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THE

Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB

NOVEMBER 2009

The Vice Prez Sez

by Kerri Canepa

What an amazing – and long – fall we've had this year! I hope it encouraged everyone to get in some extra brewing time. Of course this makes me wonder how much of that beer will show up at the Big Fish competition in December. If you haven't brewed lately, there's still time to have something ready to enter that competition so get crackin'!

This month is election month with the election of officers and board members to take place at the club meeting on November 17. You must attend the meeting to cast your vote so do whatever it takes to remind you to be there – sticky notes on the bathroom mirror, your Outlook calendar, your Daytimer, whatever it takes. The election will be done using simple paper ballots and will be tabulated during the educational presentation. Winners will be announced after the presentation. Elsewhere in this newsletter are candidate's statements. These are the same statements that were sent out via email after the last club meeting but have been put together in one place to aid in selecting who to vote for. With a mix of older and newer members, I look forward to the new group and the exciting things they plan to do.

For those of you who like (or would like) to stay actively connected with the more social aspects of the club, I highly encourage you to join the GNBC Facebook group. Announcements and invitations to upcoming beer dinners, pairings, festivals and other activities of interest get posted frequently. It's a good way to hear what's happening as it happens including the occasional "I'll be at the Snow Goose trying out the new offerings – come on down!" It's also a way to look for emergency brewing needs. There was a last minute call for bottles and several members responded right away with offers. There is also a GNBC photo gallery that group members can add their beer related photos – currently there are 276 photos of everything from the last Kenai bus trip to the most recent beer dinner. Check it out and while you're there, join the group!

Again we've got a jam-packed newsletter this month full of all sorts of useful and fun information. And every bit of it written by club members (or friends of the club). You don't need to be a professional writer to submit something and what interests you will undoubtedly be of interest to others. There's a need for everything from reviews of local watering holes to discourses on the importance of sanitation (and yes, Steve, that was a hint!). If something grabs your attention, write about it and send it to our fabulous newsletter editors.

Enjoy this newsletter and I'll see you at the club meeting, Big Fish and/or the holiday party!

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GNBC Holiday Party Announcement

by Julie McDonald

Wow, the time sure flies when we are having fun, doesn't it? It's already November! Soon it will be time for turkey and then we move right into December! Our schedules fill up with activities, parties, and other events at this time of year, so let's get our calendars out and mark this date right **now**: Saturday, December 5. This is the date of the club's holiday party. And here are the details that you will **want** to make note of:

When: Saturday, December 5th, 6pm till whenever

Where: The Snowgoose Brewpub, downstairs meeting room

Theme: **Fire** and **Ice** *AND* The Night Before Christmas

Food:

·Potluck style

·Food theme is **Fire** and **Ice**.

·For example: **Fire**— can be food that must stay hot (crockpot) or something on the spicy side. **Ice**— can be food that must remain on ice (bring your own ice and ice vessel for resting your "icy" food in) or food that is cool and refreshing.

·What are you responsible for? The dish you bring will be determined by your last initial, but it's your choice as to **Fire** or **Ice**:

A – J = Appetizers, salads, side dishes

K – P = main dishes, soups

Q – Z = desserts

Costume: Optional, this is where **The Night Before Christmas** comes in....you all know this famous holiday poem, take your cues from it and dress appropriately ;-)
Most importantly we want everyone to be **comfortable** and have **fun** !!

Entertainment: Yes, we are currently working on **fun** activities. We are also working on a playlist for background music. If you would like to request certain songs/artists for the playlist please contact Joe Michael at joeofak@gmail.com

Gift Exchange: Yes, but not mandatory.

·If you wish, bring a wrapped bottle of a **rare** or **unusual** beer, or a **fine** bottle of wine or scotch, or whiskey, or other spirit.

·Leave it on the designated table when you enter.

·Don't forget to take a gift before leaving the party for the evening.

RSVP: to Julie McDonald at juzy@gci.net or text or call 240-3688, include:

·Your name

·Number attending

·What your food contribution will be

I think that about covers it. We hope to see you all there!!!

