



THE

Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB

MAY 2009

The Prez Sez

by Ira Edwards



Hi Ho, Hi Ho, it's off to brew we go...

Today is May 1st and it is beautiful out in our great state! I hope you all got the notice that the umpteenth annual Brew-A-Thon at John Craig's house is happening Tomorrow May 2nd (well, by the time you read this we will have already brewed our beverages and eaten great BBQ, but I wanted to give a HUGE round of thanks to John and Rose Craig for hosting a hopefully not so rowdy bunch year after year... All of this great spring weather has me doing a lot to get my place looking nice after a winter of neglect, and that also reminds me that I have to brew a few batches to get ready for lawnmowing and fishing season. Not to mention having a great brew on the backyard deck after an epic bike ride. I am running low, TIME TO BREW!

Back to our regularly scheduled activities, now. If you really want to get out of town for the Holidays this month, there is always the Haines Brewing Festival. The judging for the homebrew contest starts on Friday morning, May 22, followed by a multi course beer diner in Haines. Then during the weekend there is a great Beer Festival with most of the Alaskan breweries and a few out of state ones as well. There is music and good food to be had there at the Haines Fairgrounds. A few members of the GNBC are planning the trek to Haines for the festival. Be on the lookout for the club email list to announce details of a pickup at Arctic Brewing Supply to take entries down to the contest. (Make sure to pre-register your entries...) At the end of May is the ever popular GNBC House crawl on Saturday, May 30. Think of a Pub Crawl, but instead we stop at member's homes via a rented coach bus and have some food, games and beverages at each stop. Pat Ryan is organizing the event this year, so make sure to contact her to get your seat reserved before they sell out.

I again want to thank everyone that completed the GNBC Membership survey over the last couple of months. The Board has learned a lot about what the members want out of the club and we will do our best to start incorporating those great ideas and comments. As we are all highly paid volunteers, we are working hard at writing up a summary to accompany the actual survey results, so look for an announcement and a

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Competition

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Homebrew Festival Enteries
NOW Accepted

Monthly Cryptoquote Puzzle

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This Time

Facebook Networking Nirvana

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posting on the website for all to see. It should be up before summer hits! Remember that the May meeting (Tuesday the 19th) will be our final 'official' meeting this spring. In June we will be at the Eklutna Lake group campground for our annual summer campout. We'll have the site reserved from noon on Friday the 12th through noon on Sunday the 14th so bring your best girl (or boy), beer, and a bicycle – plus some food and firewood of course. This year we plan to have an potluck dinner on Saturday night we will present the Awards for both the 2008 and the 2009 Snow goose comp. Last year's lack of awards has now been deduced to be a communications error on my part, but we are all good to go this year. July will have a BBQ at the Loughry's pad on the lake and the August BBQ will be at Ira and Kara Edwards backyard and future fruit orchard... I'll see you at the meeting on the 19th!

Well, that's it again for this month. Enjoy your Beers, Meads, and Ciders responsibly this month and remember to stay safe out there...



Breakfast Potatoes

by Georgy Porgy

I've been extremely fortunate to have attended a lot of the beer dinners over the past couple of years. Some dinners fill up in a matter of minutes. This brings me to a level of guilt that I've been hoarding tickets to the dinners. But then I realize that several of these dinners don't readily fill up (or fill up at all). My guilt level of participating too much dissipates as the dinner date comes around, materials are purchased, and the beverages are selected.

In case you don't know what I'm talking about, I'm talking about the beer dinners where the hosts set up theme and attendees bring in a course and beverage pairing (beer/mead) to go with the course. Ask around if you'll hear stories of the good food, beverages, company, and the great times.

I love to stretch my culinary imagination, matching my past experiences, available ingredients to the theme. For those that don't know, I have a small cookbook library and continue to expand it to envelope the current dinner challenges. Plus, I've been following FoodTV and various cooking shows for what seems to be a decade. Simply put, I'm not afraid of trying new things. The beer pairings are more difficult in that some beers work better for some courses than they do for others. So while I don't have the beer knowledge like the rest of you, selecting the beer can become a combination of trial and error or just plain luck.

