



THE Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB

NOVEMBER 2008

The Prez Sez

by Ira Edwards

Greetings Beerlings, Take me to your Lager! Nope, that has been used before... Hail Ninkasi! Nope, also been done... SKØL! Heja Ø! Darn, not American enough...

I keep trying to find the perfect intro, and it may happen someday...



Let's see if I can recount my accomplishments here in elected office. I have now been here a year as your Great Northern Brewers Club president and boy have I done some great things in my administration. I have developed two new home brewing contests, we have many new members, and I have made huge steps forward in our educational events and presentation. I have been a great GNBC president and I again ask for your vote in this most important of election seasons. Brew Baby, Brew!!!

OK, enough of this political BS! The organization of the GNBC is a group effort and a lot of thanks goes out to everyone who has participated in running the club events this last year. We have done some great things with the club and it is thanks to your involvement. Every one of you. I hope you all voted in the real election this month for people that can have an impact on the real issues that affect important items in our economy like the price of grain and hops. I also hope you will get involved and vote in the GNBC election to elect folks on the board and the club officers. If you have a strong desire to see someone new in the club leadership, tell us and we will get that person on the ballot. Or you can just write them in...Get involved! Write a newsletter article on a topic that you are passionate about or a project or trip you have undertaken. Volunteer to help at a club event or even to sell raffle tickets at the monthly meeting.

This month starts off with the club elections, but first a recap of what has happened recently. We now have entered this season called winter (yeah I know it "officially" starts in 2 months) where it is dark and cold, but that is nothing to be worried about. The cold brings snow which lets us enjoy winter on skis, snowshoes and snowmachines. The fall harvest was only so so this year on apples, so next year will be a little low on the cider side of things once the beverages mature. A few people came out to make juice with their apples, so hopefully we were able to introduce a few more people to another facet of our hobby: Cider Making. I'll be sure to give an educational talk on cider this year, as it is a great beverage that takes some dedication and skill, yet is remarkably simple to produce and is something you can grow off of the land in your own back yard.

The Prez Sez

Secretary's Corner

Brewer of the Year Categories
for 2009

2009 Rondy Homebrew
Competition Announced

Humpy's Bigfish Homebrew
Competition Next Month

November - Election Time

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Winter also brings us into the time to sit around the fireplace or the campfire (or the street corner Burn Barrel) and enjoy a nice winter warmer beer. I have some I brewed this summer and last year that are finally coming into their own, but there are plenty of recipes that can mature and be quite drinkable if you have not already gone down that road. The local liquor stores like La Bodega and Brown Jug have samples to enjoy to figure out what type of winter beer to make (the only limitation is your imagination). The holidays are coming up and there is nothing better to share with friends or family than a nice festive beverage that you have crafted yourself.

Well that is all for this month. We'll see you all at the GNBC club meeting on the 3rd tuesday of the month at the Snow Goose. Stay warm, and stay safe out there. Enjoy your beers, meads and ciders responsibly.



Secretary's Corner

by Dena Sessler

Members of the GNBC met at the Snowgoose at 7:00 pm on the 21st of October. The following items were discussed. Elections will be held at November's meeting. All Officer and two board positions are available for nomination. If you wish to nominate someone or wish to be considered for nomination, please contact our President Ira Edwards at ira_j_e@hotmail.com.

Humpy's Big Fish Homebrew Competition is Saturday, December 6th. Jason Ditsworth is going to try to have judging completed and everyone out of there (SubZero) early to get ready for our annual Christmas party, which is also the 6th of December starting at 6:00 pm. The theme, again this year, is beer. Bring it and cook with it. We are not going to depend on beer from the distributors, which have been so supportive and generous, through out the year, so be sure and bring lots of home brew to share! This year there will be a type of Chinese auction, and the Brewer of the Year (BOTY) will be announced at the party. At this point it is very close, and still undecided, so be sure to enter those BOTY categories at Humpy's Big Fish competition! Stay tuned to up coming newsletters for the BOTY categories for 2009. They are still being formulated, but will be similar to the categories for 2008.

