a child, you saw an angel at Andrew's bed. Just think that this angel has also been part of Andreas fall.” With Olga and her husband Werner, we have casual contacts. In May we drove to Chiasso to Alessandra's 80th birthday. She is a cousin of Olga and therefore also of my father. As a preschooler, I was with Alessandra and her parents twice during the summer holidays. Alessandra was with us several times in Davos during the holidays.

Sarah and Claudio invited us to their wedding on July 9th in January. On the longest day of the year I went to St. Gallen with Sarah. In the wedding dress shop her dress was adapted to her length. Sarah slipped into a beautiful dress embroidered with embroidery of St-Gall. I never saw a dress with so many different fabrics. On the wedding day the weather was ideal. After the church service and the aperitif in Bad Ragaz the guests were surprised by a boat trip from Walenstadt to Weesen. The highlight of the evening was for me the wedding dance. Sarah, who was dependent on the wheelchair for the most part at the age of 15 because of her MS, floated over the dance floor. Claudio, who had lost his mother at the age of 24, hold his bride overhappily in the arms. In the honeymoon baggage they took the wedding dress to Mauritius. Now they also have wedding photos with palm trees, beach and sea.

One day before Sarah and Claudio's wedding, Walter and I were at the funeral of Markus, Andis (Anna-Dora) husband. 16 days before, he suffered a stroke. In the hospital he recovered surprisingly well. The exit date and the date for rehabilitation were fixed. On a visit of his older daughter he suddenly passed away. Markus 91-year-old mother stood within ten months at the grave of her two children. Andi is lovingly supported by her family of origin. Even girlfriends stand by her. Her two granddaughters (at the time of writing 21 and 7 months old) love her grandmother. By nursing them Andi gets her mind off.

On Sunday, July 24, around 2 pm, the telephone rang. Elisabeth told me that Ladina Este ... I did not understand. In the background, our four-hour-old granddaughter Ladina Estelle Hanna from Saigon greeted us with loud screams. About Ladina's progress Walter and I learn through photos or Skype. At Christmas we can finally take her on our arms. I hope Ladina will not be shy with strangers until then.

There were some changes with Jürg. The tenants in the house from the inheritance of my mother in Zizers terminated the contract. As Jürg likes this house, Walter and I offered him to move to Zizers. Jürg accepted the offer with pleasure. Two weeks later, his Scantop boss put him before the choice to take over the business or seek a new job. Jürg decided (even after discussions with Walter and me) to take the step into independence. At the same time he introduced us to Sascha. Sascha and Jürg moved to Zizers in August.

Anni has found a position as a trainer in health care. Since the end of August



Carlo and Andrea



Franca, Alessandra, Olga (v)
Walter and Werner (h)



Sarah and Claudio



she has been working at the vocational school for health care in Zurich. Two days a week, Marc and Stella are in the nursery, one day a week I am with them in Zurich. I am delighted to be able to see the progress of the two. Marc still asks „Why?“. He knows what he wants and above all he knows, what he does not want. I was amazed how Marc led us from the station of the Uetlibergbahn in Zurich Main Station to Omi. Sascha's mother works in a shop in the Main Station. Stella is a doll mother. She is rarely seen without Abby or Caroline. She talks a lot and that sounds like music in my ears. Since August I understand her without the translator Marc.



Sascha and Jürg

In 2016, Walter and I stayed at the Hotel Engel in Sachseln (Central Switzerland) twice. In February we visited the theater of the gymnasium in Sarnen, in July we were at the Volkskulturfest in the Gsang / Giswil. On these occasions we finally visited Flüeli and Chapel of St. Nicholas of Flue in Flüeli-Ranft. We stayed two nights in the Bergell (Italian speaking valley of the Grisons). We did not reach our first goal the Sasc Furä caban. The walk from Casaccia to Castasegna via Soglio was beautiful. In Castasegna we stayed overnight. The next day we visited the churches of Castasegna and Bondo. From Promotogno you have a magnificent view on Pizzo Badile, Andrea's favourite mountain. With Claudia, Carlo, Lucy and Ellen we barbecued sausages near Lake Cresta. On the Lake of Lucerne we enjoyed the 1st August fireworks of Brunnen. A highlight was the trip by steam train from Realp over the Furka Pass to Oberwald. For two nights we slept in Realp. The landscape is barren but beautiful and much less steep than the Bergell.



Family Haltinner

I telephoned this year several times with Romi, the wife of a colleague of Walter. 13 years ago, Romi fell ill with breast cancer. After the surgery, she had good ten years. But three years ago Metastases were discovered. Romi and I were able to chat for an hour and more. When I called in August, my call came too late. „Everything has its time - the time of love, joy and happiness, the time of sorrow and suffering. This time is over - love remains.“ was written in the obituary.

