



Middlefield Cheese

By Nancy Hrivnak

Visit Middlefield Swiss Cheese at the intersection of Nauvoo Road and Route 608 in Middlefield and celebrate June as National Dairy Month with special promotions.

Busloads of tourists stream into Middlefield Cheese's spacious retail store year-round, stopping briefly in the attached first-floor museum. Tiny replica buildings in a display cases get progressively larger and more elaborate and tell the 54-year history of the Middlefield Cheese factory and retail store.

Middlefield Cheese began on July 4, 1956 as a partnership between a co-op of local dairy farmers and master cheese maker/Swiss import, Hans Rothenbuhler. During the manufacturer's five and a half decades of cheese-making, the factory has grown steadily from a local operation into a factory producing cheese for national distribution.

Once a smallish factory, Middlefield Cheese is now a large, 24-hour operation attracting national recognition. Tourists arrive by bus and car alongside locals looking to replenish their refrigerator stocks of special Swiss. They come for unique quality products, friendly service, and a charming old-world European ambience.

A wide variety of culinary treats at Middlefield Cheese ranges from deli meats that are **sliced on-the-spot to customer specifications** to locally produced maple products. A plethora of specialty items, which store manager Vera Cornell takes great pains to locate and acquire, includes imported, hard-to-find ethnic favorites.

Make no mistake, however; cheese is the feature attraction ... especially Swiss cheese. The Swiss flag flies outside the building announces that at Middlefield Cheese, Swiss is king.

The factory produces five different varieties of Swiss (more on that later), night and day. The Grade A milk that passes inspection is transferred from silos into vats where it transforms into curds and whey. From there, the cheese is pumped into 200-pound block molds and then moved to a salt brine tank by conveyor belt.

Next, the cheese is vacuum-packed, sealed, and stored for aging. The entire cheese making process, from the moment the milk truck arrives until the cheese is stored for aging, is automated to avoid exposing the cheese to contamination. Licensed cheese makers monitor all aspects of the process remotely from a control center.

The end result is award-winning Swiss cheese. Middlefield Cheese's Swiss is highly regarded nationwide and has garnered a bevy of

awards, including second and third place awards for best Swiss cheese at the 2007 U.S. Champion Cheese Contest. For 2008, Middlefield Swiss was awarded second place at the Wisconsin Cheese Maker's Association World Champion Contest.

Each of the five varieties (baby Swiss, baby-eyed Swiss, and mild Swiss, Sharp Swiss, and no-salt-added Swiss) has its own unique texture and delicious flavor. Baby Swiss, for instance, is the creamiest (due to a larger volume of moisture) and has a smooth, subtly sweet flavor. Baby-eyed Swiss (so named because of its tiny pores) contains less moisture and a lighter texture with a mild, tangy flavor. Sharp Swiss is more aromatic and zesty, featuring large holes.

To distinguish one variety of Swiss from another, check the size of its holes. The cheese's signature porous appearance

Middlefield Cheese
15815 Nauvoo Rd.
Middlefield (44062).
Hours of operation are
Monday through Saturday,
8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Closed Sunday.
For further information
call 440-632-5228, or
visit online at www.middlefieldcheese.com

is the result of the aging process. As carbon dioxide within the cheese escapes, the cheese expands. The gas pops through the surface of the cheese, forming holes. Depending on the processing method, the holes vary in size from miniscule to very large.

Store Operations Manager Vera Cornell says her 14-year tenure at Middlefield Cheese has taught her to appreciate the nuances of the different kinds of Swiss. "When I started here several years ago," she says, "I didn't really care for Swiss. But after a while it kind of grew on me. Now I can honestly say Swiss is my favorite."

Cornell spends her work days surrounded by all manner of cheeses in a store carrying just about every cheese you can imagine. There's the pepperoni cheese, which tastes like a pepperoni pizza without the crust, and the pepper cheese, which packs a slight zing. There's wine cheese, and the Gouda, imported Romano and horseradish cheese ... the list goes on. Cheese samples are laid out so you can try before you buy.

Plenty of nondairy, items are available at Middlefield Cheese as well, including locally produced maple products, imported meats and cheeses, specialty pickles at only 5 calories apiece that I vouch for personally, and gourmet items. Tasty-sounding oddities like cherry salsa, and tons of different crackers are waiting to deliver that delicious cheese.

The staff at Middlefield Cheese is expert at assembling made-to-order gift baskets, popular with Geauga residents and businesses for years. They are available in standard and custom designs and feature a wide variety of fine cheeses and gourmet items.

Katherine's Korner

By Katherine M. Byler

This year there will be no SNOWBALLS in May like we usually have. The snowball bush is covered with worms instead! At least it's good for birds to roost on, and they peck away at the brown and the green wigglers.

Some of us visited Uncle Jake C. Byler of Tavern Road. It is now a year since he lost his dear wife, and he turned 85 recently. Uncle Dan C. Byler and better half were there, too. We could tell by his grimacing all was not well with him. Hope we convinced him to get a thorough check-up at the doc's.

Earl Swonger got a charge out of seeing his name on the birthday list as age 24! It should have read "24 Thomas Drive, Middlefield, age 58!"

Henry Miller, Jr. had more surgery than he bargained for. In addition to spurs in his shoulder, he had to endure rotator cuff surgery. Circumstances encountered caused the doctor to say he's MONTHS away from working again.

Grandgirls, Rose Edna D., 15, and Elizabeth B., also 15, came to our house for several days, and did stuff literally fly! Boxes filled and carried, all ready to be loaded onto a wagon and, hopefully, sold at the ox roast in Mespo in July.

We're now blessed as well with John Mark B., 8, who finds it difficult to stop talking long enough to eat. He is also a very inquisitive boy ... in a good way!

It is now 25 years since the tornadoes went through Trumbull County and headed on to cause much damage and loss of life in Pennsylvania. This is, of course, something that those involved in will never forget, and it seems we've not had anything half as bad since then.

We're trying hard to find a cool spot, but it isn't very easy. Yet we don't like to complain. This is what we've been waiting for. The children want to have water fights, so grandpa and grandma let them.

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News from Windsor

By Barbara Ann Detweiler

Mrs. Allen Byler Sally is recuperating from hernia surgery. A son, Seth, was born to Aden and Nancy Troyer. Joe Detweiler, who works at Lumber Tiger, was hurt when a mill head fell on his back. Andrew Detweiler, 12, got his hand cut with a table saw. He managed to get it healed without seeing a doctor.

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