The BJCP course starts this month, on the 9th of November, at Café Amsterdam from 1:00 pm-4:00 pm. It is a 16 week course, with no class for the Thanksgiving holiday weekend, Christmas weekend, Beer and Barley Wine Festival weekend, or on Super Bowl Sunday. If you aren't sure if the course is for you, come on down on Sunday the 9th, to check it out. There will be no charge for the first class. Instructors will be focusing on readying you to take the exam on February 22nd 2009, which consists of 10 essay questions and judging four beers. One of the goals of the course is to try at least one beer form every style and teach participants how to critically evaluate the beer, focus on its highlights and suggest improvements to the brewer. The cost of the course is \$150.00. The break down is 1/3 of the cost is for your manual, 1/3 for beer, and 1/3 for the exam. If you have any questions or interest, please contact the course coordinator Dennis Urban at dlurban@gci.net.

John Burkett of Odom Distributing, spoke to us about a brand new website, which is a division of Odom which is all about great beer. www.worldclassbeverages.com, is your one stop for everything you want to know about craft beer. The website offers distributing information for Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, South/Central & the Florida panhandle, Idaho, Indiana, New York City & Upstate New York, Washington State, & West Virginia. The Beer locator allows you to track down everything from beer/mead/cider and soda to beer merchandise. All you have to do is choose your state, type in your zip code, and find out exactly who carries it, where it buy it, and who serves it. You are also able to find out what brands Odom distributes in the area, and a description of each. There is a Beer 101 section that informs you of the food pairings and glass ware to enjoy your favorite beer. It is also packed full of information and interesting facts about every style of beer and cool National links. I encourage everyone to check it out and book mark it!!!!

The educational portion of the meeting was a talk on ancient brewing techniques, by Todd Rock. During an anthropology class he attended the students were asked to do an experimental archeology project. Todd convinced his professor to allow him to make beer. The conditions were that he could use no modern technology or equipment, to include a thermometer or cultured yeast strains and it had to be as close to an ancient beer as possible. He said that he was allowed to use him stainless steel pot, which was fortunate since he wasn't going to make one out of earth or wood. The ancient Sumerians and Egyptians used bread called Baphir which was made of dates, honey, malted barley, and water. It was served along with their staple bread, and if done right would pretty much keep for ever. There are a lot of theories out there about how they accomplished brewing 3,000-5,000 years ago, but one thing is for sure, they knew how to mash and boil. If it was available, they would use fresh malted barley, but they would also use half Baphir and half malted barley.

There were no hops, but from what Todd could tell they used Egyptian rye or hard winter wheat that was very high in Tannins. So how did they convert malted barley into a sweet mash? Decoction mash of course. If you add equal parts of boiling water to equal parts of room temperature water, you get an almost perfect mash temperature. Todd used 6 lbs of American 2 row, flaked barley, chopped dates, and 2 lbs of honey to make the bread. Despite it being extremely hard, it almost dissolves instantly in warm water. Added to the thick gruel was ground malted barley and hard winter wheat. He let it soak for a few hours, and brought the mixture up to a boil. After adding room temperature water he hit a temp of 154 degrees. Not wanting to use a Wyeast strain that would be representative of what was available 5,000 years ago or leave the wort exposed to a kitchen environment, he found out that by adding dates, which were a big part of the Egyptian diet, that it would kick start fermentation. Organic dates, being very expensive, he introduced three to a sterile wort starter, and in 3-4 days it started. He kicked it up and added it to the wort.

At first the beer was very sour and funky. He brought it to class, and received a great grade for the project, but almost no one would drink the stuff. After a while it dried out and started to taste like something that resembled a lambic. He took 5 gallons and introduced a Brett. Strain that Midnight Sun donated to him, added 4 pounds of raspberries, and ended up with a very convincing Belgian Lambic. He brought samples of the original one, which took 3rd at the Anchor Town Invitational, as a straight unblended lambic, and the one he put on raspberries. Both were convincing Lambics, with the one on raspberries being my favorite. Thank you Todd for the interesting and informative talk!

That is it for this month. Hope to see you all at the Goose on the 18th of November.