***And** this should go without saying, but we're going to say it anyway....have a DD or procure a room for the night, preferably one within walking distance...just be sure to get to the party and home again safely!



Officer and Board Position Statements

This is a crucial time in the Club's year where members elect qualified candidates to the various officer and board positions. The objective of this document is to provide you with important information on each candidate's views on the Club in respect to his or her position.

Candidate Statement: Officer Position: President: Dennis Sessler

I have been a member of the GNBC for seven years, have been home brewing for eight years. I have served as a board member for a two year term. I am a Certified BJCP judge. I love to brew beer, and make meads and ciders. I have a passion for brewing and entering competitions, and believe this has made me a better brewer. I have run the annual Fur Rendezvous Homebrew Competition for the past two years. If elected as President I will bring an emphasis on education and an increase in club sponsored brewing activities. I believe as officers we have to do a better job welcoming new members ensuring that the GNBC grows and remains the best home brew club around.

Candidate Statement: Officer Position: Vice President: Steve Schmitt

The experience I bring to this position includes a past four-term GNBC President and three-term Board Member. I'm also a BJCP National Beer Judge. My personal agenda in regard to future GNBC functions includes a major focus on education. I feel that it is equally important to provide an atmosphere where the GNBC is both educational and fun at the same time. My credo in regards to GNBC meetings is a steadfast adherence to the 20-minute rule. We have to mix business with the socialization of responsible beer drinking in Alaska.

Candidate Statement: Officer Position: Treasurer: Breck Tostevin

I am asking for your support for another term as club treasurer. During this next year, I would like to train a successor treasurer since the smooth transition of this position is important to both the club finances and the club's membership roles including our email list. I would also like to complete the paperwork and file for recognition with the IRS as 503(c)(7) not-for-profit social club now that our club income has reached the income thresholds for filing federal tax returns.

I have been the club's treasurer since November 2006. I have put the club finances on Quicken, implemented electronic banking through Wells Fargo, put the club membership list in order using our club webpage, and implemented use of PayPal to pay dues on the webpage.

EVENTS

Every First Thursday

Moose's Tooth First Tap

Every Third Thursday

Kassik's Kenai Brew Stop Beer Debut at the Millennium Hotel in Anchorage: 4:30 - 7:00 PM

Every First Friday 5:00 PM

*Midnight Sun Brewery
Firkin Friday*

07.....*Ring of Fire Meadery Dinner at The Homestead Restaurant-Homer 6:30 PM \$75 per person*

19.....*GNBC Meeting at the Goose 7 PM: ELECTION NIGHT*

22.....*Firetap Restaurant's Alaskan Brewing Company Beer Dinner 6 PM: Cost TBD*

04.....*Arctic Brewing Supply - Entries For Humpy's Bigfish Homebrew Competition Accepted Noon - 6 PM*

05.....*Humpy's/SubZero: Bigfish Homebrew Competition Judging 10 AM*

05.....*GNBC Holiday Party at the Goose: 6 PM*

13.....*Tap Root Cafe: Celestial Meads Mead Tasting: Time/Cost TBD*

20.....*Midnight Sun Brewing Company Good Mojo Day*

15-16.....*Great Alaska Beer and Barley Wine Festival - Egan Center Watch for details.....*

Since we have moved to an electronic newsletter our club finances are on a sound financial footing. We have \$7,197 in the bank. We have \$750 in reserve for our IRS fee for nonprofit recognition and \$1000 in capital reserve from the golf tournament for next year's event. We made an \$8,500 charitable contribution to First Tee from the Golf Tournament income.

If you would like a copy of the club income and expense summary for the last membership year, let me know by email keegan@gci.net and I will send you a pdf of the report I gave at the October club meeting. (I do not want to put our finances on the web).

I have been homebrewing since 1992 and have served in all of the club positions, including two terms as President and Vice-President. I run the Equinox Mead Competition and I previously ran the Fur Rondy Competition. I am a National BJCP Judge. The Great Northern Brewers is a great organization. And we can make it better. If each of us takes on a project and implements those ideas that are so easy to talk about but just takes some work to implement, we will reach our true potential. Please read my article about club positions in the September newsletter before you vote.

