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THE

Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB

DECEMBER 2009

The Prez Sez

by Dennis Sessler

"Oh No", you must be saying. Did this guy just get elected President? "You have got to be kidding me," you might be thinking. Well I thought it poignant to have my first Prez Sez article take me back to my roots.

When I came of legal drinking age, my beverage of choice was Miller Genuine Draft, when I had my first beer, my choice was Old Milwaukee, but I was unable to find one of those for my initial Prez Sez picture. Needless to say I grew up in Wisconsin and the legal age was 21 or any age with a 21 year old guardian. I remember going to the corner bar sometimes with my father or grandfather after a hard day in the fields bailing hay. As a teenager I can remember belying up to the bar and ordering an Old Milwaukee. Of course the adults would pay. Fast forward to 2001 when a dear friend of mine introduced me to homebrewed beer. This was an overnight obsession for me.

I brewed extract beers twice, then two batches of extract beer with grain and then moved straight to all grain. I've learned a lot in eight years; some good and some bad. I managed to teach my lovely wife Dena how to brew and now she wins more competitions than I do, which is fine. I never have a problem getting that next upgrade for our home brewery, at least not yet.

Homebrewers have seen the prices of our beloved ingredients skyrocket over the past few years. With all the increases in fuel and hop prices, it's almost as cheap to take your corny keg down to your favorite local brewery and drop it off for an instant cleaning and fill up. I found myself doing this quite often over the last few years due to an extensive home remodel. It was much more convenient, I didn't have to worry about sanitation, or even more problematic, controlling temperatures considering that part of the house wasn't even insulated during the coldest part of winter. On second thought, I should have brewed and cellared an Eisbock just for that memorable time in my life. My remodel is moving along and eventually I will complete it. At least I have my house back to where I am able to concoct those wonderful beers, meads and ciders that I love to sample and brew so much.

For me this short story brings me back to my roots. It has rekindled an urge to brew all those beers that were put on that back burner only a few years ago. I hope this story has also rekindled your home brewing passion; maybe some day in the near future I will see you down at Arctic Brewing Supply gathering that malt, hops and yeast for your next batch and we can chat about your beer drinking roots.



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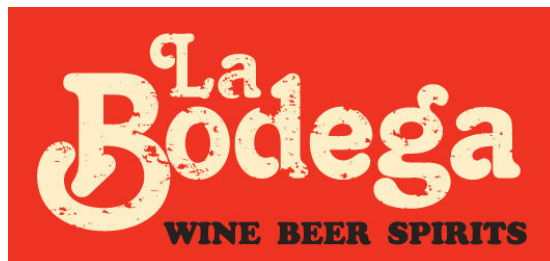
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I want to thank all the outgoing board members and officers who have carried the torch for our great club. Congratulations to the new board members and officers. Your commitment means so much to this great club and on behalf of the membership I thank you for volunteering to make this the best homebrew club that it can be. The incoming board and officers have a renewed energy. We have lots of new ideas including both educational and fun club based activities. I implore all members to renew your passion, step up and volunteer for many of the upcoming events. Without a majority of the club participation we will find ourselves bellying up to that proverbial bar ordering that "Old Milwaukee".

In this month's newsletter you will enjoy the return of the Secretary's Corner. Our Treasurer wants all to remember to update your membership because it does have perks. Jason Ditsworth and Steve Schmitt will have their reminders for the Big Fish Competition and the Black IPA Side challenge. Come in on the 5th of Dec to help out, and enjoy the debauchery of the "Side Challenge". That same night is our annual holiday party. Come one come all. See Julie McDonald's article elsewhere in this edition. Remember that the holiday party is our December meeting; we will not meet again until our Great Alaskan Beer and Barley Wine Festival (GABBF) meeting on **THURSDAY January 14**. Note the date: it's different than our traditional 3rd Tuesday of each month to coincide with the GABBF events. The GABBF is our largest and most interesting meeting bar none. More details coming, so check the January newsletter for complete update.

Elsewhere in this edition, there is also an article on the upcoming annual Fur Rendezvous Homebrew Competition. Take note and get your kettle fired up. You will also find an article about the return of the AHA Club-Only Competition and a new newsletter sidebar with the Brewer of the Year style categories and competitions schedule. This is another great opportunity to get your kettles fired up.

As I wrap up my inaugural Prez Sez article I ask that we all enjoy this special time of year with family and friends. Please show your patronage to our local craft breweries. Please "Think before you drink." I look forward to seeing everyone at our next event and until then- Brew On!



Renew your Membership Dues

by *Breck Tostevin, Treasurer*

The GNBC Membership year runs from September to September of each year. Dues were due in September, so it is LONG PAST TIME to renew your membership. Dues are \$25 and you can pay on the website through Pay Pal or by mailing a check to the club mailbox:

Great Northern Brewers Club
Attn: Treasurer
3705 Arctic Blvd, PMB 1204
Anchorage, AK 99503-5774

If you have questions about your dues status, send me an email at keegan@gci.net.

For new members who joined this summer, you do not have to renew your dues now. I applied your membership to the new year. So welcome to the club and we look forward to seeing you at club events.

I will be taking unpaid members emails off of our mailing list in January. So please pay now. Thanks for supporting your club.



Club Only Competition Returns

by *Dennis Sessler*

I am pleased to announce the return of the American Homebrewers Association Club-Only Competition hereafter known as the AHA COC. For new GNBC members, the AHA is the parent organization that all local brew clubs charter to. You may be asking yourself, what's with all these competitions?

The Beer Judge Certification Program (BJCP) works in conjunction with the AHA and simply put their mission is "to **promote beer literacy and the appreciation of real beer** and to **recognize beer tasting and evaluation skills.**" How else can we achieve this objective without having structured, set styles, guidelines and competitions? The answer is that without AHA sanctioned competitions, we can't.

Many GNBC members are AHA BJCP certified beer judges. In order to maintain their rankings, these members are required to judge in a minimum number AHA sanctioned homebrewing competitions. Without providing these judging venues, we are not upholding our responsibility as an AHA sanctioned homebrewing club.

EVENTS

Every First Thursday
Moose's Tooth First Tap

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

05.....*Humpy's/SubZero: Bigfish Homebrew Competition Judging 10 AM*

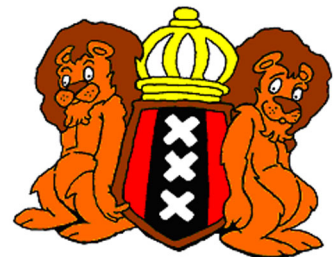
05.....*GNBC Holiday Party at the Goose: 6 PM*

13.....*Tap Root Cafe: Celestial Meads Mead Tasting: Time/Cost TBD*

20.....*Midnight Sun Brewing Company Good Mojo Day*

15-16.....*Great Alaska Beer and Barley Wine Festival - Egan Center Watch for details.....*

CAFE



AMSTERDAM

Also, without structured competitions, all we would have is social events where club members get together and shoot the bull and drink whatever somebody brewed or bought from their local liquor store. One of the GNBC's goals is to educate both new and veteran members on not only proper brewing techniques, but also on BJCP styles and judging. This is a perfect format for both new and old members to brew a batch of beer, compete against other GNBC members to have your beer represent our club in a national competition reserved for AHA sanctioned clubs. Below is the AHA COC calendar and the dates that we as a club will evaluate your beer and send the best sample forward to the main competition.

