



THE

# Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB  
DECEMBER 2017

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## The Prez Sez

by John Trapp

This is my last Prez Sez for my second stint as club president. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve over the last year. As a club we have accomplished quite a bit in 12 months. Our knowledge of beer has increased and members are brewing more beer. I thank the fantastic officers and board members that worked with me to achieve this goal; we couldn't have done it without you. But most importantly, thanks to all the members of this great organization for attending the events and showing your enthusiasm for great beer. Mike Cragen has been elected your new President and will be taking over at the January meeting. I have all the confidence in the newly elected members to continue guiding us to greatness and achieving our potential.



Here's the three month calendar of events:

**December 2<sup>nd</sup>** – Humpy's Big Fish Home Brew Competition

**December 9<sup>th</sup>** – **GNBC Christmas Party** once again at the Alaska Zoo!

**January 13<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>** – Alaska Beer Week! Many festive activities all week long.

**January 18<sup>th</sup>** – Thursday meeting of Beer Week for Barley Wine Fest at 49<sup>th</sup> State Brewing Company

**February 20<sup>th</sup>** – Monthly meeting at 49<sup>th</sup> State Brewing Company 7:00 p.m.

**February ?** – Fur Rondy Home Brew Competition – stay tuned for date and place.

The November meeting wasn't just elections; we followed up the topic of sanitation with a tasting of off-flavors in beer. As much as that doesn't sound appealing, it's important to identify the problems so we can fix it and produce

The Prez Sez

Secretary's Corner

2017 Bigfish Competition

Gift a GNBC Membership!

Upcoming New Officers and Board Members

GNBC Christmas Party at the Zoo

Sudz Corner

Merry Blitzen!

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good, clean beer. We have many more educational presentations coming up in February and March that will be very interesting for brewers.

December 2<sup>nd</sup> is Humpy's Big Fish home brew competition. Peter Hall is organizing this so please read his article on it. Always a good competition to enter with lots of great prizes. Dig through the crawl space or closet and find something good to enter. Don't forget, this is also a great competition to judge so plan on that too.



The GNBC Christmas Party is all set for December 9<sup>th</sup> at the Alaska Zoo; same place we've had it for the last 4 or 5 years. The theme is "Beer Character" so please use your imagination. If anyone has a "Duff Man" outfit, please wear it. This is a pot luck dinner, so think of something good to share and bring your homebrew.

Our January meeting is just around the corner. For those of you that have not attended before, it is by far our biggest meeting of the year. It's held on the

Thursday of AK Beer Week (Jan 13<sup>th</sup> thru 20<sup>th</sup>) and you'll need to have your membership card to get in. Pay your dues or you'll miss out. We will need volunteers to help set up and break down tables and chairs as well as check membership ID's at the door. We'll have a sign up campaign in the beginning of January, so consider volunteering.



As I come to a close here, a few more thank you notes are in order. Thanks to the editors for making me look a little better than I am; I know it can be a thankless job but you rock Jim, I owe you a beer. And thanks to my lovely wife Cyndi who encouraged me to run again, couldn't have done it without your love and patience.

Remember, be safe and drink responsibly when out and about and keep those carboys filled. Thanks for all your support, Cheers.

# Secretary's Corner

by Jim O'Toole

I realized recently that as a writer for a homebrew club newsletter, I don't write much about home brewing in these monthly articles. The primary reason is that I don't brew as much as I used to and the beers I brew are things I like to drink and they aren't even special enough to enter into most competitions.

I'm a lucky guy who has a lot of things going on that permit me to travel a bit and when I do, I'm always trying to find out what is going on with local home brewers and I also incorporate new beers or old favorites that aren't obtainable here in Anchorage. I've watched the craft beer revolution grow in places like Texas, Pennsylvania, Spain, Italy, and, over the past few years, the southeast United States.

Doctor Fermento just wrote an Anchorage Press article about Nashville and it turned out that he and I were in that great town at the same time but we didn't hook up. He had asked me if I had any recommendations for good beer places and I mentioned one in particular and even sent him a photo of their tap list that I took a couple of years ago and haven't purged from my phone yet. He seemed to like the place from what he wrote but he also wrote that the beer scene in Tennessee is going strong overall.

He also mentioned Huntsville where I just spent a couple of days. His experience was getting stuck there and mine was seeing a couple of UAA hockey games at the great municipal arena where there are about eight beer stands selling - almost exclusively - craft beers and a liquor store with a bar and about 80 taps of craft beer from everywhere.