One example of a beer dinner, was the recent beer breakfast at Todd and Katy's house. This adventure began several months ago when Todd expressed interest in hosting a beer breakfast as opposed to a beer dinner. I promised to attend and when quizzed about what I was going to bring, my first thoughts were of sourdough pancakes, coffee, breakfast potatoes and a generous plate of buttered bacon.

When I say that I borrow from my past experiences in preparing for the dinners, this theme took me back to the memories of my youth when my dad, brother and I would go on church overnights in the forests of Idaho. We would load up the truck with the gear, and ice chest, and a few basics that consisted of milk, butter, bacon, potatoes, Walla Walla sweet onions salt and pepper. My brother and I used to hike and make tracks on and off the trails. Occasionally, one could hear a ruffed grouse drumming its wings. In the morning, the adults would get up and go on their walk and bring back more mushrooms for the morning feast. Somehow those brainy looking things would make it back to my dad's area. The adults pitched in, some peeling potatoes others slicing onions. My dad would cook the bacon, which would provide the necessary grease for the potatoes and onions. After the kids were fed, the adults would add those weird mushrooms to the cast iron pan, and perhaps grill some deer liver too. While I didn't want to try those foods at that point in my life, I recall the adults seemed way too content to eat what the children did not want.

A few weeks after signing up for the dinner, I went to Café Amsterdam for breakfast. As you all know, they have a nice tap selection. I ordered a beer and the Croissant Beatrix. When breakfast arrived, I ordered my second beer which happened to be the Alaskan Smoked 2006. The pairing was almost perfect in that I wished I'd ordered some salmon lox and capers to accompany the experience. Note: Those items are served standard with their Moluska Benedict. A few weeks later, and with thoughts into overdrive and breakfast date quickly approaching, it was off to the store to buy some ingredients. At this point, the little things may make differences in how a course turns out. For example, does one use russet potatoes or yukon golds? For the potatoes, do you slice them, grate them, or mash them. I really didn't want to have greasy potatoes so I chose to mash them. With this in mind, I settled in on the Russet potatoes (yep, drawing from experiences with those Idahoan roots).

The potatoes were boiled, and a frying pan was set up to sweat some bell pepper, sweet onion, poblano pepper, and garlic. At the end of the sweating process, a portion of "Hen of the woods mushrooms" was added with black pepper and salt. The mixture was added to the mashed potatoes along with goat cheese, sour cream and a bit of butter.

For the beer dinner, I moved the potato mixture into a baking pan and let them cook in the oven. The potatoes were served buffet style where the consumers would scoop up a portion, top it with a dollop of sour cream, salmon lox and capers. I didn't have any 2006 smoked porter, so this dish was served with Corsendonk Brown and a more recent Alaskan Smoked product. Overall, I think it turned out well. The 2006 from the Café was a bit more refined so I can't wait to build the cellar with more smoked beers for future. I also look forward to making the potatoes again, perhaps mixing things up by using yukon golds, slicing them, or grating them.

If you're interested in participating in the beer dinners and want to learn when they are, please send an email to juzy@gci.net and she will add you to the list.



EVENTS

- Every First Thursday*
Moose's Tooth First Tap
- Every First Friday*
First Friday at McGinley's
- Every Friday*
Midnight Sun Brewery Tours and Brew Debut: 6:00 PM 344-1179
- 10.....Cafe Amsterdam 10th Anniversary Celebration: 4-8 pm*
- 13.....Deadline for Haines Homebrew Competition (see related article)*
- 19.....GNBC Meeting at the Goose: 7 pm*
- 22.....Goblets of Gold Mead Competition at Ring of Fire (Homer)*
- 22.....Haines Craftbrew Festival and Homebrew Competition*
- 30.....Annual GNBC House Crawl*
- 12- 14....Summer Camp Out at Eklutna Lake (see Prez Sez. for details)*



ET Barnett Home Brew Competition

by *Scott Stihler*

We need Judges!!

We need BJCP judges and/or experienced brewers to help judge the 2009 E.T. Barnette Homebrew Competition!!!

