

Early Bird 31 Mar – 5 April

SECURITY/SAFETY

Bomb disposal expert clears Giebelstadt, farmers “lucky” (April 4)

Daniel Raabe, a bomb disposal expert, cleared land which used to belong to the U. S. Army airfield in Giebelstadt, about an hour south of Schweinfurt. During the last three years he was searching for duds. He found 99 U.S. World War II bombs in the farmer fields around Giebelstadt, including the 50 he found at the former U.S. Army airfield, amounts to 149 duds in the area. In addition to that he found an abundance of ammunition, grenades, rockets, rifles and hand grenades as well as a 250 kilogram heavy highly explosive bomb from the German Army. Altogether he detected a total of 19,981 weapons weighting 7.5 tons. Very often Raabe found duds in the ground not deeper than a farmer would plow his fields. “The farmers were really lucky,” he said shaking his head. “Touched in the wrong place there would not have been much left of the farmer and his trekker.” They were so flat in the ground, that sometimes he could get them out with just a shove. Mayor Helmut Krämer said: “That shows how important it was searching for those weapons.”

LEADERS & POLITICS

New Labor agreement costs Würzburg, Schweinfurt (April 3)

The new labor agreement for public services will force cities and communities to reduce personnel and to increase fees, according to an assessment of the German Association of the cities and communities. “For many communities the pressure to reduce personnel and to contract public services increases,” said, Gerd Landsberg, manager of the association. The labor union Ver.di and the employers had reached an agreement in their tariff negotiations which states that the two million employees working for the community and cities and the government will receive an increase of 6.3 percent within the next two years, effective March 1, 2012. The city of Schweinfurt was not prepared for this, which has paid back a massive amount of debt during the past years and still has set aside tens of millions. This amount has not been budgeted for. The additional cost will be more than €300,000 only for 2012 and this does not include the civil servants. According to Jürgen Appel, deputy human resource manager, the additional cost cannot be absorbed by other measures and the city council will have to provide additional funding. For the city of Würzburg the pay increase of 6.3 percent demanded by the labor union Ver.di will cost an additional €3.5 million per year. To cover the cost an additional €2.8 million are required for 2012 and 2013.

Schweinfurt’s Carus Prize awarded to cartographer and mathematician (April 2)

On Friday Lord Mayor Sebastian Remele awarded the Carus Prize to cartographer Liqui Meng of the technical university Munich and mathematician Moritz Kerz of the University of Regensburg. Every two years the city of Schweinfurt awards this prize for outstanding research accomplishments in the domain of science and medicine. The award includes prize money of €10 thousand and was first awarded in 1962, exactly 50 years ago to the bearer(s) of the Carus-Medal of the German Academy of the natural scientist Leopoldina – National Academy of science.

Bavarian Red Cross sets up tent and heating for striking asylum seekers (March 31)

The ongoing hunger strike of the Iranian asylum seekers in front of the Würzburg city hall, which had originally been limited to 2 April, continues. The Purpose of the strike is for the refugees to be acknowledged as asylum seekers for political reasons. The city has agreed on an extension, up through April 10. The refugees had requested an extension of two weeks. Georg Wagenbrenner spokesman of the city of Würzburg said, “On April 10 we will check the health condition of the refugees and review the

dynamics of the strike. After that they will strike a balance and decide how it should go on.” Apparently the city fears the condition of the striking Iranians will decline more and more.

ECONOMY

Law against rip-off prices for gasoline (April 1)

Politicians have declare war on price surges, just in time before Easter. The Black-Yellow Coalition—a combination of Christian Democrats and the pro-business Free Democrats—in conjunction with the federal states wants to help car owners with rising gasoline prices. The CDU and FDP parties requested that the government review several options to eliminate the price jumps at the gas stations. New price records are expected for Easter. The Federal Assembly also demanded a law to regulate the gasoline prices. A liter of super gasoline costs €1.70, or about \$3.936 per gallon. One of the options is a practice used in Western Australia: The price for the following day has to be announced one day before and then cannot be increased any more. Also the system used in Austria—where the price can only go up once day—will be reviewed. However, it will take several months until a regulation will be in effect.