



HIRO KOMAE / AP
An interpreter (left) translates for Junichiro Ozawa, head of Ozawa Sake Brewery (third left) and his worker (in white) as Hitoshi Utsunomiya (far right) director of the Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association, stands during a media tour at the brewery in Ome, on the western outskirts of Tokyo, Japan, on Wednesday.

A fragrant night in Calhoun

Calhoun, Georgia. An autumn evening. I was supposed to be putting on a show with my band The Grand Ole Optimists. But that wasn't happening. I was unable to perform because of a serious gas problem.

"A gas problem?" said ticket holders who were being denied entrance into the Gem Theater. "What on earth did Sean eat?"

The cops and firemen explained. "Sean doesn't have gas, ma'am. There is a natural gas leak beneath the ground.

This is an explosion zone, folks. Step back, please."

Calhoun was in full disaster preparation mode. There were cop cars everywhere. Pumper trucks blocked the streets. Emergency vehicles sounded sirens. The atmosphere was filled with red and blue lights. Midtown was shut down.

Various audience members, lingering on sidewalks, kept eyeing me closely, watching for signs of gastrointestinal distress.

This is probably because the theater marquee was equipped with a message that read, in bold letters: "SEAN OF THE SOUTH SHOW CANCELED DUE TO GAS."

"You can look at it this way," said one of my band members, gazing at the marquee in much the same way you'd stare at a loved one, or the face of a newborn. "This has the potential to become the greatest flatulent joke of all time."

About an hour went by. Everybody kept waiting for an update on the gaseous situation. Everyone kept hoping the firemen would tell them whether they were in danger of explosion, air toxicity, or worse, they would all be required to attend my show.

But no news. So, everyone was sitting on curbs, waiting around, looking at their watches. Firemen were striding by in full turnout gear. Cops were flagging traffic. And it was growing evident with each moment: This gas simply would not pass.

But the night was not over. And this is why you have to love small towns. Because a Coulhoun-Gordon County library manager happened to be attending the show that night, waiting on the sidewalk.

"Let's all go hang out at the library!" she suggested. "And maybe we can all forget about our gas problems!"

"Yeah!" said another city employee. "It'll be a BLAST!" "Let's let'er rip!" said another guy.

And so it was, at nine o'clock on

COLUMNIST



SEAN DIETRICH

CULTURE VALUES

Japan's sake brewers hope UNESCO heritage listing can boost rice wine's appeal

By YURI KAGEYAMA
The Associated Press

OME, Japan — Deep in a dark warehouse the sake sleeps, stored in rows of giant tanks, each holding more than 2,640 gallons of the Japanese rice wine that is the product of brewing techniques dating back more than 1,000 years.

Junichiro Ozawa, the 18th-generation head of Ozawa Brewery, founded in 1702, hopes sake-brewing will win recognition as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, when the decision is made next month.

"We always think about the people who're enjoying our sake when we make it. I'm now so excited, imagining the faces of all the people around the world," he told reporters Wednesday during a tour of his brewery on the pastoral outskirts of Tokyo.

Sake, the drink of choice for the nobility in "The Tale of Genji" — Japan's most celebrated work of literature — has been widening its appeal, boosted by the growing international popularity of Japanese cuisine.

Sake exports from Japan total more than \$265 million a year, with the biggest destinations being the U.S. and China, according to the Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association.



HIRO KOMAE / AP
Bottles of Sawanoi, a Japanese sake brand by Ozawa Sake Brewery, are prepared for tasting at a room during a media tour at the brewery in Ome, on the western outskirts of Tokyo, Japan, on Wednesday.

That's up from about 22 billion yen in 2018. But exports still make up a tiny fraction of overall sake production in Japan. Brazil, Mexico and Southeast Asia, as well as France and the rest of Europe, all places where Japanese restaurants are gaining popularity,

are starting to take a liking to sake.

What's key to sake-making, which takes about two months, including fermentation and pressing, are the rice and the water.

For a product to be categorized Japanese sake, the rice must be Japanese. The relatively soft

quality of freshwater in Japan, like the supplies provided by the two wells at Ozawa Brewery, is also critical.

Among Ozawa's sake is the full-bodied aromatic Junmai Daiginjo, one of the top offerings, with 15% alcohol content and costing about \$23 for a 720 milliliter bottle.

Karakuti Nigorizake is unrefined sake, murky and not clear like usual sake, with 17% alcohol content and a rugged no-nonsense taste. It sells for \$16 for a 1,800 milliliter bottle.

The religious connotations of sake are evident at the brewery. The big cedar-leaves ball hanging under the eaves is a symbol of a shrine for the god of sake-making. In Japan, sake is used to purify and to celebrate. Sips from a cup signify the sealing of a marriage.

