



# THE Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB

MARCH 2012

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## Prez Sez

*By Tim Strayer*

A hhhh...now that felt good. I finally got back to getting my brew on! I managed to crank out about 20 gallons over the past month: a hoppy wheat, a gluten free, and a winter warmer. I still have plans for a stout, barleywine, DIPA, and eventually my first lager.



About 6 months ago I attempted to make a clone of Kentucky Breakfast Stout from Founders Brewing in Michigan – full of coffee, chocolate, cocoa nibs, and oak. Unfortunately for me, it was a little too much oak...ok WAY too much oak. So, I have this super oaky beer just waiting to be blended with a good stout. Those little oak chips can pack a punch. My personal recommendation: soak them in your favorite whiskey for a few days (or years)...but only use 2-3 chips per gallon of brew at most – not the whole bag! And be sure to remove them once you are getting the desired result. It takes less time than you would imagine.

I also managed to get my 1 year old, still in the box, Beer Gun set up and working like a charm. There are lots of ways to get beer in the bottle, but this is by far my personal favorite.

Our February meeting had a record attendance of new members – at least that I can recall. I think there must have been at least 15 or more. Welcome to the Club! Remember, that were all here to help each other brew better beer. In that spirit take a look at this month's Top 10 article. These are just a few helpful hints to brew better beer.

If you are not aware of the Better Beer Show with Kathy Phillips, you are missing out. It broadcasts from 3-5 p.m. every Saturday on 750AM and 103.7FM. She has a list of amazing guests and topics, including yours truly from time to time.

Talkeetna Beer Trippin' gets bigger and better every year, many thanks to Joe, Jim, and Denali Brewing for organizing this great event. And as always – read this month's article for details!

Dennis Sessler will be emailing information very soon about the next club brew and distribution of the current brews back to the original owners. Hopefully you got a taste of those at the January meeting – nothing quite like a good RIS on oak to make you smile! For you new members, this is a great opportunity to meet new members and be a part of something incredibly fun. Details coming soon...

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Speaking of fun, the annual House Crawl is on again! See this month's article for details, but important stuff: register early and consider volunteering your home and brew as a stop.

The coming months are jammed pack full of amazing beer events, so be sure to watch this newsletter, our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/gnbc1](http://www.facebook.com/gnbc1), and your email for updates.

Ok, get off of the computer, go get brewing, bring samples to the meetings, and submit your goods to all of the upcoming competitions.

Stay warm and brew strong!

Flame out.....

Prez



## **Second Call for the 2012 Snow Goose Break-up Competition**

*by Dan Bosch*

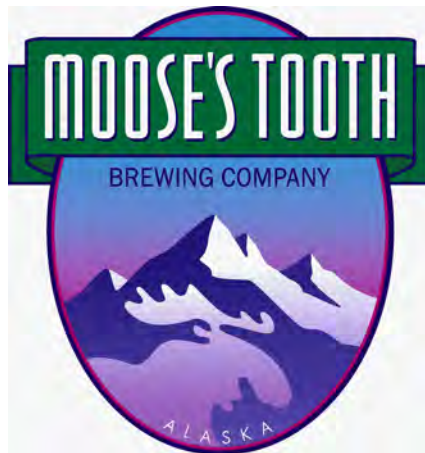
**T**his is the first call 2012 Snow Goose Break-up Home Brew Competition. Mark your calendars and start brewing for April 7<sup>th</sup>, which is the first Saturday in April. The **ONLY** BJCP categories open to the Break-up competition are: dark lagers (category 4), light hybrids (category 6), bock (category 5), Scottish and Irish ale (category 9), India pale ale (category 14) Fruit Beers (category 20).

This year's brewer's challenge a SMaSH (single malt and single hop) beer. This is the same challenge as last year and it proved to be the most popular flight. All grain brewers should make their challenge beer out of base malt alone, and one hop variety. Extract brewers are similarly delegated using one extract and one hop. We had some great SMASH beers last year and those of you who read last year's wrap-up already know that this same challenge was established last year. I would love to see some well aged barley wine SMaSH beers, or a nicely aged old ale (either English or American).

Once again this year's "Brewers Choice," may not be the overall "Best of Show (BOS)"

in this BJCP sanctioned event, but it will be chosen by the head brewer at the Snow Goose and the BOS panel. The Brewers Choice award will be served at the Snow Goose this summer, so it must conform to some criteria. It must be a quick turn-around beer for brewing economy, so a beer ready to go from kettle to tap in several weeks. For the brewer of the Brewer's Choice, this is a chance to work with the pros at Snow Goose, as you can help them expand your recipe from your home brewing system with a capacity measured in gallons to the Snow Goose system measured in barrels. I don't know about you, but I would sell my soul to the devil for a chance like this. The Brewers Choice will most likely be ale – even though a lager may win the BOS. If the stars align and brewing gods smile upon you the BOS and Brewers Choice may be one and the same.

Any questions? You can call Dan at 907-344-2335.



## Secretary's Corner

by Julie McDonald

**Last Meeting: February 21, 2012**

It's March, and that means that Tim and I are in Hawaii for the month. But I'll be keeping the Club's Facebook page active while there.

As for the February meeting, I didn't get to it, so I have no detailed notes of what transpired. However I'm sure that the majority of the info presented at the meeting can be found in this newsletter somewhere. So, be sure to read it from cover to cover.

