



# THE Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB  
JANUARY 2019

## Brewer's Log 2019.01.01

by *Mike Fisher*

**H**appy Brew Year, Great Northern Brewers. It's an honor and a privilege to be GNBC's President for 2019. I remember my first GNBC meeting, in September 2013. I had picked up a kit from Arctic Brewing Supply and brewed my first batch of beer in early August 2013 and was excited to get involved with the club to learn more. And, learn I did. Now, nearly 150 batches later, I am thankful for the countless knowledgeable members who I've met along the way.



A special thanks goes out to our outgoing President, Mike Cragen, and his officers and board. It has been refreshing to see all of the positive changes to the club meetings over the last few years, including a push to have an educational component at each of the meetings, gadget of the month, and other features. Thank you, Mike, and the officers and board members for 2018az, for leading change in 2018.

The big event for January is of course the industry meeting. We'll have a full night of club business, a guest speaker, and social time. As in past years, be sure to bring your GNBC card and ID. No ID, no entrance. Entry will be strictly limited to GNBC members and invitation-only industry guests. And as a reminder, if you haven't renewed your membership for the year yet, it expired in September, so be sure to renew so you can attend. Go to <http://greatnorthernbrewers.org/membership/> to renew and see the article later in this issue for all the details.

Upcoming events:

**January 16:** Wort pickup for Turnagain Tartside Challenge, Turnagain Brewing Company, 4-8pm (see article)

**January 17:** Industry Meeting, 49<sup>th</sup> State Brewing Company, with guest speaker

**February 19:** Monthly meeting, 49<sup>th</sup> State Brewing Company, with

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presentation by Clarke Pelz of Cynosure Brewing about yeast

**March 19:** Monthly meeting, 49<sup>th</sup> State Brewing Company

**March 3:** Fur Rondy Home Brew Competition (see the article for more details)

**Late March:** Talkeetna Beer Trippin' hosted by Denali Brewing Company

Our last Home Brewer of the Year competition was Big Fish, held December 9. **Mike Cragen**, won Best of Show with his Kölsch. Brewer's Choice went to **Nicholas Carrillo and Ryan Kinney** with their mixed fermentation blueberry sour. With that final competition decided, I'm pleased to announce GNBC's Home Brewer of the Year for 2018. After battling it out with multiple competitors and second-place Christophe Venot, **Brian Hall** emerged victorious. It was a great year for homebrewing, and I look forward to the wonderful beers and all the new competitors we'll see in 2019. Stay tuned for more details about the HBOTY program rules for 2019.

As we step into 2019, I'd like to welcome the new and returning officers and board members for 2019:

Mike Fisher, President

Christophe Venot, Vice President

Jordan Couture, Secretary

Sam Moore, Treasurer

Jim Lamb, Board Member

Peter Hall, Board Member

Tony Strupulis, Board Member

Rick Levinson, Board Member

Jeremiah Christian, Board Member

Flame Out: Keeping with the tradition started by my predecessor, each of my monthly articles will close with something I've brewed or accomplished recently. In November and December I brewed several small batches to use up small quantities of yeast and hops I had on hand. I am especially happy with the Witbier and White IPA I brewed. I will have them around for some to sample, but the quantities are limited and will go fast!

Saison Greetings and Hoppy New Year!



## Secretary's Corner

*By Jordan M. Couture*

Hello Club,

I wanted to thank you all for electing me the secretary for the Great Northern Brewers Club for 2019. After being a member for almost 10 years, I am pleased to be given a chance to serve the club. I have been hooked on home brewing since my first batch almost 15 years ago. My most recent batch was an imperial maple oatmeal stout; a far cry from a Magic Hat #9 clone, brewed in the middle of the night, on the stove in my dorm room kitchenette. Thank you all again for electing me as your secretary. I look forward to another great year.

Cheers and Happy Brewing, Jordan M. Couture



## Secretary's Corner

*by Jim O'Toole*

This is the last "Secretary's Corner" I'm writing for the GNBC newsletter as I've passed the keyboard to Jordan Christopher who was elected secretary at the November GNBC monthly meeting.