-March/April 2010 American Ales BJCP Category 10 Bring your entry to the February 16, 2010 meeting

-May 2010 Extract Beers BJCP Category 1-23 Bring your entry to the April 20, 2010 meeting

-August 2010 Mead BJCP Category 24-26 Bring your entry to the GNBC Summer campout, Date TBD

-September/October 2010 Sour Ale BJCP Category 17 Bring your entry to the August BBQ Date TBD

-November/December 2010 Strong Ale BJCP Category 19 bring your entry to the September 21 2010 meeting

-January/February 2011 English Pale Ales BJCP Category 8, bring your entry to the November 16 2010 meeting

This is a good start. More information is coming in a subsequent newsletter. To coincide with the upcoming AHA COC competitions I will be soliciting knowledgeable newsletter article submissions that cover the above styles that include a basic history of the style, brewing instructions and a simple recipe new homebrewers can try out.

Secretary's Corner

by Jennifer Bisson

What did we learn at the last meeting?

Special thanks to Jason Ditsworth for his informative "Brewing Process" presentation at last month's meeting. See Jason's article for his presentation summary.

What happened since or at the last meeting?

Elections were held at our last meeting. Ballots were cast for Officers (four positions) and Board Members (4 positions). Congratulations to those newly elected:

President - Dennis Sessler
Vice President - Steve Schmitt
Treasurer - Breck Tostevin
Secretary - Jennifer Bisson
Board Member - Joe Michael
Board Member - Jim Lamb

2010 Homebrewer of The Year Categories

Fur Rendezvous HBC

- Category 12
- Category 18
- Category 19
- Category 23
- Category 28

Snow Goose HBC

- Category 1
- Category 3
- Category 4
- Category 6
- Category 16

Anchor Town HBC

- Category 7
- Category 10
- Category 13
- Category 15
- Category 27

Equinox Mead HBC

- Category 24
- Category 25
- Category 26

Humpy's Big Fish HBC

- Category 2
- Category 5
- Category 9
- Category 14
- Category 22

Board Member - John Trapp
Board Member - Tim Strayer
Board Member - Tim Bisson (This position carries over from last year for a two-year term)

If you have any questions, concerns, or burning issues please let a GNBC Officer or Board member know. Each of us is very excited to ensure that GNBC remains one of the best homebrewing clubs in the nation with a strong emphasis on education, peer support, and fun.

What is happening now?

The Big Fish is coming? Yes, the 15th annual Big Fish homebrewing competition will be held at SubZero on December 5, 2009. Check out Jason's article for more information on how to submit entries and how you can be a judge at the competition.

The side challenge at The Big Fish is a Black Double IPA. See Steve's article for more information.

Save the date! The GNBC Holiday party will be held on December 5, 2009, at the Snowgoose Restaurant and Sleeping Lady Brewing Company in the downstairs. With optional costumes and a "Fire and Ice" themed potluck, this years party will continue the annual tradition we all have come to enjoy. Check out Julie McDonald's article for more information.

What does the future hold?

Have you ever wondered how hard it is for a small, independent brewery to take on Corporate Beer America? This David and Goliath tale finally has a voice in the recently released documentary, *Beer Wars* - directed by Anat Baron. Unfortunately, there have not been any screenings up here in Alaska. The GNBC is trying to change that. So, stayed tuned for more information and check out the movie's web-site at www.beerwarsmovie.com

The Great Alaska Beer and Barleywine festival is coming up January 15-16, 2010. This event, held at the Egan Center, is always a fun time for the entire community. And as always, attending this event is a great way to meet folks from outside of Alaska who encourage and support our nation's beer culture. This year look for your opportunity to meet Beeradvocate.com's founders- Jason and Todd Alstrom.

Do you want to go to the Great Alaska Beer and Barleywine festival for FREE? You can if you volunteer! It is not late, go to www.auroraproductions.net for more information.

Who's the survey monkey? A committee is working hard to edit and finalize a full report of member responses that will be posted to the GNBC web-site. Leadership is anxious to see the results and, in turn will make the necessary changes making GNBC even better for its members.

With the new year right around the corner and the release of the "Brewer of the Year" categories, it is time to get ready for the 2010 cycle of homebrewing competitions. Fur Rondy will be the first one, coming up in February. Check out Dennis' article for more information. Note the new sidebar that highlights dates and categories in this month's newsletter.

Do you like trying new beers? If you have plenty of experience or none at all find out how you can be a beer judge at one of the 2010 homebrew competitions. Make this year your year to get involved!

MEETING SETUP		
A - J	JAN	Setup
K - P		Cleanup
R - Z		Food
A - J	FEB	Cleanup
K - P		Food
R - Z		Setup
A - J	MAR	Food
K - P		Setup
R - Z		Cleanup



The Humpy's Big Fish Side Challenge for 2009 will be the BLACK IPA CHALLENGE. For those of you new to the game here are the basics:

- The side-challenge is not included in the overall Big Fish Competition and so the winner will not go to the Best of Show round.
- The winner of the side challenge this year will receive the soon to be coveted 'Bobble Head Beer Bottle'
- The side challenge is meant to be fun – anyone who takes it seriously will automatically have 10 points deducted from their score and be forced to watch Beaches 7 times back-to-back.

To enter the side challenge, submit at least 1 bottle at the same time entries are submitted for the Big Fish.

The basic information for entry/judging follows:

- Brewers name and other semi-relevant DATA
- Any information which the brewer feels is important and which they feel the general public should know about this beverage

Basic Judging Criteria:

- Name of the Beverage (20 points) – Remember – innuendo scores highly
- Volume of Beverage Entered (20 points) – Yes, size does matter
- Purely capricious and arbitrary judging criteria to be developed by the judging panel during the course of the competition in regard to the overall 'impression' of the beverage in hand (10 points)
- Standard BJCP judging stuff (aroma, flavor, yada yada – 50 points)
- 100 points total



Cider in Alaska; Apples, Gene Pools and the Silk Road

By Mike Kiker

I have been planning an orchard for a year now. I've been researching apple varieties with an eye toward making some good cider. I started by identifying which of the known cider apple varieties might grow well in Alaska. But I couldn't correlate that list with the list of apples that have been grown in Alaska (from the Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers Association website at <http://www.apfga.org>). The problem is that I've been chasing a wild goose! I came to that conclusion intuitively, but now I know why.

While wild apple varieties grow all over the world, the parents of almost all cultivated apples are native to the Tian Shan Mountains around the borders of China, Kazakhstan and Kirgizistan. Over thousands of years they were spread to other areas via the old (east-west) Silk Road routes. Apples made it to Turkey, Greece and Italy through southern Black Sea and Mediterranean routes, and were brought to Europe and the British Isles as the Roman Empire spread its influence north. Initially, the apple seeds were slowly spread along the Silk Road routes through horse, camel and human excrement, although cultivation played a significant role later. This was a very slow process, occurring over hundreds (if not thousands of years) and it narrowed down the gene pool of the apples that made it to Europe by naturally selecting for HOT CLIMATE varieties, since they were the only ones that could survive the long slow path through the Mediterranean climate.