I am pleased with the excellent group of newer members running for office and the renewed focus on education. I really enjoyed doing the Smoke Beer presentation at the September meeting and I hope others will do more presentations in the future. Cheers to the future! Hail Ninkasi!

Candidate Statement: Officer Position: Secretary: Julie McDonald

I have been involved with homebrewing for about 5 years now and a member of the homebrew club for three years. For those three years I have coordinated our beer dinner activities. I participate in as many club activities as my schedule will allow. I enjoy helping out wherever I am needed. I am highly organized, efficient and versatile. My 10 years of experience in office planning, administrative duties and scheduling could be put to good use as secretary for the GNBC board. I have held several board positions with The Alaska Club's Group Fitness Leadership council, including that of secretary, chair and vice chair. I would love the opportunity to put these skills to work for the best homebrew club in Alaska ;-)

Candidate Statement: Board Member: Joe Michael

My name is Joe Michael, and I am running for a board position in the GNBC. I am 32 years old, and am a lifelong Alaskan, born and raised here in Anchorage, and my family has a rich history here as well, dating back more than 60 years. I have been married to my wife Amber for 8 years, and we have 2 children, Alison (age 5) and Tucker (age 3).

Although I am a relatively new homebrewer, having only been active for a little over a year, I have a great interest in homebrewing and the art of craft beer and mead. What I may lack in "hours logged" experience, I believe I make up for in the skills and abilities I can offer in support of the club's endeavors. I have a great interest in assisting the clubs efforts on all fronts, serving both the existing members, and reaching out to potential new members and the community at large. I am willing to help anywhere there is a need, and hopefully learn something in the process to make myself a more experienced and learned homebrewer and lover of craft brewing. I'm interested in learning about the "behind the scenes" work that goes into longstanding brew club activities, and also am excited about new possibilities for the club, creating new traditions for the years to come. My overall goal is to be a catalyst for nurturing continued support of existing membership, fostering the growth of the club through new membership, and serving the overall needs and wants of the club wherever necessary to the best of my ability.





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

Candidate Statement: Board Member: Tim Strayer

I have been a member of the GNBC for a little over one year now. I have brewed many gallons of brew in this time, some good and some not so good (aka "experience"). My passion for brewing beer has taken me from the top of the kitchen stove to the spacious grounds of my garage where the neighbors often wonder, "What the #%!\$ is going on over there? Scales, propane, white powder, green plants, and copper - its got to be illegal!"

Well, in all seriousness, I do love to brew. I read books, web articles, learn from experienced brew club members, and most importantly I drink and share the beer I brew. I attended the BJCP course (most of it) last year and learned more than I could have imagined (can you say "Reinheitsgebot"?). My true focus and desire for this club is on education. My philosophy is that as a home brewer, I never stop learning; I just achieve different levels of mastery of the hobby/sport/business. I am always interested and willing to teach others so they can quickly learn the process as well as take time for myself to improve my methods and my equipment (ask me about my big blue fermentation chiller project some time).

I look forward to the opportunity to work more closely with both the leadership and the members of this club.

Candidate Statement: Board Member: John Trapp

I'm a year-year past Vice President and two-year past GNBC Club President. I'm currently on the board finishing up my two-year term and would like to serve another term. I've been Homebrewing for 17 years and a member of the GNBC for 11 years. I've gone through the BJCP program here and I think our club is one of the greatest contributing legacies we can offer to the brewing community. I think education is a great goal in the club, but my main concern is that members enjoy their experience with the club and have fun at club functions.

Candidate Statement: Board Member: Jack Smodey

My name is Jack Smodey and I am running for the position of board member. I am a brand new club member and pretty new to brewing. I've only been in the GNBC for a few months and brewing for about two years but I think that I have a lot to offer the club. For one I think that I can fairly well represent the new brewer demographic by supporting initiatives for more educational discussions as well as events and activities that mingle new brewers with the seasoned veterans. I also support alternatives that allow members to participate in group discussions, exchange recipes, methods, pictures and projects via an official online forum. As far as my brewing experience is concerned, I have been brewing partial mash, with a desire to move to all grain in the near future. I have also researched and assembled many do-it-yourself projects including a magnetic stir plate, a counter pressure bottle filler, and a three keg draft system. I enjoy every aspect of brewing and consuming beer and thrive on learning everything I can about it. In my short time as a member, I have been met with kindness and have felt very welcomed by the club. I look forward to the camaraderie, education, and good times! Thank you for your consideration.

