

## Welcome

Dear Club members - A new board was elected this year. Communication is a key priority to improve our reach and make the club more relevant. In this issue we present a new newsletter format. More is on the way. For example a completely revamped website. We see communication as a two-way process, and we look forward to

ever more members contributing, sharing and shaping this community!



*Martin Hahn*

## Past Events

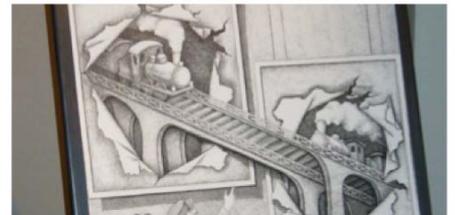
### AGM & Illusoria Museum (28 March 2009)

The rain came down, and the Illusoria-Land was beginning to seem an illusion even before I arrived! Where IS this place?? Then, after having trudged from the railway station for ca. 10 minutes I beheld the guardian angel, Eva, standing under the heavenly protection of an umbrella, waiting patiently outside.

The AGM was held in the Trattoria Penotal Magica restaurant of the Libo Center (near Bern). It was confirmed that a quorum was in attendance, so the meeting was legal. Like most AGMs I've attended in Switzerland it was a rigged affair: A few questions about statutes and finances, but all rather pleasant and of course everyone accepted more or less everything, including the (s)election of the new Board.

The visit to the Illusoria-Land was fascinating: There were several rooms of sculptures and paintings much in the style of M.C. Escher, and taken beyond,

of impossible realities and optical illusions created by Sandro De-Prete, who in fact was our guide. There was also the "Disorientation Tunnel", in which you were absolutely certain that you were being forced against the wall as you walked through the five-meter tube – which of course you were not. Our guide in the "Black Castle" was in fact a totally blind person, but whose personality was illuminating as he guided us through waterfalls and forests inside the totally dark labyrinth – even to a jungle bar! And the only remaining holography exhibition has bits where you were sure you were looking behind the subject as well as in front! All in all, a super outing, and thanks to Donald for organizing it.



*Howard Hornfeld*

## Annual Bike Tour (30-31 May 2009)

The Pentecost weekend 2009 saw the fourth annual club bike trip. Our first trip took us around Lake Geneva, subsequently Lake Constance, Lake Neuchatel and Lake Biel, and now Lago Maggiore. This year saw the return of many veterans as well as several newcomers. Together we were 20 people, including 3 kids. Our meeting point was Locarno. We biked clockwise around the lake, first through Switzerland and then across the border into Italy. We stopped for lunch at a small café on the lakeside in Luino. After lunch we continued on the east side of the lake towards our destination of the hotel Tre Re ("three kings") in the town of Sesto Calende at the southern

point of Lago Maggiore. We ate a hearty dinner together at the hotel and shared stories over drinks late into the evening. The next morning we headed north up the west side of the lake. We weren't alone, as countless pro-cyclists zoomed by. We sure didn't keep up, but we enjoyed the pretty towns of Stresa, Verbania, and Cannobio on our way towards the Swiss border, and then back to our meeting point of Locarno.



*Jonathan Claman*



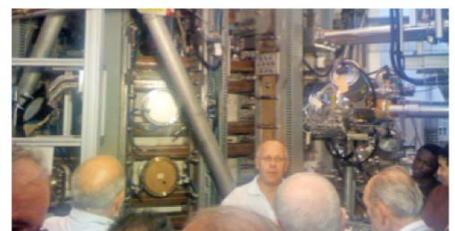
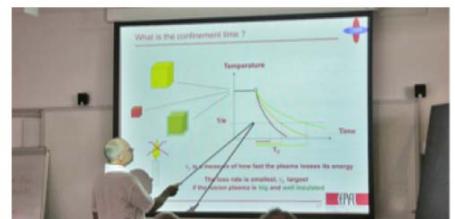
## EPFL Fusion Lab Tour (27 June 2009)

The sun was out and the blue waters of Lac Léman rippled along the waterfront at Ouchy, where a group of members and guests of your MIT Club gathered on the terrace of a restaurant and ate filets de perche. We went over to the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) where we learned about the progress in fusion energy (my particular hobbyhorse). Fusion energy is the alternative form of nuclear energy based on fusing hydrogen and/or its isotopes, and for which the future is looking brighter every day. Dr. Yves Martin of the EPFL's "Centre de Recherches en Physique des Plasmas" (CRPP) gave us a spirited rundown of fusion science and technology and on the

participation of Switzerland in the ITER (International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor) project under construction in Cadarache, France. This reactor is expected to begin operation in 2018. The tokamak at EPFL is unique, in that it can modify and deliberately distort the shape of the plasma in its torus, at 170 million degrees Celsius. Reactions from the members were enthusiastic. A good way to spend a day!