There was however a northern branch of the silk road that followed the Volga River into Russia. Apples that traveled this route have been naturally selected for COLD CLIMATE tolerant varieties but have largely been ignored by growers in favor of the European Varieties.

There are today, wild forests of native apples in Kazakhstan, with tremendous genetic diversity, that need no pesticides because the pests have natural predators or counter-balancing bacteria, fungus, etc. It is the perfect climate for apples and it is much closer to that of Alaska than the climates of England, France and most of the lower 48 states. And, there can be no doubt that the climate of Russia has many similarities to that of Alaska.

So, we need to be concentrating on the offspring of those Russian varieties that traveled the Northern Silk Road so many years ago. You know some of the originals like Alexander, Dolgos, Duchess (of Oldenburg), Yellow Transparent, etc. But a few folks have been breeding Russian varieties for colder climates in North America for quite a while now. The University of Minnesota (<http://www.apples.umn.edu/>) started with about 150 apple varieties from Russia in 1865 and has used them to create lots of new varieties including Centennial, Chestnut, Honeycrisp, Sweet Sixteen, and Zestar, to name a few.

The record cold of the winter of 1917-1918 helped eliminate some of the 'also rans'. The University of Saskatchewan has produced the 'Prairie' series. Prairie Magic, Prairie Sensation, and Prairie Sun are a few examples. The 'Land' series (Norland, Parkland, Westland, etc.,) among others, use native American crabapples and Russian varieties. The winter of 1942 was particularly devastating for them. Alberta Orchards has a website with notes about which varieties can handle their harsh zone 3 and 2 climate at <http://members.shaw.ca/BNikolai/index.html>.

Among many others B. Nikolai of Alberta Orchards mentions Lloyd Lee's apple varieties from Camp Creek, Alberta. You might notice Lee 21 and Lee 17, which are some of the more popular varieties Nikolai has developed. Any apples with a 'Nor' at the beginning of the name (Norkent, Norhey, Norcue, etc) are bred specifically for northern climates. Some of the other varieties to look for (in no particular order) are; Carroll, Collett, Hibernial, Lowland (Liveland) Raspberry, Lubsk Queen, Noret, Novosibirski Sweet, Oriole, Red Astrachan and September Ruby.

Trying to grow European and Lower 48 Cider apple varieties in Alaska is an exercise in frustration. You might find one that will live here, (I understand that someone has a Belle de Boskoop outdoors in Wasilla) but how many will you kill before you find it? And, even if it stays alive, it may not produce fruit. Investing 5 years or more to find out can waste a lot of time, when you could have been experimenting with apple varieties that have a far greater chance of survival and fruiting.

The moral is that experimentation is good, but save that Ashmead's Kernel and Calville Blanc d'Hiver for the greenhouse. You'll have better luck with apples whose parentage can be traced back to Russia. Dasvidaniya Tovarisch!

Holiday Shopping Made Easy-Time is Winding Down!

Get Your GNBC Logo Gear for gift giving or for yourself!

By Julie McDonald

It's getting very close to that time of year when the jolly man in red is looking for gift ideas for the homebrewer who has everything! We thought we'd make his job a little easier this year.

For all of us that have been clamoring for club logo merchandise, check out these two options.

1. Alaska Textiles - The GNBC logo is on file for application to tee shirts, jackets, hats, etc. They are located at Fireweed and Arctic next to Alaska Cleaners.

- Call them at 265-4880
- check them out online at <http://www.alaskatextiles.com/>
- Embroidery cost varies, depending on the number of stitches. For example a baseball cap with front logo and back logo will cost the price of the cap plus an additional \$16.29. For a shirt, the price of the shirt and an additional \$21.56. If things are ordered in multiples the cost of embroidery is discounted.

2. Land's End Business Outfitters – Get hats, fleece, Ts, bags, water bottles, scarves, aprons, etc. Our Company Store is up and running... all YOU have to do is use it! Here's how:

- Log on to your Internet Explorer browser, their websites do not run on Mozilla Firefox, they run best on IE.
- Enter this URL: ces.landsend.com/gnbclub there is no need to add the http:/ prefix to this, just cut and paste it as is.
- You will need to register before you can order, it's a simple procedure, doesn't take long. Just click on "Sign In". It brings you to a sign in page, click "register with us" and voila, enter your info.
- There are no restrictions on what we can order. But keep in mind that some products are only available in bulk quantities. So be aware of that before placing your order.
- Embroidery cost is between \$13.00 and \$14.05 per application depending on which fabrics/products we order.



So there you have it!

Now get busy getting your club gear ordered and on it's way!!!! There are roughly 20ish shopping days left!!!!

The Incredible Beer and Travel Adventures of Todd Rock Part 3 – Portland and Bend

by Todd Rock

(When we last saw Todd, he was in Seattle trying to make up for lost time...)

Drinking in Portland is a potential marathon which I don't recommend for the faint of liver. Upon reaching the city we were greeted by over a dozen breweries and several specialty beer bars and stores. One of the biggest problems was actually deciding where to start. Fortunately time solved that problem as there was only one brewery open at that time in the morning and that was Alameda Brewing Company, which is a very small brew pub with a three barrel system directly behind the bar. You can walk in and order a pint (I recommend the Black Bear XX Stout which is made with rye and has several GABF medals in the foreign export stout category to its credit) and watch the beer being brewed.

We moved on to Amnesia Brewing Company which boasts several IPA's all with a different malt and hop profiles, an outdoor beer garden and a barbeque grill. This is an excellent spot to stop in and have lunch. Up next was the HUB (Hopworks Urban Brewery) where they focus on all organic beers. Here we had a sampler because everything looked good. While all of the beers here were above average, the Belgian single was so good I took a growler home. It did not last long. The American Strong Ale was devilishly easy to drink. The IPA was bursting with Northwest hop character and the 9.2 percent alcohol Imperial IPA could most easily be compared to Dogfish Head's 120 Minute IPA in intensity and sweetness. I am also informed that they took gold this year at the GABF for their red ale.

Always moving forward, we advanced to what would be the last brewpub of the day, though not the last beer, The Laughing Labrador. While nothing here really stood out, that is not saying much in a town of such extravagant and outstanding IPA's and Double IPA's. All the beer here was good and the double IPA was even better, but overall the place was not as distinct as many of the places to which we traveled.

After the Lab we endeavored to find a Belgian and French inspired brewery called Upright. We found the building and the smell of brewing beer was maddeningly close but alas the place was closed to the public. This was on a Wednesday and I later found out that they only open for tastings on Friday and the weekends. Eventually I found an Upright Four at one of the local bottle shops. This beer was profoundly good. It is an imitation of a Belgian table beer and can most easily be compared to the DuPont Avril. It is light at 4.5% and its flavor profile is similar to a dry, spicy Saison.

