2015 Gala Silent Auction

58th Annual German-American Steuben Parade
New York
Celebrating the 25th anniversary of German reunification
Visit www.germany.info/GermanUnity25
Message of Greeting
on the occasion of the 58th Annual Steuben Parade

This year, we are celebrating the 25th anniversary of German unity, the creation of one German state with the borders it has today. Reunification was the legal outcome of the fall of the Berlin Wall nearly one year prior and the result of the desire for freedom, liberty, and unity of the German people in the East and in the West. However, this development would not have been successful without the support of our allies, especially the United States, which stood at the side of the Federal Republic of Germany throughout all the challenging decades of the Cold War. Through US support of Germany’s reintegration into the West following the atrocities of World War II and its help in boosting the German economy with the Marshall Plan, my country was granted a second chance, a chance to step foot on the path of freedom and peace again and eventually to become a unified nation in 1990. Reunification has thus become a symbol of German-American friendship and cooperation.

Yet this friendship goes far beyond the official cooperation between the governments of Germany and the US. It is firmly underpinned by the societies of both countries through student exchanges, common cultural organizations, and scientific partnerships. And by the thousands of Germans and Americans that visit each other’s countries to travel, work, or study or just to learn more about each other’s cultures. These personal ties are at least as important as our official relations.

One outstanding example of these ties is the Steuben Parade, which is being held for the 58th time this year. The parade is a great way of displaying German traditions in the US, which were brought across the Atlantic by German emigrants who didn’t want to lose their ties to their old home, but had nevertheless established new lives in this land of freedom and opportunity. I had the honor of participating in the Steuben Parade myself last year, and I want to congratulate the organizers on keeping up this tradition and bringing together Germans, Americans, and many other nationalities in the vibrant center of New York City to celebrate the historical legacy of German-Americans in the United States.

I am sure that the parade will once again be awe-inspiring, colorful, and entertaining. So let me wish you all Viel Spaß! Enjoy the parade!

Peter Wittig
The German-American Steuben Parade Committee is proud to present the Ladies and Gentleman who have represented the German-American community throughout the year and have done a great job advertising the Parade as a celebration of the history and culture of their families and ancestors.

**Miss German-America & Steuben Parade Queen:** Samantha Hart

**Princess:** Cathy Hatten

**Princess:** Rebecca Koehler

**Junior Princess:** Alessia Glebke

**Junior Princess:** Brooke Hubert

**Junior Princess:** Kristina Petzold

**Junior General:** Christian Hubert
Dear Friends and Visitors of the German-American Steuben Parade

This year we are celebrating the 58th German-American Steuben Parade in NYC in honor of the Prussian General Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben, who helped General George Washington in organizing the American troops for the Continental Army. The Steuben Parade celebrates German-American heritage and our continued cultural contributions here in America.

We invite you to come and join us for this year’s Steuben Parade to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the German Unification. Cheer for our Grand Marshals — Contessa Brewer, John Ratzenberger, and Hon. Klaus Wowereit, and welcome our honored guests: Philip Ackermann, Chief of Mission to the Federal Republic of Germany, and Brita Wagener, German Consulate General of NYC. Wave to Miss German-America Samantha Hart and her court as they lead our colorful presentation up Fifth Avenue. We hope that you will also raise a stein with us at the Oktoberfest in Central Park and enjoy all the other events we proudly present during German—American Friendship Month in the greatest city in the world.

As we reflect on the anniversary of the German Unification, I remember my experience working with Mueser Rutledge Consulting Engineers during the early unification years. At that time, as the representative of an American firm, our goal was not only to reconstruct the deep foundations of the divided city, but to work with both the East and West German engineers. The earnest collaborative efforts of the two teams with MRCE reflected the sincere unification of the German people. To this day, I believe the foundation rebuilt during that project was not just a physical one, but one of the spirit of the German people. It therefore gives me great honor to say, “Ich bin ein Berliner”.

