

PITTSBURGH STEIN SOCIETY NEWS



Volume No.8, Issue No. 12

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DECEMBER 2023



A HAPPY AND MERRY DECEMBER !!!

Holiday Greetings

From all your *Pittsburgh Stein Society* officers, we wish all of you and your families a very safe and healthy Merry Christmas and a very Happy Holiday Season.

Birthday Wishes



CAROLYN ESTEP DECEMBER 01
MARY STURM DECEMBER 08
ELLEN COLLISTER DECEMBER 10
TIM UHRICH DECEMBER 11

*May your special day be filled with happiness and joy !! **HAPPY BIRTHDAY !!***

Tip Of the Month

Our annual Holiday tip is and will always be the following: For this Holiday season, there can be only one tip and that is, **"IT'S BETTER TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE."** Remember the less fortunate among us and do whatever you can to make someone's life just a little bit better than it is right now. The very smallest item or jester represents the biggest of gifts to those who have very little. You will be rewarded many times over and the Christmas spirit will be within you.





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Society

OFFICERS

President Tom Levenson
Vice President Bill Boss
Treasurer Joyce Hoffman
Secretary Mark Paden
Guest Speaker Coordinator..Tom Weber
Newsletter Editor Tom Levenson

Members Directory

In January, we will be working on a revised Members Directory and hope to publish it in February or sooner. If any of your contact information has changed since January 2023, please send your new information to this Editor so that we can update our files and our directory. If we do not hear from you, we will publish the revised 2023-2024 Members Directory with the information we currently have on file. Thank you for your help and cooperation.



New Member

Welcome to our newest member, John Knoll who joined our stein club while attending our November 11th meeting. John and his wife Michelle, along with their 6 children, live in Verona, PA. John is also a new member of the Teutonia Männerchor Club so, hopefully we will see him around the club and often at our stein club meetings. Welcome John and Michelle.

THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH

Our most sincere THANK YOU goes out to Jim Bee for his generous donation to the PSS which Jim included with his membership renewal payment. We also want to say THANK YOU to all those members who said "keep the change" when it was time to pay for their lunch at our November 11th. meeting, AND, we want to thank all those veterans who donated their lunch payments back to the PSS when it was announced that the Teutonia Männerchor Club would pay for the lunch of all veterans present. These very kind and generous donations by our own stein club members are truly appreciated and will benefit all our PSS members very much. THANK YOU.

2024 Meeting Dates

The dates for our 2024 meetings are as follows: February 17, April 13, June 15, September 21, and November 16. Please mark your calendars with these dates. We hope to see you all at these meetings.



An Old German Holiday Drink

Our Christmas Punch recipe turned out to be so popular the last two years, we have decided to feature it once again for this Holiday Season. If you have not tried the German drink called "WEIHNACHTSPUNSCH" (German Christmas Punch) here is your chance to try something really special. Let us know how you liked it. This will be the last time that we will feature this Holiday Drink recipe.

INGREDIENTS:

5 tablespoons brown sugar
Juice of 1 lemon
One 750 ml bottle of red wine
2 cups orange juice
2 cups strong black tea
1 ½ tsp vanilla extract
1 lemon (sliced)
1 orange (sliced)
1 cinnamon stick
6-8 whole cloves
7 tbsp marzipan (check the baking supply aisle)
1-ounce semi-sweet chocolate
¾ cup of rum

DIRECTIONS:

Put the brown sugar into a saucepan large enough to hold all ingredients. Stir over low heat until it melts and keep stirring for another two minutes. Keep the flame medium low and add the tea, wine, orange juice, lemon juice and vanilla. Stir to combine. Add the sliced lemon, sliced orange, cinnamon stick, and cloves and stir. Cut up the marzipan and chocolate. Add to the saucepan and stir until they dissolve. Cook everything together for 15-20 minutes. DO NOT LET THE MIXTURE BOIL! Stir occasionally. Remove all of the solid parts (orange slices, lemon slices, cloves and cinnamon stick). Add the rum. Give a good stir and serve. You can keep the Weihnachtspunsch warm over low heat and stir occasionally. THAT'S IT !! This recipe serves 6 normal folks or 4 stein collectors !!! Prep time is 10 minutes and cooking time is 20 minutes. Try it and ENJOY. **MERRY CHRISTMAS !!**



Featured Article of the Month

With December being the Holiday month, we thought it would be appropriate to feature an article about a church and its famous tower. Ten years ago this month, Master Steinologist, Lyn Ayers wrote an article for the December 2013 issue of *Prosit* magazine about such a church. Lyn's article is titled "Oldest Church Tower" and we are happy to feature it here today as our featured article of the month. Enjoy.