On August 20, Sarina celebrated her 21st birthday. Her parents Elisabeth and Remi took this occasion to celebrate their silver wedding. A week later Remi wanted to walk with his son from the Voralp across the Sichelchamm to Lüsis. Remi stumbled on descent on the southern ridge of the Sichelchamm and fell 300 meters into the depth. He didn't reach his earthly goal.



Remi and Elisabeth

Walter and I said goodbye to Romi and Remi in our thoughts. The billet for the sleeping car was paid and in Amrum Mrs. and Mr. Konrad had reserved a room for us. For me, the arrival on Amrum is like coming home. Again and again I am fascinated by the infinite extent. The sky (according to Daniel the other dimension) seems closer to me on the island than in Switzerland. In Amrum, sky and sea seem to touch. In the mountains the sky seems to be farer away.

At the end of 2015, Pinöggel had to go to the hospital at Grabs. She spent Christmas on the geriatrics department in Altstätten. At the beginning of 2016 she was brought to Grabs' nursing home. Since March 2016, she has is in the retirement and nursing home "Wieden" in Buchs. Her household was dissolved. She never complains although she depends on additional oxygen for 24 hours a day. She is sitting in a wheelchair. Walking needs too much effort for her. Pinöggel is looking forward to the good days, she does not talk about the bad ones. A great example for me.



Amrum, sky und sea

Dori learned to walk again. After her longitudinal fracture on the right thigh she came to a nursing home in Köniz. With the help of a walker, which reaches to her shoulders, the 98-year-old Dori marches again through the corridors. For to go to the toilet she needs no help. Their daughters, granddaughters or visitors bring Dori in a wheelchair to the fresh air.

Vanessa is in puberty. With her stressed slowness, she challenges me. When I bring her home I am quite tired. And yet ... I fetch her voluntarily every five to six weeks for a weekend or for a few days' holidays to Buchs.



Vanessa

We had to take leave of Lorenz, the husband of Walter's cousin Elsy, at the end of September. The sermon on Lorenz's confirmation motto from the book of Joshua touched me. Joshua had the task of leading the people of Israel into the promised land. Lorenz took over the parental enterprise and led him with professional and leadership skills.

With Doris, I have sporadic SMS contact. At the beginning of 2016 I got Doris's thoughts about coping with grief. One day after leaving Lorenz, I received a text

message from her. She informed me that Florian (the son of Walter's cousin) would marry next day.

On December 2, 2015 Walter and I travelled to Dresden by night train. We had our hotel in Meissen. We spent one day in Dresden. In the Frauenkirche, which is full of tourists, I immediately felt comfortable. During the devotions I was able to relax and to deliver my brother's accident (which was not a week back) to the Lord. In Meissen we spent the Sunday in the porcelain factory. Despite our resolutions, to buy absolutely nothing, we left the building with the figurine of the year.

This year we will travel to Dresden on 29 November. We will spend the nights in Freiberg. A visit to the Frauenkirche in Dresden is planned. I am curious if we take home a beautiful but superfluous thing...

Today we write the 30th October. Two months remain until the end of the year. I hope that in these two months there will not be a definite farewell.

For me Christmas is the most beautiful celebration of the year. But it is also the most conflict-laden celebration. May the preparations succeed with anticipation and without stress. May the feast really be a feast of peace.

With words from Anselm Grün, I conclude my report and wish you a blessed New Year.

May God bless you as a warming and protective cloak

Franca



Frauenkirche, Dresden



Carlo and his sisters Ellen and Lucy





(This house is my house, but it is not mine who was before me, is wasn't his house neither who comes after me has to leave also My friend, say to me: Whose house is it?)

Annual report 2016 (Walter)

The old streets still, the old houses still ...

The folk song poet did not visit Buchs SG 2016, otherwise he would have had to rewrite his text. The builder of earlier times built not only for himself but for the following generations. Whoever overlooks some decades sees the construction and demolition of the same building within his lifetime. Right now, the post office building of Buchs is dismantled, „zurückgebaut“ in „new German“. Fifty years ago, Buchs was still the „gateway to the East“, through which not only a considerable freight and passenger traffic, but also the entire postal traffic with the eastern states ran. This resulted in a postal station for the SBB and OeBB postal cars, a post office, and premises for the sorting of consignments. The new building, a steel construction and a pure purpose building, was a striking, imposing building. Now it looks down and shabby; If this report lands with you, it will be demolished For the small town of Buchs, a small town post office is enough (and for how long?). Irony of fate: The post office is back at the place, where it was, before the „new“ big building was built, somewhat bigger indeed. Many houses that are built today seem to be built for 40 years of depreciation and subsequent demolition. Has anyone said something of „sustainable“? Empty sayings ...