I'm off on another craft beer rant, but there is a reason for this. Most of those craft beers originated with a home brewer who decided to take a stab and see if the things he or she created were commercially viable. Since I - and a lot of other people - are buying them, these aspiring brewers got the result they were hoping for.

I can't think of a better example of a home brewer becoming successful than Ken Grossman of Sierra Nevada Brewing. I had the chance to tour the Sierra Nevada brewery in Chico several years ago. It was led by their - at the time - Chief Financial Officer, who I served with in the navy. The first thing we did was pick up a plastic cup and then we were off, seeing places that regular tour people don't get to see and drinking beer all the way into their beautiful restaurant where we sat at the bar and had a couple more. All of this is possible because a couple of guys made a pretty nice pale ale and decided to sell it.

This last trip to the southeast US was for the purpose of seeing the UAA hockey team play in Huntsville and spend a few days before the game in Nashville but plans changed when UAA announced that their women's basketball team was going to play Duke in an exhibition game at Cameron Indoor Stadium. Basketball geeks will understand why I altered our plans and made an eleven hour drive from Nashville to Durham, NC; the chance to see a legendary building and cross a bucket list item off of my personal list.

This wasn't really too far out of my way as I had also planned to spend a few days in Asheville, NC, a town I'd visited briefly many years ago and wanted to see again. Of course, since I was in the area, an 18 mile

drive to Sierra Nevada's new brewery there had to be done and I highly recommend everyone else do the same if you are ever in the area. The brewery is a spectacular building at the end of a winding forested road with rock walls and rock street lamp bases, wild turkeys walking around and is practically at the end of the runway of Asheville's airport.

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My sons and I have a tradition; the first one of us to spot Sierra Nevada's Celebration Ale anywhere, will immediately inform the rest of us where they found it. Last year I was in Oregon and got to send the message and this year my oldest son was in California a few days before I left on my trip and he texted the photo of a display somewhere while he was out touring breweries and California's immense liquor stores. I really like Celebration but have to say that the fresh draft from the Asheville brewery has me wondering if - like Guinness in Ireland - the regular stuff available here will be as pleasurable as in the past. I am really going to work hard on figuring this out just as soon as I spot Celebration on sale here.



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The Sierra Nevada brewery is not the only good thing about Asheville. Having been to the beer playground of Bend, Oregon I was surprised to feel the same vibe in Asheville. When we checked into our hotel the desk clerk told me that Asheville Brewing Company is located in the building where her father ran an auto body shop for many years. She said it was bizarre going in there and seeing bright tanks where the frame straightener was and a beer garden where cars were detailed.



I stopped at Hops & Vines, a home brew supply shop where owner David Pottharst said business is growing fast. He said he's finding people brewing more advanced beer these days and said it is because of the craft breweries showing how crazy you can get with it. In addition to the nice supply of brewing supplies he has four taps of commercial beer on line as it is permissible for him to sell them in a homebrew store in that state. You would think that the bible belt would be an area where this was frowned upon but, apparently, bible beltters like their beer and like to buy it wherever they go.

I don't know how many breweries and/or brewpubs there are in Asheville but the owner of that home brew supply shop said that, by the end of this year, there will be five of them on his street alone. There is also the trendy "South Slope" area of town where there are a lot of people looking for good beer if the crowds of people we ran into on weekday afternoons is an indication. And one of the coolest things is that nearly every one of the breweries list the ingredients of their beers and I didn't find one where someone with knowledge of the recipes didn't have time to talk to me about them.

So, thinking about craft beer and home brewing; I'm sitting here right now drinking a clone of a Sierra Nevada Pale Ale and had a Bell's IPA clone before that. As I said, I'm not much of an adventurer when I brew but one of the things that helps when I'm out surfing for good craft beer is trying to find things I like. I hated Saisons until I made myself drink a few good ones. Now I have some of them in my home brew stash.



So, how adventurous would I have to be to try to match the amazing "12 Grain With Bret" from Bhramari Brewing? This one had quinoa, spelt, farro, wheat, oats, barley, rye, corn, purple sticky rice, buckwheat, and sorghum (I know-that's only eleven) that my palate couldn't differentiate among but it was an incredible beer. Maybe it had to do with the citra, blanc, and Idaho 7 hops that they recovered from a barrel aged IPA and dry hopped it with and I hope I run into the GNBC member who brings one of his or her own to a meeting.

