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News Canada

Fri, July 14, 2006

Brewery offers dream job

By **THANE BURNETT**

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There are only a few truly coveted jobs in Canada.

The Hockey Hall of Fame executive who accompanies the Stanley Cup on road trips. The owner of a Tim Hortons franchise. And the guy who gets to hold all the clothes during a midnight skinny dipping raid in cottage country -- although I believe that's a non-paying position.

These are vocations beside which all others seem somehow to pale.

One such appeared in the want ads of the daily papers this week: it was a call for applications for the Canadian Dream.

South of the border, kids dream of becoming president.

TALK ABOUT IT

Here -- talk about it among yourselves in the office or on the patio right now -- how many Canadian adults wouldn't want to be "Director of Product Quality" for a brewery?

Moosehead Breweries, the New Brunswick independent suds manufacturer, is searching for a beer lover to oversee -- and taste -- every batch that comes out of their giant kettles.



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"In Canada, it's the type of position that has status -- you're certainly the centre of attention at ... parties," explains Moosehead spokesman, Joel Levesque, from the company's headquarters on the main street in Saint John, N.B.

"It's an ambassador of good taste. I can't think of another job any red-bloodied Canadian wouldn't aspire more to."

You can be as American as apple pie. But here, it's as Canadian as beer.

More than 40% of Canadian beer drinkers who took part in a survey two years ago said if they were stranded on a deserted island, they would miss their brew more than maple syrup, poutine, women and water.

During the same survey, by SES Research, the phrase "2-4" was right behind "eh" as the most Canadian expression. It also found three out of four Canadians have swum in the nude and 51% talked to the TV. But it was beer that dominated the survey.

The Moosehead want ad is for a new position the company has created. The person who gets the job will be part of a taste panel, almost every day.

The company -- owned by the Oland family which can now claim seven generations working at the plant -- won't talk about salary. But as an employee, you do get a lot of free beer -- after you pay the taxes.

"It's the type of job that has you skipping to work," says spokesman Levesque, adding it doesn't mean you'll be staggering home afterward.

Gone are the days when beer taps were used like coffee pots in break rooms.

LOVE BEER

"But the job is all about the beer. And Canadians love their beer," Levesque explains. "The only thing that would make it more Canadian dream is if we put a rink in the (brewery).

"It's like being in charge of quality control at Hugh Hefner's mansion."

Perhaps better, says Jerry Bones.

He's a founding father of the Canadian Beer Drinkers Alliance (canadianbeerdrinkersalliance.ca), a tongue in cheek collection of hundreds of registered fans of Canuck amber brew.

"Where do we go after work -- we go for a beer, not champagne," says the 57-year-old retired Georgina school teacher who, in alliance literature, calls himself Elmo B. Sudz.

"And if you listen to those conversations, you'll realize Canadians solve every problem. From violence in Toronto to the economy. The answers are found over beers."

Try as he might, he couldn't think of any of his members who wouldn't long to hold the title of "Director of Product Quality" for a brewery like Moosehead.

"(The position) would be something most Canadian beer drinkers would aspire to," Bones says.

"We Canadians equate it with snowshoes and maple syrup and the musical ride. It's a part of our history."



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Moosehead Breweries -- which is backing fellow Sun columnist Mark Bonokoski's mission to have Ontario natural resources officials return Bob the stuffed moose head back to his owner -- is bracing for a number of resumes from average beer drinkers who want to turn pro.

"We get quite a few anyway, from people asking if we have spots open on our beer tasting panel," says Levesque.

After a lifetime of tipping back, many believe it's time to give back.

But they may be disappointed. The brewery wants a candidate who has a degree in science, bioscience or food technology, "supplemented by significant microbiology courses."

But take heart golden warriors.

If you don't get the job, Bones' Canadian Beer Drinkers Alliance -- with no meetings, no dues and no doubts about what's important in life -- is offering its own postings in that organization.

"And every position is at the executive level -- we're all equals," Bones says.

Just keep track of your own membership.

Bones warns that, unlike quality control at a brewery like Moosehead: "We're not big on keeping records."

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