With such a devastating defeat we decided that we should head out in search of solace and new direction so we took off to Portland's version of Café Amsterdam, Belmont Station Biercafe. This establishment had fifteen different taps and an adjacent liquor store where, for a 1.50 corking fee, you could purchase anything from the liquor store and have it opened at the bar. This is particularly handy as the store carries over 1000 different beers, including our very own Midnight Sun Panty Peeler and Arctic Devil. While drowning our woes in 2007 Mirror Mirror we got our new directions. First we were informed that if you like craft beer you need to go to a place called the Horse Brass which was conveniently in walking distance of the café, and that we should checkout the Portland Deschutes tap house as beers are produced there independently of the main Deschutes brewery.

Apparently Deschutes operates one of these tap rooms in Portland as well as in Bend. Here, when brewers burned out on making Black Butte Porter day in and day out in bend, they are sent to experiment. They are given free range to play and their product's popularity is monitored for potential mass release as part of the Bond Street Series.

First things first: we walked up to the Horse Brass, pulled up a

bar stool and were duly amazed. The place had over fifty taps from at home and abroad and a sound menu featuring English Style pub food. So, while tucking in to one of the finest scotch eggs it's ever been my privilege to clog my arteries with, (and for those who don't know, a scotch egg is a hardboiled egg wrapped in sausage and deep fried) we continued to sample some of the local brew.

The one deserving special note was the Hair of the Dog Blue Spot. In the land of IPA finding such an outstanding Double IPA is no small feat. As you might have guessed the day, and our tolerance, was waning so with one last inspired burst of determination we poured ourselves into the Deschutes Tap Room for a Black IPA and an Abt. 12, both of which were exemplary representations of their styles. The IPA was roasty and rich in hop flavor and the Abt. was highly digestible without being hot or cloying.

The following day found us in Bend, OR home of the famous Deschutes Brewery. Before heading out for the tour we stopped off at the venerable Bend Brewing Co. for a sampler and found everything in order there. Once again we were greeted with a variety of IPA's in varying strengths, and yes, one of them was black. Besides that there was not much to speak of and we were off to Deschutes.

The first endearing thing about this brewery was that the Black Butte XXI was on tap for free samples. Sadly the limit was four tasters. From the tasting room we were taken on a very informative tour through the brewery which was conducted by a guy who was almost manic in his enthusiasm for beer. This guy would probably have frightened children he was so intense. But what he lacked in grounding he made up for in information.

His tour covered not only everything you might want to know about the brewery including who built the pristine modern German monstrosity which the brewery uses for its major production line (Hupman) but his technical knowledge of beer was impressive. He led us through every level of the process and gave a sound introduction to all the ingredients. We even got a tour of the hop room; Deschutes uses only whole hops. While fragrantly terrific I feel for the zealous tourist who immediately popped his demonstration hop into his mouth to see how it tasted. I thought he was going to faint.

After the tour we immediately marched down to the Bond Street Tap Room which is the home of the Bond Street Series. Again we found a very different line up from the one in Portland and at the brewery, including a completely different Black IPA which was less roasty and focused more on debittered black malt and a different hop profile to match. I was informed that there had been over a dozen different Black IPA's as Deschutes was seriously considering a full scale production run of the brew and that they were still tweaking the recipe.

GNBC Holiday Party Re-Announcement

by Julie McDonald

HEY!!!!!! Attention!!!! In case you didn't read this information in the last newsletter or weren't at recent GNBC club meetings where it has been discussed, here is the information on this year's GNBC Holiday Party! Details are as follows, so mark your calendars NOW!!!

When: Saturday, December 5th, 6 pm till whenever

Where: The Snowgoose Restaurant and Sleeping Lady Brewing company, in the downstairs meeting room

Theme: **Fire** and **Ice** *AND* The Night Before Christmas

Food:

- Potluck style
- Food theme is **Fire** and **Ice**.
- For example: **Fire** – can be food that must stay hot (crockpot) or something on the spicy side. **Ice** – can be food that must remain on ice (bring your own ice and ice vessel for resting your "icy" food in) or food that is cool and refreshing.
- What are you responsible for? The dish you bring will be determined by your last initial, but it's your choice as to **Fire** or **Ice**:
 - A – J** = Appetizers, salads, side dishes
 - K – P** = main dishes, soups
 - Q – Z** = desserts

Costume: Optional, this is where **The Night Before Christmas** comes in....you all know this famous holiday poem, take your cues from it and dress appropriately ;-) Most importantly we want everyone to be **comfortable** and have **fun** !!

Entertainment: Yes, we are currently working on **fun** activities. Your newsletter editors are whipping up a thought-provoking trivia game for us to enjoy and Joe Michael is currently working on a playlist for background music. If you would like to request certain songs/artists for the playlist please contact Joe at joeofak@gmail.com . He has access to a wide variety of music. If you can name it, he can find it and load it up for you! So let him know what you want to hear!

Gift Exchange: Yes, but not mandatory.

- If you wish, bring a wrapped bottle of a **rare** or **unusual** beer, or a **fine** bottle of wine or scotch, or whiskey, or other spirit.
- Leave it on the designated table when you enter.
- Don't forget to take a gift before leaving the party for the evening.

RSVP: to Julie McDonald at juzy@gci.net or text or call 240-3688, please include:

- Your name
- Number attending
- What your food contribution will be

I've received **one** RSVP so far, peeps. So please, I would love to have an idea of what we are looking at for Fire dishes and for Ice dishes and number of attendants.

***And**, this should go without saying, but we're going to say it anyway.....have a DD or procure a room for the night, preferably one within walking distance...just be sure to get to the party and home again safely!



An Old GNBC Friend Checks In

by *Leo Walsh*

Editor's Note: Leo Walsh is a long time fan and former member of the Great Northern Brewer's Club. His contributions have been significant as years ago, when GNBC didn't have a home, he allowed us to meet in his establishment to hold our monthly meetings. Leo's moved back east now and has resumed his homebrewing passion and has sent forth the below for our edification. For all of us that know Leo Walsh, you will appreciate what is truly between the below lines.

All Saints Porter
Born 1 November 2009

By Leo Walsh

Yea, verily, after a long hiatus, the Sacerdos Brewing Company is back in business! Having what must be some of the most well traveled brewing equipment in the country, I decided that the time had come to once again venture into the sacred art once more. The commercial kitchen here at the staff house of the USCCB is well suited for brewing. The only detriment was the lack of a spigot for my copper cobra wort chiller. A small inconvenience, to be sure, but a troubling one.

Having decided to try a trusted recipe, I located a local brewing supply store about 25 minutes away. After celebrating the Sacred Mysteries at St. Michael the Archangel in Silver Spring, I headed out to find the place. Mapquest is a great ally and the store was located in short order.

I decided to try my favorite porter recipe. A variation on Pilgrim's Porter. Alas I was unable to pick up the brown sugar. Nevertheless, I decided to forge on. This is beer, after all.

