

## KARNEVALSBRÄUCHE

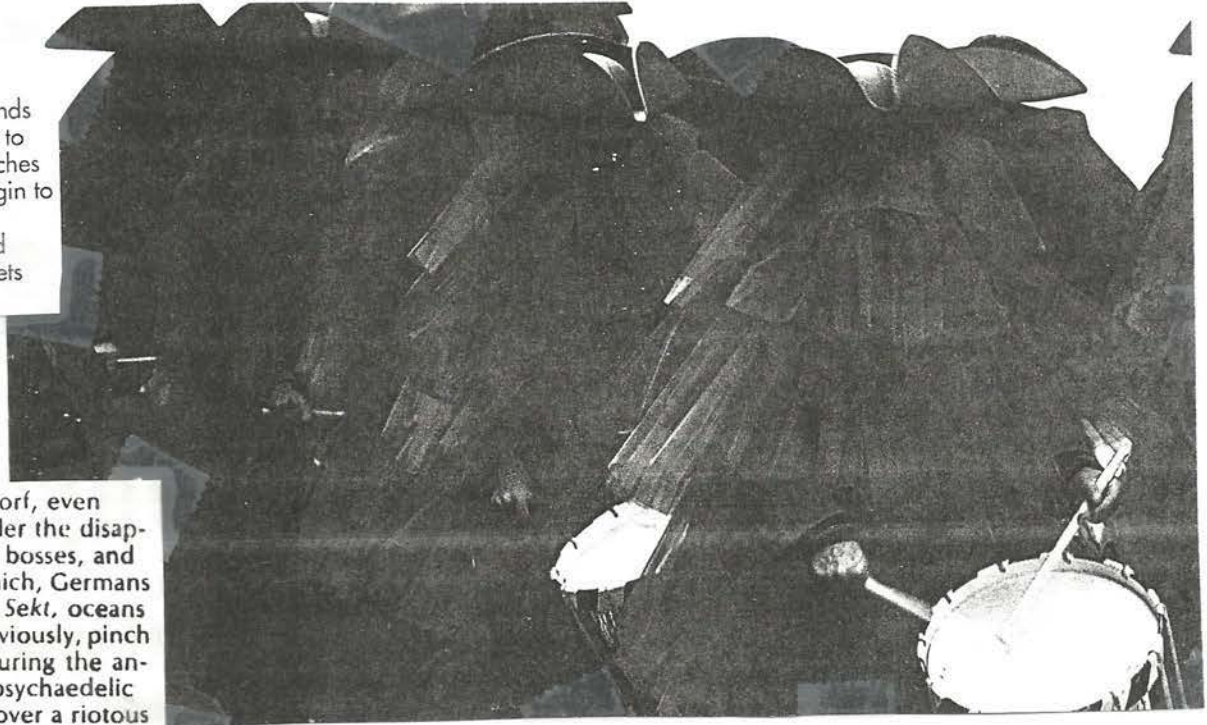
**Wie feiert man Karneval? heutige Bräuche  
(How is Carnival celebrated? / customs of today)**

**Umzüge und Züge (parades and processions)**

**Carnival Crazyness at Rose Monday Parades in Germany**

In Germany, the Rose Monday (Rosenmontag) processions - the highlight and culmination of the carnival week - are broadcast live on TV. The festival, which precedes the beginning of the pre-Easter fasting period of Lent, brings much of the predominantly Catholic west and south of Germany to a standstill in the six days running up to Ash Wednesday.

The main part of the Karneval procession are the marching bands that beat out rhythms for people to dance to. As the procession reaches the main square, the crowds begin to yell "Helau," or "Sweets." Then thousands of chocolate bars and candies are thrown into the streets for people to collect.



In Cologne, Mainz, Düsseldorf, even behind the Iron Curtain under the disapproving eyes of Communist bosses, and especially in boisterous Munich, Germans drown themselves in sweet Sekt, oceans of beer, ogle each other lasciviously, pinch bottoms and much more, during the annual Fasching revel. These psychaedelic high-brau, low-jinks climax over a riotous weekend just before midnight on Shrove Tuesday. Government offices close down tight with good reason — one ascerbic feature of the blast is a series of street parades highlighted by floats which display mocking, sarcastic comments on the quality of German political leadership over the past 12 months. Mainz usually has the longest of these prickly processions—close to 150 floats and 2500 slightly inebriated, uniformed musicians oompha-ing their way through streets packed with revellers dressed up as Mickey Mouse, astronauts, cowboys, acrobats — and sometimes (if a girl is shapely and the weather warm) as Eve without even a figleaf. Everyone is carrying a jug of something liquid, just in case there's a change in the weather and sudden fortification is needed, as it always is.