I kind of lost track of how long I've been doing this so, when President Mike Cragen mentioned that, "Four years is long enough" when I told him I would not be running for the office again, I looked in a file of the columns I've written and found the first one I wrote and kept was in March of 2015 so Mike was right. It doesn't seem that long to be honest as I've really enjoyed the job.

There are a number of reasons for "four years" being "long enough" but the primary one is that I really want to give someone else a shot at writing in the newsletter every month, especially someone who might know more about home brewing than I do and who can incorporate home brewing into the columns much better than I did.

I also, due to some minor medical issues, have slowed my consumption of alcohol considerably in the past year and, consequently, my enthusiasm for home brewing has gone from rising fanaticism a few years ago to an interest in seeing what others are brewing and how they are brewing them.

So, electing Jordan I hope will be a part of that. When I first met him it was at a GNBC meeting and I discovered he was a chemist, a line of work I always admired for a number of reasons; one being that the chemist husband of a good friend of mine a long time ago was a great guy, and another being that when I got around to studying chemistry during my US Navy days I found it an incredibly fascinating and difficult science to master.

I'm not EXPECTING anything from Jordan other than him writing whatever he feels like writing about every month for the next year but what I'm hoping for is some chemistry related information that will help us all become better brewers.

At a GNBC meeting several years ago we had a featured speaker who said to "Get your process figured out first" using whatever tap water is available and then, once all the kinks are worked out and you are making good beer, seriously consider altering your water chemistry to try to match the water used to brew whatever style of beer you are working on.

That made a lot of sense and I've been lucky enough to travel to some ancient and holy beer places to discover what the brewers in that area found to be the best recipes for the water they had to work with. They didn't need a chemist; they just needed to fool around long enough with ingredients and a process that would produce the optimum beer that people would buy consistently. And what the water is like there is no secret.

I know I'm repeating some things a lot of you know but I also know that there are some simple things any one of us can do with our brew water to improve our brewing and I'm surprised at the number of home brewers who don't know this or who don't take the time to do them. They can mess around with their process and ingredients for a long time before they figure out that they will never make a Guinness or a pure Pilsner Urquell clone unless they use the same water chemistry that is used in Dublin or Pilsen. I am not saying that you can't make a great Stout or Pilsner with Anchorage water but I think anyone would agree that you could possibly make a better one if the brew water chemistry was altered to more closely match the beers we are brewing.

I think I may have touched on this in a past "corner" or two but I'm ranting about it now because this is my last column and I have been itching to push this for several years. Seeing Jordan elected, especially after his water chemistry presentation at a meeting a while back might be the catalyst (sorry) that makes some of the GNBC members who are not adjusting water chemistry start thinking about it.

I'm not disappearing. I'll still be going to meetings and sampling what the club is doing and as long as Mike Fisher keeps the peppers out of his brews I'll keep sampling all of them. Mike's the President now and I'm not on the board so I can continue to razz him about that. But, other than a Rye Pale Ale I brewed and brought to a meeting so someone could tell me what I did wrong with it I don't remember ever having a bad beer at a GNBC meeting and I expect that will continue and even improve as we keep working on becoming better brewers.

I have to finish this with a number of people to thank. Jim Roberts for editing this stuff every month that I've written it. He's a busy guy as I can tell you that his truck pulls out of his driveway every work day long before I normally get out of bed and it doesn't come back sometimes until nightfall. He also writes about and, if you can believe everything he says, drinks an awful lot of beer. All of the board members I've served with have been great, especially Peter Hall who encouraged me to run for the secretary position way back when. But especially all of you brewers who have helped me learn more than I ever thought there was to know about this beverage that I have loved since my first taste of it almost 70 years ago. As much as I've learned, there is one thing I am totally aware of; that no one will ever brew THE perfect beer, but I am going to keep enjoying hanging around, watching the Great Northern Brewers Club membership attempt to brew it.



