

The German Karneval (Carnival) Tradition!

(And how it is celebrated by the Sportsclub in Richmond?)

German **Carnival** (German: *Karneval*) is a carnival that takes place every year in Cologne, Mainz, Duesseldorf, Aachen and in many other German Cities.

Traditionally, the "fifth season" (carnival season) is declared open at 11 minutes past 11 on the 11th of the 11th month, November. The Carnival spirit is then temporarily suspended during the Advent and Christmas period, and picks up again in earnest after 6 January (Biblical Magi) in the New Year. The time of merrymaking in the streets is officially declared open at downtown square Alter Markt in Cologne on the Thursday before the beginning of Lent. Street carnival, a week-long street festival, also called "the crazy days", takes place between Fat Thursday (*Weiberfastnacht*) and Ash Wednesday (*Aschermittwoch*). The highlight of carnival is Rose Monday (*Rosenmontag*), two days before Ash Wednesday. All through these days, Cologne folks go out masqueraded.

During the Karneval Season, each city selects a figure head to lead the festivities. In Cologne it is the *Dreigestirn* or (triumvirate) which consists of three people, the *Jungfrau*, *Prinz*, and *Bauer* (maiden, prince and peasant respectively), who in some cases pay a large sum of money for the privileges. The carnival prince is deemed to be the highest representative of the festivities, leading the main parades throughout the week. Traditionally, the *Jungfrau* ("maiden") is always portrayed by a man dressed as a female. As an entity, the trio has existed since 1883. In earlier times these were individual characters, but all three entered the Cologne carnival in the 1820s.

The *prince*, also called "*Seine Tollitat*" (His Madness), is the most important personage of the Cologne carnival. His float is the final one in the large parade on Shrove Monday. A scepter in the right hand, and a slapstick in the left one. The slapstick is known as a general symbol of the fool, but specifically it is a fertility symbol and the symbol of the princely reign over his fool people during carnival.

In some cities the festivities are headed by only a Prince, in other cities by a Prince and Princess.

Events:

During the Karneval season, many events such as the Rose Monday Parade in Cologne and other cities, indoor stand up comedy entertainment shows and Karneval Balls are scheduled up to Ash Wednesday, when the season ends. In the regions where Carneval is celebrated, most guest houses and pubs will be overfilled with people celebrating.

Events in Richmond:

The German Sprotsclub (DSC) schedules two annual Karneval Events each year, the Kappenfest,

which features a mix of comedy and dance, and includes a raffle and prizes for the craziest hats. At this event the Prince and Princess for the season will be introduced.

During the final week of the Karneval season a similar event, the Karneval Ball is scheduled, which features German and American Comedy, as well as a band that plays traditional Karneval music for your dancing pleasure. Prizes will be awarded for the nicest costumes. At both events, the attendees will be entertained by a party band. The entertainment committee of the Sportsclub tries hard to keep up these longstanding traditions.

If you want to participate in this traditional madness we encourage you to come to the Karneval ball which has been scheduled for February 23 from 5:00pm to 11 pm, at the Varina American Legion.