



THE Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB

JUNE 2011

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Prez Sez

By Dennis Sessler

A hhhh, we went from spring to summer in 3 weeks. You gotta love it. The mad rush of spring time GNBC events has come to an end. You have to admit if you didn't catch at least one event in the last 3 months you must be in a coma.



I'm chillin' as I am writing this month's article, every sip of this fine dry hopped beer that hits my lips makes me think of the day I brewed this fine Bohemian Pilsner. I brewed this batch during the Great Alaskan Beer and Barleywine Festival. My wife was out of town and my festivities were a little scaled back this year. It was an 11 gallon batch and has been lagering for the perfect amount of time. It wasn't my first lager but it the first one that I love and will be brewing again very soon. A lot of friends have asked for the recipe so here it is. This one is an all grainer. Have fun and make sure the water is fairly soft.

19 lbs of Pilsner malt
2 lbs of Cara Pils Malt
1.5 lbs of Munich Malt 8L
2.5 oz of Liberty (pellet) 60 min
1.5 oz of Liberty (pellet) 40 min
1.75 oz of Saaz (whole) 15 min
1.5 oz of Saaz (whole) 5 min
1 oz of Saaz (whole) Dry
11 Gallons OG 1167 Yeast – Wyeast 2124 Bohemian Lager

Is it too late to brew a batch for the summer? No I don't think so. I will brew something else that can ferment and be served fairly quickly though. Maybe an ESB or an IPA. I will brew this pils again this upcoming winter for next spring/summer.

I want to do a quick wrap up of all the events that the GNBC has partaken in over the last month. We started the month with the annual Brew A Thon. Again this year Tim Strayer coordinated and John and Rose Craig held the event for the club. Again it was another spectacular event. From what I have heard we brewed 266 gallons of fine beer and mead. A great time was had by all who attended. John mentioned to me that the driveway was full at 8:30am, and that was the first time that ever happened. Big thanks to all who set up and cleaned up after this year's event. Also thanks to Tim, John, Rose and Lisa and Pete from Arctic Brewing supply for all your wonderful donations. Without your wonderful contributions our annual Brew A Thon just wouldn't be the same.

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NEWSLETTER EDITOR

DEBBIE GRECCO

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Our next club event was the House Crawl. I didn't partake this year, but from what I heard it was a raging success. Check out Lisa's article for all the details. Thanks to Lisa and Pete for coordinating this event and a big thanks to all the stops on the crawl. There is no doubt each stop on the crawl will see our great club in a new light. Your house will never be the same.

So what are your plans for summer? Are you planning on taking up residency for the weekend at Trail River Campground? Check out the Vice's article on this upcoming June 17th event. It's a great family getaway were the adults can relax and enjoy the great Alaskan summer. I hope those who attend have a wonderful safe journey. I will be in San Diego on a family vacation... thank goodness for world class breweries.

This will be the sole GNBC event for the month of June, take a gander at the rest of the newsletter though. There are several events that will take place in July and August that will need some coordination. Check out our Secretary article, Julie has done a spectacular job forecasting our events both via newsletter and also on Facebook.

As I close I would like to take a quick second and remind everyone to be responsible during these crazy days of summer. I speak for everyone in our great club, we want to see everyone have a great time but at the same time be responsible club members. You all carry the responsibility to drink responsibly. Please think before you drink. Until we meet again keep the flames to your kettles and Brewon.



Secretary's Corner

by Julie McDonald

Meeting Minutes: May 17, 2011, 7p

*Meeting was called to order by the Prez at 7:10p

*52 people in attendance

*Welcome to new members, 5 new members



Old Biz:

Brew-a-thon (AHA Big Brew) Wrap-Up by Tim Strayer

A tremendous thanks to Rose and John for hosting us again

To those who helped set-up and clean-up, thank you also!

Approx total gallons brewed is 266!!

If you have feedback for next year's event, please contact Tim Strayer at tim@strayermail.com

Ring of Fire Goblet's of Gold Mead Comp

Took place Saturday, May 14 at Ring Of Fire in Homer

There were no Anchorage entries this year

Congrats to ALL that participated and placed

AHA National Homebrew Comp:

1st round judging took place 3 weeks ago

Congrats to Steve Jayich of Anchorage who has several entries going thru to 2nd round judging

Congrats to Steve Pierce of Juneau who also has several entries going thru to 2nd round judging

2nd round judging takes place the 2nd week of June during AHA National Homebrewers Conference in San Diego

New Biz:

Summer Campout, Trail River Campground, June 17, noon-19, noon

From Anchorage, go south on Seward Highway approximately 100 miles to Crown Point. Turn at Milepost 24.2 on Trail River Road for 2 miles to campground.