The recipe:

Yield: 5 gallons or so

Ingredients:

8 pounds Montmellick Amber Malt Extract
(1 Pound brown sugar, although this was not included this time)
.5 pound black patent malt
1 pound crystal malt 60
2 ounces Centennial Hops
1 ounce Kent Goldings hops (finish)
1 teaspoon gypsum
1.5 teaspoon Irish moss
1 tube White Labs British Ale Yeast wlp005



Much to my dismay, there is no six gallon pot in the kitchen. I had to make do with one that holds just over four gallons. Also, using a new stove was a challenge. It is gas, thank God, but temperature control was iffy. I steeped grains in almost four gallons of water for 20 minutes or so. Then I removed grains, added the ME and brought it to a boil. The Centennial went in next. Oh! How I have missed the smell of boiling wort and hops!

I boiled the blessed concoction for 40 minutes and then added the Irish moss. After another ten minutes on the boil, the Kent Goldings went into the brew.

Alas, with my trusty wort chiller out of action it took forever to cool the brew. By now it was getting a little later than I had hoped. I tried to cool it in a sink full of ice. It worked pretty well, but I forgot that without a sufficiently large brew pot, I would have to add some water to bring it up to five gallons. I got it down to about 85 degrees, but had I been thinking, I should have added cold water instead of tepid to bring it down all the way. Oh well, live and learn. I did not worry. This is homebrew.



Defiantly, I topped off the carboy at what I believe to be about five gallons and pitched at close to 80 degrees. Come on, I couldn't wait all night! It will come down. I hope. I pray

OG was a respectable 1.049

November 2, All Souls Day

There is life in the beer. I checked it this afternoon and it is perking away timidly. I'm not sure how good these "pitchable tubes" are, but they sure are handy.. We wait. We pray.

November 25, The day before Thanksgiving.

Well, I let it sit in primary for a week and then racked it into secondary for another week. It never really did take off with a roiling ferment. It just kept perking away. I may have pulled it out of secondary too soon as it was still doing its thing, but I felt that this fermenting thing had gone on long enough. If I'm not getting any, why should those little yeasties have all the fun? So stuck it in the fridge for a day to flock it out and then racked it in the keg.

Next, it was off to get some CO² in my tank. The guy at the first place I went to last Saturday was nice enough...well, no he wasn't. He was kind of crude and I had a hard time understanding his Southern twang. He would not fill the bottle because it was out of date. Nor would he test it. The bastard. Dismayed, I left him to his own devices.

I did a bit of research on the web and found F&M Fire Safety Supply in Hyattsville. What neat guys! I sent them an email and got a call back. As with most industrial gas passers, they were a bit tough to find, but they were worth it. They would test and fill the bottle no problem. And then wonder of wonders! As I went back yesterday to get the bottle before work, Jeff Knight, the manager came out and said, "So, you are the Alaskan priest, beer judge?"

"Yes, I am!" I replied. Turns out he is Knight of Columbus and a heck of a nice guy. When I went to pay him he said, "Let's just say, 'Happy Thanksgiving and call it good!'"

I tell you, the best people in the world are in general aviation and home brewing!

So now I came back all a twitter with a full tank of CO². After dinner I decided to brew an "Octoberweissen" from the holy Book of Recipes of the Great Northern Brewers, 1993 edition.

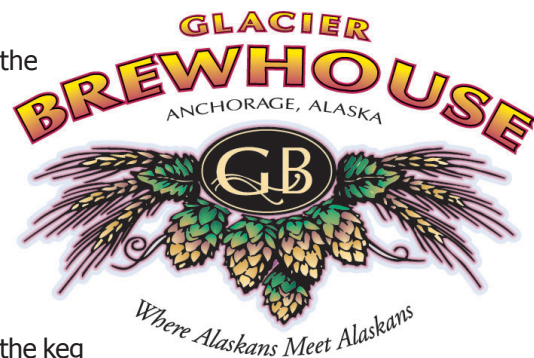
Just before, I thought to myself, "Self! Why not carbonate that there porter tonight as well." So after the Octoberweissen was in the carboy and the yeasties had been unleashed to do their magic, I set about to the task.

I had put it in the fridge that afternoon and then in the freezer for a couple of hours, so it was nice and chilly cold, as befits a pre-carbonated beer. However, when I went to attach the tank, I noticed that the CO² hose did not sit well on the fitting. This seemed odd to me, but I eventually got it to work. I purged any evil oxygen from the tank at 30 pounds and then set the beloved keg on my lap and rocked it gently into a blissful state of carbonation. Oh how happily it gurgled as it joyfully accepted the gaseous goodness into its bosom! I was filled with anticipation. Finally, it was sated and would accept no more.

I could wait no longer! Against all better judgment I felt that I must taste the fullness of my creation. Fitfully, I cleaned out the tap hose just to make sure there were not cruddy iniquities to spoil the experience. In a final act of zymerygological zest, I placed the tap hose fitting to the keg.

What was this?! The damn thing would not go on! I pushed. I pleaded. I actually sprayed some beer on the floor by accident in a folly of alcoholic exasperation. O cruel fate! O dilemma of unrequited thirsted longing!

And then I thought to myself, "You stupid fool! You probably put the fittings on the keg backwards!" Sure enough, when I reversed the fittings, everything fit like a glove. And I was happy.



Wasting no time, I put a pint glass to the tap and about as I expected, I was rewarded with a glass full of foam! No matter. I was prepared for this. After all, I had just jostled the brew, merciless forcing pearly gaseousness into its essence. Small wonder that it would want to expel it in haste.

Still, in light of this, head retention was pretty amazing. Just like I like it. After it settled down a bit, I raised it to my lips for a first taste.

Well, not bad. Clarity was good. The color is right on. The head is nice and tan. There were slight hints of coffee and roasted malt in the nose. Mouth feel was a bit silky which makes me think that I may have been better off leaving it to age for another week or so. Indeed it seems a bit green. Also, it is sweeter than a porter should be which leads me to believe that I did not get a complete ferment on it. It has the expected astringency at the end.. The sweetness seems to overpower any hops which might have been present. I'll try this again in a bit. It resides in the fridge now. So any further aging will be slow, if at all. I'm not a big fan of warming and cooling beers with impunity. Life is hard enough on them without such temperal volatility.



I may have been hasty, But then again, how could I wait?! O cruel, cruel obsession that makes a man sup from the tap before his beer is ready!

Still, it shows promise. And not a bad attempt for the first batch in almost a decade. FG was about 1.018. Confirming the incomplete ferment.

Next: "Frankenbeer! Rise of the Octoberweissen!"



THE BREWING PROCESS (Handout Presented at the November Club Meeting)

by Jason Ditsworth

BASIC EXTRACT BREWING

Most home brewers start out by making extract beers on the stovetop. Extract is available as Liquid Malt Extract (LME) or Dry Malt Extract (DME). Extract is added to water and boiled for 60 to 90 minutes and during the boil hops are added at various stages to provide bitterness (60 to 90 minutes), flavor 10 to 40 minutes, and aroma (0 to 15 minutes). Following the boil, the liquid or wort is chilled rapidly and then transferred to a fermentor, typically a 6-gallon glass container (carboy). Yeast is then added and fermentation takes place for about a week. After a week the beer is transferred to a secondary carboy and allowed to sit for another week. The beer is then dosed with priming sugar and bottled for drinking. Bottle conditioning typically takes another 2 to 4 weeks.

