



THE

Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB
APRIL 2017

The Prez Sez

by John Trapp

As far as March goes we've had some pretty spectacular weather. I hope everyone has been getting out, enjoying the sunshine and participating in fun winter activities. I hope you've been working on your recipes for a JAB. We had a nice discussion at the March meeting regarding styles that could easily fit into the JAB category. I'm hoping some of the JAB's will start showing up at the April and May meetings. I believe we will have a hot and sunny summer, so get those session beers brewed. Here's the three month calendar of events.

Tuesday April 18th - Monthly meeting at 49th State – 7:00 p.m.

May 6th – Brew-a-Thon at Kevin Sobolesky's Parents home on Emerald Street.

May 16th – Monthly meeting at 49th State – 7:00 p.m.

May 26th & 27th – Haines Craft Beer Festival in Haines, AK – Road Trip!

June 16th to 18th – Summer Campout at South Rolly Lake Overlook Shelter. It's at the end of the Nancy Lake Parkway.

A big thank you goes out to Mike Cragen and Chris Ferguson for running the Fur Rondy Homebrew Competition this year. We didn't get as many entries as I know we could, so please consider submitting a brew or two for the competitions. We did have quite a few judges show up, so kudos to all who participated and made this event a success.

Another big thank you goes out to our secretary Jim O'Toole for coordinating the afternoon of Curling we had on the 25th at the Anchorage Curling Club. About a dozen brewers showed up to throw some stones, sweep some ice and drink some beer. Everyone had a great time, . Thanks Jim.

Brew-a-Thon is right around the corner and we've been invited back to Kevin Sobolesky's parents home. The event is on the first Saturday in May and is always a great time for everyone. See Kevin's article on the event.

It's doesn't look like a house crawl has been organized yet, but we'll keep you posted as things progress or don't progress.

This month's "Meet Your Local" article features Gary Busse, Manager at Midnight Sun Brewing Company.

Remember, be safe and drink responsibly when out and about and keep those carboys filled. Until next month, Cheers.



The Prez Sez

Secretary's Corner

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Meet Your Local

Sud's Corner

Brew Quickly



GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB
PMB 1204
3705 ARCTIC BOULEVARD
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99503

GNBC WEB SITE:

WWW.GREATNORTHERNBREWERS.ORG

NEWSLETTER EMAIL

bushy@alaskan.com

PRESIDENT: JOHN TRAPP

johnctrapp@hotmail.com

VICE PRESIDENT: KEVIN SOBOLESKY

vp@greatnorthernbrewers.org

TREASURER: SAM MOORE

treasurer@greatnorthernbrewers.org

SECRETARY: JIM O'TOOLE

secretary@greatnorthernbrewers.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MIKE FISHER

mikefisher.ak@gmail.com

BRIAN SMITH

brian.smith@ymail.com

KAT KARABELNIKOFF

kkarabelnikoff@gmail.com

BRIAN HALL

iheart314@gmail.com

PETER HALL

alaskabrewer@gmail.com

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Debbie Grecco

bushy@alaskan.com



Secretary's Corner

Jim O'Toole

About a dozen of us went curling on Saturday and had a great time. This was only the second time I've ever done this. My enjoyment had more to do with hanging out with fun people and drinking good beer than curling like anything other than a complete clutz.

When this curling outing was announced at the last GNBC meeting someone yelled out, "What is curling?" and a couple of us tried to explain it. I think most people - if they know anything about curling - have learned what they know from the exposure the Olympic Games have given the sport over the last eight or 10 years. Every four years it pops up on TV and I'm pretty sure there is a lot of channel changing when it appears.

My interest in curling started back in the late 1970's when I was living in Ketchikan and the only live TV came out of Terrace, British Columbia through a series of repeaters on islands along the Inside Passage. I was a hockey fan prior to this, so I enjoyed the amount of coverage the NHL gave, but I also found that when there was nothing else to do, watching curling certainly passed the time. But, as often happens, the more I watched it, the more I enjoyed it. And, apparently, a lot of other people feel the same as it is growing at a pretty good clip in the lower 48.

A buddy of mine says that watching a baseball game is "like watching paint dry," and I get that. Some games are not designed for constant, bone-crushing action and curling is certainly one of them.