I see craft beers as simply ideas that can come full circle if we think of a brewer as a comrade in malt who does something crazy and tells us how he or she did it. Some people who have pushed limits have inspired others to do the same and then someone else pushes the limit again and we find out if there are any limits. I hope there aren't.

Calendar Of Events

(The Prez has been covering this pretty well so refer to above)

Humpy's Big Fish Competition

Saturday December 10

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10 am at Bootleggers (formerly SubZero)

GNBC Christmas Party  
Saturday  
December 9, 2017  
7:00 pm  
Alaska Zoo

Alaska Beer Week  
January 14-20, 2018  
Various events

GNBC Meeting  
Thursday  
January 18  
7:00 pm  
GNBC members and guests only



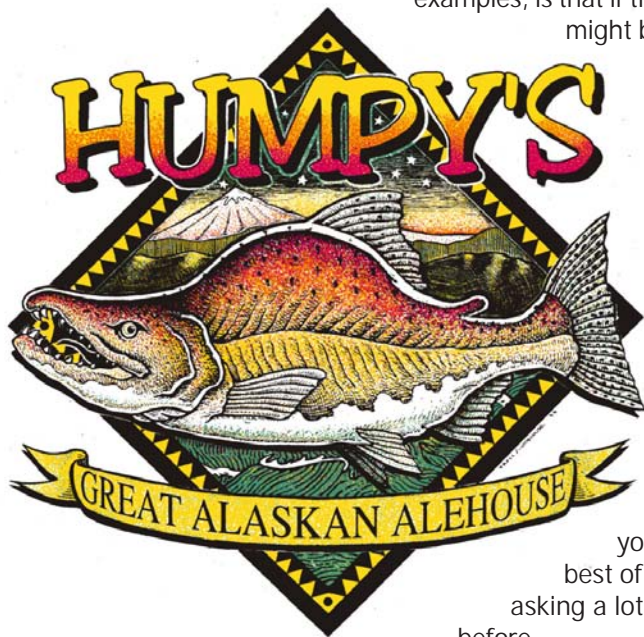
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## 2017 Humpy's Big Fish Competition

by Peter Hall

The Humpy's Big Fish Homebrew Competition continues to be one of the biggest Homebrew competitions in Alaska. Big Fish stands out as one of the highest profile homebrew competitions in the state.

Midnight Sun Brewing Company has graciously offered brew this year's grand prize-winning beer, within reason. Commercial brewery constraints help us temper what goes forward for brewing. What this means, for examples, is that if the Competition winner is a five year old, oak aged, smoked gruit, this might be the best beer, but one that might not fit the schedule at Midnight Sun.



Humpy's Great Alaskan Alehouse is once again hosting the GNBC. We are yet to be sure the exact room we will be sitting in, but I will have that information ready for the December newsletter.

The judging will take place on December 2. Tasting will begin promptly at 10 am.

The Christmas Party had been scheduled for one week later, so hopefully not so much issue of early morning arrivals as years past.

Qualified judges! Please put December 2<sup>nd</sup> on your calendar. We all know that Humpy's takes good care of us. This judging event can be one of the best of the year. The quality of the event largely hinges on judge turnout, so help me out! I would like to ask that if you do come, please plan to be there until 2 in the afternoon. The final best of show round will need to be done no later than 3. I know that I am asking a lot here. All are welcome to help judge, even if you've never judged before.

Don't fear if you are new to this; you will be paired with other qualified judges that will walk you through the whole thing in a casual, non-threatening, and learning atmosphere. If there is a competition to become acquainted with professionally judging beer, this is one of the best.

The hosts of this competition have been very generous with their contributions. Especially considering the (so far) low numbers of entries, I expect that if you made a good beer (and entered it) that you will get a nice reward. Contact Peter Hall at [alaskabrewer@gmail.com](mailto:alaskabrewer@gmail.com) with any questions.

# GNBC Memberships Make a Great Gift

by *Kat Karabelnikoff*

Happy Holidays Homebrewers! As most of you know I'm the membership coordinator for GNBC, and I find this kind of ironic now because only five years ago I was first introduced to the club because I bought a membership to GNBC for a homebrewer I knew as a Christmas gift. What a great idea right? I think so since it's been the gift that kept on giving ever since then.

