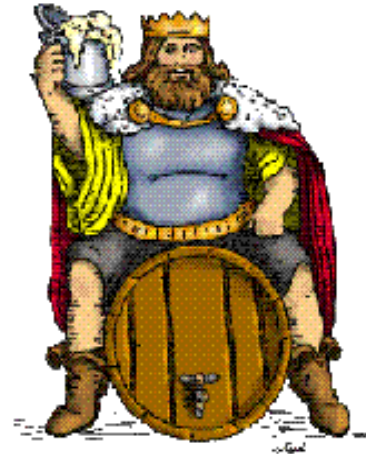


Gambrinus Gazette



Norm Paratore – Editor
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February 2024
Facebook: Gambrinus Stein Club

February Newsletter

President's Minute

Gambrinus again hosted a successful and well attended mini-Convention. I would like to thank Norm Paratore for making it happen, and Alan and Eta for helping out. Gambrinus has successfully hosted at least 5 mini-Conventions, so next fall the gathering will be held either in upstate NY or somewhere in North Carolina. As soon as the plans are finalized, we will let everybody know. The SCI Convention this year is in Madison, Wisconsin, and the planning has been moving along well.

The February meeting will be held at my home. We will have Italian food brought in for lunch. Norm Paratore will give an introduction teaser talk on early stoneware from a small town which produced a small number of steins. I'm looking forward to hearing about it. I am also going to give a brief introduction on Navy Reservist steins and a 5-minute introduction to Russian silver enamel pieces. We would like to encourage attending members to bring a piece to show the group and for discussion.

At the meeting we will be discussing our plans for 2024. Please note there is no cost for lunch. We have excess funds in our treasury and the club will cover the cost of the meeting. Please RSVP no later than Saturday,

February 3rd so I know how much food to get. If anybody has a question, or to RSVP, call me at 240-848-0306

Thank you,
Eric Salzano

Gambrinus Mini-Convention Recap

Another notch in the Gambrinus belt of successes. A great time was had by all and you can thank Eric for his effort in putting it together on such short notice. We had 63 attendees from 17 States, and one country - Australia. Two SCI members, Michele Chedzey and Ricky Thompson both from Australia, made the long flight to the DMV and had a good time. Our convention was at least the third time they have made the trip.

Eric presented them with a stein as the person or persons who traveled the longest distance.



Ricky lifted the stein up just as the picture was taken. It is actually their second Gambrinus event as they also attended our 50th Anniversary party.

We were pleasantly surprised by the number of people who signed up for the pre-convention events. Here is a quick daily summary.

Thursday afternoon open house. We had 23 members attend the first convention event at Norm's to view his collection of glass steins. We had no idea so many members would come in two days before the convention even started.

Friday morning. We had 30+ people attend the Hillwood Estate and Museum. So many Eric had to rent a second bus for the overflow. A special thanks to Dick Strom who donated eight free passes to Hillwood.

Friday evening. The Clyde's Restaurant dinner was a total blowout! We had 54 members meet up for dinner. We had to scramble to come up with enough reservations to seat everyone.

After the dinner at Clydes, 50+ members went to Eric's house to check out his collection. So many people wanted to go we had to break it into two 2-hour sessions.

Saturday

What can you say – Ron Fox had his usual assortment of great steins (500+) and go-withs. I think everyone walked away with a new piece. Lunch was part of the entrance fee and members had drinks and sandwiches at their leisure.

The convention dinner was held at Mission BBQ and it was buffet-style BBQ dinner held in our own private room, which was really nice. One of the nice parts was the staff could bring whatever food or drink ran out. The food was excellent and everyone left with full tummies.

Sunday

The morning was dedicated to the speakers. We tried something different and had four speakers lined up to give 30 minute talks instead of three for 45 minutes. Each speaker brought something totally new to the members.

Norm went first and talked about his collection of set-on-lid steins. Some very beautiful glass steins with no pewter or any other metal material. They dated from the late 1700s to early/mid 1800s.



Eric followed up with steins and other bubble glass pieces produced by Carl Georg von Reichenbach from around 1900 to 1910. Great looking pieces and so unique they will be totally recognizable by anyone who heard the talk. Hint – don't be surprised by the prices for his work.



