



THE Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB

APRIL 2011

Prez Sez

by Dennis Sessler

Wow this is a first; I'm writing my Prez Sez article from an airplane cruising at 35000 feet at 500+ miles an hour. I am sad to say that it's far too early for me to enjoy a beer; just as well I didn't feel like paying the crazy \$6 for a paltry can of yellow beer. All it would make me do is



wish I was back home pulling the tap on my homebrewed Bohemian Pilsner. The other day I served up a couple of glasses of that Bo Pils for Dena and myself. We enjoyed the first glass, then I went to go top them back off again. After she had started enjoying the second glass, she looked at me and said wow, how strong is this and I told her was close to 5.5. % ABV. She was floored that she was getting a buzz on her second fairly light beer. I began to wonder why it is that our homebrews seems to get us (Dena and I) to that happy place quicker than our favorite commercial beers that we enjoy. Is it something in the water, was it something we did while mashing or fermenting? I'm going to have to think about this one for a while.

I'm still reading one of my Christmas presents from Santa, a brewing book titled "Yeast, The Practical Guide to Beer Fermentation." I know your thinking, "he got this book for Christmas and he is still reading it." Well I'm a slow reader, I'm too busy and preoccupied to read during the day so the only chance I get to open it is at night when I go to bed. The thing is reading makes me fall asleep, so I might get 2-3 pages in then I'm out. I got a feeling that there is an answer somewhere in this book to why my homebrews seem to pack a bigger punch then comparable beer on the commercial side. And just in case you were wondering, I know how to read a hydrometer, the numbers are correct.

Well let's get on with the past and present and future. At our March Club meeting we briefed everyone on upcoming events so if you missed the meeting, check out the Secretary's Corner article. Julie keeps the minutes and publishes it for those who couldn't attend.

By the time you read this, Talkeetna Beer Trippin' will be history and memories will have been made. I'm sure, there will be another lucky brewer who will be taking home the "Golden Carboy" and brewing a batch of beer with Boe and the crew at Denali Brewing Co. I can't wait to hear from those who attended just how the weekend went. I want to thank Denali Brewing Company for sponsoring this wonderful event. I look forward to attending again with my family in the future. Check out Joe Michaels/Dr. Fermento's article and pictures from this year's event.

The Prez Sez

Secretary's Corner

GNBC Club Brew Update

Talkeetna Beer Trippin' 2011

Haines Great Alaska Beer
Festival

GNBC House Crawl

Snow Goose Break-up
Homebrew Competition Last Call

2011 National Homebrew Toast
and Brewathon

Fermentation Temperature
Control 101

Lager Brewing

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NEWSLETTER EDITOR

DEBBIE GRECCO

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The deadline for the National Homebrew Competition has passed and from what I've heard the AHA has limited entries to 750 per region. If you're like me you may agree that this is so lame-o. It is quite obvious that the US has no issue with the growth and acceptance of homebrewing as a hobby, it has an issue with an organization that is unable to digest and accommodate the rapid growth of our hobby, or better yet set up more regions nationwide so that they can accommodate all the hard work that the nation's homebrewers wish to submit for evaluation. In Alaska we are very fortunate to have a high percentage of BJCP certified judges amongst our professional and homebrewing friends. This is not the case from what I understand in the lower 48, and this is very sad indeed. I want to thank Dennis Urban for being our BJCP course coordinator for many years. Dennis has done a great service to our brewing community for years and I truly appreciate it. Dennis's efforts pay dividends with every competition that the GNBC sponsors and helps judge.

The following weekend (April 2nd) the Snow Goose will host the second competition of the 2011 competition cycle. You know its spring time when we hold our annual "Spring Break-up Competition", Dan Bosch is the competition organizer, so check out his last call article. I hope that that everyone had a chance to brew at least one of the allowable beer styles and of course the SMaSH beer. Time will tell who wins Best of Show, and who will have their beer brewed by Sleeping Lady Brewing Company.

April 19th will be our next homebrew club meeting. This is our annual meeting that we as homebrewers bring brewing items to swap or sell. Most all homebrewers start out as extract brewers to see if they like the hobby, as the passion builds so does the arsenal of homebrewing equipment. As time goes by we settle into a brewing style that we are comfortable with. Then one day we look around and think "man I don't use this anymore to brew, haven't in years". Well this is your chance to unload everything that is taking up space in your abode, and pass them on to someone new in the brew club. Just bring your wares, put your name and a price on them and hopefully there will be another member that is looking for what you have to sell.

May 7th will be our annual Brew A Thon at John and Rose Craig's home. Check out John Craig's article and invite. If you haven't attended this event in the past, it is a great time to experience all the eclectic and fancy brew systems that our GNBC members own. Tim Strayer is the event coordinator and has attached some important information on the tails of "Suds" article. For this event to run as smooth as possible it is vital that the membership shows up a day prior and a day after to setup and cleanup. Let's all have a great time and watch out for the Craig's fence.



Our next event is the GNBC House Crawl; Lisa from Arctic Brewing Supply is coordinating this year's event. Last I knew there were two spots left and they were reserved for whoever contacts her and wishes to be the final spot on the crawl. A good time is guaranteed to be had by all. Please remember that this is a designated driver event. If you have signed up, be responsible and make arrangements now. Thank you Lisa for coordinating this epic social event for the GNBC this year, I wish I could be a fly on the wall.

I've have put together three articles that in a way are very relative to each other and independently a great source of information. If you were at the March club meeting I spoke during the educational segment about the importance of yeast, temperature control, and our GNBC Russian Imperial Stout Club brew. I felt it very important to discuss this because of the rocket ship we had in my garage when all those little yeasties launched into that big beer. I was very worried that the beer would not taste good because I was unable to control the fermentation temps. Check out my three articles, first a Club brew update, then a second article on fermentation control, and a final one on brewing a lager. Yes its spring time and that means it's time to get brewing your lagers for those bright sunny days of summer. Using the experience and suggestions in all three of these articles will allow you to brew better beer not just a lager.

In closing, I hope you all find enough events and recommendations in this newsletter to keep you occupied for the next 30 days. Please be responsible and **"Think Before You Drink."** Until we all meet again keep that flame under the kettle and brew on.



