

Tea: the essence of life

Reprinted from The Martlet

By MICHAEL D. REID

Tea. Ah, tea. The essence of life.

What better reminder of the Western world's early debt to the East is there than this stimulative potion, indeed? Hailed as the world's most popular beverage (next to water) and holding that title still today - contrary to what the makers of Coke, Pepsi and their counterparts might have us otherwise believe - tea has left an indelible imprint on world culture, opening the doors to its entrenchment as a way of life in countless countries.

I was weaned on the stuff as a growing child in Glasgow, Scotland. Perhaps as a result of the brew's settling qualities or because of the sheer romanticism of its history, my frequent forays into coffee addiction have invariably been halted once the yearning for the satisfying taste of tea returned.

And I'm glad of that, too. For, despite the questionable cancer of the pancreas, these warnings provide an excuse uphold the tea-drinking habit nonetheless. Mind you, it's a lame excuse since reports also show tea's tannic acid content to be potentially harmful to the stomach lining. Further, scientists are even saying that herbal teas, doused with contaminants, cannot escape similar criticism.

All of these ominous revelations serve only to add another page to tea's colorful history, however. Throughout the ages, conflicting opinions on tea's curative qualities and/or harmful effects have surfaced and disappeared with equal swiftness. Nowadays, it's highly unlikely that even the direct predictions will thwart the habits of tea aficionados.

Imagine living in the 17th century when tea was seen as a remedy for migraines, drowsiness, apoplexy, lethargy, paralysis, dizziness, epilepsy, catarrh, eye infections, buzzing ears, sore stomach, colic, gravel, gallstones, heart palpitation, disorders of the spleen, coughing blood, colds and dysentery. If only those beliefs could hold true today!

Chronicling the history of tea has been a frustrating experience for historians. Although it is believed to have been discovered in China, exact details have been difficult to pinpoint since the Chinese often manipulated history to suit their own purposes.

The mythological discoverer of tea was the Chinese Emperor Shen Nung in 2737 B.C. He wrote: "It grows in winter in the valleys by the streams on the hills of Ichow, and does not perish in severe winter. It is gathered on the third day of the third month and then dried." He went on to say that tea was "good for tumors or abscesses that come about the head, or for ailments of the bladder. It dissipates heat caused by the phlegms or inflammation of the chest. It quenches thirst. It lessens the desire for sleep. It gladdens and cheers the heart."

From China, tea spread to Japan where that country's citizens had their own ideas on its origins. One Japanese legend claimed tea to be a native drink. As the legend went, a Buddhist saint once fell asleep during an all-night prayer vigil. He awoke and was furious at his own weakness. As a result he chopped off his eyelids and threw them to the ground. They grew into a tea bush with leaves that had the power of postponing sleep.

Another legend saw tea as being the discovery of a group of Buddhist priests who, after unsuccessfully boiling impure water in several types of herbs to make it safe for drinking, threw in some leaves from a nearby bush in an act of desperation. The result was tea.

There's no denying that the authenticity of many historical references to tea would be difficult to substantiate. Tea's later effects on society are clearly evident however. Chinese dynasties treated tea-drinking as a high art. The Japanese elevated tea to a religious ceremony. Tea was instrumental in turning Great Britain into a powerful commercial empire. Tea production greatly bolstered India's economy.

Here at home, Victoria, B.C. in its own characteristic way has sliced a share of the pie. Tourist literature boasts our city as being one of the last bastions of the afternoon tea custom. Pamphlets shamelessly include the city's "tea rooms" as an integral part in capturing that "little bit of Olde England" atmosphere. Restaurant proprietors have jumped on the bandwagon, many of them adding scones, crumpets, sandwiches, assorted teas and cakes to their menus, urging tourists and citizens alike to "... come join us for afternoon tea."

Woodsmen compete tomorrow

By GEORGE VON JAGOW

Paul Bunyan, Stand Aside, the top University woodsmen in Eastern North America have arrived! Tomorrow axes will be chopping, saws buzzing and wood chips flying as 32 teams compete for the illustrious UNB trophy. The UNB Annual International Woodmen's competition is one of the top two University competitions throughout North America. Teams come from as far away as Thunder Bay (1600 miles), Toronto, Montreal, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine and Nova Scotia.

Last year, UNB pulled off an unprecedented 1-2 finish by the men's "A" and "B" teams. This year's "A" team, led by Captain Peter Hamilton, is fully comprised of veterans and should be a strong contender for the overall championship again. The UNB "B" team has only one returnee and is considered the "dark horse" of the competition. The woman's team is one of the strongest

ever and will beat many of the men's teams this year. The girls feel quite confident after a strong second place finish down at Unity College Maine during the Thanksgiving weekend.

The competition is made up of thirteen different events involving many of the lumberjack skills necessary in the days of Paul Bunyan.

Events involved in the competition are:

- 1) Fell and Truth
- 2) Cross Cut
- 3) Swede Saw
- 4) Pulp Toss
- 5) Speed Chopping
- 6) Log Decking
- 8) Quarter Split
- 9) Chain Saw
- 10) Chain Throw
- 11) Dot Split
- 12) Pulp Throw
- 13) Water Boil

The competition takes place in the lot below the Aitken Centre starting at 8 a.m. Excluding the lunch hour, events will be run continuously till

about 6 p.m. Also present will be a display on some of the more modern machines used to harvest wood.

The following schools will be competing here this weekend: Lakehead U., U. of Toronto, MacDonald College, Nova Scotia Agricultural College, Maritime Forest Ranger School, U. of New Hampshire, U. of Maine at Orono, Unity College, Colby College, U. of Vermont, and the host school, UNB.

Hammerfest, one of UNB's largest traditions takes place after the competition in the woodlot Saturday night.



THE GARDEN SQUARE Newly Renovated!

A Whole New Eating Experience
Bigger, Brighter, Live Planter, Background Music

THE FULL RANGE

Featuring hot meals daily
11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

TERRACE TREATS

Fresh pastries and breads
9:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

GREENHOUSE DELI

Salads and Sandwiches Made to Order
11:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

SIZZLER

A La Carte Items
7:30 a.m. - 12:00 midnight

Hostess Service: Mon., Wed., Fri. Right Entrance
Cafeteria Level
Vending Machines Daily at Left Entrance
Cafeteria Level

WATCH FOR GRAND OPENING

Gifts,

Prizes,

Freebees