Candidate Statement: Board Member: Jim Lamb

I have been a member of GNBC for three years. I would like to be elected to a board position because I want to see GNBC succeed and thrive. I have sat on the sidelines during these three years and benefited from other GNBC members time and experience, and now I feel it is my time to give something back to the club.

I have been brewing beer for three years now. With every batch I make, my knowledge increases and it prompts me to learn more. I am the perennial BJCP student, having taken the course four times. One of these days I will sit for the test. I have judged in eight GNBC sanctioned events over the last three years. Being a member of GNBC has honed my palate and broadened my knowledge of beer styles, beer making and turned me into a true gourmand of fermented beverages.

I view GNBC as more than "just a home brew club". Besides being an outstanding place to perfect one's home brewing skills, our club provides an opportunity to cultivate friendships; many of them life-long friendships.

Like most all of the candidates, I want to be a part of increasing the educational opportunities. I would also like to see us explore more opportunities for club sanctioned travel to beer venues.

If you were to ask people who have served on other boards with me or who work with me, they would say that I am always looking to orchestrate forward progress. If elected to the GNBC board, my commitment would be to work with GNBC leadership to move club activities forward...and to have the best time possible while moving club activities forward.



A Review of the Eagle River Brewfest & Auction

by Tracey Lewellyn

Several folks from GNBC attended the Eagle River Brewfest & Auction held Friday, October 16, 2009 to benefit the Eagle River Boys & Girls Club, I was fortunate enough to be one of them. Tickets were \$35 in advance and \$40 at the door and this included an etched 20th Anniversary pint glass, tickets for brew samples and a great dinner. There were both a silent and live auction.

The dinner was buffet style, serving up prime rib and pulled pork, cooked by the same person who has been doing the cooking since the conception of the Brewfest & Auction. There were 5 brewers present: Glacier Brewhouse, Midnight Sun Brewing (who also brought rootbeer), Alaskan Brewing Company and the newest member Denali Brewing Company. I don't remember each of the beers poured that night, but Glacier had a porter, an IPA and a blonde: Midnight Sun had TREAT, Trickster, Cosmic, Rumbah and a few others: Alaskan had their Baltic Porter, Barleywine and their Winter Ale: Denali Brewing Company served their Mother Ale and Twister Creek IPA.

All of the participating breweries donated items for the auction. Other items came from GCI, Home Away from Home Doggie Day Care, Garcia's, Super Suppers, Lowes and Spenards. Look around the group and see if you notice any new ink...someone purchased the tattoo offered by Eagle River Tattoo. There was a wide range of items auctioned off, from paint sprayers to automobile window replacements. One person donated a lot of homemade pies and cookies. Part of our group of attendees bid and won the "Brewmaster for a Day" at Glacier Brewhouse, where we get to go brew 500 gallons (yes: Five hundred gallons) of beer alongside the crew.

I called and spoke with the organizers after the event and discovered that this is the first year they sold out of tickets, met their monetary goals and expect to purchase playground equipment for the Boys and Girls Club. If anyone is interested in serving on the Parent Advisory Board, they would love to have someone from GNBC on it. You can reach Tracy Hupe at 907-694-5437. The Boys and Girls Club stated that next year, they may be willing to supply a bus and a driver to pick up members of GNBC at a pre-designated location in Anchorage and deliver the same parties to that spot after the gathering. We all encourage safe consuming. That is why I was on foot that night.

If you go next year, be careful of waving your hands at friends during the live auction. One such move caught by the auctioneer cost the person \$30, but the platter of cookies and the benefit it went toward was well worth it.