*Howard Hornfeld*



## Future Events: Outlook

We have a number of ideas for upcoming events. This might include a visit to Google, to IBM's Research Facility, or to Geberit. Such an outing should take place around October 2009. We are also thinking about several interesting speakers. Share your opinion

on what type of event you find most appealing. Also, you would like to participate organizing such event - we welcome you! Feel free to contact me at [h-hornfeld@bluewin.ch](mailto:h-hornfeld@bluewin.ch).

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*Howard Hornfeld*

## Feature

### Michael Helke (President)

*With this issue, we start featuring our new board (one member per issue, over 6 issues). We start with our president.*

As an undergraduate math major I took a course in linguistics. Boring though it was, I soldiered on until we were assigned readings by Noam Chomsky, a relative unknown at the time. His innovative theory was a revelation to me. I decided on the spot to apprentice myself to him and applied to MIT. 3 years later, I was awarded a Ph.D. on the grammar of English reflexives. The esoteric nature of the subject essentially limited my professional opportunities to teach-

ing. After five years teaching and research at New York University, I joined the UN and later the World Intellectual Property Organization, where, over a long career, I had a number of assignments, from the management of projects of various sorts to political affairs and back. Arriving in Geneva I joined the MIT Club and gradually became more engaged.



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*Michael Helke*

## Updates

### Local Group: Zurich

This summer, we formed a local chapter in Zurich for casual gatherings, reviving an earlier initiative by Nida Farid. We meet monthly for drinks after work. All are welcome, so please do come by! If you are

not already on our Zurich mailing list, please email me at [elke.hodson@wsl.ch](mailto:elke.hodson@wsl.ch). Our website is at: [http://groups.google.com/group/mit\\_zurich](http://groups.google.com/group/mit_zurich).

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*Elke Hodson*

## Event: JAC Conference, Rueschlikon, 2 October 2009

Dear MIT Club of Switzerland. As President of the International Joint Alumni Conference (JAC), I am pleased that MIT is once again participating in 2009. This premier international business conference brings together over 400 alumni and faculty from the world's top-20 business schools. All MIT alumni are in-

vited. We have an impressive line-up of speakers from business and academia. It's not too late to register. For more information, please visit our website at [www.jac-conference.org](http://www.jac-conference.org) or you can send an email to [info@jac-conference.org](mailto:info@jac-conference.org).

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*Benno Marbach*

## Coming Soon: New Website

We are planning to revamp the Club's website. The new site will have a new design and improved functionality. We plan to offer a host of features, such as

online registration for events, and more. Stay tuned!

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*Martin Hahn*

## Have Your Say

Let us know what you think of our newsletter, website, events, activities and plans. Your input and feedback will help us to serve our members better.

Please send me your comments ([hahn.martin@gmail.com](mailto:hahn.martin@gmail.com)).

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*Martin Hahn*

## Impressum

### MIT Club of Switzerland

W: <http://alumweb.mit.edu/clubs/switzerland/>  
Email: [switzerlandclubpres@alum.mit.edu](mailto:switzerlandclubpres@alum.mit.edu)

### Board

Michael Helke (President)  
Martin Hahn (VP Communic.)  
Howard Hornfeld (VP Events)  
Nida Farid (VP Members)  
Hans Hagenbuch (VP Finance)  
  
Sheila Ohlund (Observer)  
Eva Krug (Advisor)  
Donald Tillman (Advisor)  
Nicolas Haenni (Auditor)  
Hans Herriger (Auditor)

### Alumni Info

As per Nov. 2008, there are 377 alumni in Switzerland - roughly 100 more than 10 years ago. Undergraduate degree holders have grown from 18% to 24%. Graduate degree holders in Management are the largest group overall (16% of all degree holders). Senior Executives and Civil Engineering follow (10% each). For undergraduates, Electrical Engineering (9%) and Computer Science (3%) with Chemical Engineering (3%) retain the top spots.