What is Extract Twang?

Extract twang is a common term used to describe the often sour flavor or other non-descript combination of weird off-flavors that show up in many beginning brewer's beers. There is much debate about extract twang and whether it's real. Personally, I think it's real but it's tied to process more than the actual extract ingredients.

Avoiding Extract Twang

- 1) Sanitation is the first step. Everything and I mean EVERYTHING, that touches the beer ingredients at any stage of the process must be CLEAN (use a trisodium phosphate [TSP] based cleaner or similar). Items that will come in contact with the wort after the boil must also be sanitized with a sanitizing agent such as iodophor. You cannot sanitize something that is not clean!!!
- 2) Use only light colored malt extract and use grains to add color and flavor. This gives you more control over the final product. Also, dark extracts often increase tannin levels and acrid bitterness in the beer.
- 3) Try partial mash recipes. Use a small mash tun or a small pot along with a grain bag for the mash. Then, sparge (or rinse) the sweet liquid into the boil kettle (see all-grain process below).
- 4) Turn the burner off before adding your extract. This helps to avoid scorching.
- 5) Boil the full volume of the wort. Reduce boil volumes in small pots can cause excess caramelization, scorching, and low hop utilization. The thicker the boiling liquid the less hop utilization. Spend the money and get at least a 7 gallon stainless steel kettle. This is about the maximum size for a normal stove top.
- 6) Make sure you have a full rolling boil and don't cover the boil. Covering the boil traps volatile chemicals that you want to boil off such as dimethylsulfide (DMS) which will give the beer a cooked corn flavor.
- 7) BUY A WORT CHILLER! Immersion wort chillers are not very expensive and can be used right from your kitchen sink with a few simple plumbing parts. Chilling the wort quickly, getting it into the fermentor, and adding the yeast as soon as possible will dramatically reduce the possibility of wort spoilage bacteria.

ALL-GRAIN BREWING PROCESS

Special Equipment – Not Used for Extract Brewing

Hot Liquor Tank: Used for heating the mash water and sparge water to the desired temperatures.

Mash Tun/Lauter Tun: This is where water from the hot liquor tank and the grain are mixed together to create the mash. Lautering or sparging is generally accomplished in the mash tun as well. Typically this vessel is fitted with a false bottom or screen that holds the grain back, but allows the sugar water to flow out a control valve near the bottom.

Grain Milling

Ideally we want to crack the grain so that the husk remains whole and the germ (inside) is broken up into small particles with minimal flour. Roller mills are best for this purpose. The finer the grind on the grain the more starch conversion you will get, but finely ground grain can also result in a stuck sparge.

Doughing In

For most home brewing processes grain (or the grist) is added slowly to the water in the mash tun and blended to avoid dry spots or clumps. In a commercial setting the water and grain are mixed together as they are added to the mash tun. There are several formulas available for calculating the temperature you'll arrive at, but all are dependent on several variables, such as the heat capacity of your equipment. As a rule of thumb, if it's your first time mashing, have the grist at room temperature and the water 7 to 9°F above your desired mash temperature. Adjust by stirring in cold or boiling water and adjust your water temperature up or down accordingly next time you mash.

Single Infusion Mashing

This is the simplest mash method and the one practiced by most home brewers and microbreweries. Well-modified malt is added to water at a determined temperature to arrive at the desired mash temperature. The temperature range is typically 148°F to 158°F. Beers that have more residual malt sweetness are tend to be mashed between 153°F and 156°F, while lighter bodied beers that exhibit a drier or lighter mouth feel are mashed in the 148-152°F range.

Step Infusion Mashing

This method is an extension of single infusion mashing in which two or more rests are made during the mash. This can be accomplished by directly heating the mash tun, or by adding boiling water to the mash to arrive at the next temperature. Disadvantages to this process include longer brew times and needing to take more care with the temperature changes. Advantages are that it allows more control over the fermentability of the wort and the malt character and protein in the final product.

Decoction Mashing

Decoction mashing was traditionally only practiced by German and Czech brewers, but more recently American brewers in microbreweries are also using decoction mash techniques. Decoctions can be single, double or triple. In each case a portion of the mash is removed from the main mash and taken through a separate temperature regime culminating in a boil, then added back to the main mash.

An example of a triple decoction mash (temperatures depend on your equipment, the thickness of the decoction, and the volume decocted):

- Mash in to 128°F and rest for 15 minutes.
- Remove about 30 to 40% (by weight) of the mash (you want mostly grain and less liquid) and place it in a separate kettle. You want just enough water to prevent scorching. This portion will be the decoction.
- Through direct heat and constant stirring the decoction is raised to 144°F for 20 minutes, then 154°F for 20 minutes, then boiled for 20 minutes and then it's added back to the main mash which is still at 128°F. The resulting temperature in the main mash should be around 142°F.
- Repeat the process with another decoction bringing bring the combined mash temperature to say 155°F, and then another step to bring the mash to a 165°F mash out temp. There are limitless variations on this process.

The boiling of a decoction produces more melanoidins, breaks down more protein (lessening hot and cold trub and haze), and breaks down more starch (generally giving better extraction rates) than the other two methods. It also serves to darken beer color allowing smoother dark beers through less use of dark malts to achieve the color. It is also extremely time intensive and more costly than the other two methods and losing favor, even in Germany, for lighter beers like pilsner.

Time, Temperature, pH and Mash Thickness

Time: longer mash times result in better starch conversion; however, a 60 minute mash will give basically the same results as a 90 minute mash on a typical homebrew system. Starch should be about 60 percent converted in the first 30 minutes of a 154°F mash.

Temperature: mashing in the 148°F to 150°F range results in more fermentable sugars. Mashing in the 154°F to 156°F range results in more non-fermentable sugars, such as dextrin.

pH: the optimum mash pH is 5.2 to 5.4. Higher mash pH can result in more tannin extraction from the grain and lower starch conversions. Lower pH levels can result in lower starch conversion and a harsh environment for yeast in the wort. As fermentation progresses the pH drops even further.

Mash Thickness: typically thicker mashes produce more non-fermentable sugars. The optimum ratio of mash water to grain is around 1.3 quarts of water per pound of grain.

Recirculating (Vorlof)

Recirculating liquid from the mash will help clear the wort before running it into the boil kettle. This process can take as little as 5 minutes or up to 25 minutes depending on the grain bed thickness, the speed of the runoff, the type of screen in the mash tun, and numerous other variables. By volume, it typically takes 2 to 4 gallons of recirculation to get a clear runoff. A clear runoff is critical to the stability of the final product. This reduces proteins, lipids (fatty acids) and other compounds from making it further into the brewing process. Lipids in the finished beer are bad for head retention.

Running Wort into the Kettle

While running the wort into the kettle it is important to minimize aeration. This is commonly referred to as hot-side aeration and can result in a bitter sensation that you can sense in the roof or your mouth. Also, if you want to increase caramelization effects, such as those that might be present in a Scottish ale, the burner can be started as soon as the wort enters the kettle. First wort hops should be added at this time, which impacts both hop flavor and bitterness.