EVENTS

Every First Thursday

Moose's Tooth First Tap

Every Friday

*Midnight Sun Brewery Tours and
Brew Debut: 6:00 PM 344-1179*

01.....*Entries Due for 2011 Snow Goose
Break-Up Homebrew Competition
Downstairs at the Goose:
Noon - 5 pm*

02.....*Snow Goose Break-Up Homebrew
Competition Judging at the Goose:
10 AM - ??*

09.....*Alaska Dispatch Airplane Hanger
La Bodega Website Launch Party
7 pm*

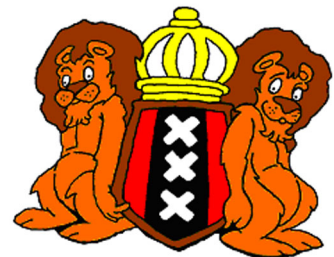
16.....*Tap Root Cafe
1st Annual Spenard Beer and
Mead Social
Noon - 3 pm, 4-7 pm: \$30 pp*

07.....*National Homebrew Day Toast and
Brewathon: John Craig's:
9 am Toast: Brewathon: 9 am-??*

14.....*Goblets of Gold Mead Competition
Ring of Fire Meadery: 10 am*

27/28.....*Great Alaska Craft Beer and
Homebrew Festival (Haines)*

CAFE



AMSTERDAM

Secretary's Corner

by Julie McDonald

Meeting Minutes: March 15, 2011, 7p

*Meeting was called to order by Prez, Dennis Sessler at 7:16p.

*Welcome to new members

Old Biz:

Talkeetna Beer Trippn' – Jim Lamb updated us on this coming event.

- March 24-26
- Denali Brewing will take entries for any beer style
- NOT BJCP sanctioned event
- Judging will be done by some of Denali Brewing Co's regular customers
- 3 bottles needed for judging
- If not attending the weekend but would like to submit an entry, contact Joe Michael
- Winning brew will be brewed by Denali Brewing Company
- Winning brewer will receive the Golden Carboy award
- Lodging for this event is becoming hard to find
- Contact Joe Michael or Jim Lamb for more info
- See the March newsletter or the club's FB page for a schedule of events

GNBC 15 Gallon Conical Fermenter Tank Group Buy

- Ace Rotoweld 15 gal, full-drain conical (stand not included, ball valves/fittings not included)
- \$80 each, with minimum order of 40 units. Actual price will vary depending on how many we purchase.
- \$50 deposits will be taken prior to ordering and remainder will be due at delivery.
- Deposits were due at this meeting, however contact Kevin if you still want to order, there may still be time.
- For more information, contact Kevin Sobolesky 907-903-1056 or metkonig@gmail.com

April 2, 2011, Snowgoose Spring Break Up competition

- Categories: 3, 6, 8, 10, 15, 20
- Winner gets to brew their winning brew at Sleeping Lady Brewing.
- The side challenge is SMaSH (Single Malt and Single Hop) beer.
- See this newsletter for more information on the competition
- The Prez will be sure that Challenge entry sheets are distributed by email before the drop off date so that we can all have them filled out before dropping off our entries.

New Biz:

National Homebrew Comp, March 21-30

- Register online for this first round comp
- 1 bottle to enter
- Must be sent FedEx or UPS. NOT USPS!! (See Frank Bell's article on beer trading in the March Newsletter for more info on packing and shipping your beer)

Brew-a-thon (AHA Big Brew), May 7, 2011

- At John and Rose Craig's Jade Street home
- Set up should be about 8a
- Group toast at 9a
- Bring a dish to share
- Bring whatever equipment you need (canopy, brewing equip and supplies, etc.)
- Water will be provided



2011 Homebrewer of The Year Categories

Fur Rendezvous HBC

- Category 1
- Category 4
- Category 5
- Category 19
- Category 22
- Category 23

Snow Goose HBC

- Category 3
- Category 6
- Category 8
- Category 10
- Category 15
- Category 20

Anchor Town HBC

- Category 2
- Category 7
- Category 14
- Category 17
- Category 21
- Category 27

Equinox Mead HBC

- Category 24
- Category 25
- Category 26

Humpy's Big Fish HBC

- Category 9
- Category 11
- Category 12
- Category 13
- Category 16
- Category 18
- Category 28

- The night before set-up will be coordinated and info will go out to the club
- Contact Tim Strayer for more info on this event

GNBC House Crawl, May 21, 2011

- This is a fun event where 25 club members take the Magic Bus and house hop
- Each stop offers games and food and beverage
- 12 spots were left at the time of the meeting
- Looking for two more stops at the time of the meeting
- 1st stop is Jim Werner's, 2nd stop is the Lewellyn's, 3rd stop is Pete and Lisa (this stop will be a little longer than the rest as they plan to serve a full dinner at this one), 4th stop?, 5th stop?
- Cost is \$30pp
- Please call Lisa at Arctic Brewing Supply to reserve a seat or sign up for a stop.
-

Next meeting is Tuesday, April 19, 2011, 7pm, Snowgoose, downstairs. Assigned duties are as follows: A - J Setup, K - P Cleanup, R - Z Food

End of club business: 8:15p

Informational Segment: Yeast by Prez

- A little update on our club brew RIS was given as a start to this presentation.
- If you would like more info on the most recent or last year's club brew, you can contact Dennis.
- There is so much info on yeast that you should contact Dennis for copies of the information he presented. He can email it to whoever asks for it.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40ish

MISCELLANEOUS:

Upcoming TAMs classes held at CHARR's new Charlie H. Selman Training Center located at 1503 W. 31st Avenue, Suite 101 Anchorage.

