



# CORNFLOWER PETAL

The official newsletter of the German-American Steuben Parade of New York and the German-American Friendship Month  
Editor: Elisa Lagos, Tanja Ohlson

## 51st German-American Steuben Parade

A summary of the events on September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2008

Over 100 000 people turned out to watch more than 2000 marchers from Germany and the United States at this year's 51<sup>st</sup> German-American Steuben Parade in New York.

The day began at 7am with two bands from Germany showcasing their talents on CBS The Early show. It was a spectacular picture, the green and white band from the Tambourcorps Grün-Weiß Bonn Oberkassel and the red and blue of the Musikcorps Bickenbach, the lead band of the parade.

For most participants the day started with a church service at St. Patrick's Cathedral. The costumes presented a colorful



contrast to the historic walls and made many heads turn when these groups made their way up to the start of the parade at 63<sup>rd</sup> Street.

By noon the crowds had lined 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and were cheering the 21 groups from Germany and 27 floats coming up the parade route along Central Park. All three Grand Marshals received whistles and started the parade with a good and loud blow. While marching, Grand Marshal and actor Ralf Möller was a favorite with

the crowds, while Grand Marshal Col. Gail Halvorsen enjoyed walking arm in arm with his wife, daughter and granddaughters. The third, Duncan Niederauer, used the time to spend some quality time with his family. As CEO of the New York Stock Exchange, his is a very busy life at the moment. Some of the most memorable floats were four sponsored by the official German partner Bundesland (state) Hessen, one with five singing Elvises on it, because Elvis was stationed in Hessen during his time with the Army. Two floats commemorating the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Berlin airlift also honored Grand Marshal Col. Gail Halvorsen, a former Air Force airlift pilot who gained fame as the "Candy Bomber". This was the first of several anniversaries honored during the parade. A float dedicated to this year's 125<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Brooklyn Bridge featured a direct descendant of its builder August Roebling; and every German-



American was proud of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Germans coming to the new Heimat. But it was not just history on display during the parade; many in the crowd including MC Linda Schmidt from Fox 5 News were in awe of the brand-new cars that sponsor Mercedes-Benz had sent to the Parade.

As the parade continued up 5th Avenue, people began arriving at the Friendship Party held in Central Park. After marching, some of the bands performed while guests ate Bratwurst and enjoyed German beer. As in



previous years, New York's biggest one-day Oktoberfest sold out very quickly.

General Chairman Lars Halter was very happy with the outcome of this day: "The parade was a huge success and I really want to thank every one of the people on my team. I could not have done it without them and I think we have managed to create another unforgettable day for many New Yorkers and all the guests who traveled to this great city to celebrate the German-American friendship with us."

## THANK YOU VERY MUCH

The German-American Steuben Parade Committee want to thank everyone who made this year's parade possible. A special Thank You goes to all the volunteers who work so hard year-round in order to have this great event, and also to all the donors and sponsors:



Mercedes-Benz



## A GROUP WITH OOMPH

The Lead Band from Germany at the Parade

The Musikcorps Bickenbach led the 51st annual Steuben Parade up a sunny Fifth Avenue this year, playing popular German

and American tunes that had the crowd singing, and even dancing, in the street.

"It's proud for us to be here, an honor for us to be the lead band here and to play our music here in New York," said Floriene



Altenau. "It's the first parade in America"

The day began at 6am, when they were on hand for the

Saturday edition of CBS's The Early Show. Soon after they were performing during prayer services at St. Patrick's Cathedral and kicking off the Steuben parade.

"To be the representatives here is sometimes really hard," Altenau said, referring to the program. "The schedule is really tight now."

But through that busy schedule they still managed to enjoy their time in New York. "Some guys want to go to musicals, see Times Square and do some shopping," said Isabel Kuhnke, who has been playing trumpet with the Musikcorps for 15 years.



Hailing from Bickenbach, Germany, the Musikcorps began playing back in 1919 as pipe-and-drums band, but in 1981 they made the switch to a marching brass band.

"It's very beautiful to play with these guys. There are children [in the band] from 9 years to sixty, well, nearly sixty," said Kuhnke. "It's great fun."

ELISA LAGOS

## AN UNFORGETTABLE AFTERNOON

Chairman Lars Halter might walk across the trading floor of the NYSE on an almost daily basis. He does, after all, work there as a financial journalist and regularly reports about the ups and downs of the stock market to Germany and he might not get excited when walking around in this place where billions of dollars are made and lost every day. But on the Thursday before the 51<sup>st</sup> German American Steuben Parade it was not business as usual. That day was special

The CEO of NYSE Euronext, Duncan Niederauer, is of German descent and was one of this year's Grand Marshalls to the parade. Although he could



not personally be present that afternoon, he had invited a group representing the parade to come and join ranks of heads of states, rock stars, sports icons and the most important business people by ringing the Closing Bell and thus ending the trading session at the New York Stock Exchange.

After a reception in the Boardroom of the stock

exchange, Lars was one of the first to walk onto the trading floor, followed by a group of twenty members of the parade committee and representatives from sponsoring firms and German corporations whose stocks are traded at NYSE.

When the little group entered the trading floor they caused quite a few heads to turn, as several members were dressed in traditional Dirndl dresses and Lederhosen. Several members of the group used the attention they created and started handing out cornflowers and flyers to the curious traders, cordially inviting them to attend the parade as they made their way across the trading floor and walked up the

few stairs to a little balcony, where the bell is rung and a hammer stroke traditionally ends the trading session.

With only 30 seconds to go in the trading session everyone on that podium started clapping, and they were soon joined by some traders on the floor. Lars Halter

and Melissa Gratzl shared the duties. Lars pressed the little button that makes the bell ring through the historic building for the last 15 seconds of trading, and then Melissa stroke down a big wooden hammer with one loud bang and ended the trading for that day.

The Dow Jones Index closed up 444 points that day, a reason for the traders on the floor to cheer on the Germans. It's just one more thing that made the day so special.

## **ANNOUNCEMENT:**

### Concert by Young German Symphony Orchestra

The Young German Symphony Orchestra (YGSO), under the direction of Maestro Klaus Arp, will tour the U.S. from October 3-19. The YGSO is the foremost young orchestra of Germany. This tour celebrates 400 years of German contributions to America.

The renowned American musical family, the Borowskys (Cecylia, cello; Elizabeth, piano; Emmanuel, violin; and Frances Grace, cello), were invited to perform as soloists in Ludwig van Beethoven's Triple Concerto and Samuel Barber's Cello Concerto.

Most recently, the Borowskys performed Pre-Olympic concerts titled "One World, One Dream, One Family" in China (including performances as soloists with Chinese orchestras). Their concerts were enthusiastically received by audiences in China.

**October 18, 7.30 pm, St. Paul the Apostle, 405 West 59th Street, New York, NY 10019. Tel. 212-265-3495. Website: <http://www.stpaultheapostle.org>**

