



The Prez Sez

Secretary's Corner

GNBC House Crawl

Three Days of Peace, Love and
(of course) Beer!

Talkeetna Beer Trippin'

Brewtrek II: The Wrath of
Ba-Kahn

2001 GNBC Barrel Aged Russian
Imperial Stout

GNBC 15 Gallon Conical
Fermentor Group Buy

Judging Beer 101: The RANT

20011 Ronly Homebrew
Competition Results

2011 National Competition

Beer Trading 101

Snow Goose Break-Up
Homebrew Competition

Q&A With Joe Michael

National Homebrew Day and
2011 Brewathon

THE

Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB

MARCH 2011

Prez Sez

by Dennis Sessler

When I wrote my February Prez Sez article I was a tad under the weather. I couldn't enjoy a beer and get creative. Well I'm still not 100% but who really is. I woke up early this morning to get my grind on, meaning a little bit of Costa Rican blend coffee in bean form. I love the smell of freshly ground beans in the morning. Last week I was at Sam's Club picking up some of my morning fix and was shocked by the price increase on everything in the store. I did a little comparison shopping with all the coffee available and decided to change flavors; I picked up the Costa Rican blend along with some Espresso blend. If you are gonna make a change might as well jump off the diving board right.



It was a couple of weeks ago and I had seen and commented on Midnight Sun Brewing Co., Facebook post about all the espresso coffee shots that the brewers were adding to a new beer called **Machu Picchu**. While strolling through Sam's my wheels began to turn. I think you see where I'm going with this. Coffee+Beer = 24 hrs of happiness.

Years ago, my better half Dena brewed an espresso stout named "Espresso thy Pinion" it was brewed and fermented with Pinion roasted coffee that fellow GNBC members John and Rose Craig brought back from New Mexico as a gift for some Limburger cheese that Dena and I had given them from a recent visit from my homeland (Wisconsin). Dena and I brewed the initial batch of beer and it did well in competition. She later tweaked and re-brewed it solo a couple of times and did much better winning scores of awards. She always has been a better brewer than me, and I am very proud of all her accomplishments.

I found a wonderful webpage while Gogging for homebrewed beer with coffee. Here is quick link to that page (<http://www.ineedcoffee.com/01/espressostout/?page=1>) for a homebrewer to start on the path of 24 hours of happiness. Make one of your next batches of beer a big black stout with some coffee on board. You won't be disappointed.

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Ok, onto the past, present and future. February is history, and the Fur Rondy HBC is in the bag. I took 91 entries and we had a wonderful day of judging on Saturday the 5th. Congratulations to all the winners, we had two best of Show winners and the Kassik "Pro Am" winner. See the winners list later in the newsletter for all the particulars. On a note about competitions, see my article on Beer Judging 101 "THE RANT", all members (veteran or not) should look over this article and take note. I re-wrote this article multiple times at the advisement of my better half. Consider it a "boot in the ass" or simple guidelines to follow to make beer judging a positive experience for the judges and the score sheets an informative piece of advice so the entrants can improve their beer.

I want to thank all that showed up to judge, steward and set up this annual event. I want to also thank the Snow Goose for putting us up and allowing me to take entries and store them in the cooler. I want to thank Kassiks Brewery for sponsoring this event and pulling a beer to brew up and possibly enter in the Pro Am competition at the GABF in Denver each year.

Madam Secretary has cranked out a wonderful Secretary Corner. She does an awesome job keeping the minutes, check out her article. And if you didn't know it already Julie is the coordinator for the GNBC monthly beer dinners, contact her to get added to her "Beer Dinner Blog List". This sub group of the GNBC is not a clique. We are fellow GNBC members who love good food and beer. Dena and I attended the latest beer dinner and the theme was "BACON", check out my quick article and pictures of what we endured.

GNBC Club Brew will take place on March 5th, I've attached the list of 12 brew teams and how this event will take place. Recipes have been emailed out to the 12 team leaders and they will be getting their ingredients this week. I'm very excited to be doing this again this year.

Something about 120-130 gallons of Russian Imperial Stout being fermented and barrel aged in your garage, life just doesn't get much better than this. This week I will be getting the garage in shape and making room for the barrels and fermentors. Dena's summer cruiser will find a cold place outside for brew day. I've promised her that her 1969 Karmann Ghia convertible will survive the day; I'm praying that we don't have some freak blizzard that day, but if we do I'll have plenty of help putting her (Abbey) back in later that night.

March 15th will be our next homebrew club meeting at 7pm at the Goose in the basement. See the newsletter sidebar for member's duties. I will email the membership with agenda as the date nears. Check out Kevin Sobolesky article about a GNBC club buy of 15 gallon conical fermentors. If you're interested contact him and bring your deposit to the March meeting. Thanks to Kevin for taking on all the leg work and to Don Lewellyn for helping with the shipping of them. It will be a wonderful way for brewers to primary ferment and free up some carboys at the same time.





Talkeetna Beer Trippin' is coming, if you are interested in joining the festivities, check out Jim Lamb's reprint article and make those reservations. I've heard that the small town is booking up quickly. My whole family attended last year and we had a blast. This is a perfect event for all the kids and homebrewers alike. It's a wonderful way to get out and enjoy the fading winter and welcome the impending spring.

Very soon after Beer Trippin', set your sights on the Snow Goose Break-up Competition. It will be held on April 2nd. Check out the side bar in this month's newsletter for all the categories allowed at this competition. Last month's newsletter displayed **last** year's list of categories for Homebrewer of the year with the 2011 HBOTC header. Take note of the correct 2011 categories, this month we will get it straight. Don't forget the "Brewers Challenge", a SMaSH beer. Greg Mill, head brewer at the Goose did a great presentation on SMaSH beers, use your imagination and see what comes of it. See competition organizer Dan Bosch's article and get those beers going, lots of ales styles can be entered this year, the winner will have his beer brewed up and served at the Goose this summer.

National Homebrew Day, Big Brew, whatever they (AHA) wants to call it. The GNBC has called it Brew-A-Thon for years. Event coordinator this year is again, Tim Strayer. Check out his article and save the date on your calendar, it will be the first Saturday of May. That's right May 7th, the day before Mother's Day.

The last thing in the crystal ball that I see is the GNBC House Crawl. Check out Lisa Peltola article and get those fingers a dialing if you want in on this event. It books up really fast trust me. For those who read the newsletter articles they will no doubt get first dibs on this great GNBC social event. I'm always amazed how many emails I receive every month from members asking questions, my reply email almost always has a response of "read the newsletter"!!!

Till we see each other again, remember to "Think Before You Drink", let's keep that flame to the kettle and BrewOn!!!