We are located in Group site 1

The theme for the Saturday night potluck is Comfort Food. So round up your best comfort food recipes and make it a potluck to remember!

If you have any questions regarding this event please contact VP, Joe Michael at joeofak@gmail.com

July Summer Picnic, Jeff Loughery's home in Lake of the Hills on Hillside, July 13, 6p

Everyone is asked to bring a dish, something for the grill, and of course your wonderful homebrews, meads and ciders!

Family friendly- paddle boats available

ET Barnette Homebrew Comp, July 23rd, Fox, Alaska

This is an AHA/BJCP sanctioned competition.

The Grand Prize for Best of Show is \$500!

Prizes will also be awarded for 1st, 2nd & 3rd places.

Entry Fee: Please include a check or money order for \$5.00. Checks or money orders should be made out to Scott Stihler.

Number of bottles required: Three 12-16 oz. brown or green bottles per entry. Crown topped bottles are preferred but flip-top (i.e. Grolsch type bottles) are okay. The bottles should be free of any ink, paint or labels. *Entries with labels will be disqualified and the corresponding entry fees will be considered donations to the prize fund!*

Entries will be accepted: June 27 to July 20, 2011 at 5:00 p.m. - No Exceptions!

Categories: Bock (5A-D), english Pale Ale (8A-C), American ale (10A-C), Porter (12A-C), Stout (13A-F), India Pale Ale (14A-C), and Fruit/spice/Herb/Veg beer (20 & 21A)

Judging will take place on Saturday, July 23rd at the Silver Gulch Brewing and Bottling Company in Fox starting at about 10:00 a.m. The best entry from each of the seven judged categories will be entered into the final round of judging to determine the Best of Show.

Entry Shipping: Entries should be shipped by FedEx, UPS etc. to the following address:



ETBHC
c/o Silver Gulch Brewing and Bottling Company
2195 Old Steese Highway
Fox, Alaska 99712
(907) 452-2739

There is no mail delivery to the above address! Items mailed to that address go to a post office not frequented by the folks at Silver Gulch. Aside from the legalities (or lack thereof) of sending entries via the U.S. Postal Service, doing so more than likely will result in them not being picked up in time for the competition. Please do NOT use the U.S. Mail for shipment of your entries!!!

Anchortown Invite Homebrew Comp: Date and Time TBD, sometime during the 1-2 week of August, stay tuned.

August Picnic, Date and Time TBD
Location: the Sessler's home in Eagle River
More info to come, stay tuned.....

Next meeting: Remember that indoor Snowgoose meetings have concluded for the summer. Our next official function is the Summer Campout in June.

End of club business: 7:30p

Information Segment: This month Jim Roberts aka Dr. Fermento, president of the Brewers Guild of Alaska, came to us looking for ideas. The Brewers Guild of Alaska and the GNBC have always had a strong relationship. Jim also comments on the level of professionalism that is shown during the Great Alaska Beer and Barleywine Festival competition, from our judges to all volunteers, as well as all of the other BJCP sanctioned competitions that the club supports. Having said that, Jim asked us who we would like to see as future guest speakers for our big January club meeting during Alaska Beer Week, leading up to GABBF. Lots of great ideas were suggested. If you have someone in mind and would like to share your ideas, please send them to one of our board members or officers and we will pass that list on to Jim.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00ish

MISCELLANEOUS:

Take note that Alaska CHARR has changed the name of the former TAMs training to TAP (Training for Alcohol Professionals)

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

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

06/04	Saturday	11:00am
06/06	Monday	9:00am
06/09	Thursday	5:30pm
06/14	Tuesday	1:00pm
06/16	Thursday	9:00am
06/21	Tuesday	5:30pm
06/23	Thursday	1:00pm
06/27	Monday	1:00pm
06/29	Wednesday	9:00am

Renewal certification available at the CHARR office Monday through Friday 10:00am to 4:00pm.
Renewal testing is also available with proof of previous training following Saturday classes at 2:00pm

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

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

50 points – Standard BJCP scoring in regards to aroma, appearance, flavor, etc. Base beer recipe is Belgian Specialty – whatever that means to you.