# Big Fish 2018

by Peter Hall

**B**ig Fish 2018 was a big success. A total of 42 entries of beer appeared for the Humpy's Big Fish competition. Midnight Sun brewing company was on hand to help judge and to select a brewer's choice/best of show beer. We had a solid representation from the GNBC of qualified and experienced judges. Enough inexperienced judged happened to come along and offer their novel tastes to every judging panel.

Brian Hall, Christophe Venot, and Mike Cragen all had several entries. Ultimately the BOS title went to Mike Cragen with a Kolsch and Brewers Choice was claimed by Nicolas Carrillo with a mixed fermentation blueberry sour. The BOS round was a mixed bag with heavy, light, sour, and weird all well represented. Thank you to all the brewers that are putting in the effort to master the more nuanced flavors of non-imperial or highly hopped beers! Thank you for making such great beer all together!

The BOS round was well staffed with representation by Humpy's, MSBC, and the GNBC. This competition reliably attracts high-quality entries. The task was handled deftly and efficiently. I was happy to have 42 well-judged entries done by about 2:30pm.

Thank you very much to Humpy's, Midnight Sun Brewing, and to all the eager judges. Thank you also to Arctic Brewing Supply for their generous support of time, space, swag, and general positive vibes. There was a great balance of new and experienced judges that made for quality judging and an excellent learning experience. Thank you, Christophe Venot, for being an amazing steward. Each year is smoother and easier, but I still get dizzy and would lose my head without amazing help.

Thank you again to MSBC, Humpy's, and Arctic Brewing Supply. Show your appreciation by patronizing these amazing local businesses! (Not that you were not already, just buy another beer or some extra grain the next time you visit.)



# 2019 Fur Rondy Homebrew Competition

**I**t's time for the 2019 homebrew competitions to start in Alaska! We are proud to announce that the 2019 Fur Rondy Homebrew Competition will take place at 11:00 on Sunday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> at Magnetic North Brewing (8861 Golovin St.). Fur Rondy, 2019 is a BJCP certified event, so you will gain BJCP experience points for judging.

Your highest score in each category is the only one that will count towards HBOTY points (*you may NOT get points for multiple beers in a category*). Points will be awarded as follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup> – 3 points
- 2<sup>nd</sup> – 2 points
- 3<sup>rd</sup> – 1 point
- SMaSH – double points (see below)

If your HBOTY entry wins BOS or Brewer's Choice, you will receive an additional 2 points (if one entry wins both BOS & Brewer's Choice, you'll only receive the 2 extra points).

Our Side Challenge will be SMaSH beers (Single Malt and Single Hop). As the title implies, you may only use one type of hop and one malt. Spices, wood, fruit, herbs, etc may NOT be added to SMaSH entries. SMaSH entries must still have a 2015 BJCP category/subcategory specified. The SMaSH category counts for double HBOTY points:

- 1<sup>st</sup> – 6 pts
- 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4 pts
- 3<sup>rd</sup> – 2 pts

Homebrewer of the Year (HBOTY) points will be different for this competition. Each entry will need 2015 BJCP category/subcategory for judging purposes. Also, one of the below categories needs to be designated. If above category isn't specified, competition organizers will place the beer into what is deemed to be the most appropriate category.

What this means is that all lagers will be lumped into one grouping to "compete" against each other for place/points, while simultaneously being judged according to their separate BJCP category/subcategory. In other words, for all lagers there will be only one 1<sup>st</sup> place, one 2<sup>nd</sup>, and so on.

Fur Rondy Homebrew Competition

## HBOTY

Lager

Stout/Porter/Brown

Imperial (8% & up)

Belgian/French

Wheat

SIDE CHALLENGE – SMaSH – double HBOTY points (1<sup>st</sup> – 6 pts; 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4 pts; 3<sup>rd</sup> – 2 pts)

## Non-HBOTY

IPA/Pale

Wild/Sour/Brett

Irish/Scottish

Other (any other category may be entered but will not be eligible for HBOTY or BOS).