The way I see it, with curling, basically you're sliding a 42 pound rock down a 75 foot sheet of ice and trying to get closer to the center of a target at the other end. Your opponent - with which you are taking turns - is throwing different colored stones. There are four people on each team, each gets eight throws per end (like an inning in baseball), and ten ends.

It seems simple until you try it. First of all, that ice is really slippery. It's more slippery than a normal ice rink, Drops of water are sprinkled on the ice to give it a pebbling effect so the stones slide easier. This means we slide easier too. Just keeping upright is part of the effort but, once you get to curling, trying to keep your balance while sending that rock down the ice, you soon find, is the easy part. I won't get into the physics of this, but curling also involves people with brooms sweeping the ice ahead of the stone at the direction of the leader of the team who determines how fast the stone should travel and with how much curl to hit its target. Sweeping reduces friction so the stone goes further and curls less.

I've taken part in most sports, some of which are pretty strenuous. I can tell you that sweeping ice in front of a curling stone, for the brief time I've had to do it, is hard work.

When you work hard, you deserve a good beer. The Anchorage Curling Club comes through in this department. They have three beers on tap and numerous other great beer selections in bottles. Two of the beers on tap are Denali Brewing's Fire Engine Red and Twister Creek IPA and the other one - I don't remember it - is also a local beer.

I used to throw darts a lot. I subscribed to dart magazines. I carried darts with me when I traveled. I found that there is a good reason why darts are popular in bars; it's an inside game that requires a physical effort for a brief time and involves any one or number of joints, and it requires beer lubrication. Darts people insist they play better with a fresh beer sitting next to them.

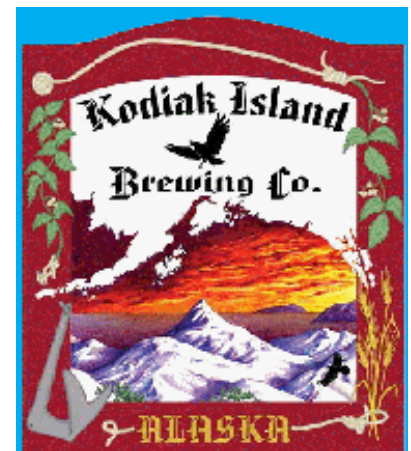
Curling is not as easy as tossing a steel tipped mini-arrow in a room full of people who are drinking as much or more than you are but it is certainly a lot less dangerous. It's more challenging. And, it's just as much fun.

I want to thank the folks from the Anchorage Curling Club who helped us put the day together. John Siegle - the events coordinator - tolerated months of emails trying to nail down a date and then accepted numerous calls while he was on a work trip to Fairbanks as we got down to the wire.

Michael Anderson was there to open the club for us and stayed until we left. He gave us a rundown on what we were in for and then stayed on the ice, instructing us and not laughing in my face when I fell on my ass again.

A young curler named Courtney was also there at the start and proved that I don't have to be an old fart to enjoy the game, be pretty good at it, and be willing to hang around with other old farts to help me see the value in it.

All of these people, and everyone involved in the curling club are volunteers, so I really want to thank Cale Peru and Dan Bogan who split the four hours as our bartenders.



The curling club has had a rough couple of years. They've never been a big money operation, but they have plans for a bigger facility that has been hanging on the wall of the club for years as a sign of their positive attitude. A couple of years ago, as they were getting ready to get their season started, their ice machine went kaput. They fund raised aggressively and managed to have a different ice making plant installed, but they lost two years of curling and the membership money that goes with it.

So, even if you never watch another curling match on TV - or give the game much thought at all - when you drive by that sad looking little building on your left as you swing around the bend on the way up to Government Hill, just know that there are some really good people working really hard to ensure that it stays open so that Anchorage can continue to provide a diversity in things for us to do. The Anchorage Curling Club provides another place where people who like good beer can hang out.

