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"Cheese Is Our Culture"™

Culture, Curds, and Cheesey Chatter



December 2021

A Publication of the National Historic Cheesemaking Center

In a far-away country

An original tale by Steve Stettler

Ebeneser gets a smile!

So, it was one sunny afternoon and this massive shiny red 58 Chevy Impala shows up in my driveway and out pops Kris Kringle. He is laughing hysterically at the look on my face looking at his car.

I asked him what he was up to on this fine fall day. He said he has had an issue that he thought he should bring to my attention. He said I have an uncle that I do not know about. He told me he is just an ornery old Koot and nothing Kris does cheers him up. I ask him who the heck it was, thinking I know all my relatives.



Kris laughs and says his name is Ebeneser Stettler, he lives in the hills of Meiringen, Switzerland. He was a hog farmer and sold his hogs and now is just kinda bitter old guy. Never been married, had a girl friend years ago, but she didn't like the smell of pigs.

About that time, Shaya and her family showed up. Of course, Sutton and little

Shaw, my grandkids, were awe struck by the huge presence of Kris.

Sutton asked, "Are you Santa Claus?" Kris laughed and said, "I sure look like him, don't I?"

(Continued on Page 3)

REMINDER DATES

NHCC is now closed for the season

Come visit us in 2022, starting May 1



Volume 14, Issue 10

Thanks to Colony Brands Inc. for the printing of Culture

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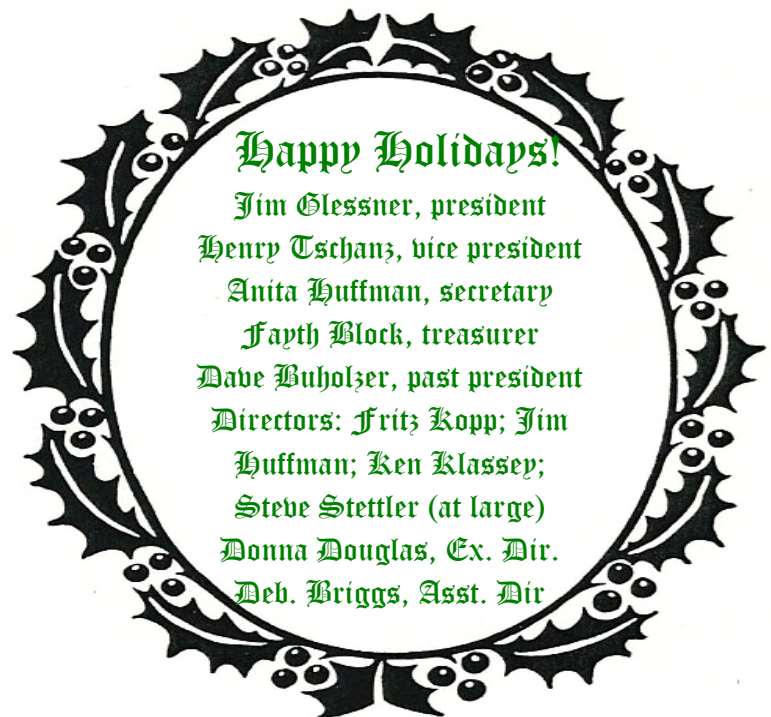


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(Ebenezer continued from Page 1)

Kris opens his car door and says that he and I had to go for a ride. He gave everyone a hug and I, not knowing I was going anywhere, said, “Kris really has to show me something?”

In the car we go and Kris peels off, “Don’t lay rubber in my driveway!!”

While we are headed out, he tells me he had hoped meeting me would soften up Ebenezer and maybe we could get him to enjoy life. He hits the Bernard (his head elf, remember”) boosters and away we go. I laughed and commented, for an old 58 she flies pretty good.

Getting into Switzerland, I asked where the heck are we going to put down? In the mountains? He laughed and said we will get her on the ground around Luzern. The old 58 smoothly hit the highway just outside of Luzern and up into the mountains we cruised. I told Kris;” These mountain roads are not really designed for a 58 Chevy”.

We got into Meiringen and I told Kris we need to stop in town and get a bottle of Appenzeller. I would offer a toast with my uncle.



We get to his old hog farm and you could still get a hint of hog in the air!!! Nice little Swiss Chalet with the big old solid wood door tucked in the mountains.