No Meads/Ciders.

\*49<sup>th</sup> State will determine a "Brewer's Choice" beer to brew. This isn't necessarily the BOS winner, though.

Entry drop-offs will NOT need BJCP Entry/Recipe forms. We just need name, contact phone number, 2015 category/subcategory, and one of the 9 general categories listed above. Entries will be accepted at Arctic Brewing on Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup> from 4pm until 6pm. You'll need three 12 oz bottles or two 22's. Entries may be dropped off at Arctic Brewing prior to March 1, just be sure to have above-mentioned paperwork completed. If you have questions, please contact Mike at: [mikecragen@yahoo.com](mailto:mikecragen@yahoo.com)

# I Need Your Help!

by Julie McDonald

Hello GNBC members!

We are gearing up for our January industry meeting and we need YOUR help! We are looking for volunteers!

Below is a list of positions we need covered. Additional details will be provided for each position after they are filled.

Please take a look and email Julie at [juzy@gci.net](mailto:juzy@gci.net) with the time and position you are available for, reference "club volunteer" in the email subject, please. And as always thank you so much for helping your club!

## **Front Door volunteers, 2 more needed:**

Time: 6:15p-7:30p - Filled

1. Pre-paid/GNBC member line: Eileen Levinson
2. Cash payment line: Denise Kenna
3. Board member/Greeter to direct line traffic: Christophe Venot (2019 VP)

Time: 7:30p-8:30p - filled

1. Pre-paid/GNBC member line: Peter Hall
2. Cash payment line: Gwen Couture
3. Board member/Greeter to direct line traffic: Jordan Couture (2019 secretary)

Time: 8:30p-9:30p

1. \_\_\_\_\_

Time: 9:30p-10:30p

1. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Certified Pourers, 12 more needed, will need copy of alcohol servers card:**

Time: 6:30-7:30 - filled

1. Fil Spiegel - TAP card copy recvd.
2. Rick Levinson - TAP card copy recvd.
3. Lisa Saperstein
4. home-brew table: Sue

Time: 7:30-8:30 - 4 pourers

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. home-brew table: \_\_\_\_\_

Time 8:30-9:30 - 4 pourers

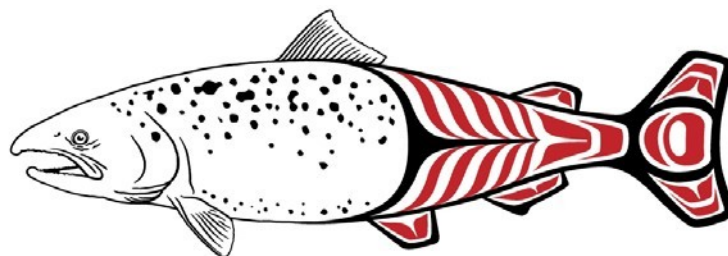
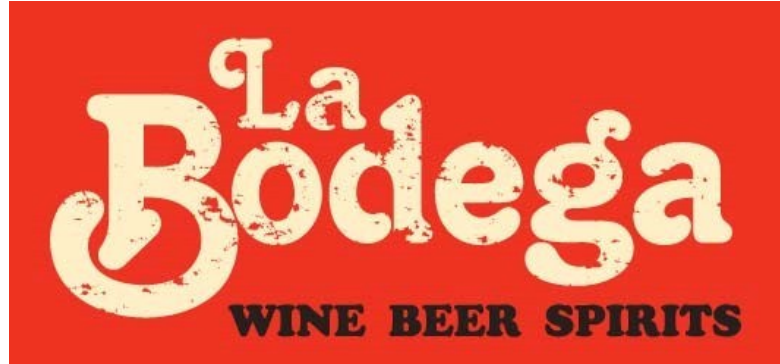
1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. home-brew table: \_\_\_\_\_