- **Remember this is required if you plan to volunteer to steward at any fests or competitions or tastings this year.**

| | | | | | |
|-------|-----------|--------|-------|-----------|---------|
| 03/22 | Tuesday | 5:30pm | 04/16 | Saturday | 11:00am |
| 03/24 | Thursday | 9:00am | 04/18 | Monday | 5:30pm |
| 03/28 | Monday | 1:00pm | 04/21 | Thursday | 9:00am |
| 03/30 | Wednesday | 9:30am | 04/25 | Monday | 1:00pm |
| 04/05 | Tuesday | 5:30pm | 04/27 | Wednesday | 9:00am |
| 04/07 | Thursday | 1:00pm | 05/03 | Tuesday | 1:00pm |
| 04/13 | Wednesday | 1:00pm | | | |

Announcing the 2011 Big Fish Side Challenge – The Belgian Specialty WTF Challenge.

This competition will be judged during the Big Fish Competition, the first Saturday in December, 2011. Points will be awarded according to the following:

- 50 points – Standard BJCP scoring in regards to aroma, appearance, flavor, etc. Base beer recipe is Belgian Specialty – whatever that means to you.
- 10 points – size of entry - that's right, the judges like things on the large side of life
- 20 points – entry name – innuendo tends to score big
- 20 points- WTF factor – Judges are looking for the ur

MEETING SETUP

| | | |
|-------|-----|---------|
| A - J | APR | Setup |
| K - P | | Cleanup |
| R - Z | | Food |
| | | |
| A - J | MAY | Cleanup |
| K - P | | Food |
| R - Z | | Setup |
| | | |
| A - J | JUN | Food |
| K - P | | Setup |
| R - Z | | Cleanup |

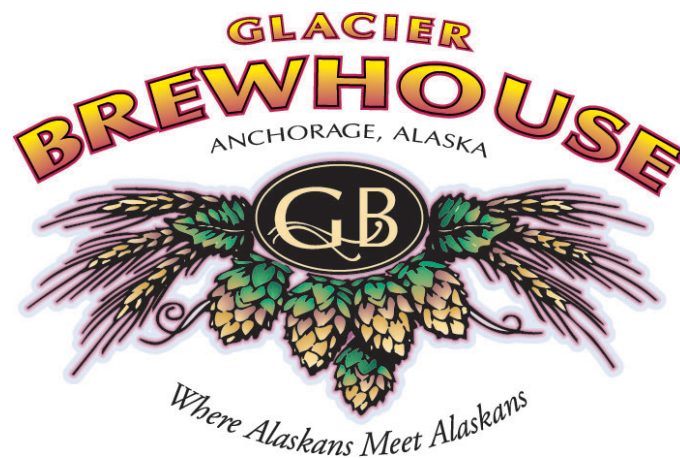
**D I M O N D
L I Q U O R**

anise, and coriander aren't going to cut it this time.

- 100 points total available

Monthly Beer Dinners

- We have an April beer dinner planned and announced, and at the time I wrote this we still had a few spots available:
- When: Saturday, April 23, 2011
- Hosts: Fil Spiegel and Tim Hilts
- Time: 6:00p
- Theme: Sweet & Sour - food needs to be sweet and beer needs to be sour. That doesn't mean that the dinner is 6 courses of desserts. Sweet means that each course needs to have a sweet element to it. Sour beers - self explanatory.
- Max number of guests: 10 (+ Fil and Tim = 12)
- Courses:
- Welcome beer (aperitif) – Fil & Tim - Beer TBD
- App & Beer - Carl - Beer & Food TBD
- Salad & Beer - Barb & Andrew Yanoshek - beer & food TBD
- Soup & Beer – Cindy & Guest - Beer & Food TBD
- Entree & Beer –
- Dessert & Beer - Jim & Lisa - Beer & food TBD
- After Dinner Beer (digestif) –
- Contact me ASAP if you would like to take the Entrée or the After dinner beer course!
- We are looking for hosts for a May dinner, email me if interested.
- If you are not part of the GNBC Beer Dinner group and would like more info, please contact me at juzy@gci.net. We can get you on the email list and you'll be kept up to date on all dinner announcements and related info.



Talkeetna Beer Trippin' 2011

by Joe Michael

As the weather slowly begins to shift from the harsh cold of Alaskan winter to the warmer cold of Alaskan springtime, we find ourselves at the close of what is becoming a new tradition for the Great Northern Brewers: that groovy event known as Talkeetna Beer Trippin'. This year's event was built upon the foundation laid in 2010 and brought everyone back for another fun weekend at the gateway to Denali. Good fun, good friends, good weather, and good food and drink were all in abundance Friday through Sunday, March 25-29.

We owe the bulk of the weekend's success to Denali Brewing Company's awesome crew. Boe, Ty, Sasson, and the DBC/Twister Creek team rolled out the red carpet for the great group of GNBC'ers that ventured out over the weekend. DBC had some fine brews on tap – some familiar, and some one-offs just for the event. In addition to all of the brewery staples, attendees sampled brews from the Seven Sisters series (Branwen's Union was a standout for many), and several others to be mentioned later in this article.

Friday night found early Trippers at Twister Creek Restaurant, enjoying the fine food and beer at the dinner hour. DBC brewers joined us for a very welcoming meal, along with some enjoyable acoustic entertainment from singer/songwriter Diana Z. We were introduced to the brewery folks, and got a chance to mingle with them and discuss the finer points of brewing with lavender (kidding, Boe, kidding!). As the night wore on, you could tell that the GNBC was there in force, as the crowd's clothing became a sea of red, donning t-shirts specially designed for this event.



On Saturday, the clouds parted and we got a glimpse of the beautiful weather Alaska is known for. At 11:00am, the homebrews for the 2nd annual "anything goes" style competition were due, and the judging began. A mixture of experienced competition judges joined some local Talkeetna residents to sample about 27 entries, putting forward the best of those to a final round, eventually narrowing it all down to 4 standouts.



As they diligently worked on the judging, the rest of us found fun around town. Mountain High Pizza Pie played host for lunch, serving up some of the best pizza in Southcentral, and pouring some very special DBC beers only available at that event. Among the offerings were a coconut porter, a cranberry wheat steam beer, and a green chile IPA. All the beers there highlighted the nature of the great experimental brewing spirit that DBC and Talkeetna is known for.

