

## **BACKGROUND PAPER FOR 2009**

***“Embrace our Bavarian Heritage!”***  
***“Umarmen unser Bayrisches Erbe!”***

### **Mount Angel’s 44<sup>th</sup> Oktoberfest**

One of the longest standing, best-loved folk festivals in the Northwest, celebrates its 44<sup>th</sup> anniversary from September 17 through September 20, 2009. The Mount Angel Oktoberfest began as a traditional fall festival to celebrate the bounty of the earth and the goodness of creation. The Oktoberfest tradition is still going strong, carrying with it the quality, warmth and fun of a community effort unparalleled in the Northwest. Oktoberfest kicks off with a traditional German Webentanz (May pole dance) performed by Mount Angel school children at noon on the second Thursday after Labor Day and continues through Sunday.

Oregon's oldest and longest running Oktoberfest began in 1966, following a tradition of over 125 years of harvest festivals under various names and formats. The community founded by German pioneers in 1867, with its surrounding agricultural countryside bears a striking resemblance to rural Bavaria, making an Oktoberfest a natural choice.

The Oktoberfest format was an immediate success, attracting 39,000 people in 1966 its first year. Since then, the festival has grown every year, with average attendance now topping 350,000. The festival is organized and run by volunteers. It is the largest, all volunteer led event in the Northwest. It is dedicated to providing a quality, reasonably priced family celebration, which raises funds for deserving, non-profit organizations in Mount Angel and the surrounding communities.

Since it began 43 years ago, Oktoberfest has donated well over two million dollars to schools, churches, civic organizations, youth activities, senior services, hospitals, and a score of other worthwhile causes. This does not include the money earned by the fifty-four food booths, sponsored by civic and non-profit organizations. Last year they

grossed \$661,000.00. For many of these groups, Oktoberfest is their major fund raising activity of the year.

Throughout the years, Mount Angel's Oktoberfest has offered traditional Bavarian food, fun and entertainment for the whole family. The 2009 Oktoberfest features fifty food booths, a large arts and crafts show and a whole lot more.

For entertainment, the festival offers Friday and Saturday night street dances, a traditional Biergarten, family Weingarten, interactive Alpinegarten, concerts in St. Mary Parish Church and in the Mount Angel Abbey Church, and an all-free kindergarten. Highlights of the 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Oktoberfest include the "Original Donaumusikanten," a world class Bavarian band, flown directly from Germany and sponsored by Lufthansa, the official airline of Oktoberfest. The German band plays daily in the Weingarten. The Oktoberfest Weingarten captures the ambiance of the great wine festivals along the Rhine River. It is noted for wonderful food, select wines from Germany and the Northwest, Spaten, Franziskaner, Beck's and Paulaner German beers and the fine beers from Budweiser and Oregon's own Widmer Brothers Brewing Company, Deschutes Brewing Company and others, plus superb family entertainment. In addition to the Donaumusikanten, you will meet here the Z Musikmakers Family Band from Mount Angel, the Happy Swiss Yodeler Band, Master Yodeler Kerry Christiansen and the Gordanairs European Musik from Canada,

The family Alpinegarten features lively interactive entertainment with a wide variety of alpine folk music in a huge *Festhalle* (festival hall), reminiscent of a Bavarian village *folkfest*. Entertaining in the Alpinegarten features the Saltzburger Echo Band. This versatile band brings the Alps to Mount Angel, playing "Old World" folk and traditional music from Germany, Austria and Switzerland. They recently returned from a successful European tour. They amaze audiences with their twelve-foot alpenhorns, Swiss cowbells and harmony yodeling. Other featured entertainers include the Oregon Polka Beats, the Al Gruber Bavarian Dance and Show Band and accordionist Paul Smith with friends. The Alpinegarten features famous Spaten, Paulaner, Erdinger and Franziskaner beers from Munich, Pilsner Urquell from Bohemia plus America's number one selling Hefeweizen from Widmer Brothers Brewing Company of Portland and Deschutes Mirror Pond Ale. The McMinnville Knights of Columbus operate the Gourmet Coffee Shoppe and Deli in the Alpinegarten with the help of Boyds Coffee Company.

The Biergarten features Die Schlauberger's, America's #1 German Band along with the Polkatones, the Country Dutchmen, the Oregon Polka Beats and others. This

adult only venue is famous for lots of Oom Pap Pah, great dancing and singing, good food and, Beck's German beer, premium Budweiser, Bud Light, Widmer Hefe Weizen and Oktoberfest beers.

Our own village band, the 60 member strong Marion County Citizens Band, plays at the opening ceremonies and every day from the bandstand. The Gordanairs, a German-Canadian band from Vancouver, BC, play and perform fabulous alpine folk songs and dances each afternoon at the bandstand. Other featured bandstand performers include the Alpine Echoes band and Tirolean Dancers, Master Yodeler Kerry Christiansen, and the Portland Liederkreis. On Friday and Saturday evenings, the Country Dutchmen play for the popular all-free street dances. The Mount Angel school children perform their Webentanz (May pole dance) and other Alpine folk dances daily at noon in front of the bandstand.

