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FASCHING/KARNEVAL IN GERMANY 2011

THE "5TH SEASON OF THE YEAR"

Information provided for you by
USAG Schweinfurt Army Community Service

Fasching and Karneval

Both of the names describe the pre-lent season known as Mardi Gras in the States. This season is notorious for parties, feasts, and parades.

This time of the year is called Fasching in the southern part of Germany but it is Karneval in the north as well as the Rhine area. Not only is the name different in different areas of Germany but also the reasoning behind all of the commotion is different. The fools of Fasching used to think the more they carried on and made noises the more they would scare away the evil spirits of winter while the fools of Karneval on the other hand simply wanted to be merry and enjoy, especially the last three days before Lent, as much as possible. The motto of Karneval was and still is "anything goes" during the three days before Ash Wednesday which marks the start of Lent. People wanted to "live it up" to make up for the austerity of Lent in advance. Nowadays the soberness of Lent has definitely decreased, but the "living it up" stayed.

The four most celebrated days in the Fasching season are the Saturday through Tuesday preceding Ash Wednesday. Fasching and Karneval both end on "Shrove Tuesday" which is always six weeks before Easter. Karneval is especially popular in the big cities along the Rhine River. Mainz, Koeln and Duesseldorf are considered the citadels of Karneval. In those cities Monday, called "Rosenmontag" is a state Holiday. The parades along the Rhine River are usually very large and they are held on "Rosenmontag". There you will see huge floats depicting various events that took place during the year, usually with a lot of burlesque and satire. Also you will see the Karneval Prince and his Court in the center of the parade. This is the most popular of all the floats and literally tons of candies are thrown to spectators from this float.
German TV usually broadcasts those parades all day long during the weekend.

On Faschingsdienstag "Shrove Tuesday" the official greeting is not Gruess Gott, but "Helau"

Here are some important dates:

Women's Karneval "Altweiberfastnacht" this year is 3 March 2011. Armed with scissors, they cut off the neckties of any men they encounter!

There will be a Fasching Parade in Wuerzburg on Sunday, 6 March 2011 in downtown Wuerzburg starting at 1155.

The parades in Cologne and Mainz are on "Rosenmontag" (Rose Monday is 7 March 2011) and are always televised for those who can't be there in person.

There will be a Fasching Parade in Schweinfurt on Shrove Tuesday (Faschingsdienstag), 8 March 2011 in downtown Schweinfurt starting at 1300.

Bamberg has a Fasching Parade on Shrove Tuesday (Faschingsdienstag), on 8 March 2011 downtown Bamberg starting at 1330.

Each city's parade will pass by the Marktplatz. If you are not sure were the route in your area is, just look for the streets lined with spectators! Then find yourself a good spot and enjoy the fun parade . If you take your children make sure you bring a bag to collect candy and goodies thrown from the floats.
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HELAU
ALAAF

There are many German links for Fasching/Karneval Events all over Germany at:

http://www.swr.de/fastnacht/-/id=264914/qds5po/index.html