Later that evening, everyone gathered back at Twister Creek for the announcement of the 2011 Golden Carboy winner, and the unveiling of Lisa Lamb and Kerry Canepa's 2010 champion brew,

an Apricot Wheat. Ty brought us all up to speed on the entries, noting what a hard decision it was to agree on this year's first place beer. In the end however, the arguments over the top two slots were a moot point, as the GNBC's own Aaron Christ took both.

Aaron enjoyed top honors for his Vienna Lager, and the Golden Carboy was presented to him by last year's winner, Lisa Lamb. The Carhartt Brothers took the stage next, pickin' out some awesome tunes as we all enjoyed more beer and food. Many event attendees found their way out to the big city Talkeetna nightlife, gathering in cabins for some relaxed socializing or heading over to the West Rib Pub and Fairview Inn to make their own fun.

Sunday morning came much too soon for most people, but most still managed to drag themselves out of bed for a final breakfast gathering at the amazing Talkeetna Roadhouse. Nothing answers a late night/early morning of beer escapades like a hearty plate of Roadhouse grub! Bleary-eyed Trippers came and went, filling their bellies for the drive home.

2011 marked the second year for the Beer Trippin' event, and I know everyone is already looking forward to the next go around (barring the end of the world). Information about this even should be out at the end of this year, so watch the newsletters next season for details on how to trip out in 2012!



2011 Winners:

- 1st - Aaron Christ/Vienna Lager
- 2nd - Aaron Christ/Kolsch
- 3rd - Chad Ross/Double IPA
- 4th - Kevin Sobolesky/Scottish strong



GNBC Club Brew Update

by Dennis Sessler

This article is missing a catchy title. This year's club brew needs a name. Let's see what catchy ideas the GNBC can come up with. I'll give you a quick rundown on how brew day, fermentation, and all the goodies about getting the club brew into two barrels went. You think of some great names and bring them to our next two meetings. We will decide on a final list that we can collectively vote on. It would be great to incorporate this name into a label completion. Then the brew teams can attach labels to all the bottles that will need to be bottled. Remember, there was 130 gallons of Russian Imperial Stout brewed. This is a beer for the ages, it's meant to be cellared, not drank quickly via draft.

On March 5th, 12 designated brew teams set out to do what no homebrew club has ever tried before. I'm not sure if the last statement is absolutely true. I'll leave that for you members to research. As far as I'm concerned the GNBC is in a class of its own.

As the sun rose on south central Alaska, the propane burners were fired, malt was crushed, hops were weighed out, malt extract, molasses and maple syrup were warmed for their eventual inclusion later in the boil. For me personally this was one of my easiest, less stressful and enjoyable batches of beer brewed at my house. My brew team had six team members, and there was plenty of help from beginning to end. The extra help was nice since we were also going to have to clean and sanitize all the fermentors for the influx of wort soon to be arriving.



By 5pm, all the brew teams began arriving, toting corney kegs and carboys. We had a table of potluck style snacks for all to share, the kids were upstairs having a blast doing what kids do best (all I remember was the resounding sound of a stampede of little feet from above). There were homebrews and commercial beers galore that night. As the beers were dumped rather unconventionally into the massive stainless steel fermentors (three in all), they were thoroughly oxygenated from the cascading effect of thick viscous wort glorping out of kegs and carboys. When I mean thick and viscous, I am not exaggerating. The wort averaged an OG of 1.114. Each 10 gallon batch contained plenty of blackstrap molasses and maple syrup. It was the thick and rich wort that would later explain why temperature control is vital to fermentation.



After all the wort was nestled in the fermentors, a heavy dose of Scottish Ale yeast was blasted into each fermentor via a 3 gallon corney keg. It wouldn't take long for the thick krausen to form. By day 1 (day after inoculation) a 2 to 3 inch krausen had established itself. Temperatures were holding firm at about 70F. I was very happy that everything had come together especially being that all the beer would be fermented in non sealed fermentors. Each vessel is covered with plastic wrap, sanitized with an iodophor solution and stretched across the fermentor. Lids were then placed on top to protect the plastic wrap.

Later on day 2 I received a phone call while at work from Dena, she proceeded to tell me that the beer was starting to blow over in all 3 vessels. There was nothing I could do while at work, it would have to wait till I got home. That night I spent 4 hours racking, cleaning and reapplying new plastic wrap over all the vessels. I realized that there was no way that the vessels were going to be able to contain all the fermenting beer. That night I racked off eight carboys of fermenting beer and attached air locks galore. Once again I think I thought I had everything under control. The main issue was the wort was so thick that the CO2 being produced was reluctant to escape, it caused massive krausen. In the large 80 gallon kettle I estimated it to be over 12 inches thick. WOW was an understatement.

Temperatures were taken and this was the first time that I understood how much the temperatures can increase when beer is fermented in a large scale environment. When fermenting in buckets and carboys, a homebrewer can use the methods outlined in my other article on temperature control with great success. By when fermenting in larger vessels, a cold water bath just isn't going to cut it. There are plans to plumb all three fermentors with temperature controlled valves that will circulate my 36F well water through the jackets to keep these club brews at a constant temperature. After drastic measure to drop the temps from 88F back into the low 70s, the big rush was over and the beer maintained a healthy temperature for the duration of the fermentation. My biggest worry was a ton of off flavors produced by these elevated temperatures; we skirted this and ended up with a wonderful beer by day seven. The beer finished at 1.028FG.



Later that day Ben from Midnight Sun Brewing Company called me and told me that the whiskey and brandy barrels were in and ready for pick up. The following Monday I picked them up and got them nestled into my garage. The temperature was dropped in my garage to around 45F and the beers flocculated quickly.

Later that week I pulled out Dena's car and filled all the barrels

up with water for a quick rinse, I wanted to make sure they would hold all the beer without leaking. Both barrels were in great shape despite their age. The metal bands are very rusty showing their true age. The aroma in my garage was intense from filling and dumping the barrels. Something about the residual cask strength whiskey and brandy being dumped out into the floor drain. It didn't take very long to catch a contact high from all that smell, no kidding!



Two weeks after brew day began, the beers were racked over into the barrels, the whiskey barrel sits on its side or staves and the brandy barrel sits on end or its head. They are filled right to the top and silicone bungs were fitted to them. We as a club brewed slightly more beer than the barrels would hold. This will be used to blend at a later date.