EVENTS

Every First Thursday

Moose's Tooth First Tap

Every Friday

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

07.....*First Taste at McGinley's Pub
Featuring Samuel Smith Beer
5-8 pm*

08.....*Celtic Samhain Observance and
Tasting at Celestial Meads
Noon - 5 pm*

09.....*BJCP Program Begins
Cafe Amsterdam Noon - 3:00 pm.*

18.....*GNBC Monthly Meeting at the
Goose: 7 pm*

19.....*Kassik's Kenai Brew Stop Beer
Tasting at Tap Root Cafe*

21.....*Alaska Grown Close to Home Beer
and Wine Tasting at the Seward
Sea Life Center: 7-10 pm*

05.....*Humpy's Bigfish Homebrew
Competition Entries Accepted at
Arctic Brewing Supply: Noon-6 pm*

06.....*Humpy's Bigfish Homebrew
Competition Judging at SubZero
10:00 - ??*

06.....*GNBC Christmas Party at the
Goose: 6 pm*

CAFE



AMSTERDAM

Brewer of the Year Categories for 2009

by Ira Edwards

This year, we are going to do things a little different to make things easier both for me (I really need to start entering some more contests) and for all of you who enter the contests: WE ARE GETTING THE CATEGORIES OUT BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR!!! Go figure.... There are still the 5 contests that we count towards Brewer of the Year (BOTY) status but we have added one new one: Fur Rondy, Snow Goose Breakup, Nationals (both first and second round will be counted), the new and awesome Anchor Town Invitational that replaced our participation in the Alaska State Fair, the totally new Mead Competition hosted by Mike Kiker and Celestial Meads and finally, the Humpy's Big Fish Homebrew Competition. Instead of 6 categories per contest in the past where you had to choose 4 entries to be scored for BOTY points, we are reducing the choices to 4 categories per contest (with a possible exception or two, depending on the competition organizer). We will then just take your highest scoring entry in each of the 4 categories and add that to your points tally. This results in less paperwork for us and fewer choices for you to make. Now you are still free to enter in all the other styles open in each competition, and I encourage you to do so if you like to brew other styles. These are just the styles we have chosen for this year, and they are pretty similar to last year. If you brew with someone and put their name on the entry form for that competition, we will award equal points to each brewer, with a limit of three brewers earning points on a given entry.

There will be a separate notation on the points list for a brewer who has not won a prize in a GNBC or National Homebrew Competition (NHC) contest in any previous year. The Category will be called "New Entrant", since some people may have been brewing for years, have been members of GNBC for years, or maybe just figured out which category to enter their beers in. It will also include folks who are completely new to the club or even to brewing. We really want to encourage people to improve their brewing skills and not have to compete against those who have won medals in every contest for years.

Get ready to start earning your bragging rights for next year...Any contest BOTY styles not listed here will be updated shortly on the Competitions page on the GNBC website (since you are reading this, I figured you knew how to get here...)

Here are the style categories for the 2009 GNBC Home Brew Competitions. Happy Brewing and good luck.

Fur Rendezvous Home Brew Competition

Category	Name
18	Belgian Strong Ale
12	Porter
23	Specialty Beer
19	Strong Ale

Snow Goose Breakup Home Brew Completion

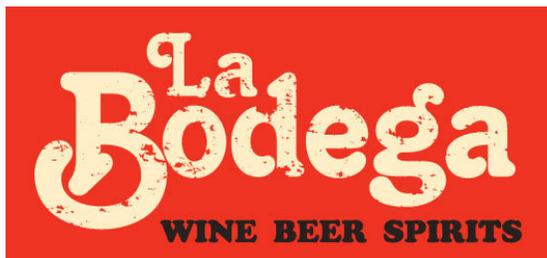
Category	Name
*???	To be determined, but it will be a summer style that can be sold by the Goose on the Deck...

2008 National Home Brew Completion

All styles are open and points are scored on any ribbon earned in the first round or medal in the second round. Enter them all, and good luck.

Anchor Town Invitational Home Brew Competition

Category	Name
7	Amber Hybrid Beer
10	American Ale
13	Stout
15	German Wheat & Rye Beer
*???	Side Challenge is yet to be announced...