**Next meeting: Snowgoose Basement, March 20, 2012, 7 pm.** Get there early to socialize and help set up. Member duties break down like this: A-J Food, K - P Set-up, R - Z Clean-up

# EVENTS

Every First Thursday  
*Moose's Tooth First Tap*

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

20.....GNBC Club Meeting at the Goose  
7 PM: In the Basement

30 - 1.....GNBC Beer Trippin' Event in  
Talkeetna: Winter Camp Out

7.....Snow Goose Breakup Homebrew  
Competition  
10 AM In the Basement

17.....GNBC Club Meeting at the Goose  
7 PM in the Basement

19.....GNBC House Crawl  
Noon - 7:30

## CAFE



# AMSTERDAM

## MISCELLANEOUS:

TAP (Training for Alcohol Professionals)

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

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

03/03	Saturday	11:00am
03/05	Monday	9:00am
03/06	Tuesday	1:00pm
03/13	Tuesday	5:30pm
03/15	Thursday	1:00pm
03/19	Monday	1:00pm
03/21	Wednesday	5:30pm
03/27	Tuesday	9:00am
03/28	Wednesday	1:00pm

· 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*

## Monthly Member Beer Dinners

· **February Beer Dinner – Theme: Belgo Cookbook** - What a great night this was. We posted some pix on Facebook if you'd like to see everything. Basically it broke down like this:

We started with some welcome beverages provided by our host and Barb Yanoshek. Then we moved on in this order:

1. Mussels: Georgy - Moules Espagnole paired with Radeberger Pilsner
2. Mussels: Breck - "Moules Pastis" served with Hoegaarden Wit
3. Soup: The Lambs – cream of Belgian endive soup paired with Ommegang's Three Philosophers
4. Main Course : The Strayers - "Filet de Porc a' la Westmalle Dubbel" paired with Westmalle Dubbel
5. Main Course: The Schmitts - "Carbonade Flamande" paired with Avery's The Reverend
6. Dessert: The McDonalds - "Belgo Tower of Babel" miniaturized to individual serving sizes, paired with Ommegang's Three Philosophers.

Between The Lambs and The McDonalds we had a seven year vertical of Three Philosophers that went back to 2005.

· Coming up in March we have another fantastic dinner planned, being hosted by the Trapps. The theme is Food on a Stick. That's right, all courses must be prepared/served on a stick of choice. There are no beer challenges for this particular dinner. I also want to note that this dinner filled up in less than 3 hours!

· Stay tuned for information to come out regarding our April dinner sometime in the middle of this month.

· We also have May hosts ready to go! If you are interested in hosting June let me know and we'll pencil you in.

· If you aren't already a member of our beer dinner group you can contact Juzy@gci.net for more information or to be put on the GNBC beer dinner email list

That's all I have for you this month. Remember to read the rest of this newsletter to find out what's going on in the club (Beer Trippin', Brew-a-thon, House Crawl?). Aloha!

# Top 10 Tips for New or Improving Brewers

**By Julie McDonald**

*President's Note: I thought I would steal this list of Top 10 tips for new or improving homebrewers from our website – I think this came from our wonderful secretary Mrs. Julie McDonald. There are many great tips, but these are the basics, and even then some people have varying techniques.*

1. Do Homework/Research – Read up on the styles, ingredients, techniques. Get a homebrewing program like Pro-Mash or BeerSmith. Take notes throughout and after fermentation.
2. Use quality, fresh ingredients – fresh ingredients make better homebrew.
3. Keep It Clean – Anything that touches our beer after it has started cooling must be sanitized using any of the popular sanitizing solutions (bleach, iodophor, etc). The period immediately after we cool our beer is particularly critical as bacteria and other infections are most likely to take hold before the yeast has started fermentation. Note: never use bleach on stainless steel!
4. Boil for 60-90 Minutes – It sterilizes our wort, vaporizes many undesirable compounds, releases bittering oils from the hops and coagulates proteins and tannins from the grains so they can fall out during cooling. To achieve all of these we need to boil for at least 60 minutes, and for lighter styles of beers a longer boil of 90 minutes is recommended.
5. Switch to a Full Batch Boil – Boiling all of our wort will benefit our beer. If we are only boiling 2-3 gallons of a 5 gallon batch, then we are not getting the full benefits of a 60-90 minute boil. The purchase of a 7-12 gallon brew pot and outdoor propane burner are great steps for moving to all-grain brewing and a full boils will improve our beer.
6. Cool the Wort Quickly – Cooling our beer quickly will increase the fallout of proteins and tannins that are bad for our beer and will also reduce the chance of infection. An immersion wort chiller is an inexpensive investment that will improve the clarity and quality of our beer.
7. Use Glass Fermenters – Glass carboys (or stainless) fermenters offer significant advantages over the plastic bucket. First they are much easier to clean and sterilize. Second, glass (or stainless) provides a 100% oxygen barrier, where plastic buckets are porous and can leak oxygen if stored for long periods. Third, plastic fermenters often have very poor seals around the top of the bucket and can leak in both directions making it hard to know when fermentation is complete.
8. Make a Yeast Starter – pitching from a tube or packet of liquid yeast is OK, but our beer will ferment better if we make a yeast starter first. Boil up a small amount of dried malt extract in a quart of water with 1/4 oz of hops. Cool it well and then pitch our yeast into it 2-3 days before we brew. Cover with foil or an airlock and place it in a cool, dark location. On brew day, pitching your starter will result in a quicker start and less risk of infection or off flavors. Consider buying and reading the book "Yeast" by Chris White.
9. Control Fermentation Temperature – Though few of us have dedicated fermentation refrigerators, there are methods we can use to maintain a constant temperature for ales during fermentation. A great technique is to pick a cool, dry area in our homes and then wrap the fermentor in wet towels and place a fan in front of it. Wet the towels every 12 hours or so, and we should get a steady fermentation temperature in the 66-68F range. Most homebrew stores sell stick-on thermometers that can be attached to our carboys to monitor the temperature. Always know your yeast and its temperature range for optimal results.
10. Make Long Term Purchases – We may have started brewing with an off-the-shelf kit, but if we enjoy brewing then we are best off making long term purchases rather than a series of short term purchases. Go from that 3 gallon pot to a 9 gallon pot, instead of making incremental size purchases over several years. It's less expensive in the long run.