I knock on the door and I could hear this gentleman yell,” Go away, I do not allow visitors.” I yell,” I came all this way from the United States and I am a Stettler, Master Cheesemaker Steve Stettler and I am a relative, just hoping to meet you!”

The door opens and this white-haired

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guy is standing there and says, “Now ya met me! “and tries to shut the door. I push back and told him I had Appenzeller and some cheese spread with my picture on it. He didn’t laugh, but almost!

In the house Kris and I went and Ebenezer said he wasn’t buying anything. I told him I was there to share a toast and some Stettler cheese spread with him. He wasn’t going along with it, remarking “Bah Humbug”.

There was a silence and you could hear a faint, “humbug “and Ebenezer says, “Who is that?”

In the door stands my little grandson, Shaw, and he comes strolling in. Little fart must have snuck into the car when Kris opened the door and covered up. **Shaw crawls up on Ebby’s (Ebenezer) table and looks him right in the eye. Ebby goes, “Humbug.”**

Shaw’s face turns red and yells, “Roaaar, humbug!!!!”

Ebenezer starts laughing and looks at Kris and I and says, “Crap, he is pretty good!” Kris and I just shake our heads. You just never know.

Kris and I have a couple of Appenzellers as Ebenezer is learning rock, paper, scissors from Shaw, who has no idea how to play it, but they are both laughing as Shaw keeps yelling rock!



Shaw was wearing down and Kris says it is time to go. Ebenezer was all smiles as him and Shaw wandered out to the car. He told us, “Maybe I have been a little brash over the years, and I hope to see you again.” shook our hands, patted Shaw on the head.

In the car, Kris smiles and was glad we got Ebby to smile and laugh. Stepping on the gas, Shaw sound asleep, on comes **“Santa Claus is Coming to Town”** as Ebenezer is waving in the taillights.

Stay healthy and have a very Merry Christmas from The Stettler’s and all the little elves that make NHCC a destination!

Jamie Fahrney explains Limburger

(Editor's Note: we found this story on Facebook. It is Master Cheesemaker Jamie Fahrney describing his background and explaining Limburger cheese)

I remember my dad taking me to a nearby cheese plant when I was about five or six years old. It was a Swiss cheese plant, and I had a piece of that cheese. That's back when they made the big 200-pound wheels, and it was like candy to me. I love that stuff.

After that, I wanted to work in a cheese plant. My sophomore year, my parents told me I had to have a job when I turned sixteen after school was out. My mother took me to Monroe, and we did a bunch of job applications at different places. But a couple of weeks later, I hadn't heard anything. My dad called me during his lunch hour and asked me if I wanted to work in a cheese plant. He knew Albert Deppeler, who was the manager at Chalet Cheese Cooperative. I didn't have my driver's license yet, but I started working here the day after I got my license. I worked after school and on weekends.

After I graduated high school, I didn't have any plans on going on to college, so Albert offered me a full-time job. I started working here full time in 1980. In 1985, I got my cheesemaker's license. Albert sent me to the class at the UW-Madison Center for Dairy Research. They had a class for beginning cheesemakers, and you could get your license through the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture.

When Albert retired, Myron Olson took over and encouraged me to get into the master cheesemaker program through the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin. It's a pretty intense course, and Wisconsin is the only state in the U.S. that has this level of certification. It's a three-year program. You have to have your cheesemaker's license for 10 years before you can even be accepted into it. You have to take courses at the UW, and they evaluate your cheese to make sure it's all up to their specs. Then you have to take a grueling test at the end. I think it took me 42 hours.

After you pass that, you become a master cheesemaker. I think there are now 80 masters in Wisconsin. Sid Cook from Carr Valley Cheese graduated the same year I did. I was a master certified in Baby Swiss and Brick. And in 2018, I became the director of operations at Chalet Cheese Co-op.



After Myron retired, I got back into the master program again for Limburger and Swiss cheese. I just finished up my three years of cheese evaluation. Now I just have to write another test for those two. Then I'll be master certified in four cheeses.

Our plant still uses the hands-on approach—we think it is the best way. We don't have the push-button vats where you're not even involved in it.

When I started here, we had 52 farms. Now we have 13, but we're getting more milk from those thirteen farms than we were getting from the 52. They have all evolved with the times, and are producing more milk than they did years ago. But they all still are family farms. Some of them are still here from when I first started, like Voegeli Farms, Barker Farms, and Riedland Farms. Everybody's within a 15-mile radius of us. We get the milk in here fast, and we can get it produced the next day. We contract with Lars Transportation and they drive to each of the 13 farms every day. They're here by 4:30 in the morning.