Equinox Mead Competition	
Category	Name
24	Traditional Mead
25	Melomel (Fruit Mead)
26	Other Mead

Humpy's Big Fish Home Brew Competition	
Category	Name
5	Bock
2	Pilsner
22	Smoke Flavored and Wood-Aged beer.
14	India Pale Ale (IPA)
*???	2009 Side Challenge is yet to be announced...

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

2009 Anchorage Fur Rendezvous Homebrew Competition

by Dennis Sessler

Well Brewers and Brewster's if you haven't fired up your kettles yet, there is plenty of time to brew that perfect beer in anticipation of the 2009 Anchorage Fur Rendezvous Homebrew Competition. The competition will be held on Saturday February 7th at the Snow Goose. This is the first competition of the year to garner as many points as possible towards the 2009 GNBC Homebrewer of the Year Title. The 2009 categories for all competitions will be announced in this newsletter, take note and get brewing. Judging will begin at 10:00 a.m. and as always there will be a need for plenty of judges and stewards. This competition is an AHA/BJCP sanctioned competition so all beer, mead and cider categories will be open for entry. You can find the current style guidelines at <http://www.bjcp.org/stylecenter.html>.

Entries will be accepted at the Snow Goose in the basement on Friday February 6th. From 11:00 am to 6:00 pm. Entry fees are \$2.00 per entry and you will need to provide three 12 oz bottles for each beer entry. Mead and Cider entries can be three 12 oz bottles or one 750 ml bottle. If you are unable to drop off entries during that time please feel free to contact me to make other arrangements. This year's competition will award a Best of Show Beer and a Best of Show Mead or Cider. There will be unique prizes for both of the Best of Show winners plus all the great Fur Rondy ribbons and notoriety. Let's make this a great competition. Dust of your meads and ciders, let's brew those beers and let's get ready to "Rondy!" For more information you contact me at sessak@mtaonline.net



14th Annual Humpy's Big Fish Homebrew Competition

By Jason Ditsworth

That's right beer fans, the Humpy's Big Fish Homebrew competition is coming up quickly. Many of you already know this competition has long been one of the best prize awarding competitions in Alaska. Not only is this a great competition itself, it's also your last chance to rack up points towards GNBC Home Brewer of the Year award (the current standings are posted on the website at <http://www.greatnorthernbrewers.org/competitions.html>).

The Big Fish competition this year will once again be on the first weekend in December. Entries will be collected on Friday December 5 from **12:00 PM to 6:00 PM** at Arctic Brewing Supply. If you cannot make it to Arctic Brewing Supply on December 5 you can still enter the competition, so please give me a call to make other arrangements for entering your beer. If you are entering from outside Anchorage you can ship your beer to Arctic Brewing Supply, 5915 Lake Otis Parkway #3, Anchorage, Alaska 99507 (do NOT send it through the U.S. Mail). If you are shipping your beer it must be received no later than Friday, December 5.

The competition this year is on Saturday December 6, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM, at SubZero Microlounge. Please note that the competition this year falls on the same day of help judging to finish up early in the day. If we get plenty of judges we should be done with the best of show rounds by 3:00. Because the competition is on the same day as the Christmas party, including the brewer of the year.

There is no entry fee for this competition and all categories of beer, mead and cider are open for entry. Entry and judging will be based on the BJCP style guide-again we will choose a best of show due to timing of the competition and the limited ability to match apple types. The best of show beer will be brewed at Midnight Sun Brewing Company and the best of show mead may be brewed at Celestial Meadery, depending on availability of honey and other ingredients. It is still possible to win best of show in beer or mead, but still not have your beer or mead brewed because of special ingredients or time constraints (e.g., if a Gueze wins Best of Show it likely would not be brewed, even though Humpy's would no doubt like to try).