# 2012 Home Brewer of the Year Categories

by *Tim Strayer*

**B**elow you will find the list of BJCP Categories that will garner points towards the coveted Home Brewer of the Year. A traveling trophy is awarded to the homebrewer who throughout the year accumulates the most points. This Award is presented at the January GNBC club meeting which coincides with the Great Alaskan Beer and Barley Wine Festival club meeting.

Here is the run down on how points will be scored:

Each Category has several sub categories, **only** your highest scoring entry per category will be awarded points. This will minimize the shot gunning affect.

Points will be awarded as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> -6 points

2<sup>nd</sup> -4 points

3<sup>rd</sup> -2 points

If your HBOY entry wins Best of Show you will earn another 2 points

## Fur Rondy Home Brew Competition

Category            Name

7            Amber Hybrid Beer

10           American Ale

13           Stout

15           German Wheat and Rye Beer

18           Belgian Strong Ale

23           Specialty Beer

\* Side Challenge    \*\*\*Gluten Free Beer\*\*\* (Double Points)

Sponsoring Brewery- Kassiks Brewing Co.

## Snow Goose Break -Up Home Brew Competition

Category            Name

4            Dark Lager

6            Light Hybrid Beer

5            Bock

9            Scottish and Irish Ale

14           India Pale Ale (IPA)

20           Fruit Beer

\* Side Challenge    \*\*\*Brewers Challenge\*\*\* (Double Points)

Sponsoring Brewery- Sleeping Lady Brewery

## Anchor Town Invitational Home Brew Competition

Category            Name

1            Light Lager

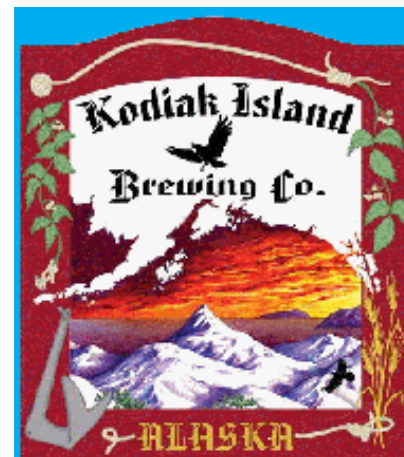
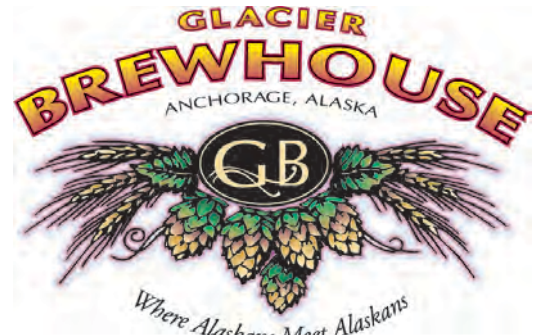
2            Pilsner

3            European Amber Lager

11           English Brown Ale

16           Belgian and French Ale

21           Spice/Herb/Vegetable Beer



### Equinox Mead Competition

Category	Name
24	Traditional Mead
25	Melomel (Fruit Mead)
26	Other Mead
27	Standard Cider and Perry
28	Specialty Cider and Perry

Sponsoring Meadery-Celestial Meadery and Alaska Cider Co.

### Humpy's Big Fish Home Brew Competition

Category	Name
8	English Pale Ale
12	Porter
17	Sour Ale
19	Strong Ale
22	Smoke Flavored/Wood Aged Beer

\*Side Challenge \*\*\* Schmitt Challenge \*\*\* (Double Points)  
Sponsoring Brewery-Midnight Sun Brewing Co.

Keep in mind that with exception to the Snow Goose Spring Break-Up Competition and the Equinox Mead Competition all the other competitions are open to all 28 BJCP categories. But only these preselected categories plus the side challenges will garner points in this year long competition. Also keep in mind that every competition except the Anchor Town Invitational has the added bonus that your home brewed beer or mead could be brewed professionally by one of our sponsoring breweries/meadery.

