

The Runoff



The newsletter of the Cincinnati Malt Infusers Volume 7 Number 12 December 2002

The End of German Brewing History!

by Jeff Seeley

Oh how the mighty have fallen; the Oktoberfest beers of recent days goneby are now relegated to memory. The Germans have abandoned standards for their pinnacle potable, Oktoberfest, in the pursuit of a watered-down Bud-like lager. Traditions started by great Bavarian brewers like Gabriel Sedlmayr must now be upheld by North Americans.

I was properly introduced to the Bavarian beer by my friend and brewing guru Charlie Olchowski in 1990. Charlie set up a tasting of five freshly imported festbiers (Ayringer, Wurtzburger, Hacker-Pshorr, Paulaner, Spaten) and the U.S. New kids in town, Harpoon and Sam Adams (both Boston, MA). I'll never forget my first taste. The beers were big and malty, chewy and thick. It was like eating freshly baked bread -delicious AND good for you. I knew that this was a style of beer that I would aspire to brew if my talent ever grew to the stature of Olchowski's. While deliberating on the finer flavor points of the beers, Charlie expounded on the history of the

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About CMI

The Cincinnati Malt Infusers meet at 7:30 PM on the second Thursday of each month at Listermann Brewery Supply on Dana Ave, unless directed in this newsletter.

A year's membership in CMI costs \$15 per individual, \$20 per same-address couple. Dues may be mailed to the CMI Treasurer (Tom Pettinger) at 9526 Brehm Rd. Cincinnati, OH, 45252. Members receive *The Runoff*, the club's monthly newsletter, and may participate in a variety of club activities and make use of club resources.

Articles for the newsletter are encouraged from all members. They may be sent to Phil McDermott, the *Runoff* Editor, either by snail-mail (**7820 Austin Ridge Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45247**) or by Email philmac@cinci.rr.com. Hard copy and/or 3.5" disk (PC or Mac) are welcome.

Our club's web page can be found at: <http://hbd.org/cmi>

General email can be sent to us at Infuser@Earthlink.net.

The current CMI officers are:

President:

Jeff Graff; (513) 232-3012

Program Director/Past President

Jeff Seeley; (513) 231-6062

Public Relations Officer:

Secretary:

Rick Walters; (513) 661-2757

Treasurer:

Tom Pettinger; (513) 385-3433

Librarian:

Tim McPartlin; (513) 242-8715

Runoff Editor:

Phil McDermott; (513) 353-0972

Contents:

End of German Brewing History.	1
Club Notes.....	2
The Lite Free Philosophy.....	4
Club Notes.....	6
Arsenic in Beer.....	7

style and his relationship with another brewing great, the late Dr. George Fix. I listened intently as I savored every milliliter of the substantial amber lagers.

Fast forward to 2002... My favorite time of year has arrived; the leaves are yellowing, the nightly-lows are approaching lagering temperature, and Jeff Graff has blessed us by providing some Spaten and Hofbrau Festbiers! I raise my brow in suspicion as I pour a glass of pilsner-blond Hofbrau festbier into my bone-dry glass. "Color isn't everything," I tell myself (even though this is Cincinnati where color IS everything). I take a sip and can't believe it, "this is a helles, NOT A FEST" I exclaim (oops, did I really shout that? Why is Weaver now staring at me?). I quickly drain my glass (there's no dump bucket at hand), and reach for the Spaten knowing that the brewery which still honors Gabriel Sedlmayr on its label won't let me down. If I hurry I can wash away the too-delicate remnants of the Hofbrau 'fest' from my pallet.

Ahh, the color reassures me, the amber beer fills my mug and builds a tempting creamy white collar. I lift it to my nose and inhale a disappointingly subtle malt aroma. "Maybe its just too cold," I tell myself as I take a long deep draught. "What? What the **** is this ****?" I wonder, (oops now Weaver looks really annoyed). My disappointment knows no bounds; Spaten, the holdout among the Munich brewers, has fallen into the death spiral of diminishing quality in the pursuit of higher profits.

In just over ten short years my all-time favorite fest (Wurtzburger) has become a pilsner-wanna-be; Hofbrau's version is something that would appeal to Bud drinkers; and now Spaten has diluted its product so that it is a poor imitation of its former

self. Only Hacker-Pshorr and Paulaner continue to make a beer that resemble the delightfully chewy festbier of the 19th and 20th centuries.

