

## Long Island Now

# Franklin Square German festival turns 129

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In search of her favorite German foods -- smoked eels and potato pancakes -- Janet Stuhrcke, 49, of Roxbury, Conn., knew attending the 129th German American Festival at Plattduetsche Park in Franklin Square was the perfect choice.

“My grandfather Otto Stuhrcke came to the festival every year and always brought me back smoked eels and potato pancakes. They were delicious,” Stuhrcke said.

The event was hosted by Plattduetsche Volksfest Vereen (PVV), an organization established in 1875 in the New York/New Jersey area that serves to preserve the German heritage handed down through generations with its traditions and customs.

Stuhrcke also took the opportunity to view her grandfather’s name engraved on the plaque inside the Plattduetsche Park restaurant. He was the president of the PVV from 1969 to 1970.

With more than 1,000 in attendance, individuals danced and listened to live German music while tasting German specialties such as German butter cake, bratwurst and potato pancakes.

Arthur Albro, of Garden City, admitted his most enjoyable part of the festival was drinking the beer.

“I love the music and the dancing but the beer is the best,” Albro said.

PVV chairman Heinz Buck, 77, of Westbury has been attending the festival since he was 15 years old and was elated to participate in the fun-filled activities.

“There is so much to do. We have delicious food, the beer garden where we drink and socialize, vendors selling German merchandise, games and live music,” Buck said. “This is a great way to come together and have a good time.”

According to Buck, the German American Festival began when a group of German immigrants coming together and deciding they wanted a festival similar to the festivals they attended in Germany.

Brigitte Mathies, of Babylon was elated to sit at a table and eat bratkartoffeln (home fries) and eggs while listening to the German music. “I am having such a great time. This festival is the best festival,” Mathies said.

Alma Weber, of Hempstead, was thrilled to gather and reminisce with friends about their childhood in Germany.

“Being here feels like home to me because I get to speak the German language and eat the wonderful food,” Weber said.

Holger Neumann, of Farmingdale, agreed.

“I love it here. I was born in Berlin and they have so much here that I had back home. It brings back a lot of memories,” Neumann said.

*For more information, visit [www.volksfest.org](http://www.volksfest.org).*

*Above: Madeline Bauer has fun with a German cutout board at the 129th German American Festival in Franklin Square. (July 15, 2012)*