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Oktoberfest brings local community together for charity fundraiser

Happy Birthday Chiang Mai Mail

Oktoberfest brings local community together for charity fundraiser

Beer, brats, dirndls, lederhosen, and paper cannons open the traditional German festival with a bang

Elfi Seitz

The first authentic Oktoberfest of its kind in Chiang Mai took place on October 17 at the Rati Lanna Hotel. Organized by the welfare organization, Thailandfriends, under the leadership of Dirk Weeber-Arayatumsopon and his partner Wuttipong Arayatumsopon in cooperation with their non-tiering team.



Dirk Weber-Arayatumsopon (left) welcomes John Valentine, the trainer of 'Flipper' and 'Kill bill' to the festivities.

Dr. Chao Duangduan na Chiengmai, the last Lanna princess, was welcomed to the hotel by representatives of Thailandfriends and the vice governor of Chiang Mai, Chumporn Saengmanee and his

lovely wife, Wanarin Saengmanee.

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Updated every Tuesday
by Saichon Paewsoongnern

More than 350 tickets were sold, making this event quite a success for which Mr Weeber-Arayatumsopon, thanked his guests in his welcoming speech. The guests of honour, Princess Chao Yai, as she prefers to be called, Deputy Governor Chumporn Saengmanee, and the famous Thai television-chef Yingsak Jonglertjesadawong were welcomed on stage by MC Miss. Bow, the radio D.J. as well as from Dirk and Wuttipong. After speeches from the three guests of honour, in which they praised the dedication of Thailandfriends in helping needy people and children, the Oktoberfest was officially opened with a bang, literally, as a paper cannon shot hundreds of paper balls into the air.



This stunning fraulein shows the men how to drink a yard of ale.

The many guests enjoyed beer, wine and other drinks, strolled around the many food stalls featuring ham, roasted pork leg, sausages and other traditional Oktoberfest fare including genuine Wies'n pretzels. Entertainment was on hand for all attendees, strong men and women tried to hammer big nails

into woodblocks in just a few blows. After more than half an hour the winner was Emil of Frankenthal of Germany. Others tested their luck at a beer drinking contest. A tricky one since the beer was served in a "Yard of Ale", which contestants had to empty as quickly as possible. Not easy with almost 2 ½ litres of beer! Pongkrit Jitpaironth, a son of a friend of Princess Soamsawali showed the most skill, and the most thirst, won the drinking contest and still managed to walk in a straight line.

Dr. Chao Duangduan na Chiangmai is greeted by Margaret Bhadungzong (left)



and Elfi Seitz (right) at the fair grounds.

Only two ladies competed for the most original Bavarian dress, the dirndl. The jury had to choose between Beate Heger, a Bavarian woman who wore an original Bavarian dress and Palacha



Kosayothin from Thailand, who won three days in a hotel in Krabi. The Limbo contest was won by the very limber Wiwon Thammarit who managed to dance under a bar only 40 cm high. The Karaoke contest was won by Tananan Wilson from Chiang Mai. The shows featured traditional Bavarian entertainment, like the original wood cutter dance with Schuhplatter, performed by the staff of Dirk's Podologie Center, the Center team performed several more traditional dances as well.



Beate Heger (left) and Elfi Seitz (centre) are happy to see Palacha Kosayothin win the contest for best dirndl.

Magician Nuttapong Rungjang performed in a daring candlelight act, the fire dancer, Mr. Pot, showed his skill on the stage and television chef Dr. Yingsak produced a pork leg salad a la Thailand which Heiko Schmidt won at the auction.

Fashion King donated a genuine silk suit to the auction, Dirk Weeber- Arayatumsopon sponsored a 12,500 Baht bottle of Chateau du Pape, and Oasis Spa gave away two body treatments. Many other great prizes were to be won at the raffle, from a mini-suite at the Royal Cliff in Pattaya, two nights at the Sai Kaew Beach Resort on Koh Samet, rooms at the Nova Platinum Hotel, the Hard Rock Hotel, and the Sheraton Hotel.

Pattaya Blatt and Chiang Mai Mail one year subscriptions were also auctioned off. The Oktoberfest ended with a fabulous fireworks display.

The proceeds, after costs, will go to the school for blind children in Chiang Mai and to the HIV-Aids project of Her Royal Highness, princess Soamsawali.

For now we only can say: 'See you next year at the Oktoberfest in Chiang Mai.



Wiwon Thammarit performing his extraordinary limbo rock.



Pongkrit Jitpairoth gulped down the yard of ale in record time.



Magician Nick Wiczinsky thrilled the kids, young and old.



Photos by Chip Olson, Peeradon Jaohom, Dirk Weeber-Arayatumsopon and Elfi Seitz