EVENTS

*Every First Thursday
Moose's Tooth First Tap*

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

*05.....Russian Imperial Stout Club Brew
Pour-Off at the Sessler's: 5 pm*

*15.....GNBC Club Meeting At the
Goose: 7pm: Downstairs*

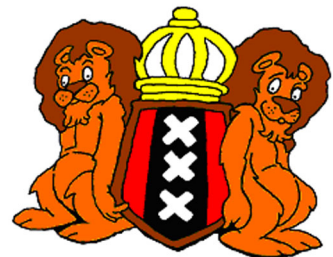
*25 - 27 Talkeetna Beer Trippin' Event
Multiple Events/Times: See Article*

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

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

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

CAFE



AMSTERDAM

Secretary's Corner

by Julie McDonald

Meeting Minutes: February 15, 2011, 7pm

*Meeting was called to order by Prez, Dennis Sessler at 7:09 pm.

*Attendance rounded out at about 43 members and 3 non-members.

- Welcome to new members

Old Biz:

Changes to Club Bylaws: Breck presented new verbiage for membership period to run Oct 1 thru Sept 30 of the following year. New verbiage to include the lifetime membership option, also changing treasurer duties. Previously membership was included under Treasurer's position. It has now been delegated to the new position of Membership Coordinator.

Vote was unanimous to accept all changes.

Fur Rondy Homebrew Comp – Awards presentation. Note: we had a record 91 entries!

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

- March 24th-26th
- Denali Brewing will take entries for any beer style
- NOT BJCP sanctioned event
- Judging will be done by Denali Brewing Co. and seasoned regulars
- Winning brew will be brewed by Denali Brewing Company
- Winning brewer will receive the Golden Carboy award
- Lodging for this event is becoming hard to find
- Contact Joe Michael or Jim Lamb for more info

New Biz:

AHA Club-Only comp: March/April 2011

Bock, Category 5 styles

- Tim Strayer brought the only entry. Good luck Tim!

April 2, 2011, Snowgoose Spring Break Up competition.

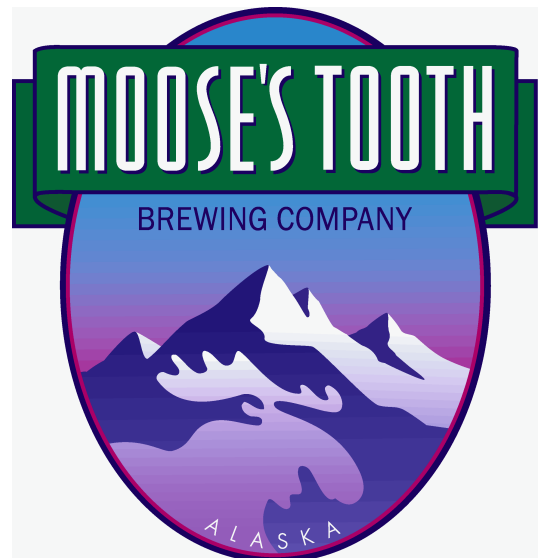
- Categories: 3, 6, 8, 10, 15, 20
- Winner gets to brew their winning brew at Sleeping Lady Brewing Co.
- The "Brewers" challenge is SMaSH (Single Malt and Single Hop) beer.
- See this newsletter for more information on the competition

GNBC 15 Gallon Conical Fermenter Tank Group Buy

- Ace Rotoweld 15 gal, full-drain conical (stand not included, ball valves/fittings not included)
- \$80 each, with minimum order of 40 units. Actual price will vary depending on how many we purchase.
- \$50 deposits will be taken prior to ordering and remainder will be due at delivery.
- Deposits due by GNBC Meeting, March 15, 2011
- Order will be placed on March 17
- For more information, contact Kevin Sobolesky 907-903-1056 or metkonig@gmail.com

Next meeting is Tuesday, March 15, 2011, 7pm, Snowgoose, downstairs. Assigned duties are as follows: A - J Food, K - P Setup, R - Z Cleanup

End of Club Business



Guest Speaker Presentation:

- Greg Mills, head brewer Sleeping Lady Brewing Co., lead a great presentation on brewing a Single Malt and Single Hop (SMaSH) beer. Many ideas, tips, options were discussed.
- We currently have a SMaSH discussion board happening on our FB page. Check it out for more ideas or to just post what you plan to brew: <http://www.facebook.com/topic.php?uid=154608164579959&topic=318>

Meeting adjourned at 8:30ish

MISCELLANEOUS:

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

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

03/03	Thursday	9:00am
03/07	Monday	1:00pm
03/10	Thursday	1:00pm
03/15	Tuesday	9:00am

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 Beer Dinners

- We have a March beer dinner planned and announced, and filled. The Bissons will be hosting an Italian food themed beer dinner.
- We have hosts for an April dinner, details are in the works.
- Stay tuned to your emails for upcoming information on the April beer dinner.
- If you are interested in hosting a May beer dinner, please contact me ASAP so we can get the ball rolling.
- If you are not part of the GNBC Beer Dinner group and would like more info, please contact me at juzy@gci.net. We can get you on the email list and you'll be kept up to date on all dinner announcements and related info.





GNBC House Crawl

by Lisa Peltola

Yes, it's back! This year's house crawl is set for Saturday, May 21st. For those of you who haven't attended this event in the past, I'll give you the run down. It's a lot like a pub crawl but we will be going to the homes of homebrewers and sampling their fine beverages. There are snacks at each stop and the mandatory goofy beer game. Points are kept for each game throughout the day and the 3 top scores will win prizes.

We will be traveling around Anchorage on a 29 passenger Magic Bus. The event starts at noon and we will be dropped off at the last stop around 7:30 pm. Participants will be responsible for a cab ride or designated driver pickup from the last stop. There are only 25 spots available for the crawl so reserve your seat early. I am still looking for a few generous folks to help out. The 1st and 3rd stops are filled; I am looking for three more stops to round out the event. Pete & Lisa will be the dinner stop (3rd stop) and will plan on having a good amount of food to fill our stomachs. Each stop will be about an hour (our stop 1.5 hours), giving us time to travel between stops. This is always an awesome event, don't miss out!

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



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



Three Days Of Peace, Love, & Beer

by *Da Lamb's*

Mark your calendar for the 2nd Annual Talkeetna Beer Trippin', "Three Days Of Peace, Love, & Beer" March 25 - 28. Hosted by Boe Barnett and Ty Schommer of the Denali Brewing Company and the Twister Creek Restaurant, this springtime outing is the perfect way to welcome back warmer temperatures and longer days.

Denali Brewing hosts a no-holds barred, open competition that has no restrictions on style, ABV, or risqué beer names. This is a non-BJCP competition and no judging sheets will be provided. Local Talkeetna residents will sample our creations and choose the one they like best. That beer will named "Best of Talkeetna Beer Trippin'", awarded the coveted Golden Carboy, and brewed by the Brewery.