10 points – size of entry - that's right, the judges like things on the large side of life

20 points – entry name – innuendo tends to score big

20 points- WTF factor – Judges are looking for the unique nature of your specialty ingredients. The usual orange peel, star anise, and coriander aren't going to cut it this time.

100 points total available

Monthly Member Beer Dinners.

June beer dinner has been cancelled due to lack of participation

Looking for hosts for July dinner, contact Juzy@gci.net for more information or to be put on the GNBC beer dinner email list

GNBC Summer Campout

By Joe Michaels

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

As the spring months come to a close and give way to what is starting out to be a beautiful Alaskan summer here in Southcentral, it's time once again to mark your calendars for the annual GNBC campout! This is a great opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors in the 49th state and socialize with your fellow homebrewers at the same time. Whether you are a tent camper or drive the USS Enterpriseabago, bring your bedroll and join us for a fun-filled weekend of good folks, good food, and good fresh fermented fluid!

This year's campout will be held at the Trail River Campground, just outside of Seward. To find the campground, head south from Anchorage towards Seward on the Seward Highway. Watch for the brown and cream colored sign just before the Crown Point Bed and Breakfast between mileposts 25 and 24 on the right side of the road. Turn at Milepost 24.2 on Trail River Road for 2 miles. The campground is between the Trail River and the Kenai Lake.

The GNBC will be taking over one of the group campsites from the afternoons of Friday, June 17th to Sunday, June 19th. Right now, it's not clear to me if there is only the one group site, or more than one. We will make efforts to put up signage that will assist in finding us. You are also welcome to try and call my cell at 907-268-1404, but no guarantees depending on service. Another bonus is that the GNBC will cover the cost of your camping fees if you stake your claim with us at the group site! Now, you have NO excuse!

Although the official campout will last from mid-Friday to mid-Sunday, the evening of Saturday, June 18th will be the official club meeting night and potluck. This year's food theme for Saturday night will be "comfort food". Please bring a dish with enough for you and yours and to share with the group as well. If our other potluck events are any indication, it'll be some good eating! Even if you can't come for the entire weekend, we'd love to see you out on Saturday night for the food and "club business" (aka socializing). We'll plan to kick off the potluck between 5:00pm and 6:00pm. A bonfire is usually constructed at some point as well, taking the fun late into the sunny Alaskan summer night.

Other things to bring are camping chairs, canopy shelters, and fire wood. All of these things would be most helpful in contributing to the success of the event. The canopies are especially useful in the event of bad weather.

This is also a family friendly event. Many members will have the whole clan in tow, so bring your kids along for the fun! If you bring your dogs, please plan to have them under control at all times. In previous years, we have had our canine friends help themselves to food at the potluck tables, and also run off and go missing.

It's also important to note that this is bear country, so be mindful of your food and other items that might attract bears to the site. Last year at Eklutna, we were joined by a bear that was sniffing around people's tents as the slept in on Sunday morning! We hope to see all of you down to Trail River! Don't forget those homebrews and craft beers!



Fourth of July Weekend 2011

Open Invitation to the Craig's Property

By Julie McDonald

If you didn't get your Talkeetna fix during Talkeetna Beer Trippin' weekend in March, you might want to mark your calendars for Fourth of July Weekend. John & Rose Craig have issued an open invitation to all GNBC members to come stay at their property in Talkeetna for that weekend.

John would, also, like to see GNBC members put together a float for the Talkeetna 4th of July Parade.

Some info on the Craig's property:

- 10 campsites
- 4 outhouses
- Plenty of parking
- Fire pits

If you plan to go, you will need to bring camper/tent, food, water, beer (that's a given), and whatever else you may need to get through the long weekend.

John would like you to call him if you want more information or if you have any ideas on a float design. John's number is 243-6540.

2011 Homebrewer of The Year Categories

Fur Rendezvous HBC

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

Snow Goose HBC

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

Anchor Town HBC

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

Equinox Mead HBC

- Category 24
- Category 25
- Category 26

Humpy's Big Fish HBC

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



E.T. Barnette Homebrew Competition

By Scott Stihler

Announcing the 15th Annual E.T. Barnette Homebrew Competition!