So now that the criteria have been set let's get those winning recipes formulated and get brewing. The first competition (Fur Rondy) is just around the corner on February 11th. All style guidelines can be found on the BJCP website at <http://www.bjcp.org/2008styles/catdex.php>



### 2012 Homebrewer of The Year Categories

#### Fur Rendezvous HBC

- Category 7
- Category 10
- Category 13
- Category 15
- Category 18
- Category 23

#### Snow Goose HBC

- Category 4
- Category 5
- Category 6
- Category 9
- Category 14
- Category 20

#### Anchor Town HBC

- Category 1
- Category 2
- Category 3
- Category 11
- Category 16
- Category 21

#### Equinox Mead HBC

- Category 24
- Category 25
- Category 26
- Category 27
- Category 28

#### Humpy's Big Fish HBC

- Category 8
- Category 12
- Category 17
- Category 19
- Category 22
- Side Challenge

# Happy Birthday, John Craig

by Jim Roberts

If there's one true Great Northern Brewer's Homebrew Club icon, it's club member John Craig. Although John didn't invent the club, he certainly represents the staying power of our institution that's over a quarter of a century old. John's presence and contribution to the club are both warming and legendary. John Craig turned 70 years young this year and I'd like you all to join me in extending him a hearty Happy Birthday!

I first met John in 1990 when I started homebrewing. Back then he may have been a bit more nimble, but his spirit has never changed since the day he first brightened my life. I remember being welcomed



into his Jade Street Brewery as a total stranger, literally with John's open arms. As a new club member, John made sure I was treated with royalty that day. I'm sure it was then that I was first exposed to some of John's legendary smoke beer. John's exuberance for the love of life and especially his love of his beloved suds overflows any time anyone's in his presence. John embodies the true Alaskan homebrewing experience.

In earlier years, the party never started until John rolled up in his legendary Suds van. He'd open the side door and out would pour his dog Beer Can Crunch. Things would instantly liven up, just as they do today whenever John walks into the room.

And, the man can dance! When he's on the dance floor at any of our club functions such as the annual Christmas party, give him



some room! Where I'm embarrassed to bust a move with my lanky frame, John gets lost in his own happy world and will grab you and suck you in with him if you're nearby. And, John's the only person I know that can do a summersault with a pint of beer in his hand and not spill a drop. Just for the record, he did this in Mark and Pat Ryan's living room on their paper-white carpet. It wasn't intentional, but he did it with grace and aplomb and is probably the only person that could get away with such a thing.

John's a gracious host and has opened his Jade Street Beer Gardens for our annual GNBC Brewathon in May for years and years. I think the man's probably judged more homebrew than I've ever made.

John's contribution to the spirit of the Great Northern Brewer's Club is beyond quantification. He's got over 30 years invested in this gig and he's still going strong. Next time you see him, be sure to give him a big hug and buy him a pint! Happy Birthday, John!







## 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

## 2012 Fur Rondy HBC Results

by Dennis Sessler

### Category Gluten Free Beer (Side Challenge)

1 Tim Strayer "Best Gluten Free Beer"  
 2 Andrew Janco  
 3 Matt Wallace

### Category: AMBER HYBRID BEER

1 Brian Walters

### Category: AMERICAN ALE

1 Steven Jayich American Pale Ale  
 2 David Short American Pale Ale  
 3 Tlyer Doil, Doug Griffin,  
 Chuck Crew American Pale Ale

### Category: BELGIAN AND FRENCH ALE

2 Ted Donat Witbier

### Category: BELGIAN STRONG ALE

1 Steve Jayich Belgian Tripel  
 2 Matt Wallace Belgian Dubbel  
 3 Dan Bosch Belgian Dark Strong Ale



**Category: DARK LAGER**

1 Tyler Doil, Doug Griffin, Schwarzbier (Black Beer) "Kassiks Choice"  
Chuck Crew Munich Dunkel  
2 Breck Tostevin

**Category: ENGLISH BROWN ALE**

1 Charlie Gillespie Northern English Brown

**Category: ENGLISH PALE ALE**

1 Dan Bosch Extra Special/Strong Bitter (English Pale Ale)

**Category: EUROPEAN AMBER LAGER**

1 Breck Tosevin Oktoberfest/Marzen

**Category: INDIA PALE ALE (IPA)**

1 Ryan Fowler American IPA "Best of Show Beer"  
2 Steven Kunemund American IPA

**Category: LIGHT HYBRID BEER**

1 Sarah Pace, Roy Pace American Wheat or Rye Beer  
2 Matt Wallace Blonde Ale

**Category: PORTER**

2 Shawn Plew, Tim Bisson Robust Porter  
3 Tyler Doil, Doug Griffin, Brown Porter  
Chuck Crew

**Category: SPECIALTY BEER**

2 Ryan Fowler Specialty Beer  
3 Dan Bosch Specialty Beer

**Category: SPICE/HERB/VEGETABLE BEER**

2 Tyler Doil, Doug Griffin, Christmas/Winter Specialty Spiced Beer  
Chuck Crew

**Category: STOUT**

1 Charlie Gillespie Russian Imperial Stout  
2 Steven Jayich Oatmeal Stout  
3 David Short Russian Imperial Stout



**Category: STRONG ALE**

1 Charlie Gillespie                      English Barleywine  
2 Matt Wallace                             American Barleywine

**Category: MELOMEL (FRUIT MEAD)**

1 John Trapp                                Other Fruit Melomel                      “Best Of Show Mead and Cider”

**Category: SPECIALTY CIDER AND PERRY**

1 Dan Bosch                                 Other Specialty Cider

**Category: STANDARD CIDER AND PERRY**

1 Dan Bosch                                 Common Cider

**Category: TRADITIONAL MEAD**

1 John Trapp                                Semi-Sweet Mead



## Minimalist All Grain Brewing (or, how I learned to stop worrying and Love homebrewing)

by *Matt Wallace*

NOTE: This is an updated and expanded version of an article that originally appeared in the newsletter a year ago.