Time 9:30-10:30 - 4 pourers

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Home-brew table: \_\_\_\_\_

**Clean-up volunteers - filled**

Mike Cragen  
Tish Cragen  
Mike Fisher  
Jim Lamb  
Christophe Venot



**TURNAGAIN BREWING**  
OLD WORLD TRADITION... THE ALASKAN WAY



# January 17, 2019 meeting!

by GNBC (*This is a Frankenarticle*)

Each January marks the return of the Great Alaska Beer and Barleywine Festival (GABBF) and Alaska Beer Week. The GNBC has long been a supporter of the GABBF competitions by supplying BJCP certified judges and beer stewards, and has also been the host for the Thursday night meeting for brewers, brewery owners, special guests and other beer industry workers. The industry meeting will happen again this year and it's scheduled for Thursday January 17, 2019, at 6:30 PM, at 49th State Brewing Co. We owe a huge thank you to 49th State for helping us continue this tradition. Get down there and have a pint and some food. Here's what you need to know:

First and foremost, and this will be repeated several times in this announcement:  
\*\*\*This is a GNBC member event ONLY. Visiting brewers and dignitaries are also welcome as GNBC guests.\*\*\*

The meeting adjusts a little every year. This year has a few big adjustments. First, the schedule:

6:30 - 7:00 GNBC Business

Come to say hello to the new GNBC leadership, say thank you to the outgoing leadership, and catch a quick update of upcoming GNBC business.

7:00 - 7:30 Guest speaker who'll be announced soon!

Please show our speaker the respect he/she deserves. We are trying to keep the night moving quickly and with lots of time to socialize.

7:30 - 11:00 Social

What many of you are waiting for!

\*\*\*This event is NOT open to the general public.\*\*\*

\*\*\*Your current GNBC Membership card and current photo ID are required for entry. Photo ID required for all entries.

\*\*\*We are asking for donations up front and/or temporary membership dues before the meeting. This party has been a mainstay of our community. We hope to keep it this way by diversifying how the party is paid for.

#### MEMBER DUTIES:

\* be responsible and have a ride home if you are going to drink.

\*There will be NO potluck this year. ALL food is being provided by the GNBC through 49<sup>th</sup> State Brewing.

PLEASE READ THIS BOTTOM SECTION A COUPLE OF TIMES TO BE SURE THAT YOU ABSORB AND UNDERSTAND WHAT IS BEING ASKED OF YOU:

- YOU must show your current GNBC membership card and a valid and clean driver's license (e.g. no red stripe) to the security guard. ABSOLUTELY, NO EXCEPTIONS.

- THERE will be security at the door to check both IDs.

- PLEASE LABEL YOUR HOMEBREW with your name and beer style at minimum before you come

- DO NOT bring any outside glassware or cups to the meeting All glassware/cups will be provided.

- THERE will be plenty of water available to cleanse your palette between tastings.
- THERE will be all kinds of amazing commercial beer on tap for you to taste as well.
- ALL beer will be available for tasting from approx 6:30-last call. We will not go all night, but we will have plenty of time to share.
- PLEASE remember that no beer in cups/glasses may leave or enter the theater area.
- LAST call is at 11 p.m. 49<sup>th</sup> State bar may still be open at that time.

On behalf of the GNBC and 49<sup>th</sup> State Brewing we want everyone to have a great time. We ask that you think when your drink and definitely plan ahead for a safe ride home, whether you are driving yourself or other pre-arranged ride.

I think that covered everything, though I'm sure it really didn't. Please DO NOT BE AFRAID TO EMAIL ME at [president@greatnorthernbrewers.org](mailto:president@greatnorthernbrewers.org) if you have any questions or concerns. My article contains even more information about this meeting. Watch out for more emails in the near future!



# Turnagain Tartside Challenge

By Ted R.