This is a AHA/BJCP sanctioned competition.

The grand prize for Best of Show is \$500!!!

Great prizes and custom medals will also be awarded to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners of each of the seven judged categories.

The seven categories that will be judged are: Bock (5A-D), English Pale Ale (8A-C), American Ale (10A-C), Porter (12A-C), Stout (13A-F), IPA (14A-C) and Fruit/Spice/Herb/Vegetable Beer (20 & 21A).

Entries will be accepted: June 27 - July 20, 2011

Entry fees: Submit three 12-16 oz brown or green crown capped bottles and a check or money order for \$5.00 in U.S. funds per entry.

Judging: Judging will take place on Saturday, July 23rd.

Location: Fox, Alaska (a small mining community ~10 miles north of Fairbanks)

More information as well as Entry and Bottle ID forms may be found at the following URL: <http://www.mosquitobytes.com/Den/Beer/Events/Events.html>

Should you have any questions or are interesting in judging contact Scott Stihler at stihlerunits@mosquitobytes.com or (907) 474-2138.



E.T. Barnette Homebrew Competition 2011

Call for Judges

By Scott Stihler

We need BJCP judges and/or experienced brewers to help judge the AHA sanctioned E.T. Barnette Homebrew Competition!!!

Judging will take place on Saturday, July 23rd at the Silver Gulch Brewing and Bottling Company located in Fox, Alaska (a small mining community ~10 miles north of Fairbanks).

The seven judged categories will be: Bock (5A-D), English Pale Ale (8A-C), American Ale (10A-C), Porter (12A-C), Stout (13A-F), India Pale Ale (14A-C), and Fruit/Spice/Herb/Vegetable Beer (20 & 21A).

Once again judges can pre-register and hand carry their entries thereby saving on the shipping costs. All they need to is fill out the Entry forms and mail it to us along with the corresponding fee payment. On the day of the competition the judges simply show up with their chilled entries in hand. Be sure to attach Bottle IDs to each of the bottles with rubber bands so we can distinguish which entry is which.

Please mail your pre-registration materials to:
Chérie Stihler
P.O. Box 84988
Fairbanks, AK 99708

Please mail in the pre-registration information etc. early enough so that it is received no later than the entry deadline (i.e. July 20). This will allow us to register those entries along with all the others.

I hope you can help us out with judging of this year's the E.T. Barnette Homebrew Competition.

For more information about this competition please go to the following URL:
<http://www.mosquitobytes.com/Den/Beer/Events/Events.html>.

If you are interested in judging please contact Scott Stihler stihlerunits@mosquitobytes.com or (907) 474-2138.



EVENTS

Every First Thursday
Moose's Tooth First Tap

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

13.....Summer Picnic at Jeff Loughry's
6 pm: See related article

17-19..... Summer Camp Out - Trail River
Friday - Sunday - See related
article

04.....ET Barnette Entries Accepted
Through July 20: See article

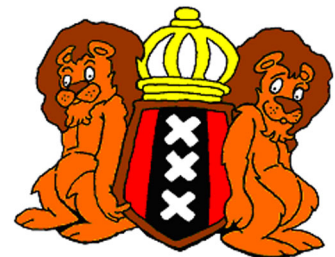
04.....John Craig Open Invite in Talkeetna
RSVP: See related article

23.....ET Barnette Judging - Fox
10 am: See related article

??.....Anchortown Invitational
Homebrew Competition
Date/Time TBD - See related article

?? GNBC August Picnic
Date/Time TBD - See Prez Sez

CAFE



AMSTERDAM

Forth Annual Anchor Town Invitational Homebrew Competition

By John Trapp

This is a quick reminder that the forth annual Anchor Town Invitational Homebrew Competition is coming up in August. We have not set a date yet, but it usually comes around the first or second week in August. There's still time to brew, so fire up the kettles and make a few batches. When the date is finalized, I'll send out an e-mail to the club and you'll read about it in the July and August newsletters.