Another item returning from last year's event is the commemorative Beer Trippin' t-shirt. Every year has its own unique design, and will be available at Twister Creek/Denali Brewing beginning that weekend. Those in attendance last year showed off their tie-dyed pride, and this year, you'll see shades of a trippy history-making event. Check out the unveiling of this year's shirt design accompanying this article in this month's newsletter.

Activities in and around Talkeetna include snow machining, Nordic skiing, sampling the finest of Talkeetna's cuisine and beer, and enjoying the company of both GNBC members and Talkeetna residents. We have confirmed that the Carhartt Brothers will be performing on Saturday Night. These musicians are a lot of fun so it should be a great time. We will also be tapping last year's winning beer and making the announcement of this year's winning beer.

Many cabins and rooms are available at this time, but make your reservations early to ensure that your first choice of lodging is available. Lodging choices include (but are not limited to) Talkeetna Roadhouse, A B&B On C, Chinook Wind Cabins, Main Street Suites and Talkeetna Cabins. All of these are within walking distance of the Brewery and Restaurant, and many other cabins and lodging choices around town. Check some of them out online to learn more about these distinctly Alaskan places to lay your head:



Talkeetna Cabins:	http://www.talkeetnacabins.org	907-733-2227
Main Street Suites:	http://www.talkeetnasuites.com	907-733-2694
Chinook Winds Cabins:	http://www.talkeetna-alaska.net	907-733-1899
A B&B On C:	http://www.abbonc.com	907-354-7836
Talkeetna Roadhouse:	http://www.talkeetnaroadhouse.com	907-733-1351

Another great informational website that gives a well rounded review of Talkeetna is the popular TripAdvisor. TripAdvisor offers information, ratings, and reviews on Talkeetna area lodging, and does the same for area dining options and activities. You can find TripAdvisor online at <http://www.tripadvisor.com>, and can link directly through to information about Talkeetna at http://www.tripadvisor.com/Tourism-g31136-Talkeetna_Alaska-Vacations.html. Many travelers from all over the world use this particular site for trip planning prior to setting their itineraries in stone. It would be a nice thought to take a few notes reviewing Talkeetna's wonderful businesses and activities if you have a good experience, which would benefit the local economy.

Information about getting your beer to Talkeetna in time for judging on Saturday, as well as any updates on other activities related to this event will be announced as it is available. Keep a watchful eye on your email for these informational updates, and also on the February and March club newsletters.

This event was a great way to put winter behind us last year and we are excited with the plans that are shaping up this year!

Talkeetna Beer Trippin' 2011 Schedule of Events

FRIDAY, MARCH 25

5:00-8:00pm | **Meet the Brewers Dinner** @ Twister Creek

Join the Denali Brewing Company brew crew for grub and gab at Twister Creek. They'll be slingin' ale, drinkin' ale and talkin' ale, their new brewery and who knows what else.

SATURDAY, MARCH 26

10:00am | **Keg fill drop offs** @ Denali Brewing Company Tasting Room.

Continuing throughout the day, drop off your kegs, let us know what you want in them and we'll have them cleaned, filled and ready to take home on Sunday.

11:00am | **Deadline for entries in the Golden Carboy Homebrew Contest.** *Entries should be turned in at the Denali Brewing Company Tasting Room.*

Noon | **Beer + Pizza** @ Mountain High Pizza Pie

You can't resist this classic combination. Not to mention DBC will tap up a couple of special brews available nowhere else and never again!

3:00-5:00pm | **Homebrew Taste + Share** @ Twister Creek

Bring your best, as a section of Twister Creek will be devoted to homebrew, homebrewers and the magic that happens when the two collide.

5:30pm | **2011 Golden Carboy winner announced** @ Twister Creek.

Your chance to see the trophy you want your name on.

6:00pm | **First Tap of 2010 Golden Carboy winner** @ Twister Creek.

Last year's winner was Lisa Lamb's apricot wheat. Get your first taste here.

7:00pm | **Carhartt Brothers** @ Twister Creek.

The boys bring their down-home sounds and a mighty thirst for suds to Talkeetna.

SUNDAY, MARCH 27

9:00am | **Keg fill pick ups** @ Denali Brewing Company Tasting Room

Continuing until 6:00pm, pick up growlers and filled kegs before heading home.

10:00am | **Farewell Breakfast** @ Talkeetna Roadhouse.

The Roadhouse's world-famous breakfast soaks up your hangover blues.

**Talkeetna is also a great place for outdoor activities of all kinds.
Town and trail maps will be available at Twister Creek & Denali Brewing
throughout the weekend.**

Beer Trek II: The Wrath Of Ba-Kahn

STARDATE: 02/19/2011

By Dennis Sessler

As the title states, for those who participated in the GNBC February Beer Dinner, we all went on a voyage far, far away, to a place surrounded by "Bacon". This night was the second installment on a voyage to go where no man/woman has ever gone before.

How the monthly beer dinners work: Contact Julie McDonald at juzy@gci.com and ask to be added to her Beer Dinner email List. When an upcoming beer dinner is scheduled through her, Julie emails out to those on the list, the upcoming event, location, beer and food theme, etc. Courses are broken down and all you have to do is reply that you want to reserve a spot, # of guests (usually 2 per course) and a particular course. It's very simple; you don't have to let her know what you are bringing, just that you want in. Time is of the essence, these dinners fill up in just a few hours, sometimes minutes. If you snooze you will lose for sure. Guest numbers are usually kept to 12 people. Too many guests and food pairings and the dinner becomes too much for one to eat or drink and be comfortable. In the weeks that follow you will pick your course and beer pairing and let Julie know so she can inform the dinner party.

On February 19th, Joe and Amber Michaels held their second beer dinner, again it was a bacon themed dinner. They love their BACON, and in turn have shared their love with everyone else one bite at a time. Thanks for being wonderful hosts Joe and Amber, I look forward to Beer Trek III sometime after my arteries have cleared.

Below you will find the Dinner menu and pairings with pictures. Every pairing was awesome.

Theme: This is the sequel to the original Bacon Beer dinner hosted by the Michaels. Beer Trek II, The Wrath of Ba-Kahn. Yes folks, each dish needs to incorporate bacon into it somehow. There are no beer challenges, other than the beer needs to work with the dish. Remember the 3 C's: Compliment, Contrast, Cut. Beer should work in at least one of those three ways with your chosen dish.

Welcome Beer: Tim & Jen brought Rodenbach

Beer & Salad: Lisa & Jim – Fresh greens salad w/Bacon paired with Tilburg's Dutch Brown Ale

Beer & Soup: Tim & Kristine – French Mushroom and Bacon soup and French Baguettes with Kostritzer Schwartzbier



Beer & Appetizer: "The Bacon Explosion" aka "The Meat Mat" paired with Great Divide's Smoked Baltic Porter
Beer & Entree: Bacon Jam Sliders paired with Left Hand B.C.'s, Fade to Black



Beer & Dessert: Bacon Chocolate Chip Cookies with maple cinnamon glaze paired with Deschutes B.C.'s The Abyss.