I'm usually here by 3:45 to start my workday. I go into the 'warm room' and check the eye [hole] development on the Swiss cheese. I go into the maker room and talk to the cheesemaker who started at midnight, to see if there are any issues, like if the the pasteurizer wouldn't work or the automatic cleaning system. Or if you overfill the vat. I'm not in the maker room a lot more anymore.

I go out there when someone is on vacation

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

or if they have questions on how to do something. And if I developed a new cheese, I go there and show them how to do it.

We've won a lot of awards with all of our cheese. I think my best one is the HP Mulloy Memorial Award. That's pretty much what every Wisconsin cheesemaker strives for. It's the average score between the United States cheese contest and the Wisconsin contest. In 2015, I got first place in the world with a Baby Swiss—a milder, creamier version of Swiss with smaller eyes [holes].

The biggest challenge is employees. We have a hard time retaining them because it's hard work, grueling work sometimes. There's no automation in any of it. We were struggling for the last 10 years, but since Covid hit, it's been really bad. Right now, we have a pretty good group of guys, and hopefully, we can retain them. In our Limburger cellar, it's high humidity—95 to 100 %. When we make the Limburger, the next day we'll cut in into six or seven ounce pieces, whatever the customers desires. And we'll smear that piece of cheese on our Limburger boards. At that time, it does not stink, does not have much taste. It's the consistency of Feta. The next day, we'll start putting a Limburger smear on it. It's a bacteria solution, a saltwater solution; it's called *bacterium linens*. That's what makes the Limburger smell. It will work into the cheese and break down the fatty acids and the protein. That's what makes it soft.

The shelf life is only about six months. Then it starts to get ammoniated. People can't eat it after that; it's too strong. With other cheeses, like cheddar, you can go up to 20 years. We make mild, medium, and aged Limburger. Mild is going to be one to two months, medium three to four, and aged Limburger takes five to six.

The mother culture, the bacteria, we've had since 1885. The original plant was at the bottom of the hill. But this plant was built by five farmers as a joint venture with Kraft in 1948. At the time, it was a state-of-the-art Limburger place. Kraft bought all their Limburger from here.

We keep the mother culture, we'll brush it into the saltwater, and we'll keep it. Each piece has to be rubbed individually, with a rag, twice in a 7-day period. It's a lot of hand labor. There are about 3,500 pieces in a vat, so it takes about two hours. We don't make nearly as much as we used to, though. The whole cellar used to be filled with

Limburger. We still make 450,000-500,000 pounds a year. This is our claim to fame. We want to keep going as long as we can.

Limburger is declining in sales. I think it's due to the fact that the younger generation coming up was raised on Kraft slices. They don't know what a full-flavor cheese is. We only make one or two vats a week now.

We are the last Limburger factory in the United States. There is another one in Canada. Limburger originated in the 15th-century in the Duchy of Limburg, which is in Belgium, by Trappist monks. When the Europeans started moving over here in the 1800s, they started making Swiss cheese here in the 1800s.

Limburger was first made in the U.S. by Swiss immigrants in Green County and was considered a working man's cheese. The factories all made the big wheels of Swiss, my all-time favorite. But Swiss was more expensive than Limburger, so they would make Limburger for themselves. A lot of them couldn't afford to buy meat, so they had Limburger sandwiches, and potatoes with Limburger on them. There was also a lot of construction on the path from Wisconsin out to New York City, and that path is where the most Limburger was sold, affordable sandwiches for the workers.

I didn't like Limburger when I first started here. My boss, Albert, would try to get me to eat it. I always thought, 'uh-uh!' But then one day I tried and said, 'Well, this isn't so bad.' I like the older stuff when the cheese is runny. You leave it out at room temperature for a couple of hours, and you can just scoop it up and put it on crackers or bread.

These days, you can get a Limburger sandwich at Baumgartner's in Monroe. They use pumpernickel bread, with raw onion and a sweet hot mustard or a stone-ground mustard. Then they give you a little Andes mint candy on top of it—for your breath.

Jaime's story was produced by Catherine Capelaro. Photo by Heidi Lamarr Rudd.





Here's an idea for a holiday cheese tray!
(use cheeses of your choice with grapes!)