Lessons Learned and Future Considerations:

-Having an enjoyable brew session with fellow GNBC members, brewing a common recipe is not just a once in a lifetime event. Dena and I would love to keep this going as an annual event even after my term as your President.

-Temperature control is vital. My equipment and process will be refined in order to provide a better environment for our little fungus friends.

-A pump would be sweet! I dream of a transfer pump to aid in filling and emptying barrels. Siphon hoses blow big time when transferring 130 gallons of beer.

-The next hurdle is going to be bottling all of this beer. There has been lots of thought on this. The initial plan is to rack off all the beer into corney kegs and let the individual teams fend for themselves on how to get it into bottles. After careful consideration the most consistent idea is to keg and via "Beer Gun" bottle all the beer into 22oz bombers, where labels if designed can be affixed and the two separate barrel aged beers divided up amongst the 12 brew teams. I think personally it would be the best yet most time consuming idea. Time will tell on what the 12 teams decide.



I would like to thank every member that participated in this year's club brew. There were 12 teams selected to lead each brew house, but there were many more members who joined in both for learning purposes and to be part of a remarkable historic brew. All your efforts will soon be ready later this summer or fall depending on time needed for each beer to acquire the flavors from each barrel. A special thanks to Ben Johnson and the crew at Midnight Sun Brewing Co. Their passion for beer and the GNBC shows no bounds. We could have never got this brew off the ground without their help with recipe formulation, and their yeast and barrel acquisitions. Lastly thanks to Pete and Lisa and the crew at Arctic Brewing Supply, they supplied all the crews with all of our ingredients at discounted prices. The cost to all the crews were hefty no doubt exceeding a Benjamin without fail, the cost could and should be spread amongst all who joined in each brew team. The cost of the barrels and bung were supplied by the club and will be reused for another club brew in the future.

The only chance you will be able to sample these wonderful beers, unless you were on one of the 12 brew teams will be in January at the GNBC GABBF club meeting. A 5 gallon corney keg of each barrel will be pulled off and served to the masses. This **will not** be a free pour beer like many of the beers brought by the distributors. The sample sizes will be served out so all will be able to enjoy. Till the next update think of a beer name and possible label design. We will vote on a beer name at our May 16th club meeting.



19th
Haines, Alaska

**GREAT ALASKA
CRAFT BEER AND
HOME BREW
FESTIVAL**
May 27th and 28th
-2011-

Friday Gourmet Beer Banquet Dinner 6 pm.
Harriet Hall at the Fairgrounds
\$60/Plate; Reservations required*

Saturday Beer Festival Food and Live Music
1pm - 3pm Dalton City at the fairgrounds
No reservations; bring your dancing shoes!

Free Shuttle to downtown after the event
ID required No children No dogs

*For reservations or to buy your ticket online:
www.seakfair.org or fairdirector@aptalaska.net or 907-766-2476

NEEDS YOU TO JUDGE BEER

When: Friday, May 27 10 am

Where: Harriet Hall — S.E.
Alaska State Fairgrounds, Haines

RSVP (required):

Rachael Juzeler

rjuzeler@alaskanbeer.com or
(907) 780-5866

**STAY TUNED
FOR S.E. BEER WEEK EVENTS
prior to
BEER DINNER FRIDAY &
BEER FESTIVAL SATURDAY
IN HAINES**

AHA & BJCP CERTIFIED



GNBC House Crawl

by *Lisa Peltola*

Yes, it's back! This year's house crawl is set for Saturday, May 21st. For those of you who haven't attended this event in the past, I'll give you the run down. It's a lot like a pub crawl but we will be going to the homes of homebrewers and sampling their fine beverages. There are snacks at each stop and the mandatory goofy beer game. Points are kept for each game throughout the day and the three top scores will win prizes.

We will be traveling around Anchorage on a 29 passenger Magic Bus. The event starts at noon and we will be dropped off at the last stop around 7:30 pm. Participants will be responsible for a cab ride or designated driver pickup from the last stop.

There are only 25 spots available for the crawl so reserve your seat early. I am still looking for a few generous folks to help out. The 1st and 3rd stops are filled; I am looking for three more stops to round out the event. Pete & Lisa will be the dinner stop (3rd stop) and will plan on having a good amount of food to fill our stomachs. Each stop will be about an hour (our stop 1.5 hours), giving us time to travel between stops. This is always an awesome event, don't miss out!

Call me weekdays at Arctic Brewing Supply 561-5771 or on my cell 350-0376 if you have questions, would like to volunteer to be a stop or would like to reserve a spot on the bus. Cheers! Lisa



Snow Goose Break-up LAST CALL

by Dan Bosch

The Snow Goose Break-up is just around the corner, so fire them brew kettles. We have a new slate of beers this year for the Break-up, so be sure to brew the right beers. Anything entered into the competition that is not of these proper classes will be confiscated and consumed immediately (a maniacal laugh maybe heard as you leave).

This competition is only open to the following BJCP categories:

Cat 6 Light hybrids
Cat 8 English Pale Ales
Cat 10 American Pale
Cat 15 German Wheat and Rye
Cat 20 Fruit Beer
And the "Brewers Challenge" **SMaSH**



These new categories are terrific and popular styles for the home brewer. The SMaSH is a **Single Malt and Single Hop** beer. Creativity is not frowned upon while crafting and brewing a SMaSH. Even though you can only use one malt (or extract: you must verify the extract is made from one malt only, most malts are a blend of malts) and one hop there are variety of tactics you can conger up to make your SMaSH stand out from the other swill. Some examples are: draw off a gallon of the first running and boil it down to a pint or a quart, caramelize some of your extract and add it back to your pot, or you can also try a decoction mash. These are only a few examples, but challenge brewers should be prepared to fill a separate and creative entry form for their beverage. All these styles and the challenge beer will be eligible for the Best of Show, and a worthy beer may be chosen to be brewed by the Snow Goose and served up on the deck this summer.