For the last year or so, I've been using a brewing method that lets me brew high quality all-grain batches with cheap, minimal equipment, little cleanup, and with considerably less time and effort than traditional all grain brewing. It's a no-frills approach pioneered lately by Australian homebrewers under the heading Brew-In-A-Bag (BIAB). A fuller description might be "No Sparge, No Chill, Single Vessel All Grain Brewing". I just call it minimalist all-grain brewing.

Here's a basic outline of the process for a batch:

- 1) Heat ALL of the water for your batch to strike temperature, and turn off the heat.
- 2) Put your grains in a mesh bag, add it to the water, stir and cover. Let it do its thing. Then heat it up to 168F or so for a mash-out.
- 3) Pull the grains (careful, they're heavy), and let them drain into the pot for a bit. And squeeze the hell out of the bag. This is what you do instead of sparging, and you'll be glad you did.
- 4) Boil as normal.
- 5) Don't bother chilling— Either transfer it to your fermenter or a heat-safe storage container. Or, just cover the brewpot and let it cool (setting it outside is optional, but recommended).
- 6) Transfer/pitch, ferment, and package as usual.

Why bother?

If you've already got your single-tier all electric Recirculating Infusion Mash System and a glycol-jacketed stainless steel conical, there is no good reason. That said, if you're looking to simplify, or even set up a secondary brewing system for brewing in the house during those cold winter days, this might be for you. And, if you are an extract brewer looking to step into all-grain, this is a great method that involves relatively minimal equipment outlay and extra processes to learn.

As for any other brewing method, there are plenty of ways to set this up. What I'll do here is explain my own set-up and try to note other common alternatives that may be out there before delving into some of the obvious (and less obvious) pros and cons. I'll start by breaking down the equipment.

**Heat Source:** BIAB allows me to brew inside in the kitchen, on a regular old electric stove. I think that's pretty convenient, especially in the winter time. That said, there's no reason one couldn't use this method with a conventional gas burner. Some considerations for indoor brewing are managing condensation and dealing with the limited output of most cooking stoves. With the insulated vessel described below, I can heat to strike temperature in 15-20 minutes with hot water out of the tap, and reach mash out and boil in 15 minutes or less.

**Brewing Vessel:** This is a single-vessel system, which means the mash-tun and the brew kettle are the same thing. I use a 32 quart aluminum stock pot, which I got online for \$30, shipped. This kettle size allows me to brew 5 gallon batches of reasonable strength— I estimate that I can fit about 6 gallons of water and 15 pounds of grain into this kettle. There are folks out there that brew 10 gallon BIAB batches, but once you get over about 10-12 pounds of wet grain, it can be a challenge to lift out of the kettle one handed. Bigger set-ups also often employ a pulley system to lift the grain bag and hang it over the brewpot when the mash is complete. In my opinion that undermines some of the advantages of a minimalist brewing set-up.

Since I brew on the stovetop, this is one instance where I think aluminum has the advantage over stainless. Not only is it a lot cheaper, but it conducts heat much better as well. However, to get a full rolling boil, and to ensure stable mash temperatures, it's a good idea to insulate your vessel. I use reflectix brand bubble-wrap insulation, which is available at any big-box hardware store for around \$20 (much more than you need, but I find it comes in handy for fermentation temp control and has other uses as well). I secured the insulation with high-heat tape. You'll also want to leave a couple of inches uninsulated at the bottom and cover the bottom edge of the reflectix with a couple of inches of high heat tape. My first couple brews melted some of the plastic insulation which smelled terrible and left a bit of a mess.

**Grain management:** This is the most complicated bit of the set-up, and consists of 3 pieces: a basket, a bag, and a pizza screen. The **mesh bag** holds the grain. I use 5-gallon paint strainer bags, and just dispose them with every brew. They cost about \$2 in the paint section at most any hardware store. Other folks make their own bags with material from a fabric store, which has some advantages, namely size and customization, but the strainer bags have worked ok for me so far.

The steamer basket and pizza screen are my solution for draining the remaining wort into the brew kettle once the grain bag is lifted out of the vessel. The grain bag sits in the steamer basket during the mash, which is sized to be as large as possible while still fitting in the brewing vessel. Many large stock pots will come with a steamer basket, but I got mine separately for \$20.

The pizza screen is a circular aluminum tray perforated with a bunch of small holes. I got mine at freddies for \$12. It is sized just slightly larger than the brew kettle, so when it's time to remove the grain, I lift the basket containing the grain bag out of the vessel, and with my free hand I slide the pizza screen over the top of the vessel before setting the basket down to squeeze and drain the remaining wort into the kettle. As mentioned above, there are other ways of getting the same result, including hanging from a hook above the brewpot or custom brewstand. After fooling around with a couple of other ideas, I find that this combination provides the easiest handling and best stability with convenient off-the-shelf components.

