

## **Message of the President**

When I was asked to take over the presidency of the International Foundation High Altitude Research Stations Jungfrauoch and Gornergrat (HFSJG) I had previously only visited Jungfrauoch as a tourist (and got awfully sick once) and had never been to Gornergrat at all; and I asked myself if a space physicist was really the right person for the job. But then I thought that – being neither an astronaut nor a mountaineer – I personally could never get much closer to space than at these two stations, and I accepted. Probably more important for my decision was that for many years I had observed my colleague and friend Hermann Debrunner manage the stations and the foundation with so much passion and dedication that after his untimely death I owed it to him to invest some of my time to his legacy. And of course I knew that the president in this foundation can rely on the very able management of the director Erwin Flückiger and his assistant Louise Wilson. With their help I have survived my first year, which was quite an experience, and I would like to thank both Louise and Erwin for their hard work and their reliable, friendly support.

This first year's experience was a very positive one. I was impressed on my visits to the stations by the high quality research work and by the great diversity of research fields; this of course is also reflected in this yearly report. I am convinced that based on the results presented here and in the literature, the stations and the foundation can look forward to a bright future. I expect that the upcoming 75th anniversaries of the foundation in 2005 and of the Jungfrauoch Station in 2006 will bring these positive results to the attention of a broad public and that this attention will consolidate the support of the funding agencies. Let me take this opportunity to acknowledge the continued support not only of the Swiss National Science Foundation but also of the various foreign and national members of the foundation.

One recent experience during the second half of 2004 was particularly impressive. After the Burgergemeinde Zermatt had first planned a gentle renovation of their Kulm Hotel that hosts our two astronomical observatories, they realized that this approach was not realistic and that the interior of the hotel virtually had to be remodeled. I shall not tell the story in detail, but the way this very serious problem was solved in such a pragmatic way among architects, constructors, and scientists demonstrated the extremely good spirit that exists between hosts and users. This positive spirit that exists between researchers and all the people who maintain the infrastructures (railway workers, hotel staff, administrators etc.) also impressed my predecessor, and it is obviously the basis of such success. I would like to thank everybody for this spirit, and I can only hope that it can be maintained for a long, successful future.



Hans Balsiger

Bern, June 10, 2005