Upcoming Events

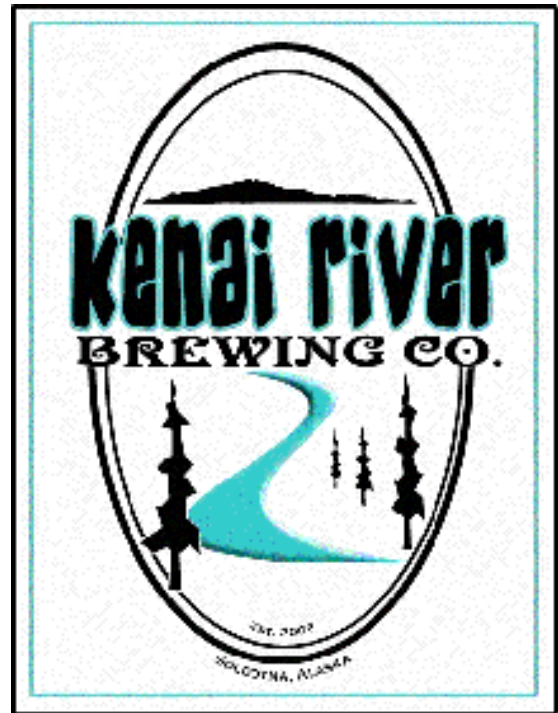
Tuesday April 18th
GNBC Monthly meeting
49th State
7:00 p.m.

April ?
49th State Brewing Company Spring Break-up HBC.
Stay tuned

May 6th
Brew-a-Thon
Kevin Sobolesky's Parents home on Emerald Street

May 16th
GNBC Monthly meeting
49th State
7:00 p.m.

May 26th & 27th
Haines Craft Beer Festival in Haines, AK





Brewathon 2017

by *Kevin Sobolesky*

This year's Brewathon will take place on Saturday May 6th, starting at 8 AM at 9551 Emerald Street in south Anchorage.

Brewathon is a GNBC Club function where homebrewers gather to brew beer, share their skills, knowledge, and share a homebrew or two in a lively social gathering. It's an outdoor event, and over the years, we've experienced all sorts of weather including glorious sunshine, blowing rain, sleet, snow and wind, so come prepared with comfortable clothing that will get you through a day of often changing weather. We'll have some chairs, but if you prefer your favorite camp chair or other seating, haul it along.

Kids and pets are welcome too, but consider that Brewathon is busy, often crowded and creates an area with open flames and large vats of boiling liquid, so keeping pets and children in control is an absolute necessity.

Anyone interested in bringing their gear and brewing a batch is welcome. But you don't have to be a brewer or own homebrew equipment to participate or just come by to socialize. Anyone who wants to observe and learn about beer making is certainly welcome; this is an educational event as much as it's a social gathering. Random passers-by and stray pets are welcome.

As is tradition, we will be grilling up many savory treats and food items. We encourage attendees to contribute to the potluck with a side dish for your fellow brewers.

Free yeast will be available for people to use to inoculate your beer for fermentation. The club will be providing a neutral Ale yeast if you don't bring your own to customize your recipe.

The event is being held at 9551 Emerald Street. This is at the very west end of Dimond Blvd. in South Anchorage between Jewel Lake Road and Sand Lake Road.

Turn onto Emerald Street heading south (left turn if you're heading west coming from Jewel Lake) and it's the one-story split level where Emerald Street ends at Jade Street. We will have some extension cords for pumps as well as a network of garden hoses for cleaning and filling. Note that we will have a carbon filter on the hose bib, but separate hoses for cleaning, so if in doubt, please ask "is this water dechlorinated?" We have no desire to produce any chlorophenols if we can help it.

We will start setting up at 8 AM, with the invocation and kick-off at 9 AM, and tear down and clean up at 5 PM.

If you are interested in teaching or mentoring a new brewer, please email me at metkonig@gmail.com with the style of beer you are making. Let me know if your recipe is all-grain or extract, and how many people you would be interested in hosting. It's fun and satisfying to share our hobby with new people, and there are people out there who don't even know they want to brew their own beer yet. Let's give them the chance.

Likewise, if you are looking to be taught how to brew and/or have no gear, please email me at metkonig@gmail.com and I will do my best to set you up with a brewer and/or gear.

Brewathon is also a great place to get feedback on your homebrew or commercial brew, for that matter. We will have numerous beer experts and ranked beer judges to give you careful, thoughtful, and most of all, thorough, feedback on your brews. If you don't know what went wrong, or what hard-to-articulate character should be there, someone at Brewathon can help you out, so bring along your own brew or commercial brew to share.

Please be considerate of the neighbors when you park nearby. Avoid blocking mailboxes and driveways. There should be plenty of spots along Jade, Emerald and Byrd lane. We'll maintain room to temporarily pull up to offload as well.