Judging will take place on Saturday, July 11th starting around 10:00a.m. at the Silver Gulch Brewing and Bottling Company located in Fox, Alaska

The seven judged categories this year will be: Pilsner (2A-C); English Pale Ale (8A-C); American Ale (10A-C); ; Porter (12A-C); Stout (13A-F); India Pale Ale (14A-C) and Fruit/Spice/Herb/Vegetable Beer (20/21A).

Once again judges will be allowed to save money of shipping by pre-registering their competition entries. All they need to do is fill out the Entry and Bottle ID forms and include the proper entry fee (i.e. \$5 per entry) and mail it to us. Then on the day of the competition you simply show up with your entries in hand and you're good to go.

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

I hope you can help us out with judging the E.T. Barnette Homebrew Competition.

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

I hope you can help out! If you are interested in judging or have any questions please contact me at stihlerunits@mosquitobytes.com or (907) 474-2138.

P.S. Note that the idea of the pre-registration is to allow the Registrar to log the entries before hand. Therefore, the pre-registration information and payment should be received prior to competition day (i.e. before Saturday, July 11th).





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

Great Alaska Craft Beer and Homebrew Festival Entries Accepted NOW

by Ira Edwards

The May 22-23 Great Alaska Craft Beer and Homebrew Festival is slated for May 22 and 23 this year in Haines, Alaska. Not many people are able to attend this festival (at least from here in Anchorage) due to the formidable 770 miles of driving one way, but you can send your homebrew entries to either Alaskan Brewing Company or Haines Brewing Company if you want to enter the competition. See a related article about participating in judging this event if you're going to be down there. Here are the details concerning entry.

Drop off (or send in) locations:

Alaskan Brewing — Juneau — 780-5866

Haines Brewing — Haines — 766-3823

DEADLINE WEDNESDAY, MAY 13th

note — this is one week earlier than normal due to ferry schedule conflicts

For any entries coming from Anchorage, please call either brewery in advance to make specific arrangements.

This is an AHA & BJCP certified homebrew competition: all rules apply

For info contact Rachael @ 780-5866 or qualitycontrol@alaskanbeer.com

There is a Gourmet Beer Banquet Dinner Friday night on May 22 at 6 pm. RSVP is required. For reservations contact www.seakfair.org or call 907-766-2476.

Saturday is the beer festival*

The Monthly Cryptoquote Puzzle

The answer to last month's puzzle was:

Fermentation may have been a greater discovery than fire.
David Rains Wallace

This month's cryptoquote is:

CQKM AW D SDZRKS MQKCW SDZRKSDU

XWNWIDPW RC XWWI, DSE RiUU CQKM

LKH DS DENDSYWE ZKRUWZ ZWYQSKUKPL

ADIO QDMORSC RS ZQW SWM LKIO ZRAWC



FACEBOOK Networking Nirvana

by Dennis Sessler

Hello all fellow GNBCer's, I hope the wonderful spring weather is treating everyone well. I hope everyone has their carboys full or getting there soon. I was asked to submit this article by Kerri Canepa our beloved Vice prez, to inform all club members of a new or maybe not so new way to network with friends, family, and most importantly other GNBC members and people in the beer community. Facebook is an internet based network that is very simple to sign up for. It is free of cost and allows members to converse, instant message, post pictures, videos, links and much more that I don't have space to write about. I was invited by a friend from the homebrew club about a month ago to join, and since have compiled over 190 friends, mostly family and classmates, most of them I have not had contact with in almost 20 years "reunion time." One day I decided to begin a new group based solely around the homebrew club. I wanted a way to blog the club without inundating their e-mails with messages. As the originator of the group, I am also the administrator, not a job that I wanted, but oh well more on this later.

It works like this: get on your computer and go to www.facebook.com, sign up and go to the group section and search for the Great Northern Brewers Club. Add yourself to the club and you will have access to up-to-date info like never before.