... but the old friends are no longer

As the age grows, the number of those who change into our memory becomes ever longer. When I went up to the Pfälzerhütte LAV this autumn, I once again stopped at the humble memorial for Arnold Gasser, who died there in the vicinity as a fifteen-year-old. He was group leader of the „Tigers“ and for me, two years younger than him, the admired model. In addition to my grandparents, he was the first whose death taught me the finiteness of being. In autumn 2016, Lorenz, the husband of my cousin Elsy, died. Lorenz, a talented engineer and entrepreneur, was not one of the loud, but kind, amiable and humorous fellow human beings. When I imagine a typical native of the Grisons he looks like Lorenz. Cousin Ruth has also lost her husband Heinz. Now she has moved from Bonndorf to the canton of Aargau, near her son. Franca has reported about other loss of friends and relatives.

The radius of action is shrinking

In 2016 I celebrated the 15th anniversary of retirement. I have uploaded my photo reports of this period to Flickr this year (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/wgiger/albums>). I have realized that obviously my adventurousness and the time and distance of my hikes have shrunk. Not only is it not quite as easy as a few years ago, but also the desire to take me off has diminished. Of course the summer of 2016 was not really a hiking summer, but it would be a lazy excuse if I relied on the weather. There were enough good days. Well, a thousand meters of altitude upwards and a thousand meters down can still be mastered. So I was on the Alvier, the Margli, the Montalin, and, for the first time, on the Gulmen near Wildhaus. But that were about all summits I have reached. Also, I have more difficulties with exposed paths. When I latterly climbed to Enderli (Enderlinhütte SAC), I looked a bit wistfully the blue-and-white guidepost for Fläscherfürggli - Falknis (T4). This path I will probably go nevermore. So what, the goals are a bit shorter.

In the water

As I walk, the joints gently remind me of the progressive wear, I still feel happy in the water, even though my never-so-powerful speed has diminished. In the summer I enjoyed the very warm water in the Diepoldsau loop of the Old Rhine. About few hundred meters to about two kilometres long, narrow water surfaces, fringed by stripes of floodplain forest, we swim often alone. Several times,



Old post office building Buchs



Memorial for my friend Arnold



Lorenz



Bergell: Bondasca



Guidepost at Enderlinhütte SAC

Margreth, an experienced swimmer from the sport facility „Obere Au“ in Chur, accompanied me in the water. She is a bit faster than I am, so I have to hurry somewhat. Sometimes, Franca has watched over our safety from the shore. In bad weather or when nothing else is on the agenda, I go to Chur every day at seven o'clock and swim in the pool or, after the summer season, in the same pool but protected by the air-inflated tent. Thanks to travel card and bicycle, it is not too expensive, although the Churians pluck the foreigners efficiently. And I am now a „Unterländer“, a stranger!

Rust

The subject of „rust“ has already been discussed, implicit. The bike I got from Mama on my 40th birthday, I had to leave to the bicycle mechanic, because the frame was rusted through. On the other hand, still going strong, the bicycle that I got when I was confirmed, now 60 years old, still serves me, I drive with it in the „Obere Au“ or I tow the trailer with a container full of compost from the refuse incineration to our house. Our legendary green VW van was no longer accepted by the Technical Control Board after more than 18 years the salt water has caused palm-sized rust holes. So we decided very quickly to buy a successor, a T5 instead of the T4. We have to accustom us to the many lights and buttons, and sometimes we look for the shift lever in the wrong place. In our imagination we have seen the poor old T4 in the Balkans or Africa endure the next 500,000 km. Instead, Sascha and Jürg have overtaken and repaired it. He remains in the family for the next time.

Friends

At the beginning of the year we were allowed to attend the wedding of my „godchild“ Gaudenz. Thank you very much for the invitation! Not often, but again and again we meet Vreni and Hamster. We have always enough discussion stuff. Bethli in Chur celebrated the 75th birthday. Once again the old „Lunch Club“ was together. Old stories were told! The 1940er of Buchs always meet at Corpus Christi. This appointment is catchy and will remain in the weakening memory. This time we were with the birds, in the bird of prey demonstration at Buchs. The eagle owl, however, fled frightened when it saw us. No wonder!