After learning of the club I started to follow the club myself and then I joined that fall and ran for office that same year. I'm thankful I saw a sign at Arctic Brewing Supply mentioning GNBC. The wheels started turning about all the benefits the club has to offer like discounts at Arctic Brewing Supply, La Bodega Liquor Store and all of our "Friends". Better yet is that your membership card is your ticket into the BIG gathering in January during AK Beer Week, which you really don't want to miss out on.

I believe that the knowledge I have gained including taking a BJCP class, helping with judging events, samples galore and most of all the fellow homebrew club members that I have met and become friends with since 2012 when I first joined have been the best gift of all.

I decided it was time to pitch this idea again to all of the GNBC members: if you know a fellow beer lover (even if they don't brew...yet) or homebrewer, why not buy them a "gift" membership for Christmas this year?

If this is something you are interested in please contact me at [membership@greatnorthernbrewers.org](mailto:membership@greatnorthernbrewers.org) or you can call me (907) 947-7365. You can also pay online with PayPal but please make note in the special instructions area indicating if this is a gift membership and if you want it mailed to the person receiving the membership or if you want it mailed to you so you can give it to them directly.

You can also print out the GNBC application and mail in a payment to the address below but please call me or email and let me know so I can ensure a timely return of the Membership card gift. The cutoff date for Gift Memberships is 12/17/17 to allow for processing and return time to be mailed out for Christmas.

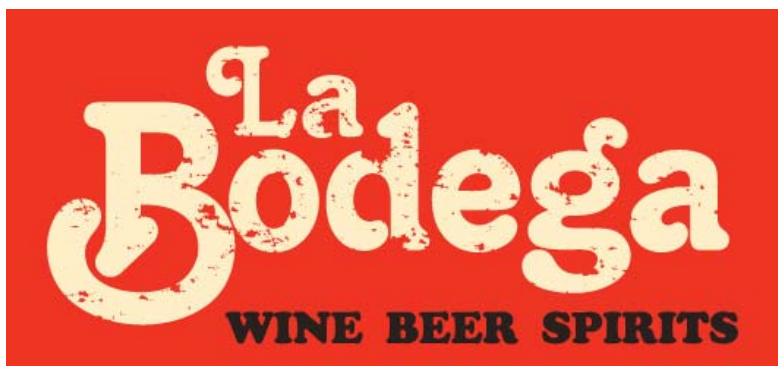
GNBC Membership Coordinator

c/o Kat Karabelnikoff

9601 Copper Drive

Anchorage, AK 99507

Thanks and Have a wonderful Holiday Season!! Cheers!!



# New GNBC Officers and Board Members for 2018

## Officers

President – Mike Cragen

Vice President – Eric Minor

Secretary – Jim O'Toole (re-elected)

Treasurer – Sam Moore (re-elected)

## Board Members

Peter Hall (1 year remaining on term)

Mike Fisher (1 year remaining on term)

Brian Hall (re-elected for new 2 year term)

Rick Levinson (elected for 2 year term)

Liz Greer (elected for 1 year term)



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## GNBC Christmas Party

by *Peter Hall*



The GNBC has been welcomed back to the Alaska Zoo Gateway complex for our annual Christmas Party on December 9th. Of course, we are paying for the privilege. They always seem happy to hear from me when I make the call to book again.

Beer was the only suggestion I had for a theme...so I'm running with it. Come dressed as your favorite beer, or whatever else beer related. I'm happy to see some enthusiasm for the simple theme. There is a lot of room for interpretation.

The music will be a bit more casual this time around. Having bands has been great fun, but I'm not sure it is worth the trouble to coordinate. I think we will get the same experience with music playing over some speakers. That is unless someone is eager to play for us. We are happy to host. We might even throw in some amazing beer in exchange.

I hope to see you all at the Alaska Zoo Gateway Complex at 4731 O'Malley Rd at 7:30pm on December 9. The GNBC will provide some food, a jockey box with one beer already plugged in and plenty of CO2, service ware, and some decorations. You can show up with a smile and whatever you want to share.

Any questions/comments/suggestions? Contact Peter Hall at [alaskabrewer@gmail.com](mailto:alaskabrewer@gmail.com)

# Suds Corner

by John Craig

Ho-Ho-Ho, "Cheers Be With Us," on this cold winter night. The Christmas lights are flashing outside. I'm staying cozy warm sitting next to the fireplace with Xmas music on the radio.