I attended an "after party" at Tim and Julie McDonald's and if anyone has had the pleasure of consuming any of Julie's meals or to attend a gathering held in the "cellar," you know that tasty food and great drinks were being served up. Folks put to good use Tim and Julie's newly finished Irish Coffin Tap box and I heard that one of the bottles shared downstairs was Sam Adams "Utopia." The delicious snacks included pierogies, smoked sausages and, my favorite of the evening: the chocolate cheesecake made with Old Rasputin Imperial Stout.

Out of all the people who attended, it is ironic that I am the one to share my memories of the evening.



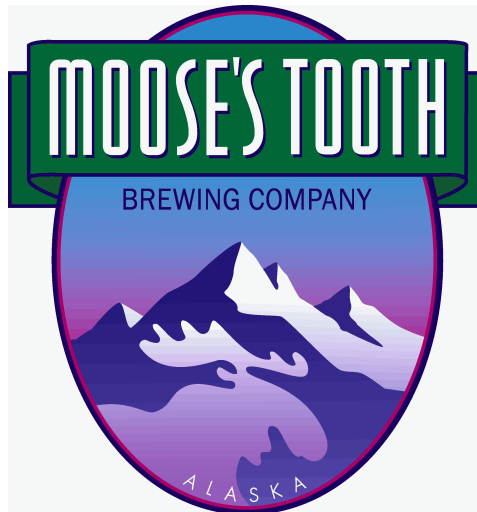
15th Annual Humpy's Big Fish Homebrew Competition (December 5, 2009)

by Jason Ditsworth

This is another reminder that the Humpy's Big Fish Homebrew competition is coming up quickly. Many of you already know that 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 Brewer of the Year award (the current standings are posted on the website at http://www.greatnorthernbrewers.org/competitions/2009_boty_points.html)

The Big Fish competition this year will once again be on the first weekend in December. Entries will be collected on Friday December 4 from **12:00 PM to 6:00 PM** at Arctic Brewing Supply. If you cannot make it to Arctic Brewing Supply on December 4 you can still enter the competition, so please give me a call to make other arrangements for entering your beer before December 4. If you are entering from outside Anchorage you can ship your beer to Arctic Brewing Supply, 8401 Sandlewood Place, 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 4, or it will not be entered – NO EXCEPTIONS. When shipping your entries please use standard AHA/BJCP competition labels and rubber band them to the bottles.

Judging this year is on Saturday December 5, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM, at SubZero. Please note that the competition this year again falls on the same day as the GNBC Christmas Party so we need lots 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 PM. Because the competition is on the same day as the Christmas Party we will announce the winners at the 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 guidelines, which are available at www.bjcp.org. Once again we will choose a best of show beer and a best of show mead/cider. 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. Cider is not eligible to be brewed as the best of mead/cider due to timing of the competition and the limited ability to match apple types. 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 MSBC to give a try).

A new requirement for the competition this year is that you must be available to participate in the recipe scaling and brewing of your award winning beer or mead. For example, if you are not available (i.e., you are not living in Alaska or not within driving distance of Anchorage) you are still eligible to win best of show; however, your beer or mead will not be brewed and put on the menu at Humpy's. The main reason for having this as the grand prize is for the brewer to be able to experience working with the professional brewer and brewing their beer on a commercial system.

To enter you must submit three 12- to 14-ounce bottles (PLEASE no swing tops), preferably brown, clean of any labels and markings along with a completed entry form (available at http://www.beertown.org/homebrewing/pdf/entry_recipe.pdf). 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 required that you provide a reasonably accurate recipe in case the judges want to know the ingredients to determine which entry can be brewed. This won't change the outcome of the best of show selection.

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.



Holiday Shopping Made Easy

Get Your GNBC Logo Gear

by Julie McDonald

It's getting very close to that time of year when the jolly man in red is looking for gift ideas for the homebrewer who has everything! We thought we'd make his job a little easier this year.

For all of us that have been clamoring for club logo merchandise, check out these two options.

