

Sip, nibble and socialize at Flint Institute of Arts' second Art on Tap

By [Jennifer Kildee](#) | [Flint Journal](#)

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Kevin Bessert attended last year's inaugural Art on Tap beer-tasting event at the Flint Institute of Arts on a whim.

"I didn't hear about it until the week of," Bessert said. "So we (he and wife Christine) decided to go and I was very impressed that a first-year event would have 300 people. I felt like it was something they could build on and I kind of felt compelled to get involved."

So this year, Bessert joined the event's planning committee and set about trying to make the fun event even better.

"It's kind of a unique event," Bessert said. "I give the Flint Institute of Arts credit for capitalizing on the rising popularity of craft beers and Michigan beers that are really growing in popularity."

Art on Tap takes place from 4-9 p.m. Saturday on the grounds of the FIA, 1120 E. Kearsley St. The chair of this year's committee, Katharine W. Eiferle, is a longtime family friend, Bessert said.

"My parents were both very involved with the FIA," he said. "This is the first time I've been on a committee there at FIA."

Bessert said he expects to see a bigger crowd this year.

"It's a great time to enjoy the fall weather in a huge tent right there on FIA grounds," he said. "The end goal is to expose people to the crown jewel of Flint, which is the FIA. This event brings in people that maybe wouldn't be exposed to the FIA, maybe a different crowd. This year we're hoping for as many as 500, including a lot of regular FIA attendees."

At last year's event, food was sold by a vendor at an additional cost.

"This year, the beer cuisine is all from Oliver T's and is included in the ticket price," Bessert said. "No one wants to sit down and have a big meal when they're tasting beer. We'll have cheese trays, finger sandwiches, pretzels, stuff like that."

Organizers are hoping for great weather, but freestanding blowers will help keep the tent cozy if necessary, he said.

"Last year it was a crisp night, and when you get that many people in a tent, it's pretty comfortable. We'll have the sides down on the tent. We're hoping for a nice Michigan fall day."



Becky Turkovics of Davison waits for her sample of Leinenkugels to be poured at the 2008 Art on Tap. (Journal File Photo)

Bessert said he is “somewhat” knowledgeable about craft beers, but added there’s “so much beyond what I know.”

The event is held in partnership with local distributors John P. O’Sullivan Distributing Inc. and Tom Ryan Distributing Co. Inc.

“Without them this event wouldn’t happen,” Bessert said. “Everyone from the novice to very advanced will learn something. Someone who’s new to beer-tasting can talk to representatives, and there will be placards on each table to let people know where they can find a beer they like locally.”

Last year, nine beer companies were represented; this year there are 22 with offerings in three categories: Michigan beers, imports and craft beers. Bessert said the growing demand for craft beers has caused the big beer companies to compete with versions of their own.

“Michigan’s best-known craft beer is Bell’s, in Kalamazoo,” he said. “They have a market share and the big boys take notice.”

Preview

What: Art on Tap

Where: On the grounds of the Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint

When: 4-9 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 24

Tickets: \$20 FIA members, \$25 nonmembers. Patrons must be at least 21 years old.

Details: (810) 234-1695