Switzerland recently landed the starring role in an international “blockbuster” on banking secrecy – and in the process stirred up a debate on global banking practices that’s reverberating from parliament halls to city streets the world over. The result will be a transformation of Swiss banking secrecy as it’s been known for the last 75 years, and signals the end of an era. We examine the most recent developments, instigated by the United States, on page 12.

Many of these developments, fostered in part by the European Union, could potentially improve the Confederation’s sometimes-rocky alliance with the EU. Often described as a love-hate relationship, we dissect a few of the dynamics on page 8.

Engendered through bilateral agreements born from this CH/EU relationship is the recent explosion of German immigration. Swiss businesses welcome these expats with open cash registers and expense accounts, but is the media’s welcome quite as warm? You decide – page 16.

This Swiss media outlet welcomes you to a ringside seat with royalty, as we travel to Canton Valais to learn how the queen of the fighting cows will be crowned (page 48).

A couple of other Swiss traditions – alphorn blowing and yodelling – are proving more durable than banking secrecy. They’re the original forms of wireless communication; take a listen on page 42.

And finally, if you’re in the mood for cake – birthday cake, that is – head on over to the Reichenbach Falls on May 22 when Sherlock Holmes societies will converge to celebrate his creator’s 150th birthday. Or, you could just flip to page 52.

Enjoy!

Cassandra Petrakis Zwahlen
Co-editor
After the fact

Sales for birth control pills in Switzerland are booming – but not for traditional pills. Instead of preventative pills, women are increasingly resorting to emergency contraception “morning after” pills, taken after unprotected sex.

Pharmacy sales of the leading emergency contraception product, Norlevo Uno, spiked 16 per cent in 2008 from the previous year to 93,500 packages, according to the Swiss Pharmacy Association (Schweizerischer Apotheker- erverband pharmaSuisse) and reported by daily newspaper 20 Minuten.

Higher sales – to customers who are primarily young women between the ages of 18 and 24 – are likely due to increased awareness of the drug since it became available in 2002, said Marcel Wyler of the Swiss Pharmacy Association.

Disconcerting to health officials is the concurrent drop in traditional birth control pill usage, which has fallen by nearly 10 per cent since 2002. “It is very worrying that so many women are no longer practicing prevention,” said Margrit Kessler, president of the SPO patient protection foundation.

According to the World Health Organization’s fact sheet on emergency contraception, the “pills are for emergency use only and not appropriate for regular use as an ongoing contraceptive method because of the higher possibility of failure.”

Women can purchase the “morning after” pills – also called “anti-baby” or “plan B” pills – at a pharmacy without a doctor’s prescription, unlike traditional birth control pills. Thus, the anonymity of picking the pill up at a pharmacy instead of making a doctor’s appointment has likely also contributed to the increased usage, said Eva Franz, of the Bahnhof-Apotheke Bern.

At the same time, health officials estimate a third of sexually active young people are not using condoms. “The fear of HIV infection has decreased,” said Thomas Lyssy, of AIDS Assistance Switzerland, because many young people forego defence due to the belief good treatment options can cure the disease.
High tide in the Alps?

The snow gods were busy in the Swiss Alps this winter. And according to statistics gathered by the Swiss Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research (SLF), they hadn’t been quite so busy since what went down on record as the “avalanche winter” of 1999.

Following the snowfall recorded during the latter part of March, data showed all Alpine regions received “either similar or much more snowfall than in 1999”, the report stated.

Depths varied by region – for example, in a 24-hour period, the Grimsel Pass in Canton Valais picked up 24 centimetres of new snow for a late March depth of more than four metres, as reported by online news source swissinfo.

The overall amounts recorded led SLF scientists to warn of the potential for snowmelt-enhanced flooding this spring. Following spring snowmelt in 1999, flooding took on natural disaster proportions, and resulted in an estimated SFr 580 million in damages.

The SLF said comparable snowfall with 1999 doesn’t automatically translate into comparably disastrous spring flooding, however.

“For such a comparison, it is definitely too early,” the report stated. It went on to explain spring flooding is also dependent on how much more snow may fall because in “mid-

April 1999, for example, significant amounts of additional snow fell”. Levels of rainfall, the temperature, and the strength of the warm and dry Föhn winds will also play a role, as well as the water content of the snow, or snow-water equivalent.
The difference is passion

Set on attaining political and entrepreneurial freedom, Dr. Jürgen Lange tried to jump over the Wall in 1976. What he got was more than a year in an East Berlin jail. The chief executive of the Moser Group watch company recalls the journey as he introduces the luxury mechanical watches of H. Moser & Cie. to Swiss News.