The Perfect Christmas Gift

Is there still that one person on your Christmas gift list that you just cannot come up with a gift idea for? Well, look no further! The perfect gift for any friend, relative, business associate, or fellow stein collector is just an email away. Yep !! You've guessed it ! A beautiful, newly designed, 2023-2024 Pittsburgh Stein Society sweatshirt is the answer to your dilemma. Just fill out the attached order form and send it to the address shown on the form and we will get your order to you before Christmas. Do not delay. We still have sizes medium, large, extra-large, and 2X large but in limited quantities. First come, first served. As they say on TV, "our phones (and email) answer 24

hours a day" (good luck with that). We're waiting for YOU ! Order now !!

2024 HANDOUTS

We now have paper handouts that can be used to advertise out 2024 meeting schedule in an attempt to promote our stein club. Below is an example of the handouts available. The actual size of the handout is approximately 5"x 7". If you are interested in obtaining some of these handouts, please contact Bill B. or Tom L. (No, we did not forget to add the location of the meetings. We prefer to have people call if they are interested in attending a meeting.) Thank you for your help.

"THE PITTSBURGH STEIN SOCIETY"

MEETING DATES FOR 2024

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FEBRUARY 17, 2024

APRIL 13, 2024

JUNE 15, 2024

SEPTEMBER 21, 2024

NOVEMBER 16, 2024



.....

🎁 **ALL MEETINGS START AT 12:00 NOON** 🎁

A LIGHT LUNCH IS AVAILABLE

"WHAT YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT BEER STEINS"

FOR STEIN CLUB INFORMATION CALL

BILL BOSS 412-367-8628

TOM LEVENSON 412-596-6360





A Very Special Stein

It's always a pleasure to publish, in this newsletter, an article written by one of our own PSS members. Below is just such an article. Jeff Arduini tells us about a special stein he has recently purchased and how that purchase came about. Thank you, Jeff for sharing this experience with all your fellow PSS members.

Well, the Gambrinus Stein Club's Fall mini stein convention has just finished up in Gaithersburg, Maryland on November 5th, 2023. I really wanted to go but had other obligations, so I couldn't. I went to this convention, two years ago, in 2021, and had a fantastic time and met a lot of new friends. I highly recommend it. Great food, tasty beer, antique steins, and good fellowship! There were great tours of members' homes and collections and an excellent dinner, at a quaint, local restaurant named Clyde's".

I perused the stein auction catalog, beforehand, but did not see anything of strong interest to me. The auction was held by Fox Auctions. The market is soft, right now, and prices are really reasonable. As I was looking through the online catalog, after the auction had closed; I noticed a stein that went unsold and had a very reasonable opening bid. I was familiar with the stein and had seen it before. So, on a whim; I contacted Ron Fox and told him that I was interested. He was very busy packing up sales items, but still took time for my call. I quickly told him that I would like to purchase the stein, so even after the buyer's commission and shipping fees, it was still a fantastic price. From a retail standpoint, this is normally a more expensive stein but things rarely sell for retail price, anymore. In the heyday of stein collecting (about 20 to 30 years ago), it sold for even more. But, no one can deny that the market has changed. Many great deals can be found, these days, if one looks in the right places. Right now,

it's a great time to be a stein buyer and stein collector!

It is a 2.5 L Mettlach form #2751. It is the master stein to Mettlach form #2752. It features two men seated at a table, smoking pipes, and drinking their favorite spirits from goblets and wearing Continental style, three-cornered hats, which were popular during the late 18th century. They appear to be Dutchmen based on the tile motif and windmills in the background. They are also wearing period era clothing. It has a beautiful, light-yellow colored background and a light-blue base band. It has a nice inlaid lid with a wine chalice and grapes on it. The thumb lift is a pewter, figural man with his mouth gaping wide open who almost looks like he is wearing a native style headdress. The stein is designed and signed by engraver Heinrich Schlitt. In my research; I have found that there is a rarer version of this stein that has a banner with a verse around the top of it. Mine is the regular, standard version.

It's not a stein that I had been searching for but I was very pleased to add it to my collection, as it's a great stein. I just received it and it is in crisp, mint condition and looks fantastic in person. I will drink an Oktoberfest beer in celebration, tonight!