Digestif: Sierra Nevada Bigfoot Barleywine vertical (11 years)



2011 GNBC BARRELAGED RUSSIAN IMPERIAL STOUT

by Dennis Sessler

Here is the short list of 12 brew teams.

- Tim and Jen Bisson
- Tim and Julie McDonald
- Aaron Christ and Sean Farley
- Frank Bell and Posse'
- Fil Spiegel and Tim Hilts
- Dennis and Dena Sessler
- Steve Schmitt
- Breck Tostevin
- Dan Bosch
- Starrsky and Renae Stubbs
- Steve Baxter
- Scott Stanifer

For those wishing to join the brew teams (co-brewing) follow the Google map link below.

<http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?ie=UTF8&hl=en&msa=0&msid=209866603221619508141.00049c86327f3927228d3&ll=61.606396,-149.760132&spn=1.112815,3.532104&z=8>

I will be sending out the recipe very soon and the modification to extract for Fil and Tim.

Brew day will start whenever you want, beers need to be cooled and brought out to Eagle River (my house) around 5pm on Saturday March 5th. It's easiest to bring the beer out in coney kegs if you have them. We will dump the wort into the fermentors and hit it with yeast. This beer is big and will take a bit to ferment out, or more like kill the yeast. After the beers has barrel aged, we will set up a date to pull out the beer and put in your kegs etc. The cost of ingredients may be split with your brew team and so may the beer. Let's use this wonderful time to show the newer members all the different ways one can brew a great beer.

As noted in the 2010 Flanders Red club brew, mash temperatures must be adhered to as close as possible. This beer is big and too high a mash temp will lead to an overly sweet beer. Sanitation cannot be mentioned enough. If 1/12 of the beer gets contaminated, it could kill the whole batch. Let's please be anal about this.

Any questions shoot me an email.

Dennis
sessak@mtaonline.net

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



GNBC 15 Gallon Conical Fermentor Tank Group Buy

by *Kevin Sobolesky*

The Product: Ace Roto-Mold 15 Gallon Full-drain conical inductor tank Material is Food Safe Polyethylene and will not impart or leach flavors. All usual brewery cleansers and sanitizers can be used on this material. Stand is NOT included Ball Valves and fittings are NOT included

The Cost: Estimated cost is \$80 each with a minimum order of 40 units. Actual price will vary with the number of units purchased. We will be requiring \$50 deposits prior to ordering and the remaining actual unit cost is due at delivery.

The Timeframe: Deposits will be due by next month's GNBC meeting (March 15th). The tanks will be ordered on March 17th.

Knowledge Bank: These websites cover modifying the tanks for use in brewing and experiences with doing so:

<http://hessbrewing.blogspot.com/2010/06/conicalus-for-restivus.html>

<http://frugalconicalfermenter.blogspot.com/>

This website sells fittings such as can be used for a Racking Port:

<http://www.bargainfittings.com/>

This website sells larger pipe fitting pieces for a Drain Port:

<http://www.murrayequipment.com/>

Organizer Information:

Kevin Sobolesky

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Judging Beer 101 “THE RANT”

By Dennis Sessler

Judging beer, it sounds like a wonderful way to spend part of your weekend doesn't it? The GNBC coordinates five BJCP competitions every year. Competitions are a big part of our club. They are not only for bragging rights, but for the awards as well. The primary reason we hold these competitions is for us as homebrewers to learn about world beer styles and how we can make our beer better. All the medals, ribbons and commercial brewery sponsored brew ups are all icing on the cake. Sure they bring a larger amount of entries into the fold. What fun would a competition be with a just handful of entries?

February 5th was the first Homebrew Competition (HBC) of 2011. As the HBC Coordinator I took all the entries, organized everything into the database to make judging easier for everyone. The reason I'm writing this article is to give new and old members a recap of what is expected as a beer judge. It's not very hard to do a good job, but it is very difficult to do a great job. Don't let that last comment scare you away from judging.

There was a 50/50 mix of BJCP judges and novices at the Fur Rondy HBC, and to tell you the truth the novices did a superb job on their score sheet. BJCP judges take this to heart, you have the training and knowledge to judge, please do your part to be thorough and give constructive feedback to all entrants. The main reason homebrewers are entering competitions is because they want valuable feedback on their entry. As a judge it is your **responsibility** to completely fill out the form and give the best feedback possible. I reviewed all the score sheets after the Fur Rondy HBC and found several that were lacking in content. It is paramount that all judges do their best.

Be thorough, with descriptions, and leave feedback with a relative score. Explain why that beer, mead, cider was great or not so great. Was it a process flaw, submitted as the wrong style or infected? That is what the job of a judge is. Along with breaking down a beer according to aroma, appearance, flavor, and mouthfeel it is paramount that the judge gives his overall impression and how the brewer could make this beer better. I remember when I first started homebrewing, the quality was ok at best, but you know I still drank it and was very proud of it. When I learned about what was wrong with my beers and was able to correct it the quality and awards soon followed.

Our competitions are administered by the **BJCP, Beer Judge Certification Program**. <http://www.bjcp.org/index.php> is the link to their website. If you are new to beer judging, this website gives a plethora of information. You will find everything you need to be a great beer judge here, aside from taking the BJCP course and test and being ranked as a member (which will allow you to garner points for judging, stewarding and administering an event). I judged, stewarded, and ran a competition for 6 years before I even took the course and exam. I personally think it was easier waiting to do this as I understood more about beer, brewing, and judging prior to taking the test.

If you are interested in become a judge, steward at one of our future events, please get schooled up. Go to the BJCP web page, print off some beer score sheets (<http://www.bjcp.org/compcenter.php>)and practice judging your homebrews or that next commercial beer you're enjoying at home or at your favorite watering hole.

I will be having a discussion with all HBC coordinators and will be asking them to monitor and make the GNBC competitions the best that they can be, solely because our judges are doing their best.

Below is an informative synopsis on how to judge beer from Peter Garofalo. Print it off and use it as a guideline for judging.

“How to Judge Beer

By Peter Garofalo

1. Fill in the score sheet header, including information about the beer and yourself.

2. Examine the bottle. Look for tight sediment (good), or excessive sediment (a possible sign of infection). Note the fill level: too high may result in low carbonation; too low (>1.5") may allow oxidation. Look for any rings around the bottle neck, which is another sign of contamination. Check the box if appropriate, or add some comments.

3. Open the beer and pour out 1-3 ounces, raising a solid head if possible. Immediately sniff the beer to capture the aromatics. Use long, deep sniffs or short, shallow sniffs—which ever works best for you, but be consistent for all beers judged.