There will be no entry fee and all categories are open. Categories for the Homebrewer of the Year are as follows, Category 2,7,14,17,21,27. We have some great prizes to give out, including the "Brass Tap" award (compliments of Arctic Brewing Supply) given to the brewer with the highest average scores. Last year we had cash and gift certificates on top of medals for first place, and plaques for best-of-show. This is turning out to be one awesome competition to enter; I hope to see a lot of entries for our forth annual competition. Good luck to all.

Beer Dinner Recap

By Foamy and Mrs. Foamy

Another successful beer dinner has come and gone. These are wonderful opportunities to try new beers, try new foods, and make new friends. If you have not been to one yet, talk to Julie McDonald about getting on the mailing list. This dinner was held at Foamy and Mrs. Foamy's house (aka Tim and Fil) on April 23rd. The dinner's theme was Sweet and Sour; the food had to have a sweet component and the beer had to be sour.



Our first course was the Welcome Beer. We had Lindeman's Faro and it was very welcome!

Our second course was Carl Hall's Hawaiian beef short ribs topped with pineapple and paired with a Wild Ale.

Our third course was a soup. As you may remember from the emails our lovely Past-President Cindy Harrington was to bring the soup and just our bad luck she HAD to take a trip to Hawaii and left us soupless. Alas, Fil and Tim moaned and cried and came up with a hardy but sweet soup called Sweet Dreams. More unfortunate was the fact that we did not have a new beer!

Our fourth course was a salad. This refreshing break was just what we needed after filling up on all the previous courses. Barb Yano brought a delightful pear and feta lettuce salad paired with a mystery beer that we were tasked with keeping secret. I'd have to kill myself if I disclosed it but it was absolutely the most fabulous beer I've ever had!!! Sorry I really can't tell you what it was.

As we continued with our decadent evening of sweet and sour, our fifth course was the entrée of Hong Shao braised beef w/ brown basmati rice, brought to us by Aaron & Ginnie. As with his beers, Aaron brought a level of detail to this dish that was amazing. He told us the story of how he learned to make it while in China, how much more authentic can you get! It was paired with a light refreshing Weisse beer.

We wound down with dessert, as if anyone had more room to put anything else in their stomachs. The dessert was an incredible scrumptious creamy lemon mousse with chocolate drizzle, you really had to taste this one to believe it, paired with Cassis. I do have to point out the cheaters here because if you notice Jim and Lisa Lamb switched it up and made the food sour and the beer sweet. We thought about kicking them out but decided to let them stay as long as they left us a bottle of Cassis.

And just in case that wasn't enough! The Ryans brought Zoestruie Flemish Ale because we had nothing but time to drink more beer.

Each course was carefully planned and prepared and each beer was a perfect match. We thank everyone who came to our humble home and shared. And of course we thank Julie for her time and efforts.

2011 GNBC Crawl is HISTORY!

By Lisa Peltola

The 2011 House Crawl was even better than expected! We started out at MSBC with a tapping of a firkin of Sockeye then moved into the brewery for a private toast with magnums of Jupiter, wow! The St. Pauli girls escorted us to the bus and sent us on our way to the next stop at Jim Werner's for a local taste of Germany and heated game of beer pong. Jim gave out some great prizes, one in particular led to lots of laughs at the Lewellyn's. The inflatable chair that Tracey won ended up in her hot tub and was just too tempting to resist. Let's just say that inflatable chairs are not very stable on water, just ask Nancy Eyraud or Jim Roberts. Nancy went down fully clothed in a matter of seconds and managed to entertain us all. Jim lasted longer in the balancing act and removed most of his clothing before attempting to stun us all with his great sense of balance (beer in hand).

I wasn't present to see the plunge but I hear he had a bit of help going down, not that it took much. On top of the entertainment in the hot tub, the Lewellyn's beer game was absolutely hilarious! Watching grown men and women swinging a banana between their legs attempting to move an orange into a hula-hoop filled the room with laughter!

Next on to our house for the dinner stop and our next round of goofing beer games. The 3 top spots in our beer toss went on to a swing-off, you had to be present to get the full impact. Tim S., Tim M. and Breck competed for the top spot and once again provided a great deal of entertainment for the rest of the group. Kristine Strayer and Windi Brammer were voted the "Best Aloha attire" and definitely deserved the title! Pat Ryan took "Top Mug" with a beautiful mug from a great friend and former GNBC member Bill Keas. This brought back a flood of memories surrounding a wonderful man who is greatly missed by all who knew him. Cheers to Bill!