The scout home of Chur (an old school barracks) had to give way to a superstructure. From the civil community the Association of Former Scouts got an old farmhouse at the foot of the Pizokel with a „building permit“. Thanks to a lot of volunteer work, a cosy but solid home was built, which was opened on 27th August 2016. The Annual General Meeting on 4 November was already held in the premises of the new home.

Grown up

My „Would-like-to-have grandchildren“ of Lungern, are grown-ups now, but still friendly and likeable. Klemens last year, Bettina recently passed the legal threshold to adulthood, Jolanda must or may wait a few years. It is she who invites Koks to a „hurry with time“ (the game I still manage to understand), and then we laugh all. I appreciate that I may visit you!!

Culture

I must admit, that we are not frequent attendants of cultural events. One is the Salzburger Adventssingen in the Festspielhaus which has become a tradition for us.. The Christmas story, always different, but always poignantly told or sung. The Railjet makes it possible within a day, from eight in the morning to ten in the evening. Thanks to the friends of Obwalden, I became aware of „Obwald“, the folk culture festival in the „Gsang“ near Giswil. Popular music in its finest, 2016 with the participation of Mongolian musicians. Bettina of Lungern plays in the theatre of Obwaldner Kantonsschule, an almost professional ensemble. In 2016, Lukas Bärfass's parabola came to the stage. Eccentric, oppressive, comedic ... in any case played excellently.

Then, nostalgically, the Tschierschen Volkstheater, whose actors the ex-Araschian largely knows. Just funny! The Araschgen choir is limited to a monthly choir practise in winter. It's nice to see the old members, although regular samples are no longer possible due to lack of participation.

In April I was alone in Edinburgh, with the intention of thoroughly visiting the museums. Problem-free a week-filling affair. And then the wonderful city full of historical reminiscences! In advance, however, I traveled to Fort William by the Caledonian Sleeper. Six o'clock in the morning: Glasgow. Then, at the next



Old Rhine



Margreth climbing out of the water



Gaudenz und Isabel



The scary eagle owl



View from the Caledonian Sleeper

view from the window: the Highlands, dark forests, solitary moor, lakes and everything surrounded by snowy peaks. How beautiful!

On Drusatscha above Davos we were. I wanted to see where „Peetsch“ from Jon Nuotclà's novel „In Davos and Berlin“ led his hermit life in his old age!

Technology

Omag (EPS) helped us to an unforgettable ride on the Furka mountain route. The HG 3/4 No. 4 led our train across the mountain. Overpowering the exhaust strikes of the hard-working machine and the aesthetics of pure mechanics ... that is much more than just transporting people. Impressive, what was done in volunteer work! Impressive also the commitment (here however financially) of thousands for the maintenance of the incomparable steamer fleet on the Lake of Lucerne. Without the many million francs that were collected, these ships, each one unique and now under monument protection, no longer existed. Several times this year we used one of the ships and enjoyed landscape, technology, but also the culinary arts of the ship kitchen (as a dessert I recommend cherry gateau of Zoug!).

„The mill rattles at the rushing stream“. Since May 7, 2016, I am aware of what is actually clattering. Not the waterwheel but the mill itself, at full working speed, so much so that the whole entablature wobbles. The millstream of Grabs, an ancient artificial water course, has been used by more than twenty mills. Many of the genial mechanics can still be seen! Even the people of the mountains of Grabs are now using electronically controlled washing machines. But the „automatic“ washing machine from the past, whose direction of rotation is reversed in a purely mechanical way, is impressive, and above all you can see what happens. Skillful craftsmen could still make a repair and did not have to throw away the whole device. Or the hammer mill with their huge hammers! They are still there, the smithies who can control this machinery and thus make tools. Of course, in today's wage conditions, the products would be invaluable in proportion to the bulk products ... And then the museum carding machine, which still processes even the smallest and smallest quantities of domestic sheep wool! Although the transmission is electrically driven, but the current is generated, at least in part, by an in-house, water-driven generator. If you are interested in historical technology, the old mills of Grabs are open on the mill day 2018!

And finally

What the rest of 2016 provides us with surprises, who knows ... We look forward to see our third granddaughter, Ladina Estelle Hanna. Before that we will go to Salzburg and to Freiberg (Saxony). We wish you all a nice holiday and a happy reunion in 2017!

Walter, under scouts known as Koks



Flagship „Stadt Luzern“; 1600 HP, 1100 passengers



Edinburgh: the castle



Home of „Drusatscha Peetsch“



HG 3/4 of FDB



Reversal of the „automatic“ washing machine



Hammer mill at the Mühlbach, Grabs