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BrewCats: A trip to Beertown

Stephanie L. Smith | Staff Reporter | Posted: Wednesday, March 9, 2016 10:23 pm

As I grow older, I find myself counting the days until I can escape Cincinnati and live somewhere quieter and less obnoxious. For two and a half hours at Know Theatre, I experienced bliss as a resident no longer of Cincinnati, but of Beertown.

I — and a handful of Cincinnatians — “moved into” this community just in time for Beertown’s 20th Quinquennial, a fictional event that occurs every five years where residents gather and reevaluate the contents of the town’s time capsule. This ceremony is a quirky mixture of improv and audience inclusion that plays out like a choose-your-own-adventure, depending on the audience member’s participation.

We were welcomed into Beertown with a dessert potluck (the audience, or new residents are encouraged to bring treats too) as happy Beertonians mingled and chatted with us. The mayor’s daughter, 15-year-old M.J. Soch (played by Aiden Simms), was excited to find out that this was my first quinquennial, yet our discussion centered more around the incredible red velvet cupcake I was devouring.

The 20th Quinquennial was indeed a magical time. We were treated to an evening of over 14 lively antecedents — reenactments of the discovery of Beertown and other key moments – interspersed between the town archivist Joann Ryals (Eileen Earnest) and the younger Soch revealing the time capsule’s contents, grouped by eternal artifacts (which symbolize the essence of Beertown and can not be voted out) and ephemeral artifacts (which reflects Beertown’s current values and can be voted out).

Heated debates of nepotism and gentrification occurred during the proposed artifact voting over what new items should be included in the time capsule. Even the audience-slash-new-residents offered persuasive opinions, contributing their own stories about Beertown’s history.

The editor-in-chief of Beertown Bugle’s, Arthur Whiting (Daryl Harris), interviewed me. As expected from the media, there were no easy questions. He asked what personal item means a lot to me, which I admitted was not an item, but rather a being: my cats.

My answer threw him off somewhat as he was looking for items to include in the time capsule. After



Beertown01.jpg

offering some of my dead cat's ashes for inclusion, I secured my place as Beertown's crazy cat lady.

You won't find Beertown on any map, but you'll find the town's essence in your heart as you struggle to figure out what items best tell your own story, and realize that memories change slightly each time you remember something, usually a result of twisting some of the details to create a supposedly better narrative. What starts out as a fun stay in a quirky little town ends up being surprisingly emotional.