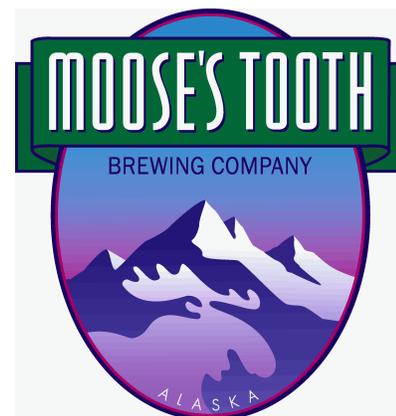
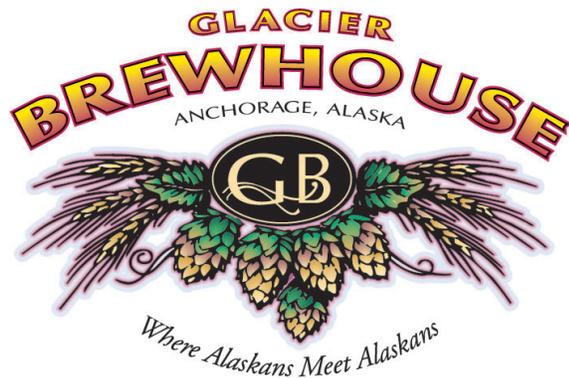
You must enter three 12- to 14-ounce bottles, preferably brown, clean of any labels and markings along with a recipe. For mead and cider you may enter one 22- to 30-ounce bottle (need two bottles for carbonated entries), or two 12- to 14-ounce bottles. Remember that because the grand prize for this competition is having your beer brewed at MSBC or your mead brewed at Celestial Meadery it is important to provide a reasonably accurate recipe in case the judges want to know the ingredients.

If you have any questions or would like to help with the event please call me at 338-8828 or send an e-mail to jditsworth@gci.net.



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GNBC Elections – The Important Vote

by *Jim Roberts*

As I write this while drinking an IPA, in the background, the TV is following our national election for President and Vice President of the United States. Big whoop! What do the candidates know and care about beer? So rather than fetter my hours away following that, my time is better spent helping the club announce it's own annual election process. November is election month for Great Northern Brewers and its time to do your sudsy civic duty and help decide who will shape our club in 2009.

It seems like a simple task. Crack a beer and contemplate. Here's the rub. While all members enjoy the fruits and fermented labors of everything our club is, few step up to the plate and help orchestrate the complexity that it takes to run our small non-profit organization focused on educating the homebrewer about all aspects of his art. Sure, anyone can pick up a book and read about how to make beer, then trudge on, learning from successes and failures and become a successful brewer.

GNBC provides a valuable resource to interested, new, aspiring, seasoned and "professional" homebrewers. Our club is the most local and hands-on educational Mecca for information and resources on homebrewing. Where else can you walk into a venue every month with your coveted brew in hand and say "Taste this, help me out, what am I doing right or wrong?" then have someone invite you over to his or her house for a hands-on learning session? Where else can you absorb an educational topic each month focused on a specific subset of the brewing world? Where else can you study and train your palate to become a certified beer judge among peers with equal aspirations, then have enough contests to judge each year to maintain your standing? It's all right here at GNBC, voters, so take heed.

It takes a ton of work to bring all of this to you, and those that have toiled with the job have experienced various degrees of success. I've been with the club for close to 20 years and have been President of GNBC twice during that time. This doesn't give me any special privileges or status, but it does give me passion and the insight to know how important proper leadership is at the top. Our club's come a long way since the formative years when I became the second President in 1992 and 1993 and I can't say I contributed anything special during that time, but I'd sure like to see the club continue to grow at the pace it's done so in recent years.

Elections at GNBC work like this. You, as a member, have the right to nominate yourself or any other member to any open officer or board position. The officer positions include President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. These positions are "open" each year. There are five board positions of equal status and the board tenure is two years. This year, there are two board positions open.

Our current President, Ira Edwards and our current Vice President, Karri Canepa, have expressed interest in running again. Our current Treasurer, Breck Tostevin, is also interested in filling the seat another year. Currently, the nominations for the Secretary position are Bruce Mills and Todd Rock. None of these positions take an inordinate amount of effort or experience to fill. All it takes is some basic organizational skills, the ability to work with the other officers and board members and dedication to get things done primarily through delegation and oversight. Oh, and having a thirst for good home brewed beer never hurts.

Ballots will be provided at the November 18th GNBC Club Meeting at the Snow Goose Restaurant and Sleeping Lady Brewing Company. Attend. Nominate, Participate and Vote

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: Tuesday, November 18th, 2008
7:00 pm at the Goose**