### **Post Boil/Fermentation:**

My method is to whirlpool in the kettle and then transfer the wort while still hot by siphoning directly into a cornelius keg that I use as a fermenter. Since the wort is above 180f when transferred, sanitation is not a big worry, and I can siphon by just filling the hose with tap water. After transferring, I hit the keg with about 30 psi of CO2 to account for the vacuum created by the wort contracting as it cools. Then I set it outside for a few hours. Generally, the beer is ready to pitch within 24 hours. I aerate using a sanitary air filter attached to an aquarium pump (or bike pump). I'm a big fan of fermenting in corny kegs, and there are enough advantages that it probably deserves an article of its own.

One alternative used by many (most?) BIAB/no chillers is to use Winpack brand plastic jerry cans as intermediate wort storage vessels before transferring/aerating as normal into a carboy or bucket fermenter. They are inexpensive and both food and heat safe.

Anyway, that's basically it. Beyond the obvious benefits of simplicity and ease of use, there are a couple of less obvious advantages I'd like to point out. And of course, nothing's perfect, so I'll also delve a little bit into some potential pitfalls and commonly raised questions.

Advantages:

- **Cheap:** This is one of the obvious ones, but worth pointing out. My entire set-up, sans fermenters and incidentals like hoses and racking canes, cost about \$85.

- **Shorter brew day:** By cutting out the sparge and a lot of messing around with equipment, I can do an all grain batch in less than 5 hours, including set up and tear down. That said, the overall grain-to-glass takes a little longer, since you have to wait for the wort to come down to ambient temps before pitching.

- **Sanitation:** One might think this would fall in the “con” column, considering that one commonly held reason to chill wort quickly is to pitch before undesirable bugs can infect your beer. However, since you are transferring the wort into a sealed fermenter or storage vessel hot, you end up getting the advantage of heat sanitization as well as whatever other method you choose to use. Many no-chillers don't even bother sanitizing their fermenters/storage vessels. I usually run some iodophor through my keg just to be extra safe, since it's easy.

- **Real wort starters:** Since the wort can be stored safely for many days before pitching, it becomes practical to make a starter with some of the actual wort. All you have to do is remove your starter wort from the kettle at the appropriate time during the boil for a good starter gravity. This way you don't have to remember to get your starter going before brewday, or whether the starter wort might affect the flavor of your beer.

- **Easy decoction mashing:** This one only applies to stovetop brewing. Since the other burners are directly next to the brew pot, it becomes a pretty simple matter to do a stepped decoction mash for those authentic german styles.

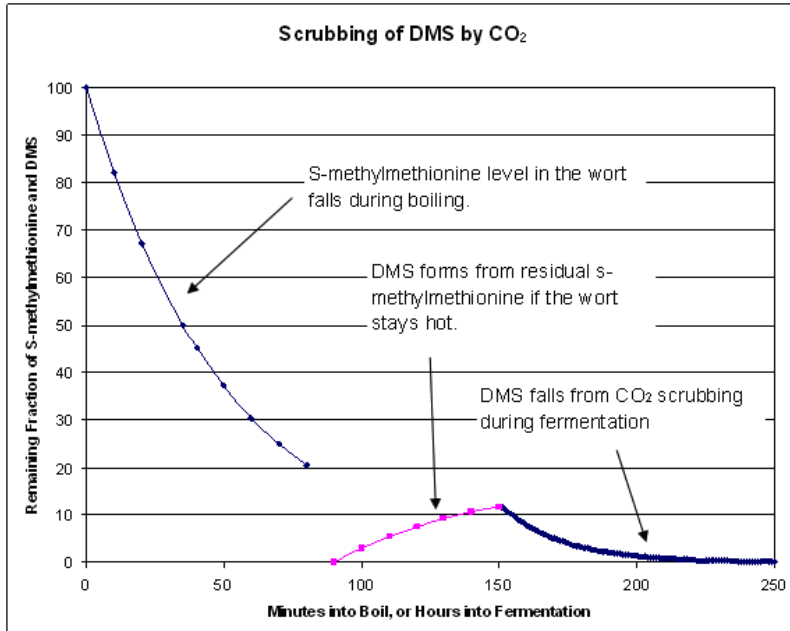
- **Malt Flavor?:** By intentionally lowering the efficiency of the mash, and by essentially only using the “first runnings” of the grain, it's often argued that no-sparge brewing lends a more intense malt flavor profile to the finished beer. This seems to make sense, but I can't speak to the truth of it without trying a side-by-side comparison. Your mileage may vary.

Potential pitfalls:

- **Efficiency:** Cutting out the sparge impacts the efficiency of the mash. That said, I have found a couple of ways to mitigate this potential disadvantage. One is by using a finer grind, since stuck sparges won't be a problem. The trick is finding the right balance between efficiency and potential astringency from finely crushed grains in a thin mash. The other workaround is to squeeze as much wort as possible out of the grain bag into the kettle. My recent mash efficiency has been hovering at just under 80%.

- **Thin mash/high mash pH:** The BIAB method uses a very thin mash, with a ratio of grain to water closer to 1:3 pounds per quart instead of the more usual 1:1.25. This typically results in a higher mash pH, which at least theoretically can lead to undesirable tannin extraction from the grain husks as well as other problems in extreme cases. What to do about it? Well, the role of pH in brewing is a complicated subject, and I'm not the guy to try to explain it— and I haven't personally measured the pH of my mash using this system. That said, the generally recognized acceptable pH range for a mash is between 5.0 and 6.0, with 5.2 to 5.5 being optimal, and several BIABers who DO measure mash pH have reported values anywhere between 5.3 and 5.8, generally well within the acceptable range. And my own experience is that I haven't made a batch that I would consider overly astringent— although it's worth noting that the scoresheets on a blonde ale I recently entered in the Fur Rondy comp did mention astringency as an issue. My opinion is that the grist composition and fineness of the grain crush are at least as important as the thickness of the mash.