Free concerts are presented each day in the stunningly restored St. Mary Parish Church. Musical groups in the church include the Festival Chorale Oregon, HarpSong with Karen Almquist and Jennifer Grady, the German Liederkreis Singing Club from Portland and more. This entertainment is made possible by a generous grant from Northwest Natural, the regions supplier of natural gas for home and industry.

The Oktoberfest Kindergarten is filled with delightful free entertainment for young and old alike. It features a 4-H barnyard, pony rings, interactive bouncing amusements, climbing walls and other physical activities, a toddler zone for the very young, plus delicious homemade goodies from the booth sponsored by the Doernbecher Children's Hospital from Portland. The Kindergarten Pavilion presents Arthur Athsma's Magic Comedy Show, Juggle Mania and Family Fun Follies. Other talented entertainers face painters and Andreas, our organ grinder demonstrate their skills in the yard. The real thriller in the Kindergarten is the famous Weiner Dog Race. This is a great place to spend some quality time with the kids.

The *Folksbühne* (peoples' stages) are covered areas where volunteer musicians gather each day to entertain the crowds and themselves with fabulous alpine folk music.

The *Fruchtsaeule* is a traditional harvest monument expressing our thanks to the Creator for the bounty of the harvest. It is constructed of seeds, fresh fruits, nuts and vegetables mostly grown in and about the village. It is located in the center of the festival area and displays the annual festival theme. It is a great place to meet and gather up your family and friends.

The festival offers softball, golf, track and volleyball tournaments, a 10-kilometer fun run and 5-kilometer run/walk. The fun begins on Saturday at 9 AM and starts at Humpert Park

The Cruz-n Car Show on Saturday and Sunday, actually two shows in one, features 100 vehicles on Saturday and a whole new group of 100 vehicles on Sunday. Thirty awards are presented each day. The award winners from Saturday will be back on Sunday and on display in our 'Winners Circle.'

No trip to Mount Angel is complete without a visit to the century old Benedictine Sisters' Queen of Angels Monastery and to Mount Angel Abbey. Busses leave from near the bandstand every half-hour to the abbey, from 11 AM to 5 PM on Saturday and Sunday. Be sure to see the two museums, bookstore gift shop, and the library with its display of rare books and the abbey church. The abbey presents free organ concerts in the church, every hour from noon until 5 PM on Saturday and Sunday. The Benedictine Sisters offer daily self-guided tours of their monastery grounds, an icon exhibit and operate a charming gift shop with many objects hand-crafted by the nuns.

The diversity of events scheduled and the uniqueness of Mount Angel and its surrounding countryside promises something to do and see for everyone. You will not find any better food, entertainment, or dancing in the Northwest. Gather family and friends together to ***Embrace our Bavarian Heritage*** at Oktoberfest 2009 from September 17 through 20.

***Oktoberfest in one form or another is celebrated in more than 3,000 communities worldwide. German Life Magazine of LaVale, Maryland, in 1999, selected the Mount Angel Oktoberfest as one of the ten best German – American celebrations in all of North America. The only festival so selected in the Pacific Northwest.***

***The American Bus Association of Washington, DC, included the Mount Angel Oktoberfest in its list of the 100 Best Events in North America for 1999 and 2000.***

***USA Today included the Mount Angel Oktoberfest in their listing of the 10 best places in the world to say "Prosit at Oktoberfest." One German newspaper rated Oktoberfest in Mount Angel as one of the twelve best Oktoberfest held outside of Germany.***

***The Leisure Group Travel Magazine listed the Mount Angel Oktoberfest as one of the TOP 50 FESTIVALS & EVENTS in North America for 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005 & 2007.***

***Arthur Frommer's Budget Travel Magazine 2002 included Mount Angel Oktoberfest in a listing of festivals in North America "that rock the house, not the wallet."***

***The Salem Convention and Visitors Association presented the Mount Angel Oktoberfest with the 2002 Regional Event of the Year Award.***

***The Federal Republic of Germany recognized the Mount Angel Oktoberfest with its prestigious Friendship Award in 2003 for its endeavors in fostering friendship between Germany and the United States.***

***The Events Media Network from Camden, New Jersey in conjunction with the Weather Channel and Travel Magazine has selected the Mount Angel Oktoberfest as a Top 100 Event for 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008 .***

***Featured on the GLOBE TREKKER Northwest Show 2004.***

***Mount Angel Oktoberfest is the recipient of the Oregon Festival and Event Associations Ovation Award 2006 as the Best Festival or Event in Oregon.***

***The German World Magazine, published in Los Angeles, California, in July 2007, selected the Mount Angel Oktoberfest as one of the 10 Best Oktoberfests in the world.***

***The Mid Willamette Valley Council of Governments awarded Mount Angel Oktoberfest its Project Partnership Award for Oktoberfest 2007.***

***Mount Angel Oktoberfest is the recipient of the Oregon Festival and Event Associations Ovation Award 2008 as the Best Philanthropic Event in Oregon.***

***Four hundred thousand votes were cast in the Statesman Journal's 2009 search for the Best of the Mid Valley. Oktoberfest in Mount Angel was voted Best Annual Event, Best Family Attraction, Best Free Activity, Best Place to Dance, Best Live Music and Best Place to Take Out-of-Town Guests. This was a clean sweep of all six entertainment categories for which the festival was nominated.***