BJCP Category descriptions and links to the recipe forms can be found here:

Style Guidelines- www.bjcp.org/2008styles/catdex.php

Recipe Forms- <http://www.bjcp.org/compcenter.php>

I will be in the Snow Goose basement Friday afternoon April 1st, from 1200 to 1730 to collect entries. As always there will be a need for judges and stewards, so please show up on Saturday at 0945 to organize and help pick the best beer. Brew On!



2011 National Homebrew Toast and Brewathon

by John "SUDS" Craig

I Love Beer! Beer, Beer, Beer, and more beer. All this beer talk is making me thirsty for our annual GNBC Brewathon. In this event, we worship the Beer Gods up in Suds' Heaven. This is the reason Rose and I am inviting homebrewers over to Jade Street Beer Gardens on Saturday, May 7th for the event. The event is part of a nationwide coast-to-coast brew day (even in outer space). Homebrewers gather to make as much beer, mead or hooch as possible in a one day session. We start setting up at 8:00 AM and celebrate the "Coast to Coast Homebrew Toast" at 9:00 AM sharp, brew all day, cook, socialize and wrap up around 9:00 PM.

The objective is to have about 10 brew stations set up in the yard for everyone's use, but if you're particular and like to share with others, bring your own brew supplies, equipment and don't forget propane, burners, your own carboys for your beer, and even rubber boots; it can get sloppy and wet out there. This is as much an educational event as it is social and you should invite curious non-brewers to attend with you and show them the foamy ropes. This is as much of a brewing equipment road show as it is a brewing session, so plan to demonstrate your set up and learn from others at the same time.

As always, there will be a BBQ/Potluck all day long, so bring along something for the grill and something to share with others, and don't forget your stash of homebrew. What makes the event great is a large array of something people can dip into, throw on the grill and toss on a plate while drinking great homebrew.

We've had lots of fun over the years at this annual event, so we hope to see you at 8757 Jade Street (west on Dimond, past Jewell Lake Road and right on Jade Street. We're at the corner of Jade and 88th.) If you get lost, call us the day of the event at (907) 243-6540. There is ample parking along Jade Street, but please respect our gracious neighbors who have tolerated (and participated in) this event over the years. Try not to block driveways or mailboxes and access to other people's property. Common sense should prevail. Keep our driveway open as well as ordered by the Fire Marshall as part of the permit we need to have a campfire in our back yard.

GNBC board member Tim Strayer will be facilitating the details of this event and has included a summary below. PLEASE read! If you should have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact him at 907-243-0174 or email at tim@strayermail.com.

We hope to see you at this great event. May the beer Gods be with us!

If you are brewing, please fill in your information on the signup sheet at Arctic Brewing Supply for either Extract or All Grain. Or you can email Tim directly.

If you don't have equipment, no worries! If you do have equipment (or extra equipment), please consider lending it for the day (and your expertise) and be sure to label it so it can find the right home at the end of the day. We will have several stations setup for your use. An experienced brewer will work with you and/or let you use their equipment.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW:

- 1) The brewing location is 8757 Jade Street (Home of John and Rose Craig). 8:00 a.m. equipment setup, 9:00 a.m. Opening Toast
- 2) You don't have to brew to attend. You can just observe and ask questions!
- 3) You must provide the ingredients for your brew (other than water)! We will have at least one strain of common yeast available for your use donated from a local brewery, but you are welcome to bring your own. The wonderful staff at Arctic Brewing Supply can provide all that you need.
- 4) You must provide a carboy/bucket w/airlock to transport your brew home.
- 5) All brewers should bring samples of their own homebrew and/or unique commercial brews to share. It's a great opportunity to get some feedback on your homebrews.
- 6) The club will be providing various grilled meats and some beverages, but we do request that everyone who comes to BRING A LARGE PORTION of your favorite dish (with the necessary serving utensils) to share.
- 7) Recipes: You may choose to brew your favorite beer style, or if you would like to share in the National Big Brew 2011 theme, select one of the selected styles from the AHA website (below). This years choices are an IPA, Porter, and Wit.

8) And lastly, it goes without saying but please remember that this is an educational event. Please share your food, brew, passion, and good humor with those around you. Always remember to drink responsibly.

For more information about National Homebrew Day take a look at the AHA website: <http://www.homebrewersassociation.org/pages/events/national-homebrew-day>

For more information about the Great Northern Brewers brew club, visit our website at <http://www.greatnorthernbrewers.org> or Facebook page at: <http://www.facebook.com/gnbc1>

Come join us for a day of great education and good fun!

Again, If you have any questions, please contact Tim Strayer at 907-243-0174 or tim@strayermail.com.

Fermentation Temperature Control 101

Fermentation temperature control is the single most important thing you can do that will make the most dramatic improvements in your beer. Without temperature control, it's simply impossible to brew most beers correctly. Many homebrewers underestimate its importance and therefore are doomed to brew mediocre beers. Some of the major problems associated with **fermenting too warm** are:



The biggest problem is the off flavors from esters and fusel alcohols that the yeast produces. Sometimes the flavors are not so much “off” as they are inappropriate for the style.

- Your yeast can blast out of the starting gate, consuming everything in sight, and then run out of nutrients before finishing the sugar. This usually ends in an incomplete fermentation.
- Fermentations that are too hot can cause the yeast to become too sensitive to alcohol toxicity, meaning that they will die off from the alcohol before their usual tolerance is met.
- Yeast begins to die off from heat stress, leaving the remaining yeast to do all the work. In effect you ended up under-pitching the yeast and will get off flavors as a result.
- Since yeast metabolism generates a lot of heat, starting fermentation too high will quickly lead to problems as the temperature will climb in the 80°F+ range and yeast die off.

When brewing in colder climates or during the winter without temperature control, yeast will exhibit stress problems too. Winter is the traditional time to brew because there is less spoilage bacteria and wild yeast to contend with. For a homebrewer, **too cold of fermentation temperature** can cause the following problems:

- Your fermentation may never get started.
- Your fermentation may be sluggish and drag on for weeks before finally getting stuck.
- For ales that require a degree of fruitiness from esters, fermenting too cold can lead to a beer that is too clean or bland for the style. Judges will be looking for flavors and aromas that just didn't make it into the beer due to the cold fermentation.