With over 150 years of German brewing tradition lost, how are we supposed to connect with the past, in a way that allows modern drinkers to appreciate the complexity of a well-made Rheinheitsgebot beer? Homebrewers and American craft brewers will maintain the traditions that the industrial brewers of the US abandoned after prohibition and that the continental Europeans are now beginning to scrap - in pursuit of greater profit. Thanks to brewing authors like Dr. Fix, and Greg Noonan we have data that allows us to keep the traditional German practices and the wonderful autumnal beer alive. Hopefully in a decade or two more consumer-conscious German brewers will learn from the Americans how to make and market an excellent amber lager. Herr Sedlmayr must be rolling over in his grave.

Club Notes

Meeting Minutes

11-14-02

by Rick Walters

CMI monthly meeting notes for November 14, 2002.

President Jeff Graff called the meeting to order at 730pm. He briefly talked about the Columbus Brew Tour that was sponsored by the Bloatarians. The Pub stops and notable brews that were available or sampled were discussed. Also, a brief discussion was held about the Oktobersbest Competition, how smooth the operation went and the money

that was made. Sunday March 11, 2003 we will again participate in the St. Patrick's Day Parade that will begin around 1pm. More about this event will come later.

Jeff opened the floor for nominations for Officers for the next 2-years. After a brief discussion, nominations were closed. The ballots will be mailed out soon and also voting can be handled at the Christmas Party on Thursday December

12th which is being held at Jack Quinn's Irish Pub, 112 East 4th Street, Covington KY at 7:00pm, 859-491-6699. Come and enjoy the celebration. (And, Tim, remember, you can't bring any homebrew.)

The meeting was turned over to our Program Director, Jeff Seeley, to begin the much anticipated topic of Scottish Ale's. After Jeff did a very comprehensive review of this style, from gravity's, flavors, aromas, and bitterness to attenuation, body and residual sweetness, the real joy came from the tasting. A warning was made that these were high to very high alcohol beers and to be extremely careful about your level of consumption. Such names as Belhaven, Skull Splitter, Roberts the Bruce and McEwan's were sampled. What a treat!!! Thanks Jeff, what a wonderful style.

See you at the Christmas Party!!!

Club Elections

The following individuals have been nominated for Club Officers's. No one is running un-opposed. We tried to encourage more people to participate. (No this isn't the election for Hamilton County Sheriff, Simon Leis appears to hold that position for life.)

We will announce the winners officially at the Christmas Party. If you think you may be interested in running for a position next time (2yrs from now) by all means offer to

help the new officers in some capacity.

President: Angie Pettinger
Program Director: Mark Olding
Public Relations Officer: John Graf
Secretary: Rick Walters;
Treasurer: Tom Pettinger
Librarian: Tim McPartlin;
Runoff Editor: Phil McDermott;

Next Meeting:
Thursday, December 12 th,
7:00 pm
Christmas Party at
Jack Quinn's Irish Pub
Topic: To Eat, Drink and be Merry

Coming Next Month:
The Annual Year in
Pictures edition of the
Runoff.

The 'Lite Free' Philosophy

This article originally appeared in the Real Beer Notes for November. For everyone in the club that attended the Louisville Pub Crawl several years ago, they should remember Rich O's. They have recently opened their own microbrewery on the premises.

Today, the New Albanian Brewing Co. in Indiana began selling its beer. With that, opinionated publican Roger Baylor made it official that he is expanding the "Lite Free Zone" established in New Albany nearly nine years ago. He explained why in Publicanista!, an email newsletter he sends out semi-regularly.

The message is long, but we think worth taking the time to read, even if you don't agree with him. Wynkoop Brewing Co. (Denver, Colo.) owner John Hickenlooper, for instance, says he favors selling mainstream beers so everybody can make the choice they want. Here are Roger's views (passed on with his permission):

For those who are not yet aware, the arrival of house-brewed beers at Rich O's Public House and Sportstime Pizza signals the departure of American mass-market lagers and low-calorie "light" beers from Sportstime, and the completion of a crusade that began almost a decade ago.