Jim Roberts won an honorable mention for his large pewter mug that dated back to his childhood. The last stop was Bruce Mills' with "A Minute to Win it Challenges". OMG! This quickly went into completed chaos, hula-hoops swirling, Kleenex flying, and ping pong balls bouncing! Tracey and I battled for top honors and in the end she was much better at shaking her ping pong balls! For those of you who left a bit early, you missed out! Thanks to all who participated and most of all thanks to all of you who opened up your houses and provided us with great beer, good food and entertaining beer games. I'm already looking forward to next year! Cheers, Lisa Peltola & Petr Dohm



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Into the Vorlauf: A Look Inside Gordon Strong's Brain

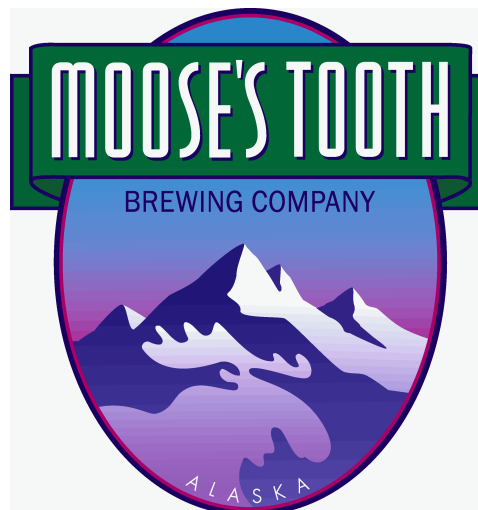
By Andy Yanco

There is a new book by Gordon Strong, the principal author of the Beer Judge Certificate Program (BJCP) style guidelines and three-time winner of the National Homebrew Competition's Ninkasi Award. It is called *Brewing Better Beer: Master Lessons for Advanced Homebrewers*. There are many books out there that tell you how to brew beer. Gordon Strong will only tell you how he makes beer. It's a refreshing approach that is both personal and lets him discuss how a master brewer thinks and creates rather than just listing available malts and brewing methods. This is a book about effortless excellence, a brewer's passion and personal style. Strong likens brewing to cooking – "Chefs take the same basic tools and apply them creatively to create something unique." Brewers are Jedi Masters who cross and blend many kinds of knowledge into their unique artistic expressions.

If you're beginning to worry that he's written a self-help book on the "Zen of Brewing and Malting," don't be afraid. This is a meaty book and its all-grain only. It is a comprehensive discussion of how Gordon Strong brews, from formulating recipes, to brewing techniques and packaging. There are recipes for 23 different award-winning beers and simply too much for me summarize. I'll try to hit some of the highlights and "ahh ha!" moments.

There's one word that appears repeatedly in the text. Gordon Strong really hates "harshness." He's also very conscious of how pH affects the brewing process. These two things have much to do with one another. For example, the chapter on brewing techniques explores the parallels between brewing with dark grains and making coffee. Following an article by Mary Gruber at Briess, Strong suggests steeping dark grains separately to reduce astringent flavors and harshness. This can be done hot (165 degrees F) or cold and then slowly blended with the wort to control color, flavor and pH (dark grains are very acidic). It's a useful tool that allows control and fine tuning for milder dark beers. A similar technique can be used with coffee and spices, which have lots of tannins. Make a spice tea and blend it to taste. Coffee can be cold-pressed, then precisely added to flavor. There is also a very helpful and detailed section on brewing with spruce tips.

Phosphoric acid (10% solution) is Strong's preferred way to lower pH. It's used in soft drinks as a flavor enhancer, which makes me a little weary. Strong uses it to reduce the pH of sparge water before adding it to the mash. The pH should be about 5.5 or you risk extracting harsh and astringent tannins from the grain bed. First wort hopping is another technique to reduce harshness. Place flavor hops in the first runnings of the mash tun to extract a very smooth and refined hop flavor. This is the result of the higher pH in the liquor. This is best done with noble hops that are low in cohumulone since they'll stay in the kettle throughout the boil. Another trick is "all-late hopping." Add all of your hops in the last 20 minutes to avoid excessive bitterness from high-alpha hops. Finally, for some styles, the book suggests using calcium chloride rather than gypsum (calcium sulfate) because higher sulfate levels increase the perception of hop bitterness. With years of experience at national competitions, Strong asserts that harshness will cost you points and "A clean fermentation character is almost always rewarded." If you're worried about harshness in your beers, this book is full of good ideas.