4. Write down initial aromas. Follow the cues under the Aroma section: malt, hops, esters, and other aromatics. A complete score sheet must contain comments on each aspect. Try to be specific: is the malt caramelly, toasty, roasty, burnt...? Are the hops fresh, floral, earthy, citrusy...? If esters are present, what fruits do they evoke: berries, cherries, pears, plums...? Be sure to note the presence (or absence) of expected characteristics for the style. For example, a German hefeweizen should have banana ester and clove phenolics.

5. Move on to Appearance: Comment on the beer's color—try to name it specifically: golden, amber, copper, brown, black, etc. and relate it to style expectations. Note the clarity: cloudy, turbid, clear, sparkling, opaque. Again, what does the style call for? Finally, note the head characteristics: color, bubble size, retention. Does it stand firmly or collapse quickly?

6. Now, taste the beer. Form an initial impression from the first sip, and allow it to linger a few seconds before swallowing. Note the finish (as you swallow) and aftertaste (a few seconds later). Pay attention to the cues under Flavor: malt, hops, fermentation characteristics, balance, finish/aftertaste, and other flavor characteristics. As under Aroma, try to specifically identify the type of malt, hops, esters (if present). Note the presence or absence of DMS and diacetyl, or other characteristics such as oxidation, sourness, sweetness, solvent character, etc. If present, are they appropriate? Be sure to note the balance from start to finish, and through to aftertaste. The best beers will remain in balance throughout.

7. Move on to Mouthfeel, assessing the beer's body (thin, watery, medium, full, thick), carbonation level, alcoholic warmth, astringency, and other sensations. Be sure to note whether the attribute is appropriate for the style at hand.

8. In the Overall Impression section, give a general impression of the beer. Try to avoid personal pronouns (I think...), and give objective comments on how the beer fits the intended style. If flaws are noted, point to possible causes.

There are several important points to keep in mind throughout the judging process. First off, avoid negative comments. Emphasize the beer's positive attributes, even if it is awful. Diplomacy is a valuable skill as a beer judge. Also, try not to be too specific, since you do not know how the beer was brewed. If there is a malt-related issue, be sure any advice applies to either all-grain or extract brewers.

As for scoring, there are two major methods: top-down and bottom-up. Top-down scoring means that you decide where the beer should score overall, and fill in the sections to add to that total. Bottom-up refers to the practice of filling in a score for each section and adding them to a final score. Either way, the score should make sense. Use the Scoring Guide on the lower left hand side of the score sheet as a sanity check.

Use the check boxes on the left-hand column of the score sheet as a list of beer characteristics to comment on. Check all boxes that apply as you score the beer. Note whether the characteristic is appropriate or not for the style.

Use the check boxes on the lower right side of the score sheet to give the entrant additional information. These are simply to inform the brewer of strengths and weaknesses in a broad manner: stylistically, technically, and in terms of intangibles.

Note that an experienced beer judge should be able to complete an evaluation in about ten minutes. The score sheet should be completely filled in, legible, and added correctly.

Finally, the most important thing that a good beer evaluation should provide is a thorough sensory evaluation. Keep opinions to yourself, and make sure the entrant understands just what attributes the beer has (or doesn't have) that justify its score."

2011 Fur Rony Homebrew Competition Results

Beer

Category: *AMBER HYBRID BEER*

1 David Coates Northern German Altbier

Category: *AMERICAN ALE*

1 David Coates American Pale Ale
 2 Ted Donat American Pale Ale
 3 Starrsky Stubbs American Amber Ale

Category: *BELGIAN AND FRENCH ALE*

1 Frank Bell Witbier
 2 Aaron Christ Biere de Garde
 3 Brian Noonan/ Frank Bell Belgian Specialty
 HM Mike Lanzarone Belgian Specialty

Category: *BELGIAN STRONG ALE*

1 David Short Belgian Dubbel
 2 Ted Rosenzweig Belgian Blond Ale
 3 Tyler Doil /Doug Griffin/ Chuck Crew Belgian Drak Strong Ale

Category: *BOCK*

1 Aaron Christ /Chris Farley Doppelbock
 2 Tim Strayer Maibock/Helles Bock
 3 Andrew Janco/ Melanie Smith Eisbock

Category: *DARK LAGER*

1 Steve Pierce Dark American Lager
 2 Breck Tostevin Dark American Lager

Category: *ENGLISH PALE ALE*

1 Frank Bell /Brian Noonan Extra Special/Strong Bitter
 (EnglishPale Ale)

Category: *EUROPEAN AMBER LAGER*

1 Aaron Christ Vienna Lager **“Best of Show Beer”**
 2 John Trapp Oktoberfest/Marzen
 3 Jeff Shearer Vienna Lager

Category: *FRUIT BEER*

1 Venetia Santana/ Eric Coffee Fruit Beer
 2 Aaron Christ Fruit Beer

Category: *GERMAN WHEAT AND RYE BEER*

1 Frank Bell Weizen/Weissbier

Category: *INDIA PALE ALE (IPA)*

1 Justin Larkin English IPA
 2 Steve Jayich Imperial IPA
 3 Frank Bell /Ira Deardorf / Steve Kunemund English IPA

Category: *LIGHT LAGER*

1 Mike Lanzarone Munich Helles
 2 Andrew Janco/ Melanie Smith Premium American Lager

Category: *PORTER*

1 Bill Howell Robust Porter
 2 Ted Rosenzweig Baltic Porter
 3 Dennis Sessler Baltic Porter

Category: *SCOTTISH AND IRISH ALE*

1 Tim Bisson Strong Scotch Ale
 2 Joe Michael Strong Scotch Ale
 3 Tim Bisson/ Jen Bisson Scottish Heavy 70/

Category: *SMOKE-FLAVORED AND WO*

1 Tim Bisson Wood-Aged Beer
 2 Frank Bell Other Smoked Beer
 3 Dennis Sessler/ Dena Sessler/ Julie McDonald Other Smoked Beer

Category: *SPECIALTY BEER*

1 Frank Bell /Brian Noonan Specialty Beer **“Kassik’s Pro Am Winner”**
 2 Don Lewellyn /Tim Strayer Specialty Beer
 3 Andrew Janco/ Melanie Smith Specialty Beer

Category: *SPICE/HERB/VEGETABLE BE*

1 Eric Dammann Spice, Herb, or Vegetable Beer
 2 Brian Noonan /Frank Bell Spice, Herb, or Vegetable Beer
 3 Breck Tostevin Spice, Herb, or Vegetable Beer

Category: *STOUT*

1 James Barber American Stout
 2 Bill Howell Russian Imperial Stout
 3 James Barber Foreign Extra Stout

Mead and Cider

Category: *MELOMEL (FRUIT MEAD)*

1 Breck Tostevin Other Fruit Melomel **“Best of Show Mead and Cider”**
 2 John Trapp Other Fruit Melomel
 3 Steve Szymanski Other Fruit Melomel

Category: *OTHER MEAD*

1 Breck Tostevin Open Category Mead
 2 Steven Jayich Open Category Mead

Category: *SPECIALTY CIDER AND PERRY*

1 Jeff Shearer Applewine

Category: *STANDARD CIDER AND PERRY*

2 Steve Szymanski Common Cider

Category: *TRADITIONAL MEAD*

1 John Trapp Semi-Sweet Mead

National Homebrew Competition



The 2011 National Homebrew Competition

Here are the important dates for the 2011 National Homebrew Competition (NHC) that you will need to know.