**G**reetings homebrewers! In the spirit of friendly competition and creative sour beer brewing, Turnagain Brewing is proud to raise the first Tartside Challenge. Here is how it works: we'll buy you a gallon of our finished but uncarbonated sour base beer, you take it home and finish it as you will within a month, and in two months we reconvene at the homebrew club meeting to share a taste. We'll brew a batch of the best beer and serve it in our taproom. The details:

- 1) You must show at our taproom on Wednesday of beer week (Jan 16) during business hours (4-8pm) to claim your gallon of unfinished beer. Please bring a container to hold your proto-brew (a couple sanitized growlers or a milk jug might work well).
- 2) You must bring or send your finished beer to the club meeting in March for "judging". The entire club will be encouraged to sample and rate beers to help us choose a winner.
- 3) The beer we chose to reproduce will be the best beer, as rated by club members, which is also reproducible on a larger scale at reasonable cost and poses no threat to the health of the general public or the reputation of our fine brewery.
- 4) METICULOUS PRODUCTION DETAILS must accompany the submission. We are looking for refermentation/conditioning temperature, source/preparation/exact quantity of any fruit/spice/fermentable added to the mix as well as the volume of base beer to which it was added, and time spent on such additive prior to crashing. Beers may spend NOT MORE THAN ONE MONTH above 40F.

Helpful hints: Force carbonation is recommended. Yeasts do not perform reliably in acidic environments. Be very careful with any spices or herbs as they are easy to overdo. Freezing any fruit prior to addition improves extraction of flavors. If refermentation is desired, repitching yeast is a good idea as the beer we will give you has been cold for some time. Avoid pits and seeds as much as possible, as well as the pith of any citrus peel (it tends to be bitter). Don't worry too much about sterilizing anything you might add; the beer we give you is already a polymicrobial playground with origins in wild and spontaneous fermentation. Have fun and get creative!



# 2019 GNBC Home Brewer of the Year (HBOTY) Criteria

Below you will find the list of BJCP Categories that will garner points towards the coveted Home Brewer of the Year. We will be using the 2015 BJCP guidelines.

Please note, the 2019 format is similar to what we did in 2018, which had the goal of avoiding extremely limited entries per category in an open competition and huge Best of Show (BOS) flights. We have refined the style groups slightly, as well as changed points for judging.

As in the past, your highest score in each category is the only one that will count towards HBOTY points (you may NOT get points for multiple beers in a category). Points will be awarded for the top three entries in each style group as well as for the Best of Show and Brewer's Choice winners. People who enter at least one beer in a competition and also judge, steward, or organize that competition will get additional points.

The style groups we will use in 2019 are:

Belgian/French

Fruit and Spice/Herb/Vegetable

Imperial

IPA/Pale

Irish/Scottish

Lager

Other

Stout/Porter/Brown

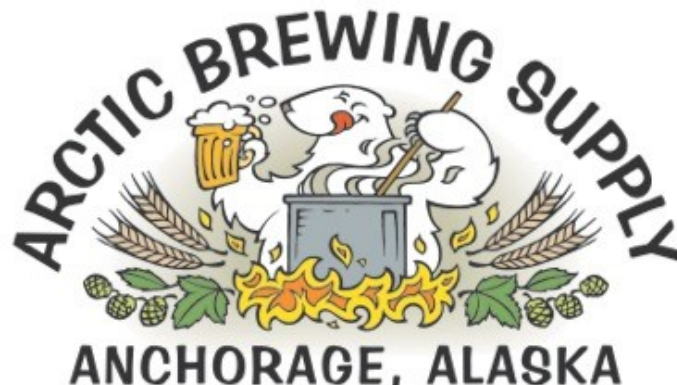
Wheat

Wild/Sour/Brett

Wood/Smoked



Each competition will have its own set of style groups eligible for HBOTY points as well as the best of show round. Please see the competitions page on the website for details about each of the competitions, as well as a more detailed explanation of the scoring and grouping systems. Information for the 2019 HBOTY will be on the website (under Competitions and Competitions/HBOTY) by January 5, 2019.



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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: January 17th, 2019**

**49th State Brewery 6:30 PM**