

Another Round: More Words of Wisdom About Beer

By Scott Laird

For those of you who have vowed to start a new diet for a New Year’s Resolution-- we bring you these words of wisdom:

“*[I recommend]... bread, meat, vegetables and beer.*”

-Sophocles’ philosophy of a moderate diet

“*This is grain, which any fool can eat, but for which the Lord intended a more divine means of consumption... Beer!*”

Friar Tuck -Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves

Joy to the Holiday Ale Festival -- For five days in early December, area beer-drinkers had a chance to try some rare winter ales at the 13th Holiday Ale Festival. Some exceptional beers were on display at Pioneer Courthouse Square in Portland, as part of over fifty beers that were on tap for tasting. A high concentration of dark and robust Stouts, Barleywines, and Winter Warmers, all brewed to ward off the chill of winter, left Portland area beer-drinkers pleased. The Festival was set up under clear large tents, and was somewhat crowded, especially on Friday and Saturday, according to reports. We stopped by on Thursday afternoon and found light crowds and almost non-existent lines for beer. We went back on Sunday afternoon, finding many of the popular beers already consumed, so we missed a chance to try some of the beers we had wanted to taste. What I did get to try were some complex, big-bodied, and high in alcohol creations that showed again why Oregon is the center of the craft brewing universe.

Most of the beers on tap are brewed especially for the fest and are not available anywhere else, so I would only be teasing you by telling you what you missed. But I’m going to tell you anyway. At the top of my list was Track Town Ale’s **Shotput Stout**-- oak rum barrel aged, that was smooth and tasty with a nice balance of chocolate and, of course, rum and oak; McMenamin’s Thompson Brewery’s **Santa Baby Stout**, that was slightly sweet and delicious; and Widmer Brothers’ **BaBushka’s Secret**-- a black raspberry Russian Imperial Stout that was very fruity, but was blended just right, and that was almost as beautiful to look at as it was to drink!

I also tried a Belgian Wit from Off the Rail Brewing in Forest Grove, called **Blizzard of Ozz**-- a warmer at 8.1% ABV; Fort George Brewery’s (Astoria) **North II** --a Grand Crue, or Belgian Barleywine that was spicy and a bit fruity; and Ninkasi Brewing Company’s (Eugene) **Sleigh’r**-- a Dark Strong Alt that was tasty and warming.

As you can tell, the names the brewers give these special ales are part of the fun. A couple of other favorites that can’t go by unmentioned: **Noggin Floggin’** from Urban Hopworks Brewery; **Rudolph’s Imperial Red**, from Three Creeks Brewing Co., newly opened in Sisters; and, of course, **Yellow Snow IPA** by Rogue Ales.

The People’s Choice winner, which was determined by the beer that went through the most kegs, was **Collaborator’s Hallucinator Olde Ale**, followed by the Holiday Ale Festival/Hair of the Dog **Commemorative Blend Jim II**.

All in all-- the Holiday Ale Festival is a good time, with fun atmosphere, and, of course, great beers. Plan on attending next year, just make sure to go early and often.

“**I still want my Snowplow!**” Thanks to everyone who commented on my distress at not being able to find Widmer Snowplow last month. Many of you stopped me to express your empathy at my plight, and your concern was appreciated. I have since learned that Widmer Brothers have not discontinued producing the Snowplow Stout, but rather have begun bottling it in 22 oz. bottles. Which means it will be somewhat challenging to find. And I haven’t found it yet! Snowed-in in Vernonia without any Snowplow-I feel like a kid who... oh never mind! I just want some Snowplow!

Oregon Bottle Bill expands! Beginning January 1, water and flavored water will be added to the list of containers that can be redeemed for a 5 cent deposit in Oregon under our Bottle Bill. A second change is that larger retail outlets of 5,000 square feet or more will be required to take back bottle and can returns of all brands and sizes of beverage containers for each kind they sell. For example, if a store that is 5,000 square feet or more sells beer, then they are required to accept bottle returns of all brands and sizes of beer -- even brands that they don’t carry in their stores. This is good news for those of us that search out unusual beers, or bring them back from trips to share with friends, and are then stuck recycling instead of redeeming them. I know, it’s just 5 cents- but 179 5 cent returns adds up to a new six-pack, or even a couple of those 22 oz. Snowplows- if I could ever find them!

We’ll leave you with this... Famous ale drinkers born in January: Verne “Mini-Me” Troyer, Paul Revere, Mel Gibson, Stephen Stills, J.R.R. Tolkien, Syd Barrett, Bobby Hull, Sally Rand, Elvis Presley, Joan Baez, Al Capone, Ben Franklin, Janis Joplin, Benny Hill, John Belushi, Bob Uecker, Virginia Woolf, Lewis Carrol, Jackson Pollack and W.C. Fields. Actually I’m not positive any of these folks were beer drinkers, but it’s fun to imagine have a pint or two with just a couple of them.

See you next time for Another Round!

Stargazer

By Esther Arce

The month starts off with the Sun in Capricorn making us more ambitious and serious about our future. Responsibilities cannot be overlooked as we try to find solutions that offer better security, but we have more work ahead of us before we can see results. The Mars and Pluto conjunction forces us to reexamine how we go about getting what we desire. Fire will be met by fire so think carefully before you act. Hopes and dreams receive an extra dose of inspiration when Jupiter moves into the sign of Aquarius on the 5th where it will remain for the next year. The Sun moves into the sign of Aquarius on the 19th changing our focus to one of personal freedom. Aquarius is progressive, visionary, rebellious, innovative, independent, and sometimes just plain weird.

