

## Looking back on 2017

...c'est le Tout Autre

More than fifty years ago I read the sentence in a French scout book: „Dieu, c'est le Tout Autre“ (God is the totally different). This sentence impressed me and somehow changed my world view. Although more or less adult, one was still influenced by the image of the old man with a beard. And now: le Tout Autre, the unimaginable, incomprehensible, unfathomable. This sentence came to mind when the Nobel Prize in Physics 2017 was awarded for the measurement of Einstein's predicted gravitational waves. A cosmic catastrophe, which occurred 1.3 billion years ago, shook the space, and because the vibration rushed through it at the speed of light, it could be measured here with highly sensitive instruments. Science and mathematics expand the gaze of man into unimaginable big distances, but also into the unimaginable small. Along with the enormous expansion of knowledge, there is certainly at least as much expansion of the consciousness of ignorance and the unimaginable. Anyone who knows a lot will become modest. The decryption of the mysteries will continue ... will one once find the hard, immovable border where „le Tout Autre“ begins? Or will human knowledge be lost in infinity? Master Eckhart said, „If I had a God I could understand, I would never take him for God.“

Ranft

One who has looked into the unbelievable, but apparently still remained on the ground of earthly realities, was Brother Klaus (St. Niklaus von Flüe), the hermit in the Ranft, whose birth 600 years ago was commemorate in 2017. We assisted the „Visionsgedenkspiel“ at Flüeli, in which brother Klaus's contemporaries comment on him after his death, in the background the texts from the „Pilgervision“. Our „pilgrimage“ to Ranft was not ascetic. We have combined the visit to Flüeli with two nights in the beautiful Art Nouveau Hotel Paxmontana.

Twice we were in Obwalden for occasions that have almost tradition. There was the folk culture festival Obwald, this time with guests from Georgia as guests, tall men who looked respectful with their soldier coats and boots, the daggers and (imitated) shell pouches, and the Kollegitheater in Sarnen with Superhero after Anthony McCarten's novel, a both depressing and humorous piece around a cancer-stricken teenager. Since Bettina from Lungern meanwhile successfully passed the Matura exam and thus ended her career at the Kollegitheater, it was probably our last visit to the student theater of Sarnen. Pity! But who knows!

Pinöggel

When our Scout leader Röbi brought his young wife Bigna to Buchs in 1951, I was only 11 years old. Pinöggel, as she was probably baptized by her husband, was a respected person for me, as was Röbi. Efficient she was and found herself apparently easily in the somewhat rough Buchser scouting environment.

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|---|--|
| <i>Aux scouts unis par cette chaîne</i> | <i>Ce n'est qu'un au revoir, mes frères,</i> |
| <i>Autour des même feux,</i>            | <i>Ce n'est qu'un au revoir,</i>             |
| <i>Aux scouts unis par cette chaîne</i> | <i>Oui nous nous reverrons, mes frères,</i>  |
| <i>Nous faisons point d'adieux.</i>     | <i>Ce n'est qu'un au revoir !</i>            |

Some years later, I myself was Scout Leader and, as such, often found in the Groffeldstrasse 19 house. The former figures of respect, Röbi and Pinöggel, became friends. S'Kafi Giger („Coffeehouse Giger“ was for us scouts the meeting place, before the scout meetings, afterwards, in the evening, yes, when the five-day week arrived, already on Friday evening. We were always served with the famous-good filter coffee, later, we occasionally emptied a bottle of wine, Affentaler was our favorite brand. The mood barometer rose ... in Giger's household we afforded all sorts of mischief, and often Pinöggel was the victim. We were familiar with each other; so it endured pranks that would not have been allowed elsewhere. Where would you light the new tablecloth, supposedly because it did not meet our aesthetic standards without being punished? Pinoggel knew just about everything that moved us; she could listen and share. So we all got older together; the visits to the Groffeldstrasse became less frequent, because the old rascals were meanwhile quite scattered. But she was always happy when one of her „boys“ showed up. Pinöggel had to accept blows of fate, and finally, increasingly, complaints of old age. She always accepted without complaining what was her fate, and lost neither humor nor optimism. Now she has left us ... and yet it seems to me she was still there.