1. Alaska Textiles - The GNBC logo is on file for application to tee shirts, jackets, hats, etc. They are located at Fireweed and Spenard, next to Alaska Cleaners.
 - Call them at 265-4880
 - Check them out online at <http://www.alaskatextiles.com/>
 - Embroidery cost varies, depending on the number of stitches. For example a baseball cap with front logo and back logo will cost the price of the cap plus an additional \$16.29. For a shirt, the price of the shirt and an additional \$21.56. If things are ordered in multiples the cost of embroidery is discounted.
2. Land's End Business Outfitters - Get hats, fleece, Ts, bags, water bottles, scarves, aprons, etc. Our Company Store is up and running... all YOU have to do is use it! Here's how:
 - Log on to your Internet Explorer browser, their websites do not run on Mozilla Firefox, they run best on IE.
 - Enter this URL: ces.landsend.com/gnbclub there is no need to add the http:/ prefix to this, just cut and paste it as is.
 - You will need to register before you can order, it's a simple procedure, doesn't take long. Just click on "Sign In". It brings you to a sign in page, click "register with us" and voila, enter your info.
 - There are no restrictions on what we can order. But keep in mind that some products are only available in bulk quantities. So be aware of that before placing your order.
 - Embroidery cost is between \$13.00 and \$14.05 per application depending on which fabrics/products we order.

So there you have it!

Now get busy getting your club gear ordered and on it's way!!!! There are roughly 50 shopping days left!!!!



A Short History of Kassik's Kenai Brew Stop

by *Debara Kassik*

Kassik's Kenai Brew Stop is housed in a small warehouse which is nestled in a clearing in the woods, adjacent to the Kassik home in Nikiski, Alaska. Owner Frank Kassik's passion for brewing began when I bought him a home brew kit for Christmas one year. Frank was hooked and soon became a proficient home brewer. We built a 36' X 50' shop in hopes of someday having a brewery. In May of 2005 we purchased a used seven barrel brewing system and then, with the help of family and friends, remodeled the building to accommodate the equipment. The brewery opened during Memorial Weekend in 2006. We had no idea what to expect when we opened. The only objective was to make a good product and offer the best customer service we could. We brew to our tastes and hope others like it as well.

Over the last two years our beer sales have doubled in barrelage. Frank and I struggled to keep up over this last summer working seven days a week, especially with The Odom Group, an Anchorage distributor, doing a great job of getting our product to market. Keeping up and keeping it together is about to pay off. Our son Jason left the Air Force in September, and he and his wife have joined the family business. With four people around the brewery things are starting to get a little easier. We're expanding our building slightly to accommodate more refrigeration, storage and new equipment, which we are hoping to have in place by the end of next summer. Our next enhancement will be a new tasting room.

Kassik's will release a new brew each month with a first taste for Anchorage at the Millennium on the third Thursday of the month. Our Double Wood (Double IPA, 8.4 ABV and 95 IBUs) is planned for November. Other planned releases will be 2009 Smoked Russian Imperial Stout, 2009 Spiced Cream Ale, our first Maple Porter and Imperial Cherry Stout. We encourage GNBC members to attend these releases!

Other than just cranking out beer, we are involved in many community events, and are proud sponsors of the Peninsula Oilers Baseball, Kenai River Brown Bears Hockey, as well as many other organizations here on the Peninsula. In 2009 we were the proud recipients of the Kenai Chamber of Commerce Small Business Award.

For more information you can check out our website: www.kassikskenaibrewstop.com. For updates via Facebook you can become a fan through our website, or just look for Kassik's Logo.



Brewer of the Year 2010 – Categories

by Kerri Canepa

The GNBC Brewer of the Year (BOTY) Program for 2009 is about to wrap up. With the upcoming Big Fish competition it's time to look ahead to next year. Below are the BOTY categories for 2010 GNBC homebrew competitions. There have been some new categories added this year and those are italicized.

Use this list to plan your brewing schedule through the next year particularly for the bigger beers and meads. It's never too late to start – so go get brewing!