As our dear, departed friend and fellow Pittsburgh Stein Society member Dick Platt would have said: "That's a hell of a stein!!" I sure do miss that guy...

Okay, enough reminiscing. Prosit, until next time.

Jeff Arduini

[Editor's Note: Photos of Jeff's special stein follow this page 5]

A SPECIAL STEIN AS FEATURED IN JEFF ARDUINI'S ARTICLE ON PAGER 5 OF THIS NEWSLETTER.



THE PITTSBURGH STEIN SOCIETY

SWEATSHIRT ORDER FORM

Be one of the first to order an original Pittsburgh Stein Society, 2023-2024 sweatshirt. These club sweatshirts are long sleeved, crew neck, 50% cotton / 50% polyester with double-needle stitched collar, shoulders, armholes, cuffs, and waistbands, 1x1 athletic rib knit collars, cuffs, and waistband, with spandex.

Sizes available are: M, L, XL, and 2XL.

Order your sweatshirt(s) by filling out the order form information below and sending the completed form to Tom Levenson at thomaslevenson@yahoo.com. or by calling Tom at 412-596-6360.

Checks should be made payable to the **Pittsburgh Stein Society** and sent to Joyce Hoffman, 254 Victory Rd, Saxonburg, PA 16056.

The price of each sweatshirt is \$25.00 for sizes M - XL. All sizes are uni-sex sizes. Add \$2.00 to listed price for all 2XL sizes. For items shipped, there will be a \$5 per item shipping charge. All sales are final and are based on information received. All proceeds go to the "Pittsburgh Stein Society." All sales are on a "first-come, first-served" basis.

Thank you for your support of the "*Pittsburgh Stein Society*."

FIRST NAME _____

LAST NAME _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP CODE _____

QUANTITY _____

SIZE EACH _____

Oldest Church Tower

by Master Steinologist Lyn Ayers

At a recent chapter meeting, Bill Bosworth pulled a small pewter stein out of his bag, passed it around, and asked if any of us were interested in purchasing it. It was one of those souvenir steins from around 1900 and I have a half dozen or so similar steins. I was not particularly interested until I began to examine it more closely. It states in bold type "SOUVENIR OF TACOMA, WASH." (1) Like many similar types it has several scenes from the city and points of special interest.



figure 1

What first caught my eye was a scene proudly proclaiming the "OLD BELL TOWER, 400 YEARS OLD." (2) Obviously I spotted the misspelling of "YEARS" which strikes me as understandable since in German the letter "J" is pronounced like our "Y". Similar errors are occasionally found on souvenir pieces from Germany intended for the American market.



figure 2

A fellow attendee noticed the reference to 400 years old. Here in the northwest nothing but dirt, rocks, and trees are that old and most trees are less than 400. How could a church tower located in the northwest be 400 years old???? But upon examining the scene more closely one will see a building (probably a church) with a tree growing beside it with what looks like a belfry on top. We agreed that must be what the image was. I wondered whatever could be the story behind this outrageous claim.

Later that day I shared the puzzle with our hosts Liz and Jim Perry and much to my amazement, they knew about the church and its special tower. Liz identified it as St. Peter's Episcopal Church built in the late 1800s. She said she had some documentation about it from about 1980 and would mail it to me. The search for the real story was about to begin!

figure 3



figure 4



When I returned home, I thought I just might have another Tacoma souvenir stein in my pewter collection. I did have a small pewter beaker Souvenir of Tacoma. (3) Many of the scenes are similar, if not identical, including the church and its bell tower. The title of the church scene is different: "St. Peter's Church, The oldest bell tower in America." (4)

A few days later the postman delivered the information Liz had promised and I immediately sat down to study it. (5) It was from the book *Early Churches of Washington State*, published in 1980. According to the article, the church was built shortly after the announcement that the Northern Pacific Railroad would make Commencement Bay (later renamed Tacoma) the western terminus located a couple of miles west of Old Town Tacoma. The book identified the church as "St. Peter's Chapel-at-Ease" Episcopal built in 1873. According to the ar-

figure 5



ticle St. Peters was built as quickly as possible to establish a place of worship for the expected influx of railroad workers and visitors from the east.

Church members were connected to a nearby sawmill and along with several others managed rapid construction of a 21-by-46-foot building. The book describes the process as follows. "Rough sawn boards and batten were used on the exterior walls, and the bell tower was a cedar tree cut to a 40-foot height and topped by a small belfry. The bell was donated by St Peter's Church of Philadelphia in 1874." It is believed to be the first church built in Tacoma and in fact was intended to be only a temporary sanctuary.