*Dorothee of Flüe with child*



*The Georgian Choir*



*Pinöggel, Groffeldstr. 19*

I have just completed this annual report, when I get the message that Hans Sulser / Guga has died. When I came to the scout cubs in 1949 thanks to Meck's persuasion, Guga and Mutz (Fred Hasler) headed the pack. I worshiped Guga! I am also thinking of Claudia Baum-Letta, a classmate from first grade primary school, and Kurt Schär, a 1959 graduate of St. Gallen.

I can / I still want to

„S'isch schöa, that you all no söavel magsch“ (You may be happy that you still can do so many things) I hear now more often. Emphasis on the „still“. Ten years ago hardly anyone said that, it was a matter of course; now apparently not anymore. Well, of course, it is probably not, if you climb on the Alvier with 77 years. On the other hand, it's not always easier for me; the first steps of a hike are the hardest. After all, I have made a personal first ascent, even if it was only the 2140 m high Guscha above the Flumser Kleinberg with some help of the teleferic to the hotel Schönholden. But it was a rewarding hike in an area that was completely unknown to me until now.

In the water

Swimming is easier than hiking. Very often, more often than other years, I was in the old Rhine (Rheinschleife Diepoldsau), often I went by train and bike, occasionally, especially in bad weather or when I decided to swim at short notice, by car. The warm water, the beautiful surroundings and the loneliness (especially in the morning), what could be better. There are plenty of options: one chooses between one of the various lakes (river sections, old dredging lakes, between 600 and 2500 m long), Swiss or Vorarlberg side, explores bays, drives for a change a few meters on one of the floating tree trunks etc. Sometimes accompanied Walking by the way on the riverside, sometimes I had the enthusiastic swimmer Margreth as a companion in the water.

On the bike

If I spontaneously want to get some exercise, I climb onto the bike, for example from Buchs to Sargans. Occasionally Franca and I drive together, then mostly along the inland canal. The coordination of the speed makes us some trouble!

The suboptimal car

I still drive the car. So we have made a one-day-five-pass ride: Flüela - Ofen - Umbrail - Stilfserjoch - Ofen - Albula. I enjoyed the many curves on the Stelvio Pass. That is driving at its best! Or Gotthard - Lukmanier including Tremola gorge, and finally Sattellegg - Ibergeregg - Pragelpass. Our „new“ T5 has probably made driving more attractive again, although Franca speaks of „suboptimal“ and thus means the not very comfortable double seat forward.

Lisbon

Actually, some foreign trips were planned. They were omitted because the calendar was otherwise full enough or the garden could not be left alone. So finally the trip to Lisbon was the only major travel over the Swiss border. Among the offered travel options we chose the railway. It was already a bit awkward. But I enjoyed the a reunion with Avignon and the incomparable light of the south, then the different shades of brown of the autumnal Spanish countryside between Barcelona and Madrid, which the AVE train rushed at an estimated 300 km/h, a short view of the Prado in Madrid and finally the TALGO night train Lusitania, which left us in the modern station Lisbon-Oriente, where Elisabeth with Ladina waited for us. Little Ladina has perfected the locomotion on all fours, soon she will master the upright gait. My glasses have not lost their appeal yet; funny to see how she laughs mischievously, before I get rid of my glasses very purposefully.

Lisbon is southern Europe and yet not again. You expect a bit of chaos, a little bit dirt, some noise ... yes, just a little European exoticism. Lisbon is clean, the people are friendly and disciplined (except, perhaps, as pedestrians, by the beacons of light), and it is surprisingly quiet (apart from the enormous traffic, of course). What brings even the big city in certain parts to their limits, are the tourist streams. No wonder, for every cruise ships unleash thousands of people on the city! Among the major tourist attractions are the old trams, which overcome incredible inclines and squeeze through the narrow streets of the old city with centimeter precision. And, I can not refrain from mentioning it: The Pasteis de Belém, the baked crème tartlets for which people make long queues in front



*Mt. Guscha above Flums Kleinberg*



*RhB ABe 8/12 at Berninapass*



*Old Rhine near Diepoldsau*



*Stilfserjoch East*



*Lissabon Line 28*



of the pastry shop, and which, as we have been able to convince ourselves, are constantly being freshly baked by the thousands. Luckily Lisbon has a sympathetic rule: people with infants have absolute priority! Sympathetic at least for those who are traveling with a toddler ...

