

Street musicians festival in Lucerne

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STREET MUSICIANS FESTIVAL IN LUCERNE

For the second time, Lucerne hosted a street musicians festival which lasted for one whole week and attracted again buskers from all over the world (see our article in the January 93 Helvetia). Once



again this harmless and good humoured madness was a great success, appreciated and applauded by thousands of tourists and local onlookers.

The local group (above) "Interkantonale Blasabfuhr" was once again in great demand, although the wheelbarrow indicated a slightly over-exaggerated hope for big money. The saxophone player (left), Di Di Byrn from Ireland, who received great applause in 1992, was once again too a very popular figure at this year's festival.

NO FREE TERTIARY STUDIES ANYMORE

The era of free university studies has definitely come to a close in Switzerland too. After all the other cantons, Geneva is now taking the first steps to introduce a hefty charge for university students. Until now the token charges were SFR 65.-per half-year for Geneva citizens, with other Swiss citizens paying SFR 365.- and foreign students paying SFR 565.-. This inequality of charges is now considered as an aberration and it was decided to make an equal but certainly substantial charge for everyone. From now on all students, irrespective of their origin, will pay SFR 500.- per half-year plus SFR 65.- in taxes. A big step away from the old system of free education.

However, only the universities of

Geneva, Lausanne, Berne and Basle charge the same fee to all students. Most other universities differentiate between Swiss and foreign students. Zurich is the toughest on foreign students charging them SFR 2200.- per year.

UNLEADED PETROL

Lead-free petrol is gaining popularity in Europe, but not equally in all countries. Here is a comparison between the various countries with Germany leading the field with 88.7% of all drivers using unleaded petrol.

Germany	88.7%	Great Britain	52.6%
Denmark	75.6%	France	41.1%
The Netherlands	75.1%	Italy	23.7%
Switzerland	73.2%	Greece	23%
Belgium	57.2%	Portugal	20.9%

PROFESSIONAL ARMY VERSUS MILITIA

According to a report, a professional army would cost Switzerland at least 50% more than the present system of militia although it would be eight times smaller in numbers.

A professional army would have to be of a least 50,000 men to be effective and would cost between 6 and 7.5 billion SFR per year. Maybe, New Zealand should take a leaf out of the Swiss army book...