

Local

Beer lover's collection just an empty dream

By MARTY BLAISE
Battalion Reporter

A beer lover's dream would be to walk into Alex Van Steen's home and see the hundreds of beer cans lined up on shelves. There's only one problem — the cans are empty.

Van Steen, a dairy science major from Houston, collects and trades beer cans. He began his hobby while living in St. Louis in 1970.

"It was something everybody did for a hobby in the Midwest," he said, "and I started collecting a few cans, too."

After he moved to Houston in 1972, Van Steen stopped collecting for awhile, but soon found several beer can collectors to trade with and began to build on his collection again.

"The last time I counted, I had somewhere between 550 and 600 different cans," he said.

When he began his hobby, Van Steen said, he collected every type he could.

"We'd take these big family trips around the United States and to national parks," Van Steen said. "I'd hit every trash can and every liquor store and get all these different cans."

While looking for cans on a hiking trip in Canada, Van Steen

found an outhouse full of old Canadian beer bottles.

"I took these back to Houston and traded them off for some nice beer cans," he said.

"I collected cans with a different type of tab or a different colored lettering, and then I decided I wanted to collect something more specific," Van Steen said.

Although at first he collected all types of cans — different types of tabs or different colored lettering — now Van Steen specializes in collecting tin beer cans.

Van Steen gets his beer cans by finding them, trading and buying them.

He also barter beer memorabilia such as trays, posters, and coasters for the cans.

His collection also is comprised of contributions.

"There was a man that came over from Great Britain on a business trip and was so impressed with my collection that every two or three months he sends me a couple of cans," Van Steen said.

Van Steen, who was born in the Netherlands, said he also has an uncle who lives there and also sends him beer cans.

Several oak shelves in the game room of his parents' home in Houston hold the beer can collec-

tion. Van Steen said he liked to alphabetize his cans.

When categorizing cans by the same brewery, Van Steen considers year, the type of beer the can contained, the type of pull-tab and the type of material the can is made of.

"I like to keep all my cans bottom-opened," Van Steen said, "so it looks like the cans were never opened, but I don't keep cans that still have beer in them."

The most valuable can in Van Steen's collection is a Drewry's Ale which he said is worth \$90. A can may be valued by age or limited series, Van Steen said.

The two cans he said he would like most to add to his collection are an old Miller Malt Liquor can and a Budweiser Malt Liquor can.

To those who might be interested in starting a beer can collection, Van Steen said, "Don't buy any cans, but try to collect or find them."

He advised keeping the cans clean, and not getting old, rusty or dented cans unless they are valuable.

The first beer cans were made in about 1935, Van Steen said, and these cans, along with some cans that were only on the market for a few weeks, like the 007 series, are some of the most valuable.



Photo by Marty Blaise

Dairy science major Alex Van Steen estimates he has more than 550 beer cans in his collection. Van Steen has been collecting and trading beer cans since 1970, and has accumulated such valuable cans as the \$90 Drewry Ale Can.

Extension service offers chemical control course

The risk of human exposure to hazardous chemicals is growing as the volume of chemicals transported across the nation increases, a specialist in charge of training emergency response teams says.

In 1977, one of the last years that figures are available, more than 14,000 accidents were reported involving trucks hauling some sort of hazardous material and about 1,600 reported mishaps involving railway tank cars, said Larry Payne of the Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEES).

Larry Payne directs the TEES program that trains officials and emergency squads in the control of oil spills and hazardous materials such as gasoline and chlorine.

The need for swift, but safe and carefully planned, action in chemical disasters prompted TEES, a part of the Texas A&M University system, to develop a five-day hazardous material control course at its College Station headquarters, Payne said.

The course is offered on a regular basis. It is designed so students may spend most of the time in realistic hands-on situations — from a fiery truck crash to finding and patching leaks.

Began only two years ago, the hazardous material control course is now held more than 12 times a year at Brayton Firemen Training Field, a 60-acre, facility southwest of the Texas A&M main campus.

In many cases, the fluid used in these simulated exercises is only colored water, but students are expected to think, dress and act as if the water were a deadly poison, Payne said.

In addition to the five-day, hands-on program, the TEES Oil and Hazardous Material Control Training Division has arranged with the Chemical Manufacturers

Association to conduct a two-day workshop at various locations across the nation.

Another spin-off of the course has been development of a two-day tank truck rollover at Brayton Field, in which emergency teams will practice controlling the material while unloading and uprighting the trailer.

Hazardous material extension courses are also being taught by the TEES division as a result of the program, Payne said. These courses are oriented towards the theory of contingency planning and hazardous material control, with limited hands-on training.

While training emergency

teams to handle sometimes life-and-death situations, the same TEES division also conducts a widely recognized oil spill control program at a special facility in Galveston. Nearly 30 of the five-day oil spill classes are now held each year, Payne said.

As with many engineering extension service programs, special contract courses are arranged when possible.

The oil spill control training includes experience in skimmer and boom operations, spill sampling and documentation, moving oil slicks across the water's surface and recovering underground spills.

These findings, the professor said, though limited by sample size and research procedures, indicate that businesses who cater to children need to get more involved in consumer education. Stores — particularly self-service stores — need to be more responsive to children as consumers, perhaps by going into the classrooms and describing purchase procedures and by letting them know how to obtain remedies for faulty products, he said.

"Most of the guidelines for developing consumer education materials for children have been developed from an adult's point of view. No one has asked the children what consumer problems they have and what consumer competencies they lack," McNeal said.

Youngsters 'scared' by business world, A&M professor says

A Texas A&M University marketing professor wanting to learn more about young consumers has found youngsters are disenchanted with the business world.

After surveying 45 third-graders and 54 fifth-graders, Dr. James McNeal of Texas A&M's College of Business Administration and a former doctoral student, C.J. Anderson, said many children expect to get "ripped off" or misled by stores, packaging, advertising and salespeople.

"Half the children felt scared or uneasy while shopping, particularly when they shopped alone," McNeal said. "They said they felt like they were being neglected by store personnel, and that it was sometimes difficult to get people to sell them things."

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