

Tent camping in the heat of an early St. Louis summer; does this sound like fun to you? Well it was more than fun, it was a blast that participants can't wait to repeat next year. Participants from four Donauschwaben clubs around the mid-west were treated to new friends, great sight-seeing adventures, singing, dancing, and intriguing cultural experiences and FUN, FUN, FUN!

With arrival on Thursday, the time was spent getting to know everyone. On Friday we participated in "Meet me in St. Louis" day by venturing to the St. Louis Arch. We had a spectacular lunch at the St. Louis clubhouse, which featured toasted ravioli, a St. Louis creation. The afternoon was spent at Grant's Farm, which is an Anheuser-Busch property. Back at the campsite dinner included St. Louis Bar-B-Que ribs and frozen custard for dinner. We danced the night away to a rock and roll band.

Our culture and heritage were the key points for Saturday. Each and every participant had their hand in making goulash and spaetzle. There was an inspiring presentation on the importance of Kirchweihfest by St. Louis' cultural representative Joseph Simon, and Elizabeth Walters' passionate presentation about her childhood in Yugoslavia and her book Barefoot in the Rubble. Everyone learned 2 dances, spent time talking, then enjoyed our efforts from the kitchen and then danced the night away.

Thank goodness for the Youth leaders in St. Louis and the Donauschwabische Stiftung U.S.A. Without their foresight in the planning and financing of this endeavor, this project would never have occurred. The memories and commitment of our Jugend would not continue to grow at the rapid rate they do, and their activity and involvement would not be there. A HUGE thank-you to everyone involved.

May this type of friendship and learning continue for our Jugend for years to come.
**excerpts taken from Joey Ludwig, Cincinnati Jugendgruppe

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