

Our Friends

Don Tolzmann

Today, we feature the historian Dr. Don Heinrich Tolzman of Cincinnati, Ohio.

Born in Minnesota, his family immigrated from Pomerania by way of Hamburg.

He has led the movement to create an awareness of German heritage in the Americas and promoted German-American Studies and the strengthening of relations between Germany and the United States, and recently retired as Curator of the German-Americana Collection and Director of the German-American Studies Program at the University of Cincinnati.

As President of the Society for the German-American Studies he called for the celebration of the German settlement in America at Germantown, Pennsylvania, and in 1987 led the national campaign to establish October 6th as national German-American Day, earning him the title of "Father of German-American Day".

Tolzmann writes for many publications and serves as Book Review Editor of *German Life*. In the fall of 2008, his collection of essays entitled "German Americana" will be published.

Actively involved in German-American relations, he serves on the boards of many regional and national German-American organizations and is currently President of the German-American Citizens League of Greater Cincinnati and Curator of the German Heritage Museum of Cincinnati.

Together with friend and colleague Dr. Joachim Reppmann, he helped organize an information booth for the BallinStadt museum at the 2008 Oktoberfest Zinzinnati.



Don Tolzmann with Ronald Reagan at the proclamation of the German American Day in 1987

Atlantik Brücke e.V.: "Young Leaders" in the BallinStadt

The non-profit association Atlantik-Brücke was founded in 1952 by leading Hamburg citizens with the goal of building a bridge between post-war Germany and the victorious power the USA. The goal was to make a contribution to

Brandström House in Hamburg. These so-called "Young Leaders" met under the motto "Signal from Hamburg." Along with the honorary chairman of the Atlantik Brücke e.V. Dr. h.c. Walter Leisler Kiep, representatives of the Deutsche

they went on a boat trip through the harbor which brought them directly to the emigration museum BallinStadt – Port of Dreams. Both Dr. Beate Lindemann, associate director of the Atlantik Brücke, and Leisler Kiep were highly impressed



normalizing and solidifying relationships between the two nations. Today, efforts at achieving a better mutual understanding are still the focal point of the association.

In this context, the Atlantik Brücke e.V. invited around 60 young executives from the U.S. and Germany to attend a meeting on August 24-29 in the Elsa

Bank AG, Airbus Deutschland and Hapag Lloyd, as well as Dr. Kori Schake, Senior Foreign Policy Advisor to Republican presidential nominee John McCain, held talks on transatlantic topics.

A sightseeing tour through Hamburg was also on the program. After the group had seen the latest developments in the Hafencity,

by the museum and expressed their willingness to spread awareness of the BallinStadt in Germany and in the United States. Many of the "Young Leaders" took advantage of the opportunity to search old ship's registers for their forefathers.

O`zapft is`: Yogi Reppmann and Don Tolzmann at the Oktoberfest in Cincinnati

From the Running of the Wieners to the Beer Stein Races, nothing celebrates the German holiday of Oktoberfest quite like America's Oktoberfest Zinzinnati.

The Oktoberfest Zinzinnati is the largest Oktoberfest celebration in America, and the second largest in the world outside of Munich. Every year the party, which spreads over six blocks on Fifth Street in downtown Cincinnati, draws half a million people to Cincinnati to celebrate the German heritage of the town.

This year, Yogi Reppmann and Don Tolzmann were there on behalf of

the BallinStadt. Yogi Reppmann, as former president of the American/Schleswig-Holstein Heritage Society (ASHHS) and Don Tolzmann, as the "Father of the German-American Day," were ideal sources on the subject of "heritage." In addition to questions on the BallinStadt and Hamburg's immigration records, the city of Hamburg and its many sight-

seeing attractions were high on the visitors' interest list.



Don Tolzmann at the Oktoberfest in Cincinnati