There isn't a beer snob among us who hasn't experienced the dissonance that arises spontaneously when a brewpub patron is spotted drinking Budweiser or Miller Lite, usually straight from the bottle, while all around people are enjoying craft beers.

While it is lamentable that so many beer drinkers routinely settle for the lowest common denominator and choose to define themselves by reference to a mass-market product, and a generic one at that, it isn't only a case of people consciously or unconsciously bowing to the incessant and pervasive nature of modern mass marketing. It must be remembered that they are allowed to do so by the management of the brewpub in question.

Explanations for this incongruity on the part of management are many and seemingly varied, but quite frankly, most have at their foundation an implicit admission of cowardice on the part of ownership, further implying a lamentable unwillingness to trust the veracity of the beer being brewed on the premises.

By doing so, the establishment's reason for being is fundamentally contradicted.

Speaking philosophically and conceptually, a bottle of Miller Lite is the antithesis of a pint of house-brewed ale. The very existence of the house-brewed ale, and by extension of the brewpub that produces it, is predicated as a necessary reaction to the bottle of Miller Lite.

The bottle of Miller Lite symbolizes the mass-market "McWorld," in which the individual is subordinated to the system. Conversely, the pint of house-brewed ale celebrates the uniqueness to be found in every person and the joy of the differences to be discerned in pre-industrial commodities.

At this juncture, there will be readers who are unable to fathom the preceding. Some are irrevocably loyal to a certain brand, and

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no amount of persuasion will budge them from the certainty that McBeer, and McBeer alone, is the only beer in this huge and diverse world that can be allowed to touch their lips. While most of us find comfort in the idea that human beings are rational animals; others embrace irrationality as a non-negotiable article of faith, and there is nothing that can be said, and no alternative to be offered, that will alter their perceptions.

A far better argument on behalf of Miller Lite goes something like this: A licensed establishment enters into business in order to make a profit, and the light, mainstream beers are the biggest selling brands in the world. Furthermore, if the establishment is a restaurant and not just a bar, customers want to drink their favorite brands when they come in for their favorite meals.

I reiterate: What were these management people thinking when they made the decision to become a brewpub? To brew one's own beer and serve it on the premises is to stake out specific and specialized territory; one is proposing to jump far past Miller Lite in the same manner as a steak house is a more specific, specialized version of a hamburger joint. Besides, isn't it possible (and in fact, usually always the case) that the on-premise brewhouse can produce a mild, yellow-colored liquid for the flavor impaired?

I will concede that it takes patience and fortitude to navigate America's insipid sea of swill, and I know that neither Rome nor the Lite Free Zone was built in a day. Now that Sportstime Pizza and Rich O's Public House have added a brewing arm, the time has come to take the next logical step and provide New Albany with its first venue in which to enjoy the city's, the country's and

the world's finest beers without the taint of Anheuser-Busch and Miller.

On January 1, 1994, American low-calorie "light" lagers were banned from Rich O's Public House, and the prices of dubiously "full-flavored" mainstream lagers (Budweiser prime among them) were raised. The advent of the Lite Free Zone was momentous, but as most Rich O's patrons always grasped, it was a "zone" only, a foothold from which to wage war against the prevailingly "lightweight" mentality of Kentuckiana until such a time as it would be possible to extend the "good beer" mandate to the remainder of the building.

Consequently, we pursued a pragmatic strategy at Sportstime Pizza and continued to offer mainstream golden lagers and American low-calorie lagers. At the same time, we used Rich O's Public House and its Lite Free Zone as the rallying point for the revolution. The results of this gradualist approach became increasingly evident as the millennium arrived: Steadily declining sales of mainstream lagers and light beers at Sportstime Pizza accompanied by concurrently increasing sales of good beer.

With the new brewery approved for operation and the first batches of beer already brewed on premise, it's finally time to complete the process of transformation at Sportstime Pizza, which in its original incarnation (circa 1988) was the leading draft Budweiser account in all Floyd County. Now it will be the taproom and pizzeria fronting a brewpub dedicated to the revolution of good beer over mass-market swill.

