

AAFI AFICS Newsletter

ASSOCIATION DES ANCIENS FONCTIONNAIRES INTERNATIONAUX - Genève
ASSOCIATION OF FORMER INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS - Geneva

Geneva, 22 May 2025

Dear members,

AAFI-AFICS has the pleasure to enclose the Newsletter for the summer of 2025.

With best regards.

Odette Foudral, pour l'AAFI-AFICS

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Summer is approaching: a few tips on how to make the most of it in retirement!

by Evelina Rioukhina

Having recently met many new retirees, I thought it might be useful to share some information on the activities available for seniors in Geneva and the surrounding area this summer. During my first summer of retirement, I explored the city and compiled a list of all the free outdoor activities that might be of interest. Today, I have much more knowledge and am happy to share what I have learned with anyone who wants to stay active.

Mens sana in corpore sano: a healthy mind in a healthy body

Sports activities are the key to our well-being. Anything will do, depending on your physical condition. Studies show that going to the gym 2–3 times a week and, especially, walking daily (even 3,000 steps) will significantly contribute to our well-being.

Walking with the Cité Seniors

Friday Walking from 14h to 15h30 are the walking and gym courses organised by the Cité Seniors and conducted by Atletico trainers. Meeting point: Place Chateaubriand (behind the Palais Wilson). There are two groups: speedy walking and slow walking with exercises. After each course, coffee and biscuits are generously provided by the Cité Seniors. The atmosphere is friendly, and it is nice to see an increasing number of former colleagues attending these Friday Walks. These walking courses not only contribute to our health but also help us to forge new ties. We have built a great Team Seniors of Geneva, and we have just returned from the Grand Prix de Berne marathon, where we represented the seniors of Geneva (see photo). I hope that more "internationals" will join us next year for one of the most historic and traditional Swiss marathons.



Friday Walks take place until the end of June and restart in September. There will be a break for Friday Walks in July and August, but the Cité Seniors will be proposing many other activities. We are privileged! **Keep up to date with the Cité Seniors – there will be one or two activities every day in summer!**

Gym for seniors at the Parks of Geneva

In addition to Fridays, the City is offering free Gym-Walking exercises the whole year round within the programme "Restons dynamiques", in the parks of Geneva, starting at 10 am. Please note:

Mondays - Park Beaulieu, starting point – behind the school of Beaulieu

Tuesdays - Park Bertrand, starting next to the pataugeoire

Wednesdays - Park des Franchises, starting at the centre of the park

Thursdays - Park Baud-Bovy, starting at the centre of the park

Pro-Senectute is another important organisation for us retirees. Its "Movement and Sports" association will offer free sports activities in different locations this summer. See the full programme on the website:

<https://ge.prosenectute.ch/fr/activites/offre-mouvement-et-sport.html> by clicking on the link: Cours d'été dans les parks, and choose what is close to you and what is suitable for you. Their programme is excellent!

La Canopée - Gym, Dance, Zumba, Yoga, Pilates and so much more – offered by the City of Geneva

No matter your age, you will find what suits you. My new colleagues-seniors attended many of those courses last summer and were very pleased. The programme and the location of La Canopée are here:

Programme June 2025 <https://www.geneve.ch/document/canopee-programme-juin-2025-ville-geneve>

Programme July 2025 <https://www.geneve.ch/document/canopee-programme-juillet-2025-ville-geneve>

Programme August 2025 <https://www.geneve.ch/document/canopee-programme-aout-2025-ville-geneve>



Urban Training – also offers free sports, including Yoga and Pilates (for seniors). Consult <https://www.urban-training.ch/fr> – for Geneva and around. You will see the time and locations of the courses and you need to enroll.

My sports tips for you: Tai Chi.

Often called the art of longevity, **Tai Chi** is good for concentration, balance, coordination and well-being. If you already practice Tai Chi, come and join us; if you have never tried it before, now is the perfect time to start, especially if you are retired.