Throughout September, I invite you to celebrate German-American friendship with us. I want to thank our many committed parade volunteers, our honorable Grand Marshals, honored guests, sponsors, supporters, and all of you who come to join us. Enjoy this memorable time of year.

I am looking forward to seeing you at the Steuben Parade and our German-American Friendship Month events.

Robert Radske

General Chairman
German-American Steuben Parade of New York
The German-American Steuben Parade is held annually on the third Saturday in September. It was founded in 1957 by German immigrants and German-Americans – one of the largest ancestral groups living in the United States, who wanted to keep the traditions of their homeland alive. They named the Parade after Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben, a Prussian-born General who served with General George Washington in the American Revolutionary War. Von Steuben is still regarded as one of the most influential German-Americans for his contributions to America's fight for independence; his training of the young American troops helped achieve victory against the British.

In April, 1956, the German-American Parade was first held in Ridgewood, Queens, on the 50th Anniversary of the Brooklyn Boys and Girls Chorus. Being a weekend celebration, it began with a concert at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and concluded the following day with the Parade down Myrtle Ave., ending with a gala celebration at Schwaben Hall on Knickerbocker Ave. The outpouring of support for this event from the many clubs and businesses who participated, inspired the idea for a parade celebrating German culture to be held annually in New York City.

In 1957, the first official German-American Steuben Parade was held in Yorkville, known then as Germantown. The Parade marched up Fifth Ave., turning on 86th St, and crossed down to Second Ave. to cheering crowds and applause. Once the heart of Little Germany, 86th Street was affectionately called the “German Boulevard.” It hosted many German shops, konditoreis, biergartens, vereins, theaters, restaurants, newspapers, and dance halls.

Today, the Parade continues to march up Fifth Avenue to 86th Street, led by cadets representing the German Language Club of the Military Academy of West Point, founded by General von Steuben himself. The three-hour Parade is filled with German groups wearing their traditional costumes, spectacular floats, marching bands, dancers, clubs, and organizations from across the United States, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and Canada. Miss German-America and her court are crowned every May, leading the Parade down Fifth Avenue after serving as young cultural ambassadors to events throughout the year across the Tri-State Area. Every year, the Parade is led by a Grand Marshal, who is chosen through his or her reputation and contributions to the German-American community. Past Grand Marshals have included distinguished German-Americans, as well as German citizens with a close relationship to our country. To this day, the Steuben Parade is still considered one of the most colorful Parades in New York, thanks to our dynamic floats, representation, and colorful cultural displays.
Klaus Wowereit is a German politician who served as the Mayor of Berlin for 13.5 years. During that time, Berlin advanced to become one the world’s most popular capitals.

After graduating from high school in 1973, Herr Wowereit studied Law at the Free University in Berlin and graduated in 1981. In 1972, at the age of 18, he joined the Social Democratic Party and Chancellor Willy Brandt was his political role model. The Fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989 accomplished Chancellor Brandt’s vision of German reunification. The peaceful revolution of German citizens in 1989, the Fall of the Wall and German reunification were crucial events in Wowereit’s political career.

Wowereit was actively involved in the local affairs of Tempelhof, his home borough in Berlin, and was elected the youngest local counselor in 1984. Winning several re-elections, Wowereit was in charge of the schools and cultural affairs of his district. In 1995, he was elected to the Regional Parliament of Berlin and in 1999, he was elected chair of his parliamentary group.

Klaus Wowereit won Berlin’s Mayoral election on June 16, 2001. The quote “I’m gay and that is a good thing” from his campaign speech became known worldwide. Wowereit realized the potential of the local creative industry for Berlin’s future. He coined the slogan “poor but sexy” that attracted many artists from all over the world. Today, Berlin is the place to be!

During the 40 years of his political career, Klaus Wowereit has remained committed to the cause of German-American friendship. The cooperation between the Americans and the Allies, who together worked hard to ensure West Berlin’s survival during the Berlin Blockade was always paramount to him.