If you wish to volunteer to help set up or clean up, please let me know. We can't have the event without some helping hands. metkonig@gmail.com

Summary:

May 6th, 2017 (1st Saturday)
Set-up at 8:00AM, Toast at 9:00AM, Break-down by 8:00PM
9551 Emerald Street
Bring your brewing gear, home-brew, food and good cheer!

If you have any questions, shoot me an email at metkonig@gmail.com

Meet Your Local

By Peter Hall

Gary Busse - Midnight Sun Brewing - The Adult - General Manager

Gary Busse has been a large part of the Anchorage brewing community for 15 years. I've been seeing him at Midnight Sun for almost all of those years (some before I could legally buy beer myself, but he had nothing to do with that), but I never took the time to more formally introduce myself. I had the opportunity to connect with Gary recently and I enjoyed laughing a little about this crazy community, and was lucky enough to have some freshly conditioned Meltdown IPA as part of the encounter.

There was a time in 2002 that wasn't all too different than it is today. Gary was an engineer. The economy was doing well enough, but construction and capital projects were slowing down around the state. What was a youngish engineer to do? Gary had available time and a few friends at Midnight Sun working hard to make a young brewery work, and he helped out by filling growlers. I know that Gary did much more than just fill growlers. In the beginning, it was just a part time gig.

Gary had a business acumen. He ended up managing the books for Midnight Sun. A part-time gig helping out quickly evolved into a more official position for Gary. The timeline may be a little fuzzy, but Gary became and remains Midnight Sun's General Manager.



Midnight Sun has grown steadily - and in several directions. Midnight Sun is not just a brewery. There's the brewery, the loft, and the apparel shop downstairs. Gary has been there to see all of this growth and to help make it happen. Growth has been steady and careful for Midnight Sun. I'm sure that's taken a tempering voice more than once to keep a successful brewery from over extending itself, and Gary's been that voice.

Midnight Sun moved several years ago - from a small spot on Arctic Boulevard next to a taxidermist, - to a shiny purpose-built space in an empire on Dimond Hook. I'm sure you have had no problem following the move or finding the new place, as out of the way as it might seem. I've seen you there and have shared wonderful, exciting brews when we visit.

Gary and I talked a lot about It all seemed like a natu- loves the place where he with. He said that Mid- brewers - is like a family. when they have the the to make it work.

This is the kind of story members will share. gone to start their own who have been there from eries work better than We all own some small Some people just come running the place.

I was especially thinking bers in the GNBC while mental picture of where

Midnight Sun will have a fresh Friday and I'd bet bombers will be hitting the shelves very soon. Grab a fresh brew and say hello to Gary the next time you are there.

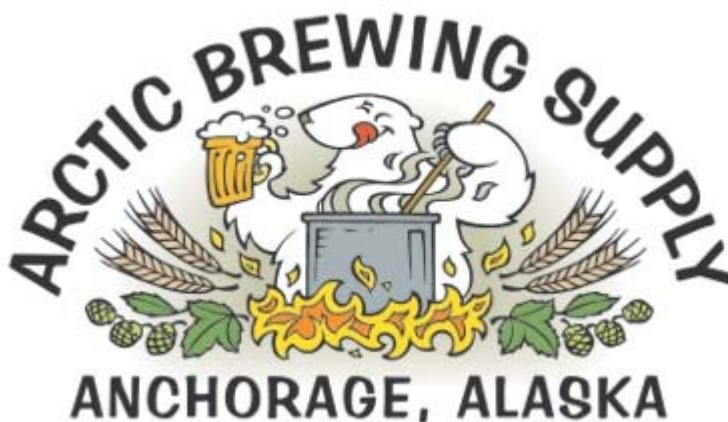
I'd like to personally thank Gary for meeting me and sharing his story while we met at the brewery. We talked about a lot more than I'm going to talk about in a brew club article. Hopefully I can provide a tasty brew for you sometime soon.

how his role has changed over the years. ral evolution for someone who works and the people that he works night Sun - especially amongst the People tend to stay for a long time smarts, dedication and the ability

that our Great Northern Brewers There are homebrewers that have brewery, and there are even more the early days to make those brew- they ever could have on their own. part of the breweries we enjoy. along at the right time and end up

of some of the engineers mem- we talked. Say hello and take a you might be in about 15 years.

cask of Meltdown Double IPA for First Firkin





Sud's Corner

by John Craig

I'm glad to only turn 75 years old once in a lifetime. It wore me out. It all started with a surprise birthday party at Bootleggers Saloon in Anchorage. Lots of good friends gathered to enjoy each other's company. As the beer was flowing, my glass was never empty – as I was told later.