2011 National Homebrew Competition – Important Dates

Entry Deadline Monday, March 21 - Wednesday, March 30, 2011

Online Registration mid February 2011

First Round Competitions April 2 - 23, 2011

AHA Mailing for Final Round before May 20, 2011

Final Round Entries Due Monday, May 23 through 5 pm Monday, June 6, 2011

Final Round Competition Thursday, June 16, 2011

Awards Ceremony Saturday, June 18, 2011 in San Diego, CA

Is 2011 your year to medal?

What is the NHC?

The National Homebrew Competition (NHC) is the world's largest international beer competition recognizing the most outstanding homebrewed beer, mead, and cider produced by amateur brewers worldwide.

The First Round of the National Homebrew Competition (NHC) takes place at nine judging locations in the USA during the month of April. The best of the beer, mead, and cider entries in the regional competitions advances to the Final Round of the competition at the AHA [National Homebrewers Conference](#). NHC winners receive gold, silver or bronze medals in 28 style categories.

The American Homebrewers Association is a division of the Brewers Association, established 1978 in Boulder, Colorado, USA. In 1979, 34 entries competed in the first National Homebrew Competition held in Boulder, Colorado.

Beer Trading 101

by Frank Bell

"Beer trading? What do you mean? Like stocks?" This is usually the first question I get when attempting to explain my addiction to the regular people out there in the world. It is far outside the realm of a normal person's sphere of comprehension that there is enough variety of craft beer to push lost souls such as myself into dedicating vast amounts of money and time to shipping beer all over the country. Hell, even to your average craft beer drinker it is somewhat of an intimidating notion. Little do they know there is an entire world out there of beer geek's nation wide, setting monthly budgets for things like bubble wrap, cardboard boxes, and shipping and making sure they have their finances and materials in order, so that they can reap the benefits when that beautiful brown box shows up on the doorstep, full of foamy goodness from all around the world. That weekly, monthly, or yearly personal Christmas that every trading geek holds dear. "It's here. It's finally here. What will I open first?!"

Beer Trading is not a difficult habit to fall into. For me it happened shortly after my third year of college. I had already been drinking craft beer for a couple years before I turned 21 (sorry Mom), but finally being able to purchase beer legally was the telephone pole that broke the camel's back. I was buying beer like Donald Trump buys real estate. After a while, I had pretty much tried every beer available in the Anchorage area, and I knew that craft beer was going to play a big role in my life. With no frontiers left to pursue in the world of commercial beer, I began to return to the favorites I had gathered in my quest of the quaff. I still enjoyed them, but something was missing: that feeling of opening something new. The potential for greatness in the glass that may be only a popped bottle cap away! This could be the one! It could be the best one yet!

I figured with all the great beer I found in Alaska, imagine the quantity of possibilities the rest of the world had to offer! So I began to look around at different beers from other parts of the world. I looked at different sites on the internet and eventually found myself at Beeradvocate.com. It didn't take very long for me to find the trading forums and begin to educate myself on how beer trading works. The first and usually fastest option is to simply post in the trading forum what beer you are looking for, and judging by your location in the country and the beers they are after, someone will usually respond pretty quickly looking to trade for some beers available in your area. Adding to the convenience, every member has "wants" and "gots" lists filled out. So, one can just find any member who has the beer they are looking for on their "gots" list, find something they have on their "wants" list that you can send them for it, and boom, the trade is on.

I quickly found out that there are a lot of people out there with Midnight Sun Brewing Company beers on their "wants" lists. I had a niche, baby! A veritable trading gold mine! You could (and still can) get nearly any beer in the world using Midnight Sun as ammunition, especially seasonals and special releases. But before I set anything up, a wave of doubt hit me. This is the internet for god sake! This isn't safe! How can I trust a random person in Joliet, Illinois to ship their box! It could be anyone just sending nothing and pillaging my beer for free! Well, it turns out there is a pretty good system for keeping traders honest. Trading Etiquette dictates that each member keeps a list of all the good traders they have traded with, vouching for their honesty in doing so. So the key for a new trader is to find someone experienced, with a long trading list and check their references. If the people they've traded with vouch for them on their own lists, which they nearly always do, chances are they are a good trader. Now that you have found a reliable trader, it is up to you to ship your end of the deal. Etiquette calls for new traders to ship first, since they have no traders list to vouch for them, but once you're off and running with a traders list of your own, it's a whole new ballgame. As long as you check your trader's references, it is highly unlikely that you'll get burned (I never have, and it's rare that anyone does.)



It was at this point that things got serious. A few months into trading I had discovered some of the classics out there that don't make it to Alaska. Bell's, Founder's, Russian River, Ballast point, Portsmouth, Smuttynose, Kuhnhenh, Surly, Alesmith, Green Flash, Terrapin, and more. If you want to know what the hottest and most sought after beer on the market in America is today, simply look at the trading forums. You will see hundreds of beer geeks clamoring to get their share of whatever is being released this week in the world. I was getting a box once every two weeks or so from places all over the world with new and exciting beers inside. Every weekend my living room looked like someone threw a hand grenade into a shipping supplies store. The dog lying in piles of bubble wrap. Cardboard boxes stacked up on all the furniture. The smell of packaging tape adhesive thick in the air, and hundreds of bottles of beer scattered around in little organized piles. "Mother of God," I thought, "what have I created?"

I had become an addict. This is the burden that comes with trading beer. It is much easier to get started than it is to stop, and it is certainly not the cheapest of habits. Shipping a box full of beer is relatively expensive no matter which way you go. There are a few things someone new to trading MUST be informed of. Technically, shipping beer privately is illegal. So is jaywalking. The Post Office (USPS) is definitely the cheapest way, especially now with flat rate boxes. However, some traders are quite paranoid of using a government agency (God knows why, everyone knows you can trust the government!) in fear that some fat-backed postal dictator will hunt them down like a beast and fine them 10 dollars. This may be a legitimate fear, but for the 2 or 3 horror stories I've heard over the years about losing a shipment because it's confiscated, I've seen and completed hundreds of successful trades using USPS. I do, however, always make sure to have an excuse ready if they ask what's inside my box. "My mother trades antique china." "My friend is a photographer; it's full of fragile camera parts." "I collect 80s TV show coffee mugs." The more specific the better, because after a while the clerks will begin to recognize your face, and you can only send so many boxes of homemade jelly out before it becomes suspicious. But in the end, the worst that can happen is losing a shipment to confiscation, which is extremely rare. If you should happen to desire a safer route nonetheless, the trader can always pay a little extra (roughly \$1.50 per lb) for the convenience, speed, and apathetic law enforcement of FedEx or UPS.

