

Keeping members and friends in touch with the Wisconsin Union

QUARTERLY

FALL 1998



Students gather in the Rathskeller after classes in the early 1940s.

Rathskeller celebrates 70th

In cheerful spirit enter. Leave your sorrows outside.

That's the English translation for the German motto hand-painted above the archway entrance to the Rathskeller. The motto continues to welcome thousands of students each year just as it first did 70 years ago when the Rathskeller opened on October 6, 1928.

This fall, the Rathskeller will mark its 70th year with special events, an anniversary logo (in use for one year and then it will disappear), commemorative clothing, goods and specially-brewed lager beer. Anniversary T-shirts (\$14.24 for members) and a ceramic mug (\$20.30)

emblazoned with the anniversary logo are already available in Essentials Store.

Sample a draft of the Rathskeller 70th Anniversary Lager, a specially-brewed beer by Gray's Brewing Co. of Janesville. It is a light lager, golden in color, brewed in pre-prohibition tradition and aged for 60 days. The Anniversary Lager is already for sale now through October on the Terrace and in the Rathskeller.

Find out more about the Rathskeller— page 2



THE WISCONSIN UNION

Through the decades

October 6, 1928: Rathskeller opens and celebrates “gemutlichkeit” – comradeship, congeniality, and a warm feeling of well-being.

1933: Rathskeller begins serving 3.2 beer after Congress declares it non-intoxicating, the first public university to serve beer on campus.

1935: Union designated by the Board of Regents as UW-Madison’s Division of Social Education.

1944: For the first time, Rathskeller is fully-open to women who, as a result of the war years, outnumber men on campus more than 3 to 1.

Mid 1950s: Shorts are approved on the Terrace and “in the informal atmosphere of the Rathskeller” but not elsewhere.

Early 1960s: Rathskeller “hostesses” start checking ages and ask patrons to take their feet off tables. The Daily Cardinal proclaims, “The old Rat is dead!”

1964: Stiftskeller opens.

Late 1960s: A move to close the Rathskeller to curtail illicit drug traffic is rejected by the Board of Regents.

1970s: In a new spirit of peace and cooperation after years of unrest, students meet with campus police over coffee in the Rathskeller.

1980: The end of a 30-year Fasching tradition, an ancient German drinking festival at Memorial Union.

October 6, 1998: Rathskeller turns 70.



“When wine and beer make war on each other, who will win, who will lose?” is the English translation of the banner across the Battle of Beer and Wine mural on the far west wall of the Rathskeller. It is adapted from the famous mural in the Munich Rathskeller.

Why “Rathskeller?”

The Rathskeller is world-renowned for wonderfully replicating the beer halls of ancient Germany. The fact that the room became a Rathskeller was quite accidental. It was labeled taproom in the original blueprints. But when Leon Pescheret, the Union’s French-born interior designer, first saw the bare room in 1927 he exclaimed, “Why, this looks like a Rathskeller,” or the cellar of a German Rathaus or village hall where the city fathers gathered after work for fellowship and refreshment.

Painter Eugene Hausler, trained in Germany and familiar with Rathskeller decor, executed the famous murals and German mottoes in oil on dry plaster (secco). They were restored by Kurt Schaldach in 1978. The murals depict the main facets of student life at the time the building opened: social activity, study, athletics, forensics, student government, journalism, drama, music.

Special music and entertainment events during the first two weeks of October will add to the 70th celebration. Watch the local newspapers or call 265-3000 for complete details.



Union employees Steph Andrew and Mike Hirsch manage a staff of 80-100 in the Rathskeller and on the Terrace. Steph, who began here as a student employee, says, “I’ve learned what can be accomplished through dedication and team work – experiences that’ll stay with me the rest of my life.” Mike points to “the variety of people, the students that come through and the promise of great events” as highlights of his 26 years here.

Questions? Call us!

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