- **DMS (Dimethyl Sulfide):** Aside from sanitation, the other commonly held reason to rapidly chill wort is to avoid excessive levels of DMS in the finished beer. DMS is an aroma compound commonly described as having a cooked-corn like character that is present to some degree in all beers, and in some styles is actually a key flavor component (think cream ales and American lagers). DMS is formed during the boil from compounds found in all malted barleys, but is especially prevalent in lightly kilned malts like Pilsner and adjuncts like (not surprisingly) corn. Because it is highly volatile, DMS is both formed but also driven off during the boil (one reason why it's a good idea to not cover the boil kettle). However, at temperatures between 180 and 212, it continues to be formed but not driven off, which could potentially lead to uncharacteristically high levels in the finished beer. I haven't noticed this to be a significant problem in my brews, and even a test brew composed entirely of pilsner malt had a DMS character that has subsided significantly with age. My opinion is that this is mainly a potential problem with pilsner or maize heavy recipes, and even then it's a small one. It can be largely addressed by utilizing a longer boil and encouraging active fermentation. The chart below helps illustrate:



source: picobrewery.com

**- Aroma Hops/Hop Utilization:** Since the wort remains hot for a significant period of time, hop utilization will be different than for quickly chilled brews. That said, the vast majority of craft breweries employ a whirlpool of 30 minutes or more before chilling, and this is not significantly different than what's happening here. Hop utilization can pretty easily be accounted for during recipe formulation, and by adding an aroma hop addition during your own whirlpool, or just before transferring. I also guesstimate that many aroma hop volatiles that might be driven off ultimately fall back into the beer before pitching, since the cooling process occurs in a sealed container. In my personal experience, I haven't noticed it to be a problem. In fact, I don't account for different utilization levels when using other people's recipes, and instead just try to dial in my desired bitterness and aroma through repeat brews and recipe fine tuning.

All in all, I'm very pleased with this set-up and brewing method, and I plan to continue using it for all my homebrewing for the foreseeable future. What downsides there are can be mitigated or avoided through minor process tweaks and recipe formulation. It's cheap, simple, and effective, and I encourage you to give it a try.



# House Crawl 2012

*By Lisa Peltola*

**W**ith Spring just around the corner it is time to get prepared for the annual house crawl. This is a club event that is not to be missed! This year's house crawl is set for Saturday, May 19th. There will be 5 stops and I am looking for volunteers to host a stop along the way. 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. There wasn't a shortage of laughter last year when it came to the various games, just ask anyone who participated. Points are kept for each game throughout the day and the three top scores will be awarded prizes. 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. We will be traveling around Anchorage on a 29 passenger Magic Bus, but there are only 25 spots available so reserve your seat early. The cost will be around \$35 per person. Each year we pick a theme for the day, last year was a Hawaiian theme, I am looking for suggestions for this year. (Prizes will also be awarded for best attire.)

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 Peltola



## Brew like it's 1790!

*By Aaron Christ*

**T**he following is brewer's week as accounted by Johann Ludwig Timotheus Zitzmann in his treatise "Praktishce Anweisung gutes Bier zu brauen" (Practical guide to brewing good beer) published in Coburg, northern Bavaria in 1790. Amounts and measurements have been approximated in modern units (seriously, who wants to deal in Eimer, Malter, Maas, Loth and Pfund??).

It is interesting to note how the hops are steeped for a long time before being added to the boil. There should still be a reasonable amount of isomerization since the second hop addition is likely boiled for an hour or more. Also, the constant moving of wort and boiling water back and forth between vessels makes the whole process look rather tedious, but it does serve the purpose of sanitizing anything that will eventually receive the final wort.

Enjoy the translation.

## **Monday**

Around 2-4PM, fill the kettle with 180 gallons of water, Install the false bottom in the lauter tun, and check all the other kettles in case they need cleaning. Take 16 lbs hops with 3 oz cream of tartar and steep it in 30 gallons boiling water in a covered keg. Here comes the miller with the malt, so I'll put it in the brewhouse. Every 2 hours [from now until 6AM the next morning] I give the hop mixture a good stir. At about midnight, I light the fire under the kettle so that it boils around 4AM

## **Tuesday**

At 4AM I put the 180 gallons water from the kettle in the mash tun, and refill the kettle with as much fresh water as will boil in 2 hours.

Around 5AM, the water in the mash tun has cooled enough so I can now mash in.

Around 6AM, the extra [160-180 gallons of] water are pumped into the mash tun from the bottom while two people mix it with paddles. [This raises the mash temperature] I refill the kettle with 75-90 gallons of water [for the sparge] and heat it. Now is when the brewers can enjoy a breakfast.

After breakfast, I take the hop mixture that has been steeping for 12 hours and put it in the small [secondary] kettle. I start the lauter and when the wort runs clean, I put 60-75 gallons in the small kettle.