Our club newsletter and the clubs e-mail messages do a great job of notify all members of issues pertaining to official club events both past and present. Facebook give access to info both past and present that are unable to be compiled in the monthly newsletter or inappropriate to be email blogged to the membership at large. This is a club orientated group so all beer/mead and cider comments and posts are more than welcome. Recently pictures of a past beer diner were added for all to see. Say that you were brewing this weekend and wanted to invite members over to help or watch. This would be a great way to reach out to our newer members at large. Do you have a brew question that you need answered? Your answer could be seconds away. Would you like to let others know what you will be brewing this weekend? Do you need help picking and crushing all those apples and pears this fall? Do you have some brew equipment that you would like to sell? Say I'm heading down to the Snow Goose or Humpy's for some of their awesome halibut tacos, and want to invite club members to come on down and play a little ring toss or listen to some great music in the company of friends, then Facebook is the place. If you go on vacation and you have some cool pictures/ info that you would love to share about breweries/wineries, feel free to slap a post on the board. Have you had a great commercial sample and want all members to get the skinny? Then post it.

There is an official link to our clubs website for easy access. You will also find links to a plethora of both local and not so local breweries and classy liquor stores. For the businesses that are having specials, new releases, and open houses please feel free to post. The possibilities are endless. I only have one request that we keep this group, club orientated, please no political post and post that have nothing to do with beer/mead and cider. If you feel so inclined to add such items they will be deleted.



Spring is in the air, for sure this time...

by Ira Edwards

Guess what? Spring is here again in Alaska, and it is SOOOO much nicer than last year. This means that the time to plant the gardens flower beds. All of our wonderful fruits that we use for eating and brewing will start flowering and begin to provide us with their bounty again this summer and fall. This load of goodies includes the various things you might have growing in the dark corners of your yard like strawberries, gooseberries, currants and raspberries. Then we move onto the tree fruits that grow well up here like apples, sour cherries, and pears. Now is the time to take care of your plants to make sure they set the fruit to grow for the summer. Don't over fertilize them after they start flowering. Make sure that they don't dry out and kill the flowers, and try to keep the weeds down at least a little bit (don't get too anal on me here...)

If you don't have your own place or space to grow these goodies, fear not. There are countless people around town that use fruiting trees and shrubs ("Bring Me A Shrubbery!!!") as ornamental decoration and these people have no intention of using the fruit. Try to find the owner, office, building, or property manager for the place in question and just ask if you might grab the fruit later. Make sure to tell these folks that you will not damage anything and to point out a side benefit that they won't have to clean up the fallen fruit. Crab apples are sometimes a good item to blend into the bulk juice, but we are looking for real apples here, even if they are as small as golf balls or tennis balls.

I'm sure that some of you know that I have a passion for apples and making Cider. This is not just for making fresh juice, but for making the fermented cider that makes a great drink. The juice I've been blending seems to make both a good cider and a wonderful cyser (apple mead). I am asking for all of you to keep your eyes out this month for the blooming fruit trees. I have all of the equipment to grind and press out the juice of these apples, pears, and cherries, so I am willing to let GNBC members come over and make some more juice later this year. At this time, it should be part way through hunting season, so I bet I'll be able to fire up the grill while making juice.

Last year was a bit of a bust for fruit production, but I have had several folks helping out the last few years and I hope to have more this year. Find ways to ask if the tree owners use the fruit, and if you don't care about apples at all, just let me know about the trees and I'll ask the owners myself. Often all it takes is the promise to clean up the yard and rake up all of leaves after you're done picking. Most people really do not use their apples. Keep your eyes open and let's hope that some more people in the GNBC can get into one of the simpler aspects of brewing: cider making. This is not to say that you cannot get all technical about it, but I like to just clean it up, let the juice ferment naturally (works 95% of the time) and blend later.

Take care, and let me know if you have any questions about cider making. I am constantly re-working my equipment and methodology and always have a drinkable, if not damn good, cider around the place.

The Northern Brewer is a monthly newsletter published by the Great Northern Brewers Club for distribution to all club members. Subscriptions are a part of club membership and may be obtained by joining the club. Membership is open to everyone over the age of twenty-one. Please send \$25 to:

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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: May 19th, 2009
7:00 PM at the Goose**