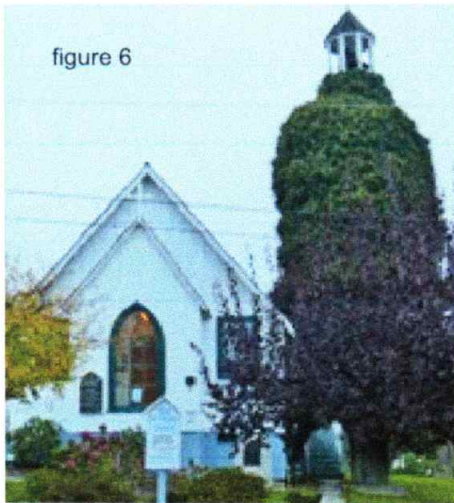


figure 6

But this is not the whole history and where the legend begins to play a larger role. Liz later sent me a clip from a tour guide of "Tacoma's Historic Sacred Places." This article verified that the church's location was in Old Town close to the waterfront and Ruston Way. It confirmed the tree-trunk bell tower and stated that for a time the church was known as "The Little Stump Church at Old Town." There was an effort to preserve the old building in 1908 and years later in 1956 it had an extensive remodel.

And then I had the idea to see what I could find on the internet. How accurate were the claims of the "400 year-old-Tower" or "Oldest Tower in America"? Was it still standing? If so, was it in current use or had it been abandoned after some 135 years? The first site I found was a website for the church! Obviously it still existed and was actually being used. I contacted the current Rector, Rev'd. Morgan Johnson and asked for permission to use information and photos from the church's website in this article. He responded that he was pleased to grant my request and additionally included an article

from the Rt. Rev. John D. Keliher, who has voluntarily served the church for some 50 years.

Following is a selection from his article: "... the postcards that trumpeted the age of the stump were a source of embarrassed amusement for me. It seemed doubtful that any of them had much veracity. I mean, the oldest postcards – say around 1885 - depicted the church and its bell tower and claimed that it was the oldest bell tower in North America. (6) Well, that, of course eliminated any Spanish contenders in Mexico and I presumed that there were churches with belfries in Mexico in the late 1500's... And by 1900 a similar photo on a postcard said, 'Oldest Bell Tower in the World.'



figure 7

I realized that St. Peter's bell tower, the resourceful expedient of the frontiersmen (and frontierswomen) who found themselves thousands of miles from what passed for civilization, gave them a sense of parity with those older cities from which they had emigrated. Here they were, some 125 settlers clustered around a sawmill hoping that the railroad would come through and buy them out. Dark thick woods surrounded them on every side except the Bay. They imported plants, they imported furniture, but they could not import antiquity. And there it was, antiquity sixty feet high, holding up their bell and it was older than dirt. Great legend.

Well, you know what? The story is true – mostly. Well it wasn't the oldest bell tower in the world. But it was the oldest bell tower in the New World. After the hurricane shoved the cedar stump into the roof of the church

in 1935, they erected a derrick to hold up the bell and its root rotted stump. ... According to the 1935 Tacoma Daily Ledger, they counted the tree's rings. It was over 900 years old when it was topped in 1874... The bell tower really was as old as the pioneers thought it was. The legend was almost as good as the real story."

Today the church is generally referred to as Old St. Peter's, and remains an active congregation. It is located at its original location of 2910 N. Starr St., Tacoma, WA. Although no longer directly connected to the Episcopal Church it does follow the traditional Anglican service. Current photos show the tower as a vine-covered tree with the bell on top. (7) Visit <http://www.oldstpeters.org/> for an interesting virtual tour.

I never cease to be amazed with the historical background behind so many of the steins that make up our hobby. Taking time to closely examine our steins and then wondering if there is a story behind the design can develop into a wonderful trek into the past. The next time you pick up a stein, study it to see what questions it raises for you to pursue. But be cautious: it can turn into a time-consuming—yet captivating—quest.

Credits:

Pearson, Arnold & Esther, *Early Churches of Washington State*, University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1980

www.oldstpeters.org, Rev'd Morgan Johnson

Historic Tacoma, "Tacoma's Historic Sacred Places, 2009

Historical article, Keliher, Bishop John D., not dated

Hunt, Herbert, *Tacoma, Its History and Its Builders; a Half Century of Activity*, S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, Chicago, 1916

