

Roll out the barrel and greet Oktoberfest

By HILLARY GAVAN Senior staff writer | Posted: Saturday, September 24, 2016 10:00 am

BELOIT — Pleasant weather, toe-tapping music and cold beer drew a hearty crowd to Beloit's downtown for the third annual Oktoberfest on Friday evening. While a few guests donned traditional German attire, those with the Downtown Beloit Association (DBA) were dressed as beer mugs and maids in an evening of brats and Lederhosen.

The festivities kicked off at 8 a.m. Friday with a sidewalk sales and German lunch. By dusk, the downtown was rockin' with live music and the occasional dancer. Wisconsin Distributors supplied the event with four or five popular beers, much to the crowd's delight.

Dave and Therese Oldenburg and Perry and Cindy Folts arrived to the event clad in German attire and toting beer steins. While the Foltses had purchased their authentic German outfits overseas, Therese Oldenburg and her husband opted for some festive T-shirts and home-grown hops adorning Therese's head.

The Oldenburgs and Foltses had been to Milwaukee's Oktoberfest the week before and were ready for round two of fun. The Oldenburgs said they came out to drink beer and would consider some polka dancing.

Chris Walsh was so excited about the event, she wore her wedding dress to it. Walsh explained how she had an Oktoberfest themed wedding last year and was happy to haul out her dress on Friday. A lover of all things German, Walsh fondly recalled studying abroad in Germany in her younger days. Her best friend from Germany ended up marrying her brother and having four kids with him. Because of Walsh's many German connections, she's traveled back and forth over the years where she purchased her purple dirndl.

Kris Jacobsen said she came to see a friend in the band. As she lives on Park Avenue, she said she was happy to be able to walk to the festivities in Beloit's downtown. After last year being so cold, she said she was thrilled with the pleasant weather. She had already enjoyed a beer and brat and was looking to do a little dancing with her 10-year-old daughter, Lauren Slatter.

Mastergear employees Marc Punte, of the Netherlands, and Joe Dodd, of the United Kingdom, were eager to introduce their UK friends Victoria Fish and Dean White to Oktoberfest in Beloit. Fish and White were staying in Beloit for a week and enjoying the pleasant weather.

"It's a lot warmer than back in the UK. We wouldn't be out in short sleeves," Dodd said.



Prost!

(From left): Dave and Therese Oldenburg and Cindy and Perry Folts enjoy the evening at Beloit Oktoberfest. The two couples went to Milwaukee's Oktoberfest last week and were glad they had another to attend in Beloit. The Foltses got their outfits during a trip to Germany.

DBA Executive Director Shauna El-Amin said the event had a good crowd after the past two years of chilly weather. Guests were pleased with the local bands and new games like Hammerschlagen, where guests put one hand behind their backs and attempted to hammer a nail into a stump.

The enthusiastic DBA volunteers didn't hesitate to pitch in, wear their beer mug suits or beer maid aprons as they mingled with the locals.

"We had 60 to 75 volunteers this year. That is amazing. Without our volunteers we couldn't do what we do," El-Amin said.