Again and again...

There are occasions that recur and you do not want to miss. Every year those of Buchs who were born 1940 meet thanks to Marlis' invitations and organization on Corpus Christi day, this time in the „Kreuz“ at Haag near Buchs, a long-established inn that I had never seen from the inside. We dared even a cone thrust!

The Genevaers among the graduates of 1959 invited to visit their adoptive home. An amusing and very well versed city guide convinced us of the qualities of his city. I think he beat every Texan! The association Pfadiarchiv invited to a sightseeing of Schaffhausen, with the former Scouts Switzerland we were in the zoo of Basel and enjoyed its parkland.

Every month, the retirees of the gymnasium of Chur meet in the Va Bene restaurant and rant about today and praise the past conditions. No, no ... not only!

A not to be missed event is the annual meeting of the steamer friends of Lake Lucerne, always connected with a long drive with two of the beautiful old ships. On the lake we were also on my birthday and for the last season cruise of the steamers in autumn. We visited the old Kurhaus on Sennisalp three times, once with two overnight stays. Walking to Sennis is always a little bit coming home. The trip to Amrum was omitted this year, hopefully it will succeed in the next. Thanks to Austrian Railway, the night train to Hamburg is still running, even in a rather better timetable.

Well, my dears, 2017 is not over yet. As a pessimist, I hope that it does not bring us any unpleasant surprises. Last year we were around this time in the silver city of Freiberg in the Ore Mountains, the basis of the wealth of the Electorate of Saxony, and in Dresden. On Christmas Eve the whole family was at Haltinners in Zurich and the end of the year, but already on the 29th of December, we celebrated with a ride on SS Blüemlisalp (Lake of Thun).

#### People

Actually, I wanted to write here about making and getting visits. However, I realize that the relationships with you, the recipients of this report, are so different and so personal that this section should be different for each recipient. And that would not be the meaning of such a text. So I just think back with joy at the meetings of this year and regret that it could not be more. Although I've never had a real diary all my life, the non-existent calendar also has a limited number of free slots. And now I wish you a good end of 2017 and that we will see each other again in a healthy and lively manner in 2018. Take care!

Walter



*Woe! the tourists arrive!*



*The alumni of 1959 at Geneva*



*On SS Stadt Luzern: Foehnstorm*



*Sennis hotel prepared for winter*



*Paxmontana at Flüeli*



*My birthday on SS Stadt Luzern*



*Autumn at Sennis*



*Souvenirs.. (Val di Campo)*

„As in water face reflects face,  
So the heart of man reflects man“. Proverbs 27:19

Dear relatives, friends and acquaintances

The words from Proverbs 27:19 used Martin Domann in his last letter to the parish union Steinbach and Maladers. This verse appealed a lot to me. I decided to put it at the beginning of my annual report. A month later I received the Muggestutz card from Vreni. The right picture to the starting words.

On the 1st of January after the service in Passugg-Araschgen I learned that Martin Domann is leaving Passugg-Araschgen, Praden, Tschierstchen and Maladers at the end of July. After almost nine years of activity, this was very understandable. Nevertheless, it hurt me. I loved Martin's preaching and it was clear to me that I would not go to Araschgen's church any more as soon as he leaves the villages (on average once a month). Now it was time. At the beginning of July I visited a service in our old homeland for the last time. Structurally, I do not like the concrete church from the seventies. For 19 years I worked in the board of the parish. I know the church and the parish like no other. They became my home.