Revival of the fittest
H. Moser & Cie. watches were first created and manufactured by Schaffhausen native Heinrich Moser in 1828. They gained a global reputation as high-quality precision watches, but ultimately disappeared from the international watch arena in 1917 when the wholesale and retail head-quarters in Russia were nationalised by the communists in the aftermath of the Russian revolution. By the close of the 20th century, the watches that once adorned the Russian Imperial Court and were sold in Paris, New York and Persia could only be found through collection circles on the antique market.

Lange changed that. After four years as technical director of Schaffhausen’s International Watch Company, he decided the time was ripe to establish a watch company of his own. He chose to do it by resurrecting the H. Moser & Cie. brand in 2005 to coincide with founder Heinrich Moser’s bicentennial birthday. And, he did it with help from Heinrich Moser’s great-grandson Roger Nicholas Balsiger, who serves as honorary chairman of the board.

“It’s an authentic brand name, the family is available and the watches are historic and of an excellent quality and look. That’s why H. Moser & Cie. is a wonderful brand to build a new company,” says Lange.

Exceeding expectations
Lange’s long-term goal was to get H. Moser & Cie. on par, for example, with Swiss peer Patek Philippe. A first milestone, however, came much earlier. The Moser Perpetual range clinched the 2006 Grand Prix d’Horlogerie de Genève, winning first place in the prestigious complicated watches category only one year after the H. Moser & Cie. brand re-launch.

“To find out a jury of enthusiasts, specialists and watchmakers gave our watch the prize before Patek Philippe … after one year … that was a wonderful moment,” he beams.
H. Moser & Cie. – spanning centuries

By the age of 21, H. Moser & Cie. watch brand founder Heinrich Moser had earned an international reputation as a skilled and respected watchmaker.

Born on December 12, 1805 in Schaffhausen, he learned the watch-making craft from his father, who had learned it from his own father. After working in the family’s watch-making business from 1820 to 1824, Heinrich went to Le Locle to expand his knowledge under the master watchmakers who were located there. In 1828, he planned to return to Schaffhausen and open a watch factory based on division of labour principles. Despite the fact that both his father and grandfather had been town watchmakers, the Town Council thwarted Heinrich’s plans. Likely due to his age and short experience, the Council denied his proposal to open the factory and be town watchmaker.

Scorned, he left for St. Petersburg, Russia in 1827 where he worked for other watch companies until he established his own trading company in 1828, called H. Moser & Co. He then launched the H. Moser & Cie. brand, which became world-renowned for its high-quality precision pocket watches, as well as those designed to double as pieces of jewellery. One year later, he established a watch factory in Le Locle. In 1831, he opened a branch in Moscow. Within 15 years, Heinrich became watch supplier to Russia’s Imperial Court and its armed forces. He sold his watches in China, Japan, Persia, Paris and New York. Nor did he scorn the military. He supplied his watches to the Russian armed forces. He also supplied his watches to the Russian armed forces.

Within 15 years, Heinrich became watch supplier to Russia’s Imperial Court and its armed forces. He sold his watches in China, Japan, Persia, Paris and New York. Nor did he scorn the military. He supplied his watches to the Russian armed forces. He also supplied his watches to the Russian armed forces. He returned to Schaffhausen in 1848 and set about industrialising the town. Among other projects, he built a canal and dam on the Rhine to supply inexpensive, hydroelectric energy to the local industries. Of bitter disappointment to Heinrich was his only son’s refusal to learn his craft and join the family business. Thus, when Heinrich died in 1874, his second wife sold all of the operations. However, the sales contracts stipulated all successor companies continue to operate in perpetuity under the names H. Moser & Cie. or Heinrich Moser & Co.

The 1917 Russian October Revolution resulted in complete expropriation of the Moscow operation. In an effort to compensate for the loss, the Le Locle factory increased international exports. But in 1979, the Le Locle factory became part of the Dixi Mechanique Group – and traded as Hy Moser & Cie.

In 2002, Dr. Jürgen Lange, together with Heinrich Moser’s great-grandson Roger Nicholas Balsiger and private investors, founded Moser Schaffhausen AG. They once more registered the H. Moser & Cie. brand internationally, and re-launched a range of watches in 2005. A year later, the Moser Perpetual 1 range won the Grand Prix d’Horlogerie de Genève in the complicated watches category.