Mercury will be in retrograde motion from January 11th to February 1st. Mercury in astrology represents, among other things, thought, speech and communication of all sorts including email, telephones, and the postal service, cars, bicycles, short term and short distance travel. It also represents the power of the mind and at this time it’s easy to miss the details, to misread, or misunderstand. If it’s necessary for you to sign contracts or make major commitments now be aware that there will more than likely be issues that come up later. This is also a time when travel plans are delayed or changed, and we can experience car and transportation problems. The most vulnerable times are the first week in January, right before Mercury turns retrograde, and the last week of the month when the planet stations then turns direct.

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Aries

There are many times when life is just simply out of our control and although this may drive you crazy, the truth is the only thing you can control is yourself. If you can get a grip on your reactions your actions will have a much better chance at meeting with success. Allow yourself and others to make mistakes as it can be easy to become frustrated.

Taurus

Your general attitude in life shows itself in the people and situations that surround you. If you like what you see then keep going the way you’re going, but if what you see causes you distress, accept that it’s time to make changes. Let go or your stubbornness will get in your way.

Gemini

Mind over body and body over mind. Everyone knows that balance and moderation in all things makes for a happier, healthier life, but it doesn’t hurt to be reminded of it every once in a while. You’ll be feeling more social and generous towards others this month so perhaps it’s time to find volunteer opportunities.

Cancer

See the meaning through the simple everyday events. You will see messages if you are open to seeing them. As one of the most sensitive signs in the zodiac you are able to ‘feel’ what’s really going on better than most. Sometimes it’s just in your head, but a lot of times it’s not. Chances are that gut feeling is correct. If so, don’t hesitate and follow through.

Leo

Although you can be very charming, fun and engaging, you’re not the easiest person to be around when things aren’t going your way. Lighten up and you’ll find loyal supporters, family and friends coming to your aid. You have a dynamic personality that can easily attract but can just as easily repel. It’s up to you what you give out. What comes back will reflect that.

Virgo

You may find yourself challenged and pushed to the limit. You’re a great troubleshooter so finding the right solution is only a matter of time. If the way is not yet clear, retreat and wait for a better time. A patient and focused mind is your most valuable tool.

Libra

A time of endings is at hand or is soon approaching. It’s the perfect time for reflection and contemplation, and for strengthening your spirit. An objective and calm understanding of life’s experience is available now. Take time to be creative and surround yourself with beautiful, pleasurable things.

Scorpio

Your sign can be very intense, determined and passionate but the stars are telling you to lighten up. Laughter and play helps you to relax and when you’re relaxed it’s easier to get things back on the right track. Your life is going to keep heading in directions you never expected.

Sagittarius

If you’ve been feeling a need to move on to new thoughts, new ways of doing things or to a new way of life, you’re not alone. There are others who are feeling the same way. Set aside your stubborn independence and strive to work better with others. By banding together you’ll get the help you need.

Capricorn

You may be put in the position of leader or given more responsibility to handle. Don’t worry, you were born for it. It can be easy to get carried away with what is needed to be done so make sure to take a break when you necessary. Just one more hour of sleep can make a world of difference.

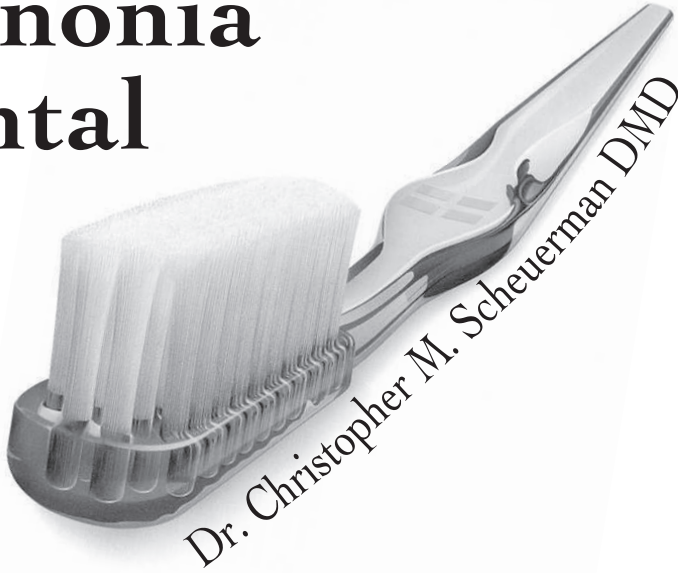
Aquarius

It isn’t always easy being brilliant, especially when you’re already a bit different. People may have difficulty understanding what you’re trying to say and it may be necessary for you to go back and explain yourself. You’ll experience mechanical difficulties at some point this month so make sure to keep an eye on your car and back up your computer’s hard drive.

Pisces

The time may not be right to make any changes, but it is coming soon. Wait in a calm, meditative state until such a time arrives. You may be feeling oversensitive and even defensive and you may react in a way that is unlike you. Try not to take what others say or what you imagine they think about you to heart.


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