

## Long Island Now

# At German Christmas fair, traditional food and crafts

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Ann Harmeling, 73, of Commack, has organized the Plattduetsche Park Restaurant in Franklin Square since it started in 1997. She says she looks forward to it every year.

"It has grown quite a bit," and especially this year thanks to the sunny skies and warm weather, she said Saturday. Several thousand people are expected to attend by the time it ends at 4 p.m. Sunday.

The fair, which is being held in the 20-acre beer garden behind the German restaurant, features authentic German food, beverages and crafts. That includes homemade beer, wine, frankfurters, imported German bread and chocolates.

Vendors are also selling scarves, bird houses, wreaths and Christmas ornaments -- some made from sea shells and sea urchins, among other products.

"We work so hard all year," said Ursula Soebke, 78, a volunteer from West Hempstead. "We made all the greens. It's all our labor and we put it together."

Soebke said all the money raised will be used to maintain the restaurant, which more than 20 German clubs call their headquarters. During the summer, park becomes a beer garden that features music performances every Friday.

"I've been coming here since I was a little boy," said Matt Buck, the restaurant's general manager for the past several years. "My grandparents were members."