When current stocks of Budweiser, Bud Light and Miller Lite are depleted, no more will be ordered. The New Albanian
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Brewing Company has brewed an authentic English Mild, a dark-colored, light-bodied and lightly hopped ale, to serve as the house "dark light" beer. For those customers demanding the familiar golden hue, we will offer Spaten Premium Lager, certainly the easiest drinking of German beers, at a reduced price of \$3.25 a 20-oz. pint. We have introduced Flying Dog Old Scratch Lager and Oaken Barrel Meridian Street Lager in 12-oz. Bottles at \$2.50, and lowered Samuel Adams Boston Lager to \$2.50. Lighter imports like Red Stripe and Warsteiner still are available, albeit at regular prices.

To drinkers of light beer, I say this: Try to remember what it was like when you were a baby (of course I do), and a quivering spoonful of Gerber's goo was lovingly offered in the vicinity of your mouth. Sure, it tasted good. It was easy going down, and it served the purpose - but c'mon, you knew even then that it was a passing stage, because you really were thinking about growing up someday and being big, and when you were big, you certainly wouldn't have to eat Gerber's any longer; there'd be steak! Chicken! Lasagna! Bacon! Even falafel (for the veggie crowd)!

It's the same with beer. Now it's time to grow up, to wean your long-suffering palate from the spoon-fed swill, and to become an adult beer drinker. Sugarcoating no longer is necessary: If you can't drink Spaten Premium Lager, you have no business drinking beer, here or elsewhere. It's as simple as that, and as a business, we'll sink or swim with that dictum in mind. Thank you for your support.

To learn more about New Albanian, visit <http://www.newalbanian.com>. You'll find a link there to Rich O's, where you may read more from Baylor.

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An archive of past issues is available at:

<http://www.realbeer.com/library/beerbreak>



Beer Fact: Sharing beer from a boot-shaped glass is a German tradition. As the glass is passed around, each drinker taps it to wish the previous and next drinkers good luck, takes a sip, and then passes along the glass. Soon air enters the boot's toe, causing the beer to gush out. The first drinker unable to control the flow of beer buys the next round.

We wish to thank the following sponsors for their generous support of our Oktoberfest Club Competition this year.