CHEESE COUNTRY
book is now available through the mail.

It features the 12 remaining active cheese factories in Green county as well as many interesting photographs and cheese related anecdotes.

The 114 page book is a must have for cheese history buffs of every age.

The price is \$20.00 plus \$8 shipping cost. Make your check payable to:

NHCC

Mail to:
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Box 516,
Monroe, WI 53566

Linda Lee
Prairie Farms Dairy, Inc.

Favorite Cheese
Swiss

Proudest Achievement
Being appointed by the Southwestern Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association as their representative on the WCMA Board of Directors.

Why I Support WCMA
"WCMA is a reliable source for education, training, advocacy, and employment resources for the dairy industry. Association staff are always available to help members in any way that they can. It gives me great pleasure knowing that I am contributing to the dairy industry on a broader level."




More WCMA Board members

Kyle Jensen
Hilmar Cheese Company

Favorite Cheese
Aged Cheddar

Proudest Achievement
It's nearly impossible to call out one single achievement, but one thing that stands out to me is having a voice in many of the key decisions made throughout my career at Hilmar Cheese.

Why I Support WCMA
"I've found WCMA events to be an ideal place to connect with our customers and our colleagues in the industry. More recently, I've really enjoyed learning from the incredible team that is currently serving on the Board. I always feel that I take more than I give at our WCMA Board meetings with the talented and experienced WCMA team."




Chris Renard
Renard's Cheese
Rosewood Dairy

Favorite Cheese
Cloverleaf Reserve, New World Cheddar and 2 Year White Cheddar

Proudest Achievement
Producing award-winning cheese as a Wisconsin Master Cheesemaker, and growing our wholesale business over 250% and retail business over 900% in 10 years.

Why I Support WCMA
"WCMA is a great resource for industry news, education and training. WCMA plays an important role in the dairy industry for regulatory information, legislative decisions, and promotion. I'm proud to be a part of the group that is helping to grow Wisconsin dairy and keep it on the leading edge."




hope you have a great day
Aubrey
😊

November 9, 2021

Hello!

I am in third grade in Evansville, IN and we just finished reading Flat Stanley. In case you don't know, that is a story about a boy that was flattened by a bulletin board, and was able to fit in envelopes to be mailed to visit his friends. We are also learning about the Midwest Region of the United States. So, my class is trying to send Flat Stanley on a Midwest adventure.

I sent my Flat Stanley to you! Please take him somewhere and write to me at my school telling me about where he went. If you have any pictures of Flat Stanley on his trip or postcards, please mail them along.

We will be keeping track of all the places in the Midwest that Flat Stanley visits in our classroom on our map.

Thank you for helping me with this project.

Sincerely, Aubrey

Mailing Address:

Mrs. Kinman's 3rd Grade Class
Hebron Elementary School
4400 Bellemeade Ave.
Evansville, IN 47714

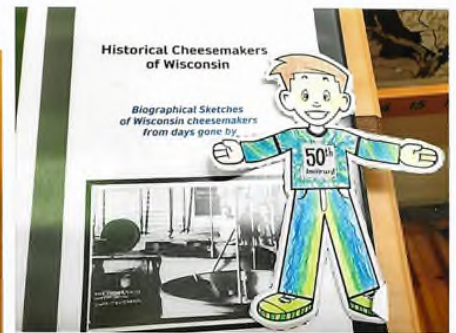
Email:

stacia.kinman@evsck12.com

NHCC gets some Unusual requests! Exec. Dir. Donna Douglas Fulfilled this request and made some 3rd Graders extremely happy! Even Stanley was Impressed!



*Flat Stanley
Toured the
Cheese Center
And educated
Some
3rd graders*



FLAT STANLEY 'S OFF SEASON VISIT TO NHCC



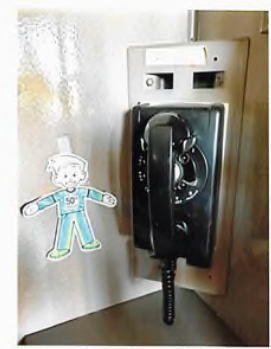


Limburger Cheese

The first Limburger cheese maker was Nick Corber, who came to Grant County in 1806, and established the Foreign type (Swiss & Limburger) cheese making area.