Boiling

Typical boil times are between 75 and 90 minutes.

Wort is boiled for several reasons:

- 1) Sterilization of the wort.
- 2) Protein coagulation. It takes at least an hour-long boil to prevent this hot trub from being reabsorbed into the wort.
- 3) A good rolling boil, where you are driving off five to ten percent of the liquid an hour, will also drive off several unwanted volatile compounds from the wort (originating in the hops and malt).
- 4) Extraction of essential hop oils for bitterness, flavor, and aroma.
- 5) Wort caramelization. Longer boils will enhance caramelization effects and shorter boils will lessen wort darkening. Scotch ales and barley wines will typically be boiled 2 hours or more while pilsners might only boil for 75 minutes.
- 6) To deactivate enzymes in the wort, concentrate and stabilize the wort, and drop the pH to the proper range for normal fermentation with beer yeast.

Chilling

There are three types of chillers used by home brewers: immersion chillers, counter flow chillers, and plate chillers. The most efficient are the plate chillers, followed by the counter flow, then the immersion chillers. However, counter flow and plate chillers present one major problem – cleaning and sanitizing is much more difficult.

With an immersion chiller you can see exactly what is in contact with the wort. Counter flow and plate chillers also require a pump. Immersion chillers are often the easiest for home brewers to use as they are easy to clean and sterilize. One downside is that a hopback (used between the kettle and the chiller) can't be used with an immersion chiller.

After completion of the boil many commercial brewers separate out hot trub by inducing a whirlpool or centrifuging the hot wort. Home brewers can achieve similar effects by rapidly stirring with a spoon, being careful not to aerate. Unless the wort is in a perfectly sterile environment it's in your best interest to chill it and pitch the yeast as quickly as you can. A whirlpool can also be done after chilling (personally I use an immersion chiller to whirlpool the wort right before I remove the chiller. I then let the wort rest for 10 minutes before running it off into the fermentors.).

Wort should be chilled to the yeast pitching temperature, 65°F to 70°F for ales, 55°F to 60°F for hybrid beers (e.g., California Common or Steam Beer), and 45°F to 55°F for lagers. Ideally, chilling time should be less than 30 minutes. Wort is very susceptible to infection once it gets down under 140°F (68 – 104°F is the highest danger area), so keep it covered while chilling and don't put any non-sterile objects in it.

Pitching the Yeast: *(this is a subject within itself, but for calculating yeast pitching rates go to <http://www.mrmalty.com/calc/calc.html>)*

Aeration

Yeast require oxygen to grow before they kick into the fermentation stage. Commercial breweries oxygenate the chilled wort on the way to the fermentor. Generally, home brewers don't have this same capability. A good 60 seconds of continuous shaking of the carboy after the yeast has been added will do the trick.

Fining

Generally speaking people tend to shy away from cloudy beer. However, this is not inappropriate in every style. The two main things that cause cloudiness in beer are polyphenols and proteins, which can both cause chill haze. Bacterial infection can also cause cloudiness, but fining will typically not help fix this problem.

Finings include:

- Isinglass which is made from the swim bladder of a tropical fish. Isinglass adheres to yeast and proteins through molecular attraction causing them to drop out of solution with it. Typically an Isinglass solution equal to 1% of the volume of the finished beer is used.
- Gelatin operates in the same way but is cheaper and is more readily available. It works best at cooler temperatures such as those for lagering.
- Silica gel will pull haze proteins, but not foam proteins, out of solution.
- Bentonite, a form of clay, will also pull protein but is bad for foam stability.
- Polyclar will remove polyphenols or tannins, and is often used in wine to reduce browning coloration.
- Irish Moss helps remove and coagulate protein during the boil.

Bottling or Kegging

Bottling is accomplished by mixing priming sugar with the fermented beer after it has clarified in the secondary carboy. Typically ½ to ¾ cup of corn sugar or ¾ to 1 cup of DME depending on the style of beer and the desired carbonation.

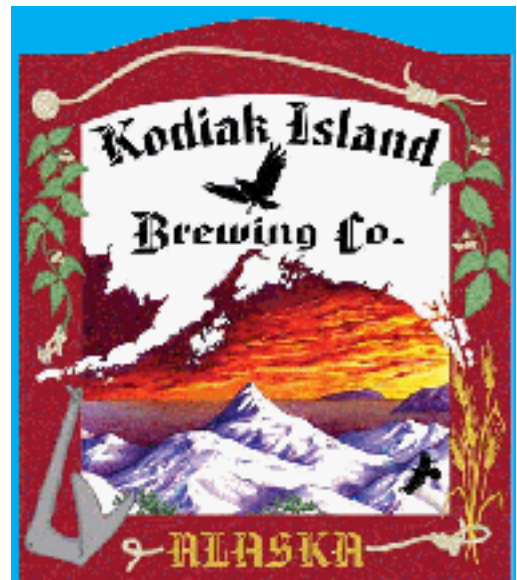
Once bottled or kegged (if priming) the beer must be kept at room temperature for ales or at least 50 degrees for lagers for about 2 or 3 weeks to carbonate. Often beginning home brewers rush this process and end up with corn sugar flavors in their beer.

If kegging and force carbonating, the quickest way is to put the chilled keg under 12 to 14 pounds of pressure and roll or rock the keg until it will no longer accept any more CO₂. Conversely the keg can be set inside a refrigerator with the same pressure left on it for 3 to 5 days and it will carbonate on it's own. Personally, I get better results by letting the beer sit under pressure for several days.

When force carbonating, the amount of pressure needed is highly dependent on the temperature of the beer. For example, if the desired carbonation is 2.5 volumes of CO₂ (a typical ale) and the beer is at 35°F the required pressure will be 9.7 psi. However, if the beer is at 45°F it will require a pressure of 14.9 psi. A good online (and free) resource for determining carbonation is available at <http://hbd.org/recipient/>

Recommend Brewing Reference Material for the Intermediate to Advance Home Brewer

- New Brewing Lager Beer by Greg Noonan
- Principles of Brewing Science by George Fix
- An Analysis of Brewing Techniques by George Fix
- Designing Great Beers by Ray Daniels



Big Fish Side Challenge: Another Opportunity To Shine!

by Steve Schmitt

The Humpy's Big Fish Side Challenge for 2009 will be the BLACK IPA CHALLENGE. For those of you new to the game here are the basics:

- The side-challenge is not included in the overall Big Fish Competition and so the winner will not go to the Best of Show round.
- The winner of the side challenge this year will receive the soon to be coveted 'Bobble Head Beer Bottle'
- The side challenge is meant to be fun – anyone who takes it seriously will automatically have 10 points deducted from their score and be forced to watch Beaches 7 times back-to-back.

To enter the side challenge, submit at least 1 bottle at the same time entries are submitted for the Big Fish.