I promised my friend Jim Roberts on Thanksgiving Day I'd write something for this month's Great Northern Brewers newsletter.

We had a super turkey dinner at the American Legion Hall on Fireweed Street. This is an annual event for us because the ladies' Auxiliary gets together and does all of the cooking and it involves our tight group of good friends, good food, and cheap beer. I've realized that it seems that I like to overeat.

With my dog Brewer at my feet, I open a bottle of Barberg Schaenkerla Weizen Smoke Beer - one of my favorites - and a gift from my friend Jim Lamb. He's also my new neighbor in Talkeetna next to Grizzly Beer Camp up Yoder Road.

Today I stopped by King Street Brewery for a growler of Pilsner.

King Street's my favorite pit stop because it's close to our home in Jewel Lake. Thank the state of Alaska for limiting brewery pours to 36 ounces; it's the only way I can escape the beer drinking buddies I always run into when I'm enjoying beer around town.

I like to get home before dark. We eat dinner at 5 pm, then watch the news. King Street is my second home during the winter. I'm a member of the 100 Club, so for me it means \$6.00 growlers.

As a senior, I find the Senior Center boring. To me, I'd rather be in a dive bar drinking cheap beer. There's also cheap beer at Koots, which is also a great place to talk to locals and see my favorite server - Wanda - in the Bird House Bar.

After Turkey Day - on Black Friday - I went to the Army Navy store for the 20% off sale looking for a new jacket. After leaving the store, I walked by the Panhandle Bar. As I was walking by, the door opened and someone was leaving and I got a big whiff of beer. That's all it took for me. As I went into the bar, it felt like heaven. The aroma and good times were in the air. Everyone smelled of beer. As they racked the balls at the pool table, I had music and voices in my ears and heard the balls break on the table and I felt like being home again with old friends of the past.

Enjoy your holiday season and relish in the fact that you're part of the best homebrew club in America. I'll see you at the next meeting!





# Merry Blitzen

by John Craig

*Editor's Note: This is a reprint from the December 1992 Great Northern Brewer's Club Newsletter.*

Taws' the night before Christmas and all through the house  
There were empties and pretzels, left around by some louse.

My homebrew I'd hid by the chimney with care  
Had been swiped by some bum who discovered it there.

My guests all had long since been poured in their beds  
To awaken next morning with God-awful heads.

My mouth full of cotten hung down to my lap  
Because I was dying for one more night cap.

Then through the window there came such a smell,  
I sprang to my feet and said "what the hell?"

And what to my wondering eyes should show up  
but eight bloated moose hitched to a beer truck.

It was glassy-eyed Santa and he didn't look tame  
While he drooled and he belched and he called them by name.

On Pilsner, On Weizen, you must help us out  
On Bitter and Ale and Porter and Stout.

Scram up on the roof now, get the hell of that shrub,  
Get going you dummies our won't get no good grub.

So up on the roof when the moose and that truck  
But a tree branch hit Santa before he could duck.

So I pulled in my head and I cocked a sharp ear,  
Down the chimney he plunged landing smack on his rear.

He was dressed up in furs, yes every last stitch,  
By the way that he squirmed, he had some sort of itch.

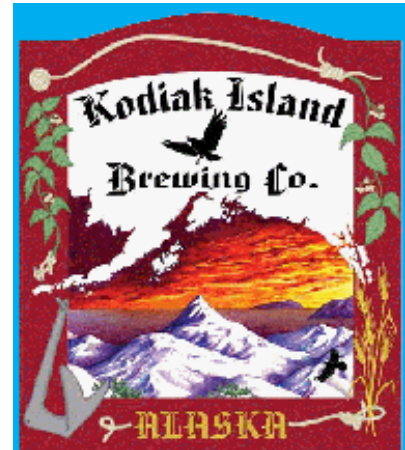
He had pints and quarts in the sack on his back,  
His breath had the power to knock a train from its track.

He was chubby and plump and generally spritzed,  
But he didn't fool me, he was one-eyed blitzed.

He spoke not a word but went straight to his work,  
But he missed half the stockings, that plastered old jerk.

Then putting five fingers aside of his nose,  
He gave me the bird and up the chimney he rose.

He sprang for his truck and such a hasty pace,  
That he tripped on the gable and slid on his face.



CAFE



AMSTERDAM



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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: December 9, 2017: 7:00 pm  
GNBC Christmas Party At the Alaska Zoo**