



History Pub

Burgers, beer, a history lesson — it's a winning combo at McMenamins Kennedy School one evening a month

BY JANIE NAFSINGER

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Attention everyone who used to nod off in history class: Karen Kinzey urges you to give the subject another shot. Because this time, the teacher will let you order a burger and beer.

Kinzey is the creator of History Pub, a monthly gathering at McMenamins Kennedy School where adults gather around tables to enjoy food and drink and hear guest speakers talk about fascinating chapters from the region's past.

Where else can you sip a pint of Terminator Stout while learning about the street theater and mass advertising campaign that finally won Oregon women the right to vote in 1912 after five failed attempts? Western Oregon University history professor Kimberly Jensen painted a vivid picture of Oregon's "votes for women" movement when she spoke at the Sept. 29 History Pub.

Since History Pub began in July, other guest speakers have included McMenamins historian Tim Hills; journalist-musician Valerie Brown on Portland's coffeehouse scene; and Portland Fire Bureau historian Don Porth on the political intrigue in Portland's fire services. Coming up in November: World War II bombardier Wilton Jackson.

History Pub strives to "remind people that history can be fun and relevant," Kinzey says.

Held the last Monday evening of the month, History Pub is a joint program of McMenamins, the Oregon Historical Society and Holy Names Heritage Center, a Lake Oswego-based community education resource run by Sisters of the Holy Names.

Kinzey, program manager at Holy Names, got the inspiration for History Pub from Science Pub, a similar program that OMSI runs at McMenamins Mission Theater.

"The idea behind both is similar," says Kinzey, who heard a presentation by Science Pub coordinator Amanda Thomas. "With science — and, even more so, history — I think not everyone has the most positive memories of their experiences in school."

In fact, Kinzey believes that "people's perception of history is even more negative than that of science."

And she liked Thomas' approach: "Speakers have to be able to talk with a mike in one hand and a beer in the other," she quotes Thomas saying.

History Pub also aims to focus on "under-represented history" such as the 1887 massacre of Chinese miners in Hells Canyon, Kinzey says. That is one topic she is planning for 2009, along with the World War II internment of Japanese-Americans, the 1948 Vanport flood and the 1970 Vortex rock festival at McIver State Park.

History Pub draws adults of all ages, ranging from college age to retirees in their 80s and 90s. "Most are boomers and up," Kinzey says.

Her in-laws, Howard and Nancy Kinzey of White Salmon, Wash., attended their first History Pub on Sept. 29 and enjoyed the program.

"It is educational," Howard Kinzey said. "It's what we need more of — you can't be hurt by education."

Brush up on your history

What: History Pub.

at 7 p.m.

Where: McMenamins Kennedy School, 5736 N.E. 33rd Ave., Portland.

Admission: Free. Food and beverages available for purchase.

Next topic: Nov. 24, World War II bombardier Wilton Jackson. No program in December.

Presented by: Oregon Historical Society, Holy Names Heritage Center and McMenamins.

Online info: For the next History Pub

program topic, visit www.ohs.org (click on “events calendar”) or www.holynamesheritagecenter.org (click on “events”).

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