It all started with a bottle of home made Kentucky Derby whiskey and barley wines that were given as gifts for my special day. I sort of remember Rose driving home and having company waiting in our driveway.

Guess what? Mixing beer, whiskey and barley wine took me three and a half days to recover from. It was pure hell for sure. When you turn 75, it takes a lot longer to heal.

Later in the week, us birthday boys have our birthdays within days of each other. We have celebrated together over the years. This year the get together was at Midnight Sun Brewing Company where it's been before, but this year, it was held in the private oak room in the warehouse building, a block from the brewery. Midnight Sun's named this little hideout "Oakland." For the more familiar crowd, Oakland is right behind the Tickle Room.

This was another surprise birthday party that featured a lot of old ancient beers with dust and cobwebs on the bottles that my friends dug out from their stashes. Unbeknownst to me, a "Cellar Raider" was organized in my honor. There were lots of barley wines and Alaskan Smoked Porters going back at least 20 years. (Editor's note: Alaskan Smoked Porters went back at least 25 years).

I was in heaven with Suds tears rolling out of my eyes. I love my friends for sure. May the beer Gods be with us I the great land of Suds. Amen!

This was only mid-week, and I still had two days to go. I wasn't quite sure if I was going to make my 75 years on this Mother Earth with this second hangover. A week later, I'm so proud of myself for surviving all of this. I was happy, suffering and happy suffering.

Twenty years ago, I celebrated my 55th birthday at Bird Creek Brewery when it was still open off 76th Ave, just north of where King Street Brewing Company is today. It was with friends drinking the classic Old 55 Pale Ale, one of my favorites. Today this re-make beer is brewed by Silver Gulch Brewing Company, but it's not the same.

Back then, I was in a lot better beer drinking shape. Hangovers were a lot shorter. This old sourdough has had his share of drunks. Some day, I hope to get smarter.

Today you don't have to go to Silver Gulch in Fairbanks to get Old 55. It can be found fresh on tap at Café Amsterdam, thanks to Ken and Shauna who put it on.

I also want to thank Gallo's Mexican Restaurant for my free lunch/dinner meal on my birthday. I also enjoyed their Tequila Distilled Mescal in their margaritas with salt-lime on my lips. I just had to give up the beer with this on the menu; it's damned good stuff.

Thank you Humpy's for the on-the-house hot whiskey bread pudding with a burning candle. I enjoyed it with my Alaska smoked Salmon Chowder there. My favorite at Humpy's is the extra crispy fries.

Later on in Talkeetna at the Upper Mat-Su Valley Senior Center, I had cake and ice cream. The lunch special was Road Kill Moose Meat Loaf, Scalloped Potatoes and fresh green beans. It was wonderful to be with my friends.

I'm sorry I missed the last homebrew club meeting. I heard that I missed my beer and cake at the gathering. I was in bed suffering. Beer, beer, beer!

To make my day, back in Anchortown, I picked up the local Anchorage Press and discovered the article that Jim "Dr. Fermento" Roberts wrote about my love for suds. The beer Gods sent Roberts to Mother Earth to spread the gospel about good beer in the world. He's truly a saint from Suds Heaven. We have had many beers together over the years, spent time at lots of winter and summer camp outs, and shared many stories around the camp fire. Many beers later, as Fermento and I get wild and crazy with our snowmachines and ATVs, as we say our cheers as we run in to each other here in Anchorage or on the trails, life is good. That's why you might see us beer-kiss each other from a distance. Cheers!

Brew Quickly, Brew Easy, Brew Extract

by *John Trapp*

Note: I'm running this article that was printed in the newsletter seven years ago because it pertains to what we have been preaching in the club. There is a quick and easy way to brew great beer.

As a home brewer for almost 25 years now, I'm often asked what my brew system is like and how I have it set up. Most people are pretty surprised to find out that it consists of a 22 quart pot and a grain bag and that I brew on the stove top. I'm an extract brewer, and I don't have any plans on changing that any time soon. I have nothing against the all-grain brewers, and I've brewed up a number of batches with friends that have more room in their garages than me. But after all these years, I just haven't found a need to convert to all-grain and I still make great beer.

