



hands of Sultan Hassanal for his blessings before heading a royal procession through the streets of Bandar Seri Begawan, capital of the Muslim nation of 350,000 on Borneo Island.

The 58-year-old sultan is reputed to be one of the world's richest men.

Experienced St. Bernard Rescue Dogs for Sale

Are you in the market for an experienced St. Bernard rescue dog? If so, contact the few Swiss monks still living on the St. Bernard hospice high up in the Swiss Alps. The 18 adult dogs and 16 pups will only be sold to owners who promise to bring them back to the monastery each summer, and who ensure that the breed is continued.

During the last 200 years, the



Barry, the most famous St. Bernard dog, during his life reportedly saved the lives of 41 people.

St. Bernards are estimated to have rescued more than 2,000 travellers on the 2,400 metre above sea level mountain pass, an ancient gateway from Switzerland to Italy. The Romans were the first to cross the pass, and Hannibal and his elephants and Napoleon used the alpine route.

The monks founded the hospice at the summit of the pass in the 11th century as a refuge for travellers.

The St. Bernard's roles as live savers have gradually been taken over by helicopters and thermal-imaging equipment, but the dogs remain a great attraction to tourists.

The most famous of all St. Bernards is the legendary Barry, who is said to have rescued 41 people buried in avalanches. While the tales of heroic rescues are all true, the St. Bernards never carried a barrel of brandy to help revive people found in the snow.

A Plane on his Back

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's Swiss Superman!

Swiss daredevil Yves Rossy recently became the first man to fly like a bird – thanks to his own invention of jet-propelled wings.

Rossy flew a total of four minutes over the Swiss Alps after being dropped from an airplane.

His invention is a three-metre wide, 40-kg carbon wing with two miniature jet engines. The whole contraption is strapped on his back and propels him at speeds of up to 180 km. per hour.

Rossy also holds the Guinness world record as the first person to be transported between two small planes while holding onto handles on the wingtips of each plane.

But in his day job, the former fighter pilot will hopefully not perform too many stunts – he is an Airbus captain with Switzerland's national carrier, Swiss.

Who's this on your Finger?

For people who don't know where to store the cremated remains of a loved one, a Swiss entrepreneur has a solution: wear them on your finger.

Chur-based Algodanza – Romansch for remembrance – is offering to turn the ashes of the deceased into diamonds for no more than the cost of a gravestone.

To produce the synthetic diamonds, human ashes are purified, then heated and pressurized for two to four weeks, before being turned into jewellery chosen by the customer. The diamonds are grown the same way they are in nature, the company says, except it takes just weeks instead of millions of years. It says response to their service has been extremely positive.

Website for Swiss Children Around the World

Swiss children living anywhere in the world now have their own website to keep them in touch with life in their homeland.

The new website, named *swisskids*, can be accessed through the website of the Swiss Revue (www.revue.ch) and is available in English, German, French, and Spanish. It will allow children anywhere in the world to learn more about their homeland, correspond with children in dif-

ferent countries, and compete in contests. The website will have no chatroom to keep the site safe.

Swisskids is published in collaboration with the Swiss Foreign Ministry.

High Pay – High Cost of Living

Swiss people take home more money than any of their other European neighbours, yet they are ranked only seventh in terms of purchasing power.

Switzerland also has the second-highest proportion of part-time workers, after Holland – a fact mainly due to the high percentage of service workers. The country also has more female workers (56.5 percent) compared with a European average of 34 percent.

According to data from 2002, the average salary for a full-time earner in Switzerland was SFr 75,000 (50,000 Euros), while workers in France and Austria earned less than 30,000 Euros, and Italians took home less than 21,000 Euros.

Army Bunker becomes Hotel

A former top-secret military bunker deep inside the Gotthard mountain has changed into an underground retreat for people wishing to get away from it all.

The four-star hotel called "La Clastra" — the monastery — has 17 rooms, a dining hall, bistro, library, underground spring and a spa, but no telephone or television.

It's not cheap to get away from it all: full board costs SFr325 a night per person — a far cry from the past when the bunker housed up to 200 soldiers.

Did You know...

Romansh is a language derived from Latin, and is Switzerland's fourth national language.

"Romansh" is actually a generic term used to indicate the five dialects spoken in canton Graubünden (Sursilvan, Vallader, Surmiran, Sutsilvan and Puter).

"Rumantsch grischun" was created in 1982, with the aim of providing Romansh speakers and the cantonal authorities with a standard written language.

According to the 2000 census, Romansh speakers account for 0.46% of the population. 35,000 people claim to speak Romansh as their first language.