Next speaker was Allan Fogel, who spoke on how to identify the country of origin of different pewter pieces. And, of course, he had some great pewter pieces to demonstrate the points he made.



Our fourth speaker canceled shortly before the convention due to a family emergency.

Lunch was pizza and cokes, free to the attendees.

Sunday afternoon was dedicated to membership table sales. Those members who brought stuff for sale used the lunch time to set up their table. We sold 19 tables and there were over 500 pieces for sale. If you add in the Fox auction, there were over 1,000 pieces for sale in the two days of the convention.

Treasurer's Report

The end of 2023 saw a fairly large increase in our treasury due to the 50th Anniversary in the end of 2022 and the mini-convention of 2023. Just FYI, we only took on the burden of the 2023 mini-convention because the new England group couldn't get it done, for whatever reason. As of 12/31/23, the balance is \$9,331.77. If anyone would like to go over the books, let me know. I will bring the paperwork to the February meeting.

A Short Piece by Dick Strom

CONFESSIONS of a YOUNG CIGARETTE SMUGGLER

Around 2001 I bought several steins from the widow of a US Army sergeant who had been stationed in Germany a few years after World War II ended.

One of them was the Schierholz pig shown below. I explained that the retail price for the pig in mint condition would be \$250, perhaps a little less. But the pig had a chip in its right ear, so I would be happy to get \$125 if I sold it. I offered her \$75. She replied, "That's alright. I only paid two packs of cigarettes for it."

When World War II ended, Germany was devastated, and everything was in short supply. The mark had lost its value, and cigarettes were a desired medium of exchange.

My parents were both German immigrants and they had seven siblings with families who were living in Germany. Every Saturday morning we prepared care packages of food, clothing, and cigarettes. My job was canning the cigarettes. My parents explained that inspectors would steal the cigarettes if they were visible in the package.

There was a size can whose diameter exactly accommodated two packs of cigarettes. I put rice, oatmeal or sometimes coffee in the bottom of the can, inserted the two packs of cigarettes, and filled the can with more rice, oatmeal, or coffee.

We had a simple machine that sealed the can. Place a lid on the can, press a lever down, and crank. I was nine years old and could do it easily. And smuggling cigarettes must have appealed to my imagination.

Saturday afternoons father and I drove the packages to the post office. I remember the car's trunk and back seat being full. The packages were a major effort in 1945 but decreased as conditions in Germany improved.

Over the years cousins in Germany have told me about receiving the packages. One cousin told how his father got otherwise unavailable building supplies with cigarettes. Some family houses had been damaged by bombs

I still have the Schierholz pig with a chip in its ear. And I remember the Saturday mornings, so long ago, when I canned cigarettes.



February Meeting

BIG NOTE: The meeting will be on Saturday the 10th.

It will be held at Eric & Lydia's lovely home and I know you are all drooling over seeing what he has procured since the last time you were there. I guarantee he has quite a few new pieces. Since it is at a member's home food and drink will be provided at no cost to the attendees. The lunch will be catered and I assure you that it will not be just pizza. If you want something alcoholic, you will have to bring your own.

The address is: 5704 Stanbrook Lane, Gaithersburg, MD 20882. If you get lost, call him at 240-848-0306. If you need help with directions or actually getting there, please give me a call at 410-456-0042.

At this time we will have a couple of short presentations. Norm's talk is about a small German city that developed stoneware products right up to the 1950s and which you may never have heard of. He will have a couple

of steins from the area and it might give you something to look for in your own collection.

Also, Eric has several new pieces that he will show. Everyone else is welcome to “bring and brag” or just something that has stumped you in identifying. The collective experience of our club should be able to help figure it out. And, if you have some pieces you want to sell, bring them along.

The times are the usual. Arrive between noon and 1:00 PM to socialize and drool. Around 1:00 we will have the food. After everyone has eaten we will have the business meeting, which includes election of the new officers, followed by the talks and bring and brag.

A special thanks to Donna Robb for supplying the photos I used in this newsletter.

Hope to see everyone there.