2010 categories

Fur Rendezvous Home Brew Competition

- Category 12 Porter
- Category 18 Belgian Strong Ale
- Category 19 Strong Ale
- Category 23 Specialty Beer
- *Category 28 Specialty Cider*

Snow Goose Breakup Home Brew Competition

- Category 1 Light Lager
- Category 3 European Amber Lager
- *Category 4 Dark Lager*
- Category 6 Light Hybrid Beer
- Category 16 Belgian and French Ale

Anchor Town Invitational Home Brew Competition

- Category 7 Amber Hybrid Beer
- Category 10 American Ale
- Category 13 Stout
- Category German Wheat and Rye Beer
- *Category 27 Standard Cider*

Equinox Mead Competition

- Category 24 Traditional Mead
- Category 25 Melomel (Fruit Mead)
- Category 26 Other Mead

Humpy's Big Fish Home Brew Competition

- Category 2 Pilsner
- Category 5 Bock
- *Category 9 Scottish and Irish Ale*
- Category 14 India Pale Ale
- Category 22 Smoke Flavored and Wood-Aged Beer



The Incredible Beer and Travel Adventures of Todd Rock

Part 2, Seattle

By Todd Rock

(When last we saw Todd, he was on the ferry in Ketchikan after having explored Juneau. We return to the story as he arrives in Bellingham...)

My final destination on the boat was Bellingham, WA. Thinking that I had been rather successful—depending on how you define success—in Ketchikan I followed the same plan and caught a ride from the boat with another passenger to the nearest state park. Unfortunately I was not as lucky as I had been and wound up stranded in Larrabee State Park for four days before my ride from Missouri could get me. I had made arrangements with an acquaintance for a ride into Seattle but he suffered a last minute divorce and was not able to pick me up. Fortunately, on the second day a nice family—complete with a Canadian Country & Western singer—adopted me for the duration of the Labor Day holiday. They even gave me a ride into town for supplies, beer, and fed me for the duration. As for the beer, their beverage of choice was Busch in cans which I bought a thirty pack of. For myself I saw my first six pack of New Belgium Triple in over a year, and despite the proliferation of Oregon and Washington brew, I bought it. This might sound odd to some of you but the NB Triple was one of the first craft brews that I fell in love with and I had been sorely missing it in Alaska. At 7.8% (down from the 8.5% of my college days in Missouri) with a light fruity aroma, faint floral alcohol presence and a dry hoppy finish, this stuff is not to be trifled with. No worries—in the days to follow there would be more than enough Oregon and Washington beer.

I was finally rescued on Tuesday afternoon. From there my friend Skippy and I went to the brewpubs in Bellingham, about which I had been dreaming for several days. We first visited the Chuckanut Brewing Co. which just won best small brewpub at this year's GABF. Their beers focused on German Style ales and lagers and while all of them were clean and quaffable it seemed that as you worked through a sampler they all began to run together, with nothing setting them apart besides color and some subdued stylistic character. From there we moved on to the Boundary Bay Brewing Co. Here we were treated to a wide variety of beers including an Imperial Oatmeal Stout, a double IPA and what was to be the first of dozens of Black IPA's. As it turns out the style set for the Humpy's Big Fish side challenge has taken the Northwest by storm.

Up next was Seattle. I thought I would have several days in which to arrange this leg of our beer tour, but since I lost the anticipated planning time in Seattle, we did the best we could. Our first stop, thanks to the GPS locator on my friend Skippy's iPhone, was a beer bar called Brouwers. One of the great disappointments of my entire trip was that I did not have enough time to get a hotel across the street from this place and just drink there for several days. They had an extensive tap collection—think Humpy's, but you'd only be familiar with about ten beers on tap— with beers from craft brewers all across the American west, and imports such as the Duchess and Abbey du Roccs.