Part III offers a very good introduction to beer tasting and evaluation skills. Evaluating your product is an important part of the “feedback loop” that begins with recipe formulation, through brewing, finishing and judging. Strong makes a good case for the usefulness of the BJCP guidelines (he wrote them after all). This section is a great introduction to beer judging and may be helpful to those turned off by the idea of formal categories and criteria.

For those interested in brewing for competitions, Mr. Strong has many tricks. For example, several beers can be brewed from a single mash. He gives a recipe for a Cream Ale and Standard American Lager duo. Just pitch ale yeast in half the batch and lager yeast in the other. I recently split a batch of Pilsner and Saison. You can also add steeped specialty malts to make several styles from the same mash. Another method is the British parti-gyle system. Use the first runnings from the mash tun for a relatively high gravity beer, say a Barley Wine, and then use the second runnings for a Pale Ale or something lighter. Beers can be blended and mixed to taste. Single malt or single hop experiments can be kept in a “blending archive” to add a known character or flavor “component.” All of these methods garner multiple competition entries from fewer batches. If you’re interested in stability and ways to bottle and package your beers for national competitions, there is a wealth of information in this book.

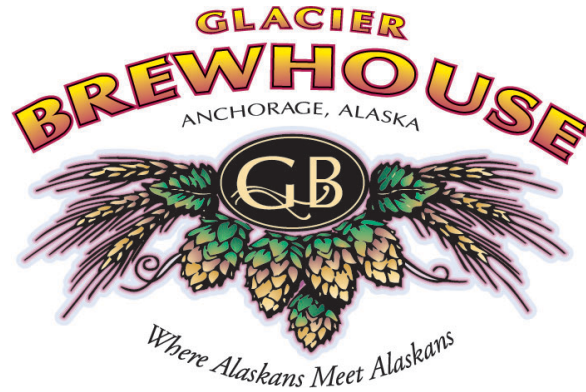
Brewing Better Beer is best thought of as a conversation. Gordon Strong talks through his ideas and methods, which can get your mind working on your own. Much of what he has to say won’t be new to advanced brewers, but he has his own way of talking through the material. What matters is how he thinks about brewing. He’s trying to find that indefinable quality that sets master brewers apart from all the other mash-monkeys. I don’t think he’s put his finger on it exactly, but he has started the conversation and I think that’s all he intended to do. Where you go from there is up to you.

Kegeerator Anyone????

By Starrsky Strubbs

Hey beer lovers... I have a four tap full size kegeerator for sale with the freezer on top and the fridge on bottom. It can actually fit six corny kegs in it with absolutely no room to spare. Included in the deal is a five pound co2 tank with a dual gauge regulator, all the necessary tubing, and the faucets and shanks. I also have some Sanke couplers if desired. I’m asking \$450. Please call or text Starrsky Strubbs at 244-8667.





Brew-A-Thon Wrap Up

by *Tim Strayer*

Well, another successful year of Brew-a-thon (aka "AHA Big Brew") is behind us.

The final totals were approximately 260 gallons of beer brewed and fermented into something tasty. Just glancing over the submitted totals on the AHA website, it appears that we are definitely in the top 20, and likely the top 10 of nationwide participation.

Many thanks to John and Rose Craig for once again opening their home and surrounding lawn area to the club. I know I speak for everyone when saying how thankful we are for having such wonderful hosts! THANK YOU JOHN AND ROSE!

An additional thank you-s go out to:

- Arctic Brewing Supply for supplying the portable "facilities" for everyone. This makes the day that much more enjoyable – especially for John and Rose.
- Midnight Sun Brewing for donating a large amount of yeast.
- Several of the local breweries (you know who you are) for providing whistle wetting product – aka BEvERages.

And lastly, but not least: thank you to all of the participants for making this a fantastic event. The food was good, weather was great, and the participants were greater.

See you next year!



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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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**NEXT MEETING: June 13, 2011 Summer Picnic
At Jeff Loughrey's House - 6 PM**