While we're on shipping, it is also quite frowned upon to package your beer unsafely. The apt trader wants to ensure a safe arrival, and learns quickly the methods of bombproof packaging. If you are not confident your box can be drop-kicked out the back of a truck by a disgruntled postal worker with a monster hangover and divorce papers on the dash, then it is not packaged safely enough. Traders are responsible for replacing their counterpart with any bottles that break during shipment, and beyond that, there is no better way to get busted by the post office than to have 22 ounces of beer soak through the bottom of your box. Package well, and be safe instead of sorry. Wrap each bottle in bubble wrap individually. An extra \$2 of bubble wrap is a lot cheaper than shipping more beer to replace broken ones. Some traders like to put their bottles in Ziploc bags as well, just in case of breakage, no liquid will soak through the box. It's also a good idea to stuff the box full of crumpled newspaper so the bottles won't roll around or bang into each other. Ideally, one would ship each box with Styrofoam bottle shippers, but these can be tough to get a hold of, although they do show up from time to time.

The next, and much happier, tidbit of etiquette is that of extras. It is customary (though not required) to add a bottle or two of beer to each trade that is not part of the trade itself. These are known as "extras", and they make each trade just that much more exciting. Not everyone adds extras, but most find that it is a good way to both surprise the recipient, and to add a little of your own zest to the box. To put in things they don't necessarily want, but you think they should try. Extras are fun, and after all, that's what this is all about isn't it?

One final suggestion is to make sure to continue supporting your local breweries and bottle shops. To lose sight of this is to condemn the craft beer movement. Trading can sneak up on you, and really bring you into another world. Without local support of breweries and bottle shops no one would have anything to trade at all. And although breweries like Midnight Sun are some of the best trading ammo available, any beer geek should be more thankful they have incredible local beers to drink any day of the week than they are for any damn trade fodder.

So, after a couple years of hardcore trading, I have slowed down a bit. Most of my trading now is to re-up on some of the classics I love from out of state. Keep the cellar verticals of Bourbon County Stout and Dark Lord going, and visit Firestone Walker's anniversary series each year, etc. Now that I am well established as a trader I like to fly under the radar and just trade with old buddies for beers like these, and the occasional new release. Some of my best beer geek friends I met in the trading world, and the general awesomeness of the people is really what makes it go 'round. It's great fun to be there at the front lines of the trading forum for a little while, always searching for the next white whale, and doing the pee-pee dance when it shows up on your doorstep, but it's a madhouse my friends. The world of beer trading is exploding with the rest of the craft beer world. It can be frustrating, it will be time consuming, it will be expensive, and it will be addicting. But with great effort, comes great reward. Every liquor store and brewery in the world handpicked and delivered to your doorstep. In the world of the serious beer geek, there aren't many rewards greater than that.

Snow Goose Break-Up LAST CALL

By Dan Bosch

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

This competition is only open to the following BJCP categories:

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



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

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

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

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

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

DIMOND LIQUOR



Q&A with Joe Michael

by Joe Michael

Continuing my ongoing series of Q&A style interviews with GNBC members and Alaska craft brewers, I thought it would be nice to compliment this month's "Beer Trippin'" event with a Talkeetna twist! Lisa Lamb was last year's competition winner with her Apricot American Wheat, and Boe Barnett is not only the Head Brewer at Talkeetna's Denali Brewing Company, but also a fellow GNBC club member as well. Both gave us a moment of their time to allow us all to get to know them better. For those that missed last month's Q&A, check out the newsletter archived for February and catch up! Enjoy! ~Joe Michael, Vice-Prez.

GNBC Homebrewer Profile: Lisa Lamb

Questions: How long have you been a homebrewer?

About 3 years. I wanted to understand more about the process and what makes something good or not good. I love the process of using 4 basic ingredients to turn out wildly different products and all the chemistry involved in the process.

What is the first homebrew you ever attempted? How did it turn out?

This first one was an extract pale ale. It was ok, but otherwise not anything very interesting. OK was about as good as I could say it was.

What is your favorite style to homebrew?

I like to brew things I like so I end up with things on the lighter end as far as ABV and more balanced or malty than hop-forward. I really prefer the noble hops (Hallertau, Tettnang, etc). I love wheat-based beer, but am not a big fan of banana overtones, so I generally will trade out some of the Hefe yeasts for something different.

What is your least favorite style to homebrew (or something you may never brew again)?

I'm just not a big fan of the Alpha hops. I can appreciate about 2 – 4 ounces of an IPA style, but that's about it.

What is your preferred method of homebrewing (extract, all-grain, etc)?

I don't think I have a preference. It's been more driven by what looks interesting recipe-wise.

What is the strangest thing you have ever brewed or fermented?

Kerri Canepa and I made a Roggenbier that was wonderful. The rye gave it some terrific character but the ABV was pretty low and it was very drinkable. That ran out really fast, and I'd like to make it again.

Is there something you would like to attempt to brew that you have not yet tried?

I'd like to make a Russian Imperial Stout....an Old Rasputin clone. I'd also like to try making a mead with lemon and basil. It just sounds good. I don't know if it would turn out as good as I think it might, but it would be an interesting experiment.

What is the strangest/kitchiest/most unique or interesting item relating to beer or homebrewing that you own?

My beer related "stuff" is pretty pedestrian. Jim has a collection of somewhere in the neighborhood of 3,000 beer mugs and he keeps bringing more home, so I guess I have "stuff" vicariously.

Alaskan summers, winters, or fall?

It's all good. It's like living in two different places without having to move. However, there might be nothing better than sitting in a lawn chair outside the motor home, near a stream, with or without a book, with a refreshing beverage, and nowhere to be or nothing specific to accomplish.

What is in your "desert island six pack"?

Old Rasputin, MSBC Cosmic, Moose's Tooth Hard Apple Ale, Alaskan Wit or Summer (kind of interchangeable), MSBC Kodiak Brown, New Galarus Raspberry Tart, Spaten Oktoberfest, Czechvar, Denali Agave Gold..... I think that might be more than six, but if you are the creative type, math-wise, you could get there.....

What is your “I’m slummin’ it” beer?

St. Pauli Girl or Michelob Dark probably. Last year, I was in a restaurant in Oklahoma and they were so proud to serve seven different beers, all of the Coors, Coors Light, Bud, Bud Light, variety. I gave the nice young man a blank look until he said “We have something seasonal from Samuel Adams”. I asked what it was and he had no idea, but I drank it anyway.

What is your proudest moment or achievement in homebrewing so far?