In 2008, the Moser Group AG holding company formed to unite all Moser associate companies – Moser Schaffhausen AG, Precision Engineering AG and MSG AG Manufacturing Support Group – to expand the growth of the H. Moser & Cie. brand.

A number of factors set Moser watches apart from the crowd. They can all be classified under H. Moser & Cie’s creed, which is “passionately different”.

“If we want to have a new watch company, with a historic background, we must do some new things,” says Lange. “The new H. Moser & Cie. must have its own elegant look; its own movements.”

Its own look is calculated understatement. Lange says he had to fight to get his shareholders to go along with his design vision, since the premium luxury watch sector is currently dominated by complicated faces. Most – 90 per cent – have so many subdials vying for space that no one over the age of 50 can tell the time without glasses, he says.

“Our watches are timeless. Elegant and understated – you have to look inside to find the complexity,” he says. “To show the complexity on a second glance is not so many in the premium sector have this. To differentiate ourselves, we decided on this.”

At first glance, members of the H. Moser & Cie. watch family look deceptively simple. Many display only the time, while others also display a perpetual calendar. A look inside the Perpetual 1 watches, however, would reveal more than 400 pieces, versus 150 to 200 in the average comparable watch. Many of those pieces are proprietary, as well.

Matters of the heart

Moser also differentiates itself by supplying its proprietary components to other watch companies – Lange is insistent about sharing technology.

Moser joins Swatch, Rolex and Seiko to become one of only four companies...
worldwide that can melt Nivarox, the corrosion-free alloy used to make the hairsprings. According to Moser, the “consistent oscillation [of a spiral hair-spring] in combination with the balance ensures the even running and the accuracy of the watch”.

During our discussion, Lange has to break for a previously scheduled test of a machine connected to the production of the hairspring – what he calls “the heart of the watch”.

“You can see the heart of the watch beating,” he says, removing a Moser Henry Double Hairspring from his wrist to show me, through the watch’s transparent sapphire glass backing. During a tour of the watch-making operation, I also get to hold some of those beating components in my hands – so minuscule and delicate, I am afraid to exhale.

As chief engineer, it is Lange who first develops new technologies and designs for the company’s watch ranges. With a three-year waiting list for the Perpetual 1 watches, Lange is anxious to increase the number of employees to about 150 to decrease the wait. At the moment, Moser produces two to three Perpetual 1 watches per month. Lange’s target is to make between five and 10 to match demand. Ultimately, the company will produce around 5,000 watches per year compared with about 1,000, currently.

Meeting the family
The H. Moser & Cie. family includes five ranges, not counting special editions. Lange says he and his design team have enough development ideas in the pipeline for the next 20 years. However, Moser will introduce a new watch to the market every other year, rather than every year as other companies do.

A glint of the next one, due in 2010, flashes from under Lange’s shirt cuff – but it’s only a flash. New model details are closely guarded – one new movement alone can cost five million Swiss francs to develop.

Soul searching
After the quartz watch craze levelled off in the 1980s, enthusiasts and non-enthusiasts migrated back to the value of mechanical watches. A quartz watch, says Lange, “is not to hold in the family for the next 100 years … it’s something to wear for two years until the battery runs out, and then throw in the trash.”

Mechanical watches are composed only of mechanical components, while quartz watches rely on a crystal to activate a battery. Mechanical watches can also be repaired, unlike many quartz watches. And, says Lange, modern quartz watches are soulless. “The mechanical watch has a soul and a big history,” he says, to explain the fascination. “You could bring us a mechanical watch from Heinrich Moser from 1830, and we could repair that.”

To illustrate, he winds up and hands me an original Heinrich Moser pocket watch, manufactured in 1850. Its movements, visible through the transparent backing, look little different from those in the watch on his wrist, manufactured more than 150 years later.

Moser watches are indeed heirloom material. Excluding special editions, they range from SFr 12,500 to SFr 47,000.

An uncrowded space
When asked if he was concerned about entering what many perceive as a crowded Swiss watch-making sector, Lange says no. The sector isn’t really that crowded at all, he elaborates, because so many companies that boast Swiss-made watches simply buy their movements from the Swatch Group, make a small technical change and call themselves manufacturers.