With great regret Walter and I had to take note and accept that Daniel Hanselmann leaves the parish of Wartau on 1 January 2018. End of the special services in Wartau dialect, the presentation of the baptized, who were carried by Daniel through the central aisle, the reading of a psalm in the change of pastor and worshippers and the lighting of candles at the intercessory prayers in the church of Gretschins. For me it was very nice that Walter accompanied me to the services of Daniel and this in Gretschins as well as in Azmoos. On the way home, we talked about what we heard

„Stay healthy“ were Pinöggel's farewell words after our wheelchair walk on March 23rd. On March 28, in the morning, I received a phone from Margrit. She informed me that Pinöggel had fallen asleep last night. Pinöggel went bad from the 24th of March. On the 27th, she expressed her desire to fall asleep and not wake up anymore. The following night fulfilled this wish. She lived a bit more than an year in the nursing home „Haus Wieden“. She was always dependent on oxygen and could only move in a wheelchair. Death came as a release. For the bereaveds, she leaves a gap. I had to consciously imagin the healthy Pingöggel. Since April, a picture of Pinöggel and Röbi is hanging in my office.

At the end of March, Andrea (Elisabeth's partner) had fulfilled his task in Vietnam. The apartment was terminated, the household contents stored in a container with destination Lisbon. From June Andreas should be working in Portugal. In April, the young family went on holiday in New Zealand. On May 1, Elisabeth, Ladina and Andrea landed in Switzerland. They wanted to spend a month in their homeland. One month became two. During this time Walter and I visited Elisabeth and Ladina once a week in Zurich or Elisabeth traveled with Ladina to us to Buchs. Ladina learned to raise herself in Switzerland and to stand with help. She discovered how to open cabinet doors from below. Above all, she was looking forward to clearing out. Before their visits, I cleared the lower racks and put empty yoghurt pots and plastic utensils inside.

For Anni and her family 2017 was a year without any serious illnesses or disturbances. Anni and Sascha had to work. I usually watch their kids on Mondays. The action circle of Marc and Stella expands. They do not just want to play in the garden, they prefer to bike around the block. Objectively there is no danger in the neighborhood. They are not allowed to go on the main roads. But mostly I have Marc and Stella in sight. Even Nanis (grandmothers) have to let go and to trust. In August Marc entered kindergarten and with him two neighbor girls. This was difficult for Stella. Who should she play with? I got to know Stella from another side. Ten days of the autumn holidays were spent by Haltinners in Portugal. They stayed five nights with Elisabeth in Lisbon. With a rented car they drove in stages to Porto. Anni and family are excited about this country.

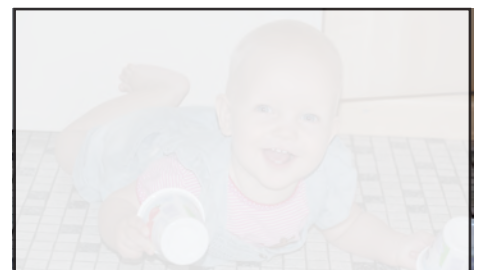
Jürg has restrained Scantop AG from Sargans to Zizers in March. We are amazed how he found space for all his devices in the small room. In August, he invited his customers to a tour of the business. Sasha's mother provided the



Church of Gretschins



Pinoeggel and Roebi



aperitif. She stood in the kitchen all day, brining rolls with fine sauces and conjuring up delicacies in and out of the oven. Thanks Monika! It was a nice day, behind which was a lot of work. Every visitor got a giveaway. In a carton-folded box with the Scantop signet, Jürg documented his work on the basis of printed matter and cards. For the write on the cards, he put a ballpoint pen with the signet. Sascha cutted a metal bottle opener with the Scantop bird out. This one also found place in the box. We hope that our son has always enough orders.