Around 8AM, I take the boiled water from the kettle and put it in the coolship for the good beer and leave it until the pouring of the fresh beer. Next, I take about 120 gallons of the light, clear wort from the mash tun in the kettle.

Around 10AM, when the first wort starts to boil I take it and put it in the fermentor. Then I take the rest of the wort, around 120 gallons, and put it in the kettle. About 30 gallons are still in the mash tun, but also 65 gallons are with the hop mixture. The sparge water from the coolship can now be poured on the spent grains in the mash tun [to sparge].

The 120 gallons in the kettle are boiled down to about 90, then I add the first of the hop-mixture and let it boil a little longer.

Around 12PM I take the first boiled wort (around 90 gallons) from the kettle and transfer it to the coolship. The first 120 gallons of wort in the fermentor are put back into the kettle and boiled down to 90 gallons. Then the remaining 75 gallons of hop-mixture are added and it's boiled down to 150, or better 135 gallons. The wort is then added to the coolship. Now is when the brewers can have lunch.

Around 3PM I transfer the second runnings to the kettle. [No mention was given how they were procured, presumably from yet another sparging of the grains.] I add the leftover hops and boil it all as much as I think will make it good.

Around 6 or 7PM the 'fresh' beer [second runnings] are cooled in the small [secondary] kettle. It should be rather bitter.

## **Wednesday**

Around 10AM, when the spent grains are cold, I dispose of them, then clean the mash tun and false bottom.

Sometime between 12PM and 2PM when the beer is cool enough, I add 1 1/3 gallons of yeast to the main beer and a quart of yeast to the 'fresh' beer.

## **Friday**

Between 10AM and 1PM after the yeast has done its work and left its character, the krausen is removed, the beer is transferred to kegs via taps underneath and it is taken to the cellar. The bottom yeast is collected and all vessels are carefully cleaned.

The rational individual would understand that the above timetable is not strict, but for the unknowing and even brewers who use other methods this is a clear representation of the series of tasks.





# TALKEETNA BEER TRIPPIN' 2012

## "DARK SIDE OF THE BREW"

### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

#### Friday, March 30, 2012

##### **5:00-8:00pm | Welcome Dinner @ Twister Creek**

Make this your first stop when you roll into town Friday night. In addition to its full lineup of beers, Denali Brewing will have several specialty brews available and Twister Creek will be serving up its righteous menu of delectable edibles.

#### Saturday, March 31, 2012

##### **Keg fill drop offs @ Denali Brewing Company Tasting Room**

Starting at 9am and 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.

##### **10:00am | Soda Share @ Flying Squirrel Bakery Cafe**

Bring your homebrewed soda to this inaugural event and get good and sugared up for Beer Trippin's big day! There's no better accompaniment to a cold pop than the Squirrel's gourmet baked goods and deli items!

##### **11:00am | Deadline for entries in the Golden Carboy Homebrew Contest**

Please turn in all entries at the Denali Brewing Company Tasting Room.

##### **1:00 | Beer + Pizza @ Mountain High Pizza Pie**

You can't resist this classic combination. Not to mention DBC will tap up a few 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. This is a private event, so please bring your GNBC membership card.

##### **5:30pm | 2012 Golden Carboy winner announced @ Twister Creek**

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

##### **6:00pm | First Tap of 2011 Golden Carboy winner @ Twister Creek**

Last year's winner was Aaron Christ's vienna lager. Swill your first glass here.

##### **7:00pm | Live Music @ Twister Creek**

Kevin Worrell of Beer Money brings his happy spirit, soulful songs and big love for beer.

#### Sunday, April 1, 2012

##### **Keg fill pick ups @ Denali Brewing Company Tasting Room**

Starting at 10am and continuing until 6pm, pick up filled kegs before heading home.

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

Soak up your hangover blues with the Roadhouse's world-famous breakfast and the first beer brewed by the homebrew class of Northern Sunitna Institute's Folk School. All proceeds of the sale of this beer go directly to NSI.

##### **1:00pm | Brewery Tour @ DBC Spur Road Brewery**

Come check out DBC's new digs!

**When it comes to outdoor activity and local Alaskan flavor, Talkeetna ROCKS! Go exploring!  
Town and trail maps will be available at Twister Creek & Denali Brewing throughout the weekend.**

BEER  
TRIPPIN'  
2012  
TALKEETNA, ALASKA



## Summer 2012 GNBC Campout (reprint from February Newsletter)

*by Joe Michael*

**H**i-ho! Another fast breaking news story! After braving cold, blowing snow, high winds, and even an avalanche, the group site for our annual summer campout has been procured! Every year, the club alternates locations, to give those tethered closer to Anchorage a chance to get in on the camping fun. The savings on gas doesn't hurt anyone's feelings either! This year, we return to the group site at Eklutna Lake. For those of you that have been around for at least a few years, this is the same location we were in back in summer 2010. More information will be forthcoming as we transition into summer, but for now, save the dates, Friday, June 22 and Saturday, June 23, and plan to join us at Eklutna Lake for a great big outdoor sleepover with the GNBC!



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

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*The Great Northern Brewers Club and the American Homebrewers Association remind you to.....Savor the Flavor Responsibly*



The *Northern Brewer* welcomes letters, opinions, articles, ideas and inquiries. You can contact the editor, Debbie Grecco at:

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**Great Northern Brewers Club  
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**NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, March 20th, 2012  
7:00 PM at the Snow Goose**