- If there is any contamination in your beer, it is going to be a race to see which can dominate the fermentation. A sluggish start can give these bacteria a chance to take over and ruin a batch of beer.
 - When fermentation does commence in an environment that is too cold, CO₂ becomes entrained in the cold beer. Flavors that are normally “gassed off” stay in solution and may make it through the entire fermentation process to the final product. This is especially true for the sulphur aromas and flavors produced in lager fermentations.
- So what are the solutions?** What can I do to control the fermentation temperature? It goes without saying that before you can control the temperature of your fermentation; **you must know what that temperature is.** There are a few options here.
- **A separate thermowell** with temperature probe installed will give you the exact temperature of your fermentation. This is the most accurate way to measure and control the temperature of the fermenting wort.
 - Or you could rely on the setting on the dial of your temperature controller. You want to control the actual temperature of the wort and not the ambient temperature inside the fridge (which can vary by quite a bit). To do this, tape the temperature probe to the side of your fermenter and then tape a piece of bubble-wrap on top of the probe for insulation.
 - For measurement only, an indoor/outdoor thermometer works well for monitoring the ambient temperature inside your refrigerator. Place the control unit on the outside of your fridge, and the temperature for the outside (which is now inside your fridge) will be the inside ambient temperature of your fridge.
 - Of course, the better the quality of the thermometer, the more accurate the temperature will be. I place my traceable thermometer inside and compare it to the cheaper indoor/outdoor temperature. In my case there is a two degree difference. I just keep that in mind when I monitor the temperatures.
 - Your local homebrew supply store will probably have the stick-on thermometers you can use for your fermenter. It’s not the most accurate instrument but is better than nothing.
 - A good option is a **liquid-filled thermometer** that you place inside the fridge. The liquid reacts much slower to changes in ambient temperature than does the air inside the fermentation fridge. If you have the door open for a short period of time, while measuring the SG of your fermenting wort for example, the liquid filled thermometer will still measure the same temperature. It is also a little more accurate measuring the fermenting beer than just a typical thermometer, since it is filled with liquid just like the fermenter is.

Once you can monitor temperatures, here are a few solutions **for controlling the actual temperature of your fermentation:**

- **Refrigerator or Freezer** The most common solution is the spare refrigerator/freezer. Because fermentation temperatures need to be more precise than the refrigerator can provide, you will need to bypass the thermostat. The simplest way is to use either an analog or digital electronic thermostat controller.
- **The analog temperature controller** (pictured is the Johnson Controls model most often seen in homebrew catalogs or websites). You can use this controller to regulate the temperature in your freezer between 20° – 80°F (-7° to 27°C) by bypassing the unit’s internal thermostat. You can also use the controller for turning a chest freezer into a keg refrigerator. It is strictly a mechanical thermostat for cooling only. It operates with a gas filled probe on a 6-foot capillary tube.



When the gas contracts or expands in the probe, it triggers a mechanical device inside the control which turns the power on or off. There is no probe-temperature readout on the dial, so keeping a dedicated thermometer inside the refrigerator is highly recommended to keep track of the actual ambient temperature. On most refrigerators, the Controller will allow a usable range of 37° to 80°F, while on freezers, the controller will be able to reach its full 20°F to 80°F range. Keep in mind that if you use it to control a refrigerator, you will lose the use of the freezer compartment for food storage, as it will not stay cold enough for safe frozen food storage. It is made of stainless steel and is adjustable with the turn of the knob. To install, plug the unit into the wall, then run the sensor into your refrigerator/freezer. Then you plug the freezer or refrigerator into the control unit. It

will cycle the power on the freezer based on the dial's temperature setting. NOTE: Freezers do not have a means of draining and evaporating condensation like a refrigerator does.

- A better choice, although more expensive, is the **digital electronic thermostat control**. With this controller you can precisely control the ambient temperature inside your refrigerator or freezer, or you can control your fermentation. You can control fermentation temperatures three ways. First you can place the probe inside the space that is being cooled or heated to control the ambient temperature around the fermenter. I put a pint jar filled with distilled water inside the freezer and punched a hole in the top. Then I place the probe inside the water. Because the 6' coil will want to tip the jar over, I use tie wraps to hold the jar in place. The temperature inside the jar of water will change more slowly than the ambient temperature inside the freezer. Doing this enables you to open the door for a few minutes without the controller cycling the compressor. A better choice is to place the probe directly into the fermenter using a stopper thermowell. If you don't have a thermowell, here's what I do. Tape the probe directly to the side of the fermenter. Then tape a piece of bubble wrap over the probe to insulate it from the air inside the fridge. The probe will read the temperature of your fermenting beer and make adjustments to the refrigerator to keep it within the controller's range. You can change from cooling to heating mode directly from the digital control panel. When in cooling mode, and hooked up to a refrigerator or other cooling device, the controller turns the compressor on when the ambient temperature rises above your set point. When in heating mode and hooked up to a FermWrap heater for example, the controller turns on the heater when the temperature drops below your set point.



- **A FermWrap around a fermenter** or inside an unplugged refrigerator can be the ideal solution for fermenting in cold climates when your fridge or freezer is in your garage. The digital temperature controller features an adjustable differential down to within one degree in both heating and cooling modes. This means you can precisely control an environment to within one degree of your set point. The included sensor probe monitors the temperature while the digital readout displays it in either Fahrenheit or Celsius. The sensor probe is 1/4" in diameter and works well with the stopper thermowells. The temperature range of these controllers is -30° to 220°F (-34° to 104°C). Another great feature of this device is that you can ferment two completely different beers at the same time in the same fridge. Set the temperature controller for the colder fermentation (a lager for example) at around 48°F (8.88°C), this will keep the ambient temperature low enough to ferment your lager. Then use the FermWrap on an ale by wrapping it around the carboy and setting the controller to your ale fermentation temp, say 65°F (18.33°C). The FermWrap will heat the carboy and maintain the ale wort at the proper fermentation temperature for that style as well. *NOTE: The heating tape you buy (called a "brew belt") is not the same as this device. It should not be used on glass carboys, only plastic fermenters. The heat applied is too localized and the glass could crack or shatter. The FermWrap distributes the heat over a much broader area and is therefore safe to use on glass carboys.*
- **Electronic controller units** designed for air conditioners or commercial refrigerators are available everywhere and can be used for temperature control. Or you can build thermostats from designs that you can find online. I find the temperature controller to be much easier and simpler to use.
- The only downside to **using a spare fridge** for fermentation temperature control is when you also use it to store your bottled beer. The temperature inside is always fluctuating based on whether you are fermenting an ale or a lager. Aging beer benefits from stable temperatures. I'm not sure what effect this has on the beer's quality. It may be minimal for beers you will consume

within a few months. But for big beers meant for long aging, like barleywines, lambics, and old ales, the consequences of constant temperature fluctuations may be more dramatic. More research is in order.

