

Martin Luther (der 10. November 1483—der 2. Februar 1546)

MARTIN LUTHERS HOCHZEITFEST  
(der 13. Juni 1525)

Reformation, Wittenberg is undertaking several costly restoration projects. The Castle Church, Castle Wittenberg, Arsenal Square and the Parish Church of St. Marien and Augusteum are all being refurbished.

In the 1500's, Luther's father supported his son's marriage, as did the famous Reformation painter from Wittenberg, Lucas Cranach. Having thought long and hard, Luther decided that "his marriage would please his father, rile the pope, cause the angels to laugh and the devils to weep." The result was the wedding on June 13, 1525 of a 42-year-old former monk and a 26-year-old former nun. By all accounts, it was a happy and affectionate union. Luther recorded that he loved waking up to see pigtails on the pillow next to him.

Several years after the reunification of Germany in October of 1990, Wittenberg officials gave the go-ahead to plan for a celebration of their town's most famous personage. The town today could be called "Martin Luther Central," and Luther's Wedding weekend is the highlight of the year for the residents.

One member of the 50-person *Wittenberger Stadtwache und wackeren Männern*, which leads the festive parade every year, says, "It's a big party, and we have many events to enjoy." Anna Lehmann, 24, a resident of Wittenberg, says she has been to the celebration for each of the last 20 years, and wouldn't miss it. She used to walk in the children's parade when she was younger, as did her twin sister, Paula. The two young women dance with a group on stage now, one of the numerous events that take place during the three-day extravaganza.

The expectation of the crowd reaches a crescendo early Saturday afternoon when the wedding parade kicks off from the Luther House at the Augustinian monastery,

where Luther lived, first as a monk and later as the owner with his family.

The parade route begins on Collegienstrasse, past the Marktplatz, up to the Castle Church, then loops back onto Coswiger Strasse and Jüdengasse. For a good seat, festival-goers start to locate a place to watch the parade well before the kickoff. The elongated route through town and back again allows the many thousands of spectators to view the parade up close.

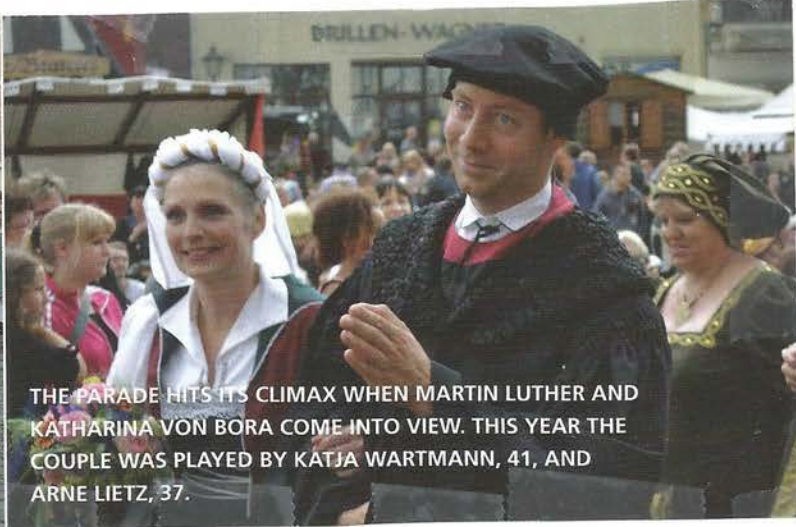
After the *Wittenberger Stadthauptmann* with their shiny armor and colorful suits pass, they are followed by the *Stadtwache Bretten*, another group of town guards from that city. Next up is the Wittenberg Mayor, councilman and guests, the Elector Court including such dignitaries as Frederick the Wise, Phillip Melanchthon, Luther's parents, preacher Johannes Bugenhagen who married the Luthers, and Lucas Cranach, the famous Reformation painter, among many others.

The town's lord mayor, Eckhard Neumann, calls the weekend event "the festival of festivals," because it features six separate activity venues including courtyards, streets, and small lanes of the city's Medieval center. Guests take part in a rich and varied slate of programs: for instance, in front of the Castle Church, where Luther nailed his theses, visitors find a Medieval market of artisans and minstrels offering crafts, arts and foods in the style of the 16th century. Artisans also offer woodcarving tents for young children who can hone their carving skills, as people did in earlier days.

Other artisans teach children to emboss leather bags that they can take home with them, while others demonstrate the use of spinning wheels, and even others instruct festival-goers in the fine art of using a bow and arrow.



CHILDREN FORM ONE OF THE TWO PARADES DURING LUTHER'S WEDDING FESTIVAL; THE CHILDREN'S PARADE DEPARTS FROM WHERE THE FIRST PARADE BEGINS, COVERING THE SAME ROUTE.



THE PARADE HITS ITS CLIMAX WHEN MARTIN LUTHER AND KATHARINA VON BORA COME INTO VIEW. THIS YEAR THE COUPLE WAS PLAYED BY KATJA WARTMANN, 41, AND ARNE LIETZ, 37.