He will always remember the visit of President John F. Kennedy in 1963, whose speech will never be forgotten as a strong symbol of solidarity. In 2013, he welcomed President Barack Obama to the city at the Brandenburg Gate.
Contessa Brewer was born on March 16, 1974. She is a nationally recognized Emmy award-winning television news anchor and the host of MSNBC’s primetime series “Caught on Camera.”

Brewer was born in Parsonsfield, Maine and graduated from Sacopee Valley High School in Hiram, Maine in 1992. She graduated magna cum laude from Syracuse University’s Newhouse School of Public Communications with a B.S. in Broadcast Journalism in 1996, as well as a Certificate of Contemporary Europe following her political studies in Strasbourg, France.

Contessa Brewer joined MSNBC in September 2003 after working for WTMJ-TV in Milwaukee, Wisconsin as a weekend anchor and general assignment reporter. She also worked for KMIR-TV in Palm Springs, California from 1997 to 1999 and KSNV-TV in Reno, Nevada. In the spring of 2005, she served briefly as a news reader on the “Imus in the Morning” radio show, which was syndicated nationally. She later appeared as the news reader on “Verdict with Dan Abrams” before its cancellation in 2008. She and Dan Abrams would discuss the “Winners and Losers” of the day, as well as reading responses from readers.

She hosted “MSNBC Live” weekdays at noon, until her departure on August 26, 2011, when she announced at the conclusion of her regular anchoring hour on MSNBC that she would no longer be serving as an anchor for the network. Brewer would continue hosting “Caught on Camera” and filing reports for NBC news. In March 2012, Contessa Brewer began doing fill-in anchor work for WNBC Channel 4 in New York City, mostly on weekends, and became the anchor of “Weekend TODAY in NY” until her departure earlier this year. She is currently an anchor for network news, currently seen on CBSN, host for the MSNBC weekend program “Caught on Camera”, and freelance reporter for the “CBS Evening News.”

Contessa traces her German heritage way back to Brandenburg and Oldenburg. She is also married into a family who arrived in the United States from Baden Baden and Berlin. She and her husband reside in NYC, have twin toddler sons, and a “dog”ter: a Dachshund named Olive.
John Ratzenberger is a multi-Emmy nominated actor and accomplished screenwriter, director, producer and author who may be best known for playing mail carrier Cliff Clavin on the long-running NBC sitcom “Cheers.” Prior to creating his character on Cheers, John lived overseas for 10 years and worked as a carpenter, archery instructor and deck hand on a fishing boat. He produced and starred in the Travel Channel series “Made in America” which highlighted U.S. made goods and workers. He is passionate about how important it is for this country to recognize the need for, and provide the training to produce, skilled laborers.

With “Made in America,” John established a television precedent and led the way for a new series of Dirty Jobs, Deadliest Catch and Ice Road Truckers to celebrate the work ethic that built America. He co-authored A Common Man’s Salute to an Uncommon Country published by Time Warner.

Along with work in feature films, from major studio blockbusters like Superman and Star Wars: Episode V –The Empire Strikes Back to independent films like the recent drama The Woodcarver, animation has been a natural home to his versatile vocal talents. Ratzenberger is the only actor to participate in every Pixar film, voicing the iconic characters of Mack the Truck and Hamm the Piggy Bank. Due to John’s volume of film work, he is listed as the 6th most successful actor of all time in terms of box office receipts.

Ratzenberger is currently in pre-production on a new Television Series with the purpose of awakening Americansto the shortage of skilled workers that threatens our country as a whole. It will be a show about everything highlighting America, its products, workers and citizens. Born in Bridgeport, Connecticut, he attended St. Ann’s School in Bridgeport and Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut. In 1971, he moved to London, and began his career in the performing arts while working as a carpenter. John is also the developer and founder of ECOPACK, a biodegradable shipping material that replaces Styrofoam and is now used world wide.
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