The Tai Chi Open Club of Geneva is offering free classes in the summer, from **2 July to 27 August**. They take place every Wednesday at 18h30 in the Parc des Bastions (near the Palais Eynard).

Tai Chi classes are also offered by the Open Club all year round, on Sundays at the Bains des Paquis (starting at 9h15) and on Tuesdays at the Grottes (starting at 7h – early, but healthy!). All of these classes are excellent – please do come along!



Culture: exhibitions, concerts, cinema, music

For all **cultural events** please consult the following sites: www.geneve.com and www.geneve.evous.ch
Arts exhibitions are here <https://www.artageneve.com/galeries-musees/programme-des-expositions>

Scène Ella Fitzgerald: 2 to 3 open-air FREE concerts weekly in the Parc La Grange from 20 June to 22 August 2025. Programme is on the [site web de la manifestation https://evenements.geneve.ch/scene-ellafitzgerald/](https://evenements.geneve.ch/scene-ellafitzgerald/)

CINETRANSAT – watch their site for the summer programme <https://www.cinetransat.ch/>

And note that there will be film projections for seniors proposed by the **Cité Seniors**, at their premises.

Fête de la musique: - DO NOT MISS 21-23 June 2025 <https://evenements.geneve.ch/fetedelamusique/>
Watch for the programme, and go around, you will see some of the choirs, also for seniors.

My music tips to you: Join the Choir and sing

If you've never done it before, now is the perfect time to start! Please know that singing and taking part in the choir is excellent for seniors: it combats cognitive decline and maintains our memory and concentration, while also being beneficial for our overall health. There are many other benefits, such as creating social ties and staying motivated and connected. Whether you have musical experience or not, come and join the choir! Mark those that might be of interest to you:

Chante en Cercle – classes are offered by Cité Seniors, Friday at 10h (some of us "internationals" attend)

Chant'AVIVO – the AVIVO Association choir (free for members) – we also attend these on Mondays at 14h15 at the AVIVO premises. **Everyone is cordially welcome to join! AVIVO is moving soon and will be closer, at the Charmilles!**



There are choirs for seniors organised in the Communes: Carouge, Meyrin, Confignon (modest payment).

Hospice Général offers the choir (free). Check their programme on their web site for seniors.

Institute Jacques Dalcroze – offers the method of singing, movements and sounds for seniors – check out.

Excursions/guided tours and holiday ideas for seniors

Many people ask me about **excursions**, and my advise will be: either to join any of the associations that propose excursions (**AVIVO** proposes a big number of excursions, or **MDA+50**, and there is an interesting choice of **excursions and guided tours** proposed by the communes – check out). AVIVO proposes also excellent free guided tours. For the excursions and holidays check here <https://avivo.ch/sorties-et-voyages/> .

Hospice Général and Pro-Senectute propose stays and holidays for seniors at the Nouvelle Roseraie near Vevey, for prices please visit https://www.hospicegeneral.ch/fr/vacances_pour_seniors

For more dynamic sports holidays, **Pro-Senectute** offers a **Nordic Walking week in Crans-Montana** in August, <https://ge.prosenectute.ch/fr/activites/offre-de-sejours.html> , in a very nice mountain resort and a good hotel near the beautiful lake. For those who prefer group guided hikes, this might be an excellent holiday.

Switzerland is a paradise of **thermal resorts**, and you can make the best ever holidays staying at the thermal resorts such as Leukerbad, Ovronnaz, Saillon les Bains, and even further away – Rigi Kaltbad, where you can combine thermal baths, sports and healthy mountain walks.

But if you do not want to go far, there is a possibility to have **Spa and aquagym in Geneva, Bains des Cressy (HUG)** – those baths and gyms in warm water are beneficial for seniors. For further info please consult: <https://bainsdecressy.hug.ch/aquagym>. I see many colleagues visiting those Bains and the aquagym courses.