Watson Brothers Bistro

Sam Adams Brewery

The Barrel House Brewery

Rock Bottom Brewery

Jungle Jim's Super Market

The Party Source,

Listermann's Brewery Supply

The Dubliner

Nicholson's Tavern

The Cock and Bull Pub

Uncle Woodies

Mecklenberg Gardens,

Pessler Distributing

Briess Malting Company

Hop Union

Arsenic in Beer - A Historical Account

related by Kevin Ashley, Inert, Inept, Infuser

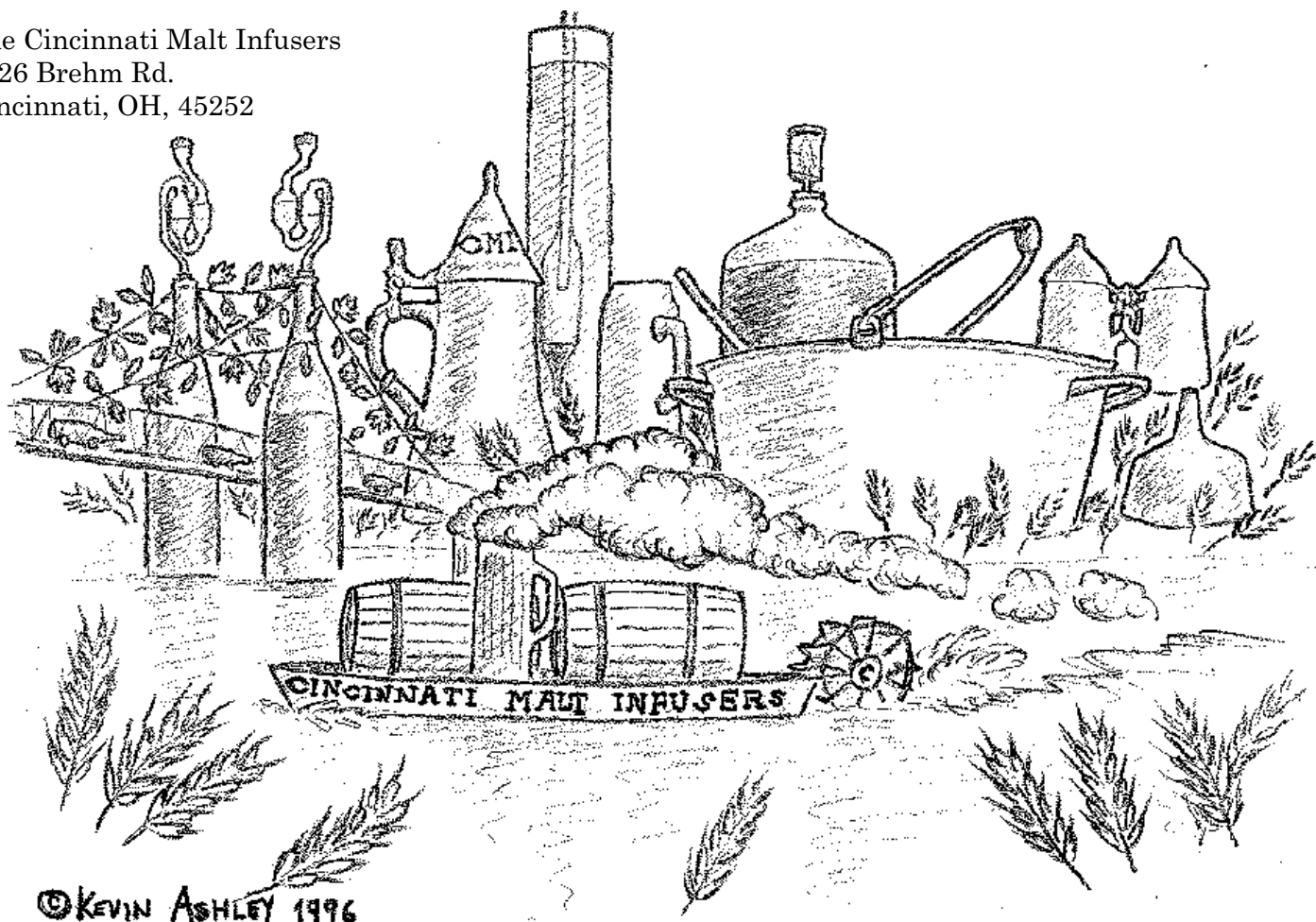
In 1900, six-thousand beer drinkers in Manchester England were poisoned by arsenic, of whom 70 died. Unbeknownst to anyone, the beer contained 15 parts per million of Arsenic. Imbibers of 6 pints (~ 3 Liters) would ingest a potentially dangerous dose of ~45 mg. The cause of the arsenic contamination was discovered to be the invert sugar used for brewing. This sugar had been produced using sulfuric acid(!), which came from iron pyrites that contained arsenic in significant concentrations.

Beer Fact: Before the widespread use of thermometers, brewers tested the right temperature at which to add yeast by carefully poking a finger (usually their thumb) into the mixture. If it was too hot, the yeast died; too cold, it wouldn't grow. Today, "rule of thumb" is still used as a guideline when exact measurements are unavailable.

Dues Due: A reminder that club dues are due in January for 2003. Any you may ask what is the price for this much fun. Why, it's only \$15 dollars per year for individuals or \$20 for same address couples. Please send your payment to Tom Pettinger, club Treasurer.

9526 Brehm Rd, Cincinnati, OH 45252

The Cincinnati Malt Infusers
9526 Brehm Rd.
Cincinnati, OH, 45252



Competition & Events Schedule

For event information and entry forms, contact Jeff Seeley (513) 231-6062 unless another contact person is listed below.

December 12th, CMI Christmas Party and Elections. 7PM. To be held at Jack Quinn's Restaurant & Irish Pub, 112 East 4th Street. Covington, KY, 859-491-6699. Note: The Christmas Party takes the place of the normal monthly meeting for December

January 9th, CMI Monthly Meeting. Dan Listermann's at 7:30 PM. .

January/February , Entries due for the AHA Club only competition, Bitter and English Pale Ale category 4. If you have an entry you think is worthy, bring it to the January CMI meeting and we will pick a club entry to submit. For more info visit www.beertown.org/AHA/Clubs/clubcomp.htm. Note: The Mar/Apr competition is Brown Ale. Start brewing now.

February ?? The Annual CMI Pub Crawl. Start training now!