It’s always wonderful when someone likes your beer, regardless of what formal recognition there is. However, by far the biggest highlight has been Kerri and my Apricot American Wheat being selected for the first Talkeetna Beer Trippin’ winner. I thought it was a good beer, but there are wonderful brewers in the GNBC, so it was a complete surprise. We also came in second in Humpy’s Big Fish side challenge a couple years ago and lost out to something with a more interesting name. My favorite beer t-shirt is from that event. Although I think this year’s Beer Trippin’ t-shirt is going to give it a run for its money.

Alaska Professional Craft Brewer Profile: Boe Barnett, Denali Brewing Company

Questions:

How long have you been a brewer?

I was a homebrewer for ten years before starting Denali Brewing Company, which I’ve been at for almost two years now.

What is the first brew you ever attempted? How did it turn out?

The first commercial brew I ever attempted was the first scaled-up version of our Mother Ale. We had a pretty bad stuck mash that first day out of the gate, and we ended up with a beer that was much lighter than what we were shooting for. We called it Extra Pale Virgin Ale. We sold five hundred gallons in seven days, so I guess it did the job.

What is your favorite style to brew?

I have always leaned toward British ales. If I had to nail down a style, I’d say English Summer Ale or milds and bitters.

What is your least favorite style to brew (or something you may never brew again)

I will probably never brew with lavender again. Or if I do I won’t let people know I’ve brewed with it!

What is your preferred method of homebrewing (extract, all-grain, etc)?

I started as an extract brewer, but after a couple of years, I was getting bored with it. I had read Papazian cover to cover at least a dozen times, and I finally decided to try all-grain. Eventually I was brewing an all-grain batch of ale pretty much every day. Needless to say, my friends were very happy.

What is the strangest thing you have ever brewed or fermented?

I once homebrewed a pale that I hopped with Labrador tea. When fermented, Labrador tea apparently has magic side effects. Unfortunately, we had no flashback-worthy experience while drinking that beer, but the bitterness and flavor were...interesting.



Is there something you would like to attempt to brew that you have not yet tried?

I would love to brew an easy drinking export style lager with an addition of coffee. I once had a beer of this style at the Wynkoop Brewery in Denver. It was the most unique session beer I've ever had. Crisp yet malty with a bright coffee character that took you by surprise in such a light colored beer. I'll never forget it.

What is the strangest/kitchiest/most unique or interesting item relating to beer or homebrewing that you own?

I learned to homebrew in Fairbanks, in this little cabin we lived in for years down in the very depths of the Goldstream Valley. I spent pretty much an entire summer one year chiseling through permafrost at the rate of an inch or two a day, until I was four feet down. I then enclosed this space with plywood as well as I could and would lager in and dispense from that hole in the ground. It inevitably would fill with water as the frost around it melted, causing the kegs and carboys to float, but it worked pretty darned well. My wife dubbed it the Permarator.

Alaskan summers, winters, or fall?

Summers, of course! You can brew out on the deck.

What is in your "desert island six pack"?

Oh wow, the chance to finally assemble this most hallowed of all the mixed-packs! Thanks GNBC! Here it is: Ommegang Witte, Bateman's Combined Harvest, Brooklyn Lager, Sierra Nevada Summerfest, Fuller's London Porter, Ommegang Three Philosophers.

What is your "I'm slummin' it" beer?

I don't mind a nice-cold can of Coors on a hot day.

What is your proudest moment or achievement in homebrewing or craft brewing so far?

That would have to be winning the People's Choice Award at the Mighty Matanuska Brewfest last year. The win gave Denali Brewing Company the opportunity to brew the official beer for this year's state fair, which is a big deal for a small brewery like ours.

Where do you see yourself in the world of craft brewing in 5-10 years?

Oh boy, that's tough. I guess I'd have to say I'm pretty stoked by the crew of folks we've been able to assemble here at the brewery. We now have two solid assistant brewers (neither of whom had any brewing experience whatsoever before I taught them the basics and who are taking those skills and becoming better brewers all the time) and several others who help out with everything from sales to kegging to office work to driving our new delivery truck. My future in the craft beer world will be decided more than anything else by what these guys are able to accomplish. A brewery is a tough place in which to hole up and be singular. You are only as successful as the people with whom you surround yourself. That said, it would be nice to be making a little money in five years!



National Homebrew Day, aka “The Big Brew”, aka “Brew-a-thon”

by *Tim Strayer*

It's that time of year again when brew clubs across the entire United States (and locations around the world) celebrate their passion for beer by joining together for a day of brewing.

Beginning in 1988, the United States Congress recognized the first Saturday in May as National Homebrew Day. The American Homebrewers Association created “Big Brew” as an annual event to celebrate National Homebrew Day. Big Brew has been held every year since this formal declaration by Congress, and the Great Northern Brewers continues to celebrate this history as well by holding an event we call “Brew-A-Thon”. This event also provides the opportunity for experienced homebrewers to share hands-on knowledge with those who desire to learn for the first time, or improve their current skills.

Editor's Note: GNBC actually started conducting its annual Brewathon somewhere between 1993 and 1995. The club was informally challenged by a rival homebrew club in Phoenix called Brewmeister's Anonymous. Jim Roberts (Fermento) was president of the Club back then and had attended a homebrew club meeting in Phoenix while down there on business back then. It was then that the gauntlet was thrown down. The first year, the Club collectively brewed 440 gallons of beer. During those formative years, the club actually tracked consumption as well, and at that first brewathon, members collective consumed 115 gallons of beer. There was so much fire and propane at the host's house that someone called the fire department and at 11:30 pm they came over and declared that there was way too much propane and open flame in one small area for safety. As soon as they left, we brewed on. The last brew was finished at 12:30 in the morning. I personally brewed three 10 gallon batches of beer that day.

Brew-A-Thon will be held at John and Rose Craig's house (the same place it has been held for the last 10 years), located at 8757 Jade Street. The ceremonial toast and brewing kickoff will take place at 9:00 a.m. and last until John kicks us out. However, if you will be providing brewing equipment, please arrive at 8:00 a.m. to allow enough time for setup. Thank you in advance to John and Rose for providing the wonderful brewing grounds!

We will have several brewing stations available for those that don't have equipment, but want to brew. A signup sheet will be at Arctic Brewing Supply (ABS) during the month of April. You can brew under the guidance of an experienced brewer or an experienced brewer can choose to donate their equipment and/or demonstrate actual brewing, and, of course you can just show up to observe as well. We will have stations brewing with both extract and all-grain. If you are unable to make it over to signup, please send me an email at tim@strayermail.com and I can sign you up.

Here is the scoop on food and drink: All brewers should bring samples of their own homebrew to share. It's a great opportunity to get some feedback on your brews. The club will be providing various grilled meats and some beverages, but we do request that those who come bring a large portion of your favorite dish (with the necessary serving utensils) to share.

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

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



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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: Tuesday March 15th, 2011
7 pm at the Goose**