My excursions tips to you for this summer:

I usually recommend active mountain hiking, which you can do with hiking clubs or the above-listed associations. However, this year I will give tips to those who don't want to walk or hike, but would still like to discover interesting places in Switzerland. From your reactions to my articles, I understand that many of you would like to learn more about Switzerland, and I am very grateful for your feedback. Now is the perfect time

to do it! I won't encourage you to take on long, daring trips like the ones in Glarus, but I'll still suggest some interesting places with breathtaking landscapes and historical and cultural landmarks, without any long hikes. My top four tips for you this summer are:

1. The Lake of the Four Cantons (take the round trip from Lucerne – it's worth it! But please get off the boat at one or two places, such as Rütli, where the famous Oath of Rütli was sworn in 1291 – this is where Switzerland was born. You can also get off to visit the Wilhelm Tell Kapelle, where you can admire magnificent frescoes depicting these historic (or legendary) events by the Basel artist Ernst Stückelberg. You can also disembark at the picturesque resort of Brunnen or visit Gersau, which was an independent state for more than three centuries. You will have a memorable day full of incredible sights and rich in history.



2. Lake Thun and Lake Brienz. Take a boat trip through both lakes, which are connected by Interlaken. If you plan your trip well, you will be able to visit both lakes and see many beautiful castles and picturesque towns as you glide through the gorgeous turquoise water.

3. Einsiedeln – via Zurich: The Abbey of Einsiedeln was featured in one of our previous bulletins and is definitely worth a visit. I won't recount the story here. However, if you go that far, get off in Zurich for at least an hour to visit the Fraumünster Church and see the magnificent frescoes by Marc Chagall. As you know, Chagall authored the Peace Window at the UN Headquarters in NY (was featured on the cover of our previous bulletin). And his breathtaking five frescos in the Fraumünster Church in Zürich are a must-see.

4. If you don't want to go that far, Martigny is a "must visit" – the Pierre Gianadda Foundation is hosting an exhibition of Francis Bacon until 8 June. For details of the next exhibition, visit <https://www.gianadda.ch/>. While you're there, take a stroll through the magnificent Foundation Park and pay special attention to the Chagall Court, which was gifted to Léonard Gianadda. Take a walk through this charming town and visit the Temple of Martigny, which has absolutely magnificent frescoes by Hans Erni (who also designed the mosaic at the entrance to the Palais des Nations).

Do not miss the most important event in summer -*the 1 August Swiss National Day*



Do not miss important events in summer, the 1 August Swiss National Day, celebrated through the whole country (photo from the celebration at Rütli). The most beautiful fireworks are perhaps in the Rhine Falls, but there are fireworks all over the places – check out – usually they are either 31 July or 1 August. And check the programme in Geneva – **Geneva celebrates pompously this important day.**

Carrefour International –

every first Wednesday of the month, Cité Seniors welcomes us!

(from 14h to 16 h, at the address: 62 rue de Lausanne or 28 rue Amat)

If you would like to learn more about Geneva and Switzerland without going anywhere, come to **Carrefour International on 4 June or 2 July. These meetings were initiated by Odette Foudral** and are kindly offered to us by Cité Seniors. Thematic discussions, or simply meeting up with former colleagues over a cup of coffee, keeping the old contacts and creating **new ties with Genevans** – do come along on the first Wednesday of each month (except August) at 14h at the Cité Seniors – this is the time that the City provides for us, for the AAFI-AFICS. **Do not lose this perfect opportunity and keep this wonderful achievement by Odette !**



Heatwave/Canicule and Seniors

In the event of a heatwave, the City of Geneva will take special measures, which will be announced. You can also consult the following website for more information: <https://www.geneve.ch/fr/themes/social/actions-sociales-proximite/plan-canicule-aine> . Free entry to the swimming pool and cinema will also be available to Geneva seniors. Please also stay in touch with Cité Seniors, communes and Antennes de proximité.

We are so privileged to have all this care for seniors here, as well as this rich palette of activities.

I hope some of my advice and tips will be useful, especially for those who are on their own. I wish you all a very nice and healthy summer!