The Chales Cheese Factory was built by the Kraft Food Company in 1948 and they were instrumental in producing the first Limburger made from pasteurized milk. In 1951 the factory became a co-op and it remains as the only factory in the United States that manufactures Limburger, as well as Baby Swiss. Albert Dejecker managed the factory from 1946 until his retirement in 1992.

Thank You Evansville, Indiana 3rd Graders & Aubrey



Welcome Visitors
Please Tell Us How You Heard About Us
Thank You!

Date	Who are you?	Where are you from?	Zip Code	How did you hear about us?
10/30	Sherry & Dennis	Chicago, IL	60626	Internet
10/30	Kyle & Tim Keeler	Bellevue, WA	98006	Family
10/30	Paul Keeler	Denver, CO	80202	Family
10/31	Ann & Nancy Street	Denver, CO	80202	Family
10/31	Sherry & Dennis	Chicago, IL	60626	Family
10/31	Paul & Nancy	Denver, CO	80202	Family
11/1	Paul & Nancy	Denver, CO	80202	Family
11/1	FLAT STANLEY	EVANSVILLE, IN	47712	Family

See Flat Stanley's Signature





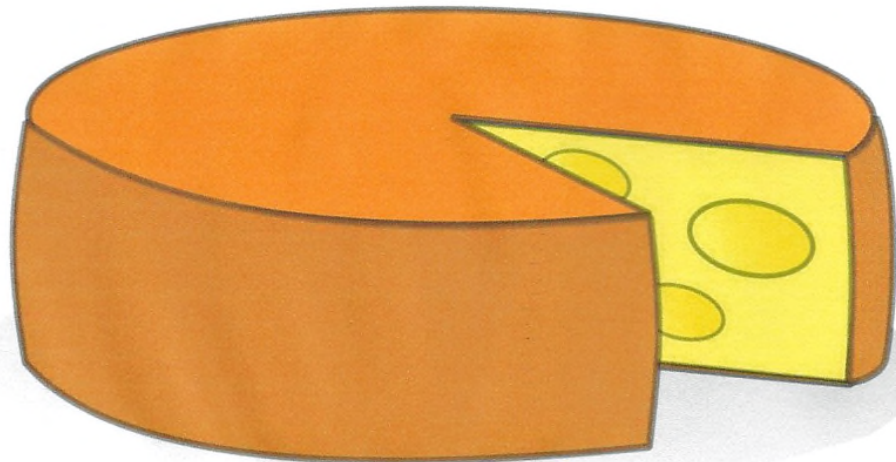
CHEESE

WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

- BLEND
- BRAND
- BRICK
- BRIE
- CHEDDAR
- COTTAGE
- CREAM
- DAIRY
- DIPS
- FETA
- FOOD
- FRESH
- GOAT
- GOUDA
- GRILLED
- MELT
- MILK
- MOLD
- NACHOS
- NATURAL
- NUTTY
- ODOR
- PASTA
- PASTE
- PIECE
- ROBUST
- SERVE
- SIDE
- SNACK
- SOFT
- SOUP
- SPREAD
- SWEET
- SWISS
- TACO
- TASTE
- TRAY

S W I S S N A C K T F O S
P V Z N G R I L L E D L W
A S A F U P I E C E S R E
S N I T A T M A E R C A E
T Y E D S N T C H O F D T
E C T I E A A Y T E S D B
H H S E R F P T T J P E C
K O A X T K A A U F I H L
B D T A O G L B W R D C K
D F O D E N R I B S A C T
N G O U D A C T M P I L S
E R P O N C D A I R Y N U
L K T D D H F C B E F J B
B O N D L O M O Y A R T O
R E V R E S O U P D Y P R

The words appear UP, DOWN, BACKWARDS, and DIAGONALLY.
Find and circle each word.



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The National Historic Cheesemaking Center, Inc. is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of information and artifacts about the history of cheesemaking in America, extending back to the "old world."

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<input type="checkbox"/> SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP	\$500.00	Annual

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The National Historic Cheesemaking Center is a tribute to those who have gone before...and is dedicated to the hard work and sacrifices of all those in the dairy industry who have made this area of southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois internationally famous.

The unique center recalls the rich heritage of the area and is illustrative of the lively cheese industry which still flourishes today.

*.....Recalling an era that was,
And will never be again!*



IMOBESTEG CHEESE FACTORY

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Center
2108 6th Avenue
Monroe WI 53566**