Our favorite topic is in the water! It's a conspiracy! It's everywhere.

In a month "History on Tap: Farms, Fermentation and the Free Lunch" starts at Mission Mill and we can barely stand the excitement!

So you can imagine how interesting it was to see in the New York Times a review of "Beer Here: Brewing New York's History," an exhibit at the New York Historical Society that started on Friday.

It's almost like there's a master exhibit template you can buy from the Historical Society Guild. Just fill in the blanks with local names and details and you've got a show.

OK. Not really. But what it is, is a clear sign that what we might call the Bierzzeitgeist is heavy just now. Beer is of the moment, and its history an increasingly serious - and popular! - topic for social history.

History on Tap examines the cultural and economic role of Oregon generally, and the Willamette Valley specifically, as one of the nation's largest beer producers.

Discover brewing methods, machinery and recipes for creating beers, as well as information on home brewing. Explore the importance of hops growing to the Willamette Valley's economy, past and present. Uncover the tensions and interdependence that existed between the brewing industry, the temperance movement and women's suffrage. Entrepreneurship is highlighted through "case histories" from brewing at Fort Vancouver in 1826, to Henry Saxer and Henry Weinhard in the 1840s and 1850s, to Salem's Capital Brewery, to today's craft brewing industry.

We love this.

The Salem edition has announced an event schedule.

On Sunday, June 24, at 2:00pm, Gilgamesh is leading a food and beer pairing exercise. $15

And a lecture series on Thursdays at 5:30pm ($3 members / $5 riffraff), McMenamins beer for sale:

- July 12 - "Essentials of Beer," Fred Eckhardt, Oregon Beer Publicist, and John Foyston, Oregonian Beer Reporter
- July 19 - "Northwest Beer War of the 1930s," Tim Hills, McMenamins Pubs & Breweries Historian
- July 26 - "Tribal Hop Pickers," Dr. David Lewis, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Cultural Resources Department
- August 2 - "Suffrage and Temperance: Significant Women's Movements in Oregon's Prohibition Era," Sarah Hardy, Western Oregon University
- August 9 - "Microbrew Revolution and Evolution," Fred Bowman, Oregon craft brewing pioneer and co-founder of Portland Brewing

If we have a quibble, and it's a small one, we'd like to see a little more on the Salem area - there's a significant, and not unexpected, Portland angle to much of this, and hopefully Salem's own beery history won't be stinted.

In any event, a big tip of the pint to Mission Mill for "History on Tap"!

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