Walter and I enjoyed our home this year. We went on vacation in mid-September (Lisbon; see later!). Amrum stayed without our visit. We took day trips from time to time or drove off for a day or two. We visited the theater in which Bettina of Lungern played, the Obwald Folk Culture Festival and a play about Brother Klaus (St. Nicolas of Flüe) in the canton of Obwalden. In May we were in Geneva at the class reunion of Walter's Matura class. From July 31 to August 2 we stayed at Sennis. Walters birthday we spent on Lake Lucerne, with Olga and Werner we visited Alessandra (my aunt) in Arzo. In a daily car tour we drove to the Stelvio Pass and Central Switzerland. In the Val di Campo we spent a wonderful October day. I tried to consciously observe nature. The beans grew and grew on the trunks of our Christmas trees. This year I could have needed a ladder at harvest. The pumpkin shone yellow and red. Despite my careful observation, I did not discover a red pumpkin until it weighed 12 kg. Our neighbors across from the kitchen window put sunflowers on their patio. I was very happy that some flowers shone in our kitchen.

The neighbors opposite on the Holderweg became grandparents. I learned that ultrasound is not just a blessing. Stella Elina was born well in early July. She often stays with her grandparents together with her parents. I am happy about their development. Every time Carlo comes to Switzerland with his family from Scotland, I see them. Often I travel by train to Zurich and afterwards with them from Zurich to Chur. After almost two years, the regulation of inheritance is coming to an end. There were difficulties because Carlo is a minor, has inherited in Switzerland and lives in Scotland. The Swiss and Scottish inheritance laws do not match. Claudia once again made every effort to support her son, consulted with lawyers in Switzerland and sought a lawyer in Scotland who is competent in inheritance law. Lucy and Ellen learn German. They understand a lot. But I never heard them speak. With Carlo I speak dialect (Swiss German).

Vanessa finished school at the Masans school in late June. On August 1, she entered Plankis. Plankis is a foundation for people with disabilities. The handicapped can live in Plankis home and, depending on their gifts, complete an apprenticeship or work in production. For Vanessa Plankis should be her future home. She can visit her parents and siblings every two weeks over the weekend. The intervals of visiting home are slowly extended to every three or four weeks. Vanessa lives in Plankis and gets occupied and cared for during the day. In July, Vanessa spent a few days in Buchs. I have not seen her since.

September 19, Walter and I started our big adventure. We got on the train in the morning with destination Avignon. We stayed there, but still had a few hours to visit the old town. The next day we took the train to Madrid. Also there we had a few hours stay until the night train, which started from another station, brought us to Lisbon. Elisabeth and Ladina were waiting at the station. Walter and I stayed at a hotel. We spent a few hours every day with Elisabeth and Ladina. Lisbon is a magnificent city, built on hills and frequented by a large number of tourists. Large cruise ships dock at the ports. Thousands of passengers flock to the city upon arrival, not just to the delight of the locals. I liked the castle. The Christ Memorial on the opposite side of the Tagus was not overrun by tourists. Taizé music received us. Here you could relax. With the tram Walter and I drove up through narrow, steep streets and then down again. Elisabeth came to Belem with us; for one morning she was our guide; we got to know the grounds of the 1998 World Exhibition. We visited different parks. Here Ladina could move and play. On the night train we drove back to Madrid on the 30th of September, spent the night in Avignon and arrived in Buchs on the 2nd of October.

From December 12th to 19th we booked a river cruise on the Main. We sleep on the ship and visit Christmas markets during the day. Our journey starts in Basel and ends in Nuremberg. Back we go by bus

I come to the end and thank everyone who thought of my birthday. I got phone



*Franca, Alessandra, Werner, Olga*



*Our garden*



*Ellen, Carlo, Lucy*



*Vanessa*

calls, cards, mails and SMS. Thank you very much!

In June, I was looking for a birthday card a suitable wish. With the words that I found in the song: „No fairer Land“, I wish you a merry Christmas, Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year.

*May we meet again in this valley  
Many hundred times.  
God may gift it,  
God may grant it,  
He has the grace.*



*Cristo Rei (Lissabon)*



*View from Cristo Rei*



*View over the Tejo*

*Pictures from 2017, but also nostalgic pictures from earlier decades*

**<https://www.flickr.com/photos/wgiger/albums>**

*Scantop-Website of Juerg:*

**<http://www.scantop.ch/>**