A correction
Not the Lord's Prayer After All

In a recent installment of “Photos From the Road” (June 2011) one of the steins depicted (figure 2) was brought to a chapter meeting of the Golden Gate Zechers. Its owner, Jim Stoner, had concluded that the verse on this stein, actually a six-liter size, was the Lord’s Prayer.

Roy De Selms soon realized that the stein in fact shows a different verse entirely, one which is very much in keeping with the Germanic sense of the relationship between drinking and humor. The verse on the stein reads as follows:

Der Kather ist ein Leid für wahr.
Vordemes Jedem schaudert,
Ein Mittel gibt’s dagegen zwar.

The first word in this verse plays a crucial role in understanding its meaning. The old German word Kather (and its modern counterpart, Kater) has a double meaning, translating both as “tom-cat” and “hangover”. That bit of knowledge explains why we so often see a cat depicted on beer steins, especially those which depict a drinker suffering from over-indulgence.

With his head bandaged and a sorrowful howl emitting from his mouth, the Schierholz Drunken Cat (figure 3) drives home the symbolic relationship between the cat and the hangover.

The verse on Jim Stoner’s six-liter stein can be roughly translated as:

The tom-cat is unpleasant for sure. Everyone shudders when facing him, on the other hand a remedy is available, which should not be a secret; for the medicine is well known, just get the upper hand of drinking, of boozing by old or young and the answer will come to us.

In other words, instead of drinking from the six-liter stein, consider switching to the 1¼-liter Vater Unser stein, or better yet, from the ½-liter Drunken Cat.