

MapMagic, or BeerTails[®] from Another Land?

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For more than two years, bar customers have been enjoying various items displayed on the wall. Some are simply there for decoration or publicity. Others have evoked comment.

Consider, for example, the diagram below (Figure 1) showing beers of various kinds. Naturally, it is designed to educate those learning about craft beer. But, what lurks within? Graph theorists have been overheard to question whether the diagram, when viewed in a graph theoretic context is planar. Does it contain a Petersen subgraph? Does it contain bipartite subgraphs? Yes, there is more than one person in metro Meridian who can carry on a conversation about graph theory and beer!



Figure 1. Beer diagram.

On the brick wall near the beer diagram there is a large map of Mississippi, filled with names of famous folks originally from that state as well as locales of interest (Figure 2). Comments have been overheard on Groundhog Day between two college professors, one of English language and literature, and one of Geography, speculating whether James Joyce saw his shadow in his writings (given that his birthday is on Groundhog Day). Both were stimulated by the map: when the English professor saw the prominent position of William Faulkner's name, he noted that class that day had had to center on readings from Joyce.



Figure 2. Mississippi name map.

My personal favorite, however, despite interesting ventures into the worlds of mathematics and literature prompted by the bar wall hangings, is the blackboard map of the state of Mississippi (Figure 3). On it, we note the names and approximate locations of craft breweries within Mississippi. Clearly the projection is different from the map in Figure 2 although neither projection is known. I have proposed to customers sitting at the bar sipping their unique BeerTails™, that the projection should be named the “Simpson” projection. That comment usually draws a blank stare. However, once I mention

“[Bart Simpson’s head profile](#)” the usual response is a giggle and an “oh, yeah, I see it...Wow” (see the link).



Figure 3. The proposed “Simpson” projection of the state of Mississippi.

Later, when queried, all have commented (without exception) that they will never be able to look at the map behind the bar in the Brickhaus without seeing an image of Bart Simpson! That map has an evident power (magic?) to transform thought. Are there maps in your lives that have a similar effect? If so, please share with *Solstice* readers!

*Mr. Arlinghaus is the owner of Magnolia Cemetery, Marshall Florist, and the Brickhaus Bar and Grill, all of Meridian, Mississippi. Photos that appear here from the Brickhaus do so with his permission.