Mechanical watch connoisseurs, says Lange, aren’t interested in mass-produced watch movements. Moser’s customer base includes mechanical watch connoisseurs and enthusiasts who may already own a Rolex, an A. Lange & Söhne or Patek Philippe, but who want something “passionately different”. That is when they find H. Moser & Cie.
By Cassandra Petrakis Zwahlen | Even for those who understand the word – it literally means kitchen cupboard – pronouncing it up to native-speaker standards is highly unlikely. If you are one of the precious few who has managed to receive a Swiss speaker's stamp of approval, congratulations. For the rest of us, here's a helpful guide from the swissboox company.

Aptly called Chuchichäschtli, it's a pocket book that includes over 1,200 Swiss German words that have been translated into both English and High German. It's available in every bookstore in Switzerland, as well as online.

Capitalising on a cupboard
Chuchichäschtli is the brainchild of 37-year-old Zurich resident Tito Lorenzi. “I had a German girlfriend, and she thought Swiss German was so funny,” he said, explaining how the idea for the book was conceived.

Recognising the potential to capitalise on that humour, he started collecting Swiss German words that are different in High German, and loading them into a database. Swiss friends, colleagues and family members got in on the act, and within three weeks, they had compiled a list of more than 1,000 words.

Tito’s brother and business partner José Lorenzi, a 36-year-old graphic designer who also lives in Zurich, came up with the book’s three different cover designs: a Swiss passport, Swiss cheese (Emmentaler, of course) and iconic black and white cow fur. He produced the cheese and cow fur covers using photographs of his subjects.

“We had to clean the cow’s fur first, before taking the photo for the cover,” laughed José, as he relayed the story.

Overwhelmingly, said the brothers, the book mirroring the passport cover is the best seller.

From novelty to navigational tool
Sales typically spike ahead of Swiss National Day on August 1. In honour, the Lorenzis now offer a special edition, packaged with a bound version of the Swiss national hymn. A winter edition features a toasty scarf, and a party edition includes Swiss trivia memory cards, to name a couple of the other special edition packages available.

While they keep actual sales figures close to the vest, the Lorenzis said sales increase approximately 20 per cent per year. A hardbound book costs SFr 17.90, and softbound books cost SFr 12.90.

Since its first printing in December 2005, 350,000 copies have been sold. The largest market, said Tito, is the High German speaking. No doubt Switzerland’s biggest foreigner group views the book not just as a novelty, but also as a survival guide. Future editions will even include codes readers can enter on the company website, which will allow them to listen to the proper pronunciation of the words online.

Tourists from around the globe represent the book’s second largest market. Upscale hotels including Grand Hotels Bad Ragaz and Mövenpick purchase customised copies of the softbound books – often bearing business name, logo and personalised forwards – to present as welcome or thank-you gifts for guests and clients.

Two weeks after the first Swiss German to High German edition of the book landed, the Lorenzis put out a Japanese translation due to popular demand. An English translation immediately followed, as did Chinese and French. A Russian translation will hit the shelves this spring.

Sometimes, it’s the ‘little’ differences
The book is now in its 26th edition, because new words are continually submitted and added. Words are provided by Swiss-speakers from every German can-
tions who see the book and want to contribute to what’s becoming something of a must-have, cult item among the Swiss, said Tito.

Here are a few gems the Lorenzis list among their favourites:

A *täplischtwiesser* is a person who’s a stickler. Sounds just like the High German *pendant*, doesn’t it?

Or, imagine trying choke out *Blööterliwasser* (water with little bubbles) when desperately in need of refreshment ... it makes the High German *wasser mit gas* sound so first-grade.

Both words – naturally – contain the uniquely Swiss –*li* which represents little, small, or cute and gets tacked on to just about everything tumbling out of a native speaker’s mouth. (Versus –*chen* in High German.)

This writer’s favourite is *gäi*. Really, why wouldn’t anyone immediately realise it means *gewesen* (was or has been) in High German?

Harrumph.

The book’s forward says it may contain errors, despite the care taken in its preparation. No sooner had the first edition been released, Tito recalled, than the phone started ringing.

The Lorenzis had forgotten to include the very word that José labelled “The number-one running gag in Switzerland”.

“The word *Chuchichäschtli* wasn’t inside” – only on the cover, Tito said with a grin.

Ironically, Tito and José aren’t native Swiss German speakers themselves. Adopted from Peru by Swiss parents, the brothers didn’t move to Switzerland until they were seven and six, respectively.

So there must be hope for the rest of us, after all. In addition to keeping *Chuchichäschtli* on hand to help navigate the Swiss German landscape while you’re learning, it is also sure to amuse your Swiss German friends ...