I had the distinct pleasure of sitting down with a Duchess alongside a La Folie from New Belgium. While I am sure you are all familiar with the Duchess, the La Folie is a Flemish style brown. While the Duchess has that intriguing sweet and sour dichotomy the example from New Belgium was not fooling around and was all sour. My only complaint about it is that it has a flaw similar to many American interpretations of sour beers: there was the slightest hint of acetic acid. I also sampled a double IPA from Laughing Dog in Idaho called The Alpha Dog, and something called Double Barrel Ale from Firestone Walker. While no one could fill me in on what the Double Barrel was, it reminded me of an old ale which had undergone a brief barrel aging. The Alpha dog would be one of the first of many incredibly impressive double IPA's which we would stumble across in Portland the next day. Light and citrusy with an incredible hop flavor and aroma without an overbearing bitterness and a pleasant sweetness that made me want to just chug the stuff. (Which I do not recommend seeing as how the beer rang in at 8%.) I greedily downed mine and decided I had better retreat before me and my compatriot in beer really did get stuck.

From there we found the quintessential Seattle package beer store: The Bottleworks. While I drooled over the selection of microbrews and German and Belgian imports—many of which were unfamiliar to me—I settled on two beers I had wanted to try but had been unable to obtain: a Carcole Nostradamus and a Hansen's Oude Kriek. After that we made an obligatory stopover at the Pike Market for a Monk's Uncle Triple and an Extra Stout. If you haven't familiarized yourself with Pikes line-up then you are really missing something.

Smoke 'em if you got 'em

By Breck Tostevin

This article is adapted from my Smoke Beer presentation at the GNBC September meeting. I will focus more on the smoke beer recipes I presented and how — as suggested by Mr. Hall — they might be improved upon.

For those with a serious interest in Smoke Beer I highly recommend the book "Smoked Beers, History, Brewing Techniques, Recipes" by Ray Daniels and Geoffrey Larson published by Brewers Publications in 2000. Both these gentlemen are well-known to Alaskan brewers: Geoff Larson is one of the founders of Alaskan Brewing Company (home of the famous Alaskan Smoked Porter) and Ray Daniels was the special guest at one of the past Great Alaska Beer and Barley Wine Festivals and is the author of the great brewing book "Designing Great Beers" which I recommend as well.

"Why brew an ale or a lager when you can brew smoke beer?," suggested John Craig, at an early GNBC Brewathon held behind the former Borealis Brewery.

At one time all beer was smoke beer. Before the invention of coke fired-malt kilns, most germinated barley was dried (kilned) using wood as a heat source. During this drying process, the wood smoke imparted smoke character to the malt that influenced the final brew. To avoid smoke character, early recipes called for malt dried using straw or other subtle tasting fuel sources. In the 1680s-1700s coal-fired kilns took over and smoke character in beer died out in all but a few strong holds around the world. Luckily, smoke beer lived on in Franconia, Bavaria in the town of Bamberg. This is the home of the classic Rauchbier which is described in BJCP Style Guidelines category 22A. Beechwood is the traditional wood for making smoked malt in Bamberg. Beechwood smoke malt is available to the homebrewer through Weyermann. Classic rauchbier is a Marzen/Oktobertfest-style lager with a sweet, smoky aroma and flavor and a somewhat darker color and spiced with German/Czech hops. Some use small amount of dark grains. Classic examples are Schlenkerla Classic Marzen and Spezial Rauch Marzen.

Category 22B of the BJCP Guidelines is Other Smoked Beer. 22B is defined as a classical beer style with smoked character that complements the traditional Style. The style guidelines call for a balance between smoke, hops and malt. It is most helpful to think of balance not in terms of equal weight but in terms of whether those three components complement one another. Classic examples include Alaskan Smoked Porter which is brewed with alder-smoked malt. The malt is smoked using both cold and hot smoking techniques in a process that originated at the Taku Smokeries in Juneau.

Brewing Smoked Beers. Here are the general principles. Know the smoke power of your malt. Choose your smoke source: Rauch malt from Weyermann's, Home-smoked malt or peat malt. Peat Malt is insanely powerful – use less than 2 oz for five gallons. I prefer rauch malt for its depth of smoke character without harshness. Test home smoked malt by making a tea. I use only a couple of ounces of home smoke malt to boost a rauch malt based wort. Smoke strength in malt decreases over time. Daniels and Larson estimate a loss of 20% of smoke power per year. Hops and smoke aroma clash so reduce hop flavor/aroma additions in Classic Beer Styles. Pay attention to Your Base Beer. Also think