

Appreciating Oktoberfest

Dear Tim:

What's the deal with Oktoberfest? Every year you hear about places celebrating it, but I've never found out what it's all about. Are you supposed to dress up? Is there gift giving? What's the deal?

—Festless on Fenwick



DEAR TIM

Dear Festless:

It's actually spelled Oktoberfest, and it's the world's largest beer festival. The first one was held in 1810 in honor of Bavarian Crown Prince Ludwig's marriage to Princess Therese von Sachsen-Hildburghausen. The festivities began on October 12 and ended on October 17 with a horse race. In subsequent years, the celebrations were repeated and, later, the festival was prolonged and moved forward into September to take advantage of better weather. Today the festival attracts 6 million people a year to the German town of Theresienwiese. And after the lord mayor of Munich taps the first barrel, more

than 61,000 hectoliters of brew are consumed. That's like 2 million gallons. Talk about a party! But don't feel like you have to miss out. Lots of American communities with German ancestry celebrate the occasion on a smaller scale. And you don't have to bring anything but a love of beer and a fondness for good food and good times. We're celebrating with some great October beer specials, including Samuel Adams Oktoberfest, Victory Storm

King Imperial Stout and Kinsale Lager. So pick up a case and hoist a stein. And wear your lederhosen. It's tradition.

Dear Tim:

What are you going to be for Halloween this year?

—Ghoul on Goodale

Dear Ghoul:

This year I'm going as the national debt. I couldn't think of anything scarier than that. Besides, my clown costume (or, as Glenda calls it, my uniform) is in the wash. No matter how you dress up, don't forget to stock up on treats for the little tricksters in your neighborhood. We've got a sweet selection in aisle 2, and the prices won't scare the bejesus out of you.

Dear Tim:

What's black and white and red all over?

—Riddler on Ridgeview

Dear Riddler:

My column.

Dear Tim is presented as a public service by Tim Huffman, owner of Huffman's Market. Write to him in care of Huffman's Market, 2140 Tremont Center, Upper Arlington, Ohio, 43221 or at www.huffmansmarket.com. Or bring this ad in for a free 2005 calendar you can use to remember his birthday.