- **Evaporation** You can place your fermenter in a spare bathtub or large tub. By placing an old t-shirt over the fermenter, or wrapping a towel around it, you can wick the water into the fabric as it evaporates. This provides a fairly constant cooling effect. To increase the cooling effect, add a fan. You can drop the fermentation several degrees using this method. One drawback is that you tie up your spare bathtub for a few weeks. I'm sure many great types of ale have been made using this cooling method.
- **Ice Bath** Instead of adding water to the tub, try adding ice instead. Or if you are handy, try building an insulated container to place your fermenter in along with the ice. You have no way of controlling the temperature, and it will vary with the amount of ice left, but it will definitely get your fermenter near the lower ranges for most ale yeasts (55°- 60°F or 13°- 16°C).

Fermentation temperature control is probably the most important thing you can do to improve your beer. If you have your sanitation control and brewing processes down pat, then most of the off flavors in your beers can be attributed to improper fermentation temperatures. Ales fermented too warm will exhibit fusel alcohol and fruity esters that may or may not be appropriate for the style you are brewing. Although the yeast love the warmer temperatures and ferment faster, the flavors and aromas of your beer will suffer. The same goes with lager fermentations. You can't even try making many of the world's finest beers if you lack temperature control. I'd suggest that if you don't have a fermentation fridge, that you purchase or find one before you buy many of the other luxury homebrew gadgets on the market. You will make better beer, and isn't that the whole point?

Information for this article was adapted from Randy Mosher's books [Radical Brewing](#) and [The Brewer's Companion](#) as well as articles on fermentation control in the wine industry.

Lager Brewing

by Dennis Sessler

Thinking about brewing a lager style beer? Here are a few tips to help ensure success on your first try. For an in-depth scientific analysis of lager brewing, please refer to Greg Noonan's book ***New Brewing Lager Beer***. It is one of the best resources I have found pertaining to brewing lagers.

1) Make a yeast starter

- The purpose of doing a yeast starter is to encourage a vigorous fermentation that yields full attenuation and clean flavor profile. The cool fermentation temperature required for lager beer stresses yeast, so a strong yeast starter paired with good wort aeration will help ensure that your lager beer is a success. I strongly encourage that a yeast starter is prepared for all lager fermentations. If a yeast starter is not used when fermenting a lager, you increase the risk of a slow fermentation that will under-attenuate and produces off flavors.

- For procedure, please refer to the Yeast Starter document on the Beer Making page.

2) Pitch Yeast at 70F - 75F

- While lager yeast can maintain fermentation at cooler temperatures, they are more comfortable fermenting at warmer temperatures. Pitching your yeast starter at a warmer temperature and waiting for fermentation to start before cooling the beer down will help ensure a healthy fermentation free from diacetyl production.

3) Reaching fermentation temperature

- To produce the clean and sometimes sulfury (which can be desired) fermentation profile that lager yeasts provide, a colder fermentation temperature needs to be achieved. Most lagers are typically fermented at 50-55F, though some specific yeast strains may vary on optimal fermentation temperature.

- Ideally, fermenting the beer in a converted deep freezer or refrigerator with a temperature controller will yield the best results. You will want to reduce the temperature slowly, over the course of a few days to your desired fermentation temperature.



- Though not as ideal, it is still entirely possible to lager beers during the colder months without a dedicated freezer or refrigerator by using your basement, attic, garage or any combination of spaces that would help you achieve the desired temperatures.

4) Perform a Diacetyl Rest

- Diacetyl is chemical compound that is produced by yeast during the early stages of fermentation that is typically consumed by the yeast near the end of fermentation. The colder fermentation greatly decreases the efficiency of yeast's ability to metabolize the diacetyl that is present.

- Diacetyl in a beer can give the beer a buttery and/or creamy quality that is undesirable in most styles and especially in lagers where a clean fermentation is most desired.

- To perform a diacetyl rest, you will need to gradually warm up your beer to 60-70F for at least three days. This can be done by controlling your temperature in your refrigerator/freezer or removing your beer from the cold environment and putting it in a room that sits within the target temperature range.

- The warmer temperature not only helps reduce diacetyl but it also allows the beer to fully attenuate before the lagering stage.

Lager Brewing Continued

5) Lagering

- This is the conditioning stage that helps achieve that crisp and clean flavor profile desired in lager beers.

- After the diacetyl rest is complete, transfer the beer into your carboy for secondary and begin to gradually (over the course of several days if possible) reduce the temperature to about 32-35F as possible and hold it at that temperature at least 2 weeks but preferably up to 6 weeks (or longer depending on the style) to ensure that your beer has matured in flavor.

6) Priming, Packaging, and Storing

- If you have a kegging system and forces carbonate your beers, keg as normally would.

- If you are bottle conditioning there are a few steps to perform to ensure that your long awaited for beer is properly carbonated when you go to crack one open. Since the beer has been condition for a long period of time at very cold temperatures, the yeast will have become malnourished, dormant, and almost completely flocculated out of the beer.

1. Warm the beer back up to about room temperature
2. Prime the beer as normal in bulk
3. Repitch dry yeast into the beer (US-04, S-04, S-33, or T-58 will perform well)
4. Let the beer sit a day or two with the new yeast in it at room temperature
5. Now you can bottle just as you normally would any other beer.



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



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**NEXT MEETING: April 19th, 2011
7:00 PM at the Snow Goose**