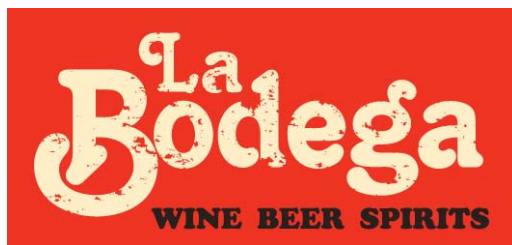
There are a few instances and styles of beer where extract brewing simply can't compete with all-grain. However, the majority of styles can. For those of you playing along at home or just starting the wonderful hobby of home brewing, malt extract is the honey-like substance that comes in a can or bulk out of a drum at Arctic Brewing Supply. It comes from barley (or wheat) and is reduced from the coating of malt on the malted barley. Basically, the malting companies are taking the place of the mash tun and concentrating down the wort to a honey-like consistency. Using malt extract saves about three hours of brewing time, which may or may not be a bonus for some.

There is still a stigma about brewing with malt extract and it's something called "Extract Twang". The twang refers to a certain taste from "other" fermentable sugars that were supposedly added to the malt extract by the malting companies. Additional ingredients are called adjuncts. I use the word "supposedly" because no one really knows for sure if this took place unless they worked at the plant. Over the last 20 years, the quality of malt extract has been top notch and basically guaranteed pure. With the competitive market and demand for brewing supplies, no malting company would risk throwing in adjuncts and tainting their reputation.

Just as there is malt extract, you've probably also seen dried malt extract (DME) in the brew store or read about it in a recipe. It's the same substance; it's just taken one step further and dried to a powder. The more the malt is processed the more the price goes up. Brewing all-grain is cheapest, followed by extract, and finally using DME to increase the malt body. This is why most commercial breweries use an all-grain recipe; it is the most cost affective method. The reason I didn't say that all breweries do this, is because I still remember the tour I took at the now defunct Bird Creek Brewery. Bird Creek brewed with extract because the brewery didn't know how to dispose of the spent grain. I think the brewery converted to all-grain near the end, but it was a little too late by then. But for the home brewer producing a five or six gallon batch, the cost of using extract is minimal.

When I first started brewing back in 1992, the only malt I knew of was the hopped malt in a can (John Bull & Cooper's), so I wasn't even using purchased hops in the boil. This was an all-in-one method that, believe it or not, produced some tasty beer. I then bought Papazian's book and started educating myself, but most of the recipes he had were all extract and even called for certain cans of hopped malt to duplicate a desired style. As I brewed more and started playing around with recipes, Arctic Brewing Supply opened its doors and I began brewing a more traditional style using bulk malt extract and bags of hops.

If you're just starting out brewing, or maybe you don't brew that much because of the time commitment to brew all-grain, give extract a try. I've won many competitions and taken home plenty of prizes with extract brews. The real key is making sure the brewing process is clean and sanitary and that the fermentation process is temperature and light controlled. As a process note, when adding the extract to your pot of hot water, turn off the heat and let the pot sit for a few minutes. Add the malt extract and stir until it's all dissolved in the water. Then - and only then - turn the heat back on. If you don't follow these directions, you'll end up with a burnt bottom of the pot and your beer will have a burnt or scorched flavor too. So good luck and get that malt pouring.



The Northern Brewer is a monthly newsletter published by the Great Northern Brewers Club for distribution to all club members. Subscriptions are a part of club membership and may be obtained by joining the club. Membership is open to everyone over the age of twenty-one. Please send \$30.99 to:

Great Northern Brewers Club
Attn: Treasurer
PMB 1204, 3705 Arctic Blvd
Anchorage, AK 99503



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The Great Northern Brewers Club and the American Homebrewers Association remind you to....Savor the Flavor Responsibly

The *Northern Brewer* welcomes letters, opinions, articles, ideas and inquiries. You can contact the editor, Debbie Grecco at:

Online: bushy@alaskan.com
Phone: 333-8985
Mail: 6933 Soyuz Circle
Anchorage, Ak 99504

GNBC Web Site: www.greatnorthernbrewers.org



Great Northern Brewers Club
PMB 1204
3705 Arctic Boulevard
Anchorage, AK 99503

**NEXT MEETING: April 18th, 2017
7:00 PM at 49th State Brewing Company Anchorage**