The basic information for entry/judging follows:

- Brewers name and other semi-relevant DATA
- Any information which the brewer feels is important and which they feel the general public should know about this beverage

Basic Judging Criteria:

- Name of the Beverage (20 points) – Remember – innuendo scores highly
- Volume of Beverage Entered (20 points) – Yes, size does matter
- Purely capricious and arbitrary judging criteria to be developed by the judging panel during the course of the competition in regard to the overall 'impression' of the beverage in hand (10 points)
- Standard BJCP judging stuff (aroma, flavor, yada yada – 50 points)
- 100 points total



Your Last Reminder: The 15th Annual Humpy's Big Fish Homebrew Competition (December 5, 2009)

by Jason Ditsworth

The Humpy's Big Fish Homebrew competition is **THIS WEEKEND!** Entries will be collected on Friday December 4 from **12:00 PM to 6:00 PM** at Arctic Brewing Supply. If you cannot make it to Arctic Brewing Supply on December 4 you can still enter the competition, so please give me a call to make other arrangements for entering your beer before December 4. For more details see my previous article in the November newsletter at <http://www.greatnorthernbrewers.org/newsletters/nov2009.pdf>

Judging this year is on Saturday December 5, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM, at SubZero. You do not need to have previous experience to help judge. Just show up and we'll find a spot for you. Please note that the competition this year again falls on the same day as the GNBC Christmas Party so we need lots of help judging to finish up early in the day. If we get plenty of judges we should be done with the best of show rounds by 3:00 PM. Because the competition is on the same day as the Christmas Party we will announce the winners at the party, including the brewer of the year.

If you have any questions or would like to help with the event please call me at 338-8828 or send an e-mail to jditsworth@gci.net.

A Visit to Dry Dock Brewing Company

by *Ted Rosenzweig*

While in Denver to spend Thanksgiving with some old friends I had a chance to visit the GABF winner for Best Small Brewery 2009: Dry Dock Brewing. Dry Dock is not actually in Denver, but rather the suburb of Aurora, my home town. Like most everything in Aurora, the brewery is located in a strip mall. For many years the Brew Hut Homebrew Supply Shop has been located in this same mall, one of the few to survive the "bubble" of overdevelopment which occurred with the 1990's explosion of homebrewing popularity in Denver. Dry Dock is an addition to this business, and it is located in the adjacent storefront. The two are now in one huge room separated by a stout 4 foot movable wall with a floor-to-ceiling glass enclosure for the seven-ish barrel brewhouse in the back.

The Dry Dock side is truly a brewery, not a brewpub, with popcorn being the only food served. And the popcorn is free; as much as you want. Beer is served in pints and flights of six 4 oz glasses across a fairly traditional bar. The patron receives a tab which is kept until time to "check-out"; much like Midnight Sun. The imbibing area is noisy and informal, with tables crowded fairly close together. On a Wednesday night it was full of mostly middle-aged people, yet all found a place to sit. Unlike Midnight Sun, it was easy to get a pint from the bar as a bevy of what I assume were brewing staff were on hand to prevent a line from forming at the bar (callin' a spade a spade here Midnight Sun). At one point a burly brewer with a booming voice greeted an innocent-appearing guy who walked into the bar "hey everyone, Mike is here". Felt like a GNBC meeting with Schmitt at the helm.

I made the trip for a taste of Hatch Chile Beer, which they had run out of months prior. There were perhaps a dozen offerings from the taps, however. A hefeweizen, which won silver at GABF, was light and almost white with distinct Belgian yeast quality, really more of a wit and quite good. An apricot blonde with pronounced apricot qualities was proclaimed by the wife as the perfect non-Guinness half of a black-and-tan. Their Alt, which brought a gold medal from GABF, was not too far from Alaskan Amber...a bit cleaner and less cloying perhaps. There was an Old Ale, light and not-so-complex as style guidelines might require, which was drinkable. They offered both an IPA and a Double IPA, the latter of which was clearly superior and possessed the largest clean citrus hop flavor I have ever experienced. The IPA was decidedly average. Dry Dock's ESB won gold at '06 World Beer Cup but never got a chance to compete in the Rosenzweig '09 cup because of limited hepatic reserve. I did sample both porters: a vanilla porter with a bit too much vanilla, and the base beer, a respectable big, roasty American-style porter with coffee notes. Lastly was an allspice bomb they called a pumpkin ale....a must pass.

All considered it was a respectable showing with a nice variety of offerings. I lamented there was nothing big and Belgian on the menu, but as of today there is a dark strong and a saison listed as on tap. How they can have so many beers available at any given time, and all in good condition, testifies to the huge number of batches they must be putting through their dinky-ass brewhouse. I reckon business is good when you are the "best". In my opinion the breweries right here in Anchorage compare well. I'd love to see a Dry Dock vs Midnight Sun smackdown...even if it meant I had to watch my hometown brewery fall headlong to the bloody canvas. To the best of my knowledge Dry Dock beer is available only from the brewery in glasses and growlers. Well, at least none of the 50 Mexican restaurants I visited during my 4 day stay had a Dry Dock tap!

The logo for tapRoot features the word "tap" in a lowercase, serif font with a decorative flourish above the 'a'. The word "Root" is in a larger, bold, uppercase, serif font with a distressed, wood-grain texture.



2010 Fur Rendezvous Homebrew Competition Slated for February

by Dennis Sessler

"Diamond Jubilee," you ask? Yes that's right, Alaska has just celebrated its 50th Anniversary of statehood and this year the Fur Rendezvous will celebrate 75 years of doing what Alaskans do best. For the GNBC that means it's time to get brewing those wonderful beers, meads and ciders in anticipation of the 2010 Anchorage Fur Rendezvous Homebrew Competition.

The competition will be held on Saturday February 6th at the Snow Goose. This is the first competition of the year to garner as many points as possible towards the 2010 GNBC Homebrewer of the Year Competition.

The categories which will garner points towards the year long competition are Categories 12 Porter; 18 Belgian Strong Ale; 19 Strong Ale; 23 Specialty Beer, and 28 Specialty Cider. But by no means are you restricted to only enter those beers. Heck enter one in all 26 categories!

Judging will begin at 10:00 a.m. and as always there will be a need for plenty of judges and stewards. This competition is an AHA/BJCP sanctioned competition so all beer, mead and cider categories will be open for entry. You can find the current style guidelines at <http://www.bjcp.org/stylecenter.html>.

Entries will be accepted at the Snow Goose in the basement on Friday February 5th. From 11:00 am to 6:00 pm. Entry fees are \$3.00 per entry and you will need to provide three 12 oz bottles for each beer entry. Mead and cider entries can be three 12 oz bottles or one 750 ml bottle. If you are unable to drop off entries during that time please feel free to contact me to make other arrangements.

This year's competition will award a Best of Show Beer and a Best of Show Mead or Cider. There will be unique prizes for both of the Best of Show winners plus all the great Fur Rondy Medals and notoriety. Let's make this a great competition. Dust of your meads and ciders, let's brew those beers and let's get ready to "Rondy!" For more information contact me at sessak@mtaonline.net



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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:

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GNBC Web Site: www.greatnorthernbrewers.org



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Anchorage, AK 99503**

**NEXT MEETING: GNBC Holiday Party: December 5th, 2009
6:00 pm at the Goose**