"Sake is not just an alcoholic beverage. It is Japanese culture itself," said Hitoshi Utsunomiya, director of the Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association.

The UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage designation is given to not just historical monuments but also practices passed down generations, such as oral traditions, performing arts, rituals and festivals.

It's not meant to be used for

See APPEAL, 3C

Helping Hand: A faint nebula located in the constellation Cassiopeia

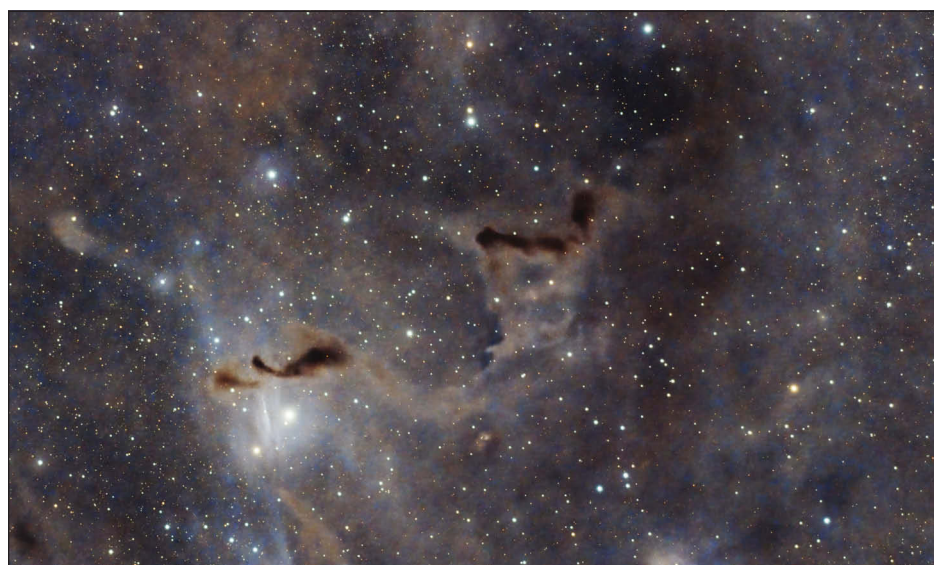
Thanksgiving is upon us and the sky is offering us a helping hand.

The Helping Hand Nebula (LDN 1355) is a very faint nebula located in the constellation Cassiopeia at a distance of 800 light years. It is a dark nebula that contains three distinct dark clouds giving the impression of an extending hand, hence its nickname. These dark clouds are cataloged under the Lynd's Dark Nebula catalog. LDN 1357 are the fingers, LDN 1355 is the palm and above the center LDN 1358 is the shoulder.

Dark nebulae are thick clouds of gas and dust mostly composed of hydrogen that block the light coming from behind. Star formation occurs in the inner molecular regions of dark nebulae. In the image we can also see a reflection nebula under

the palm of the hand known as VdB9 (Van Den Bergh Catalogue). Reflection nebulas do not emit a light of their own; they rather reflect the light from a nearby star. SU Cass is the bright star under the palm of the hand, which is a yellow giant star nineteen times larger than our sun, located 1,200 light years from earth. In the lower right corner there is another reflection nebula known as VdB7 which lies in proximity to the bright star RZ Cass located 200 light years away.

At first dark nebulae were thought to be holes in the Milky Way but eventually were discovered to be clouds of gas and dust so thick that blocked the light behind them. There are two major dark nebula catalogues: Barnard and Lynds (LDN) catalogues.



CARLOS ROTELLAR
The Helping Hand Nebula is a dark nebula that contains three distinct dark clouds giving the impression of an extending hand

Edward Emerson Barnard, born in Nashville, was an American astronomer known as "The Man

Who Never Slept." He first published a list of 182 dark objects in the sky on his "Barnard Catalogue of

Dark Markings in the Sky" in 1919. A latter version of the catalogue including 369 objects was published in

1927.

Beverly Turner Lynds was an American astronomer who, in 1962, compiled a list of 1,802 dark objects in the sky known as LDN catalogue which also includes the Barnard objects. In 1965 she published a list of 1,125 bright objects known as the Lynds' Bright Nebula (LBN) catalogue.

As we travel through space we continue to encounter objects that reveal the wonders of the universe; and in this month as we give thanks, the universe extends its helping hand to us. Happy Thanksgiving!

— Dr. Carlos Rotellar is a Bowling Green nephrologist who has had an interest in astrophotography and has been taking images of the universe from his driveway for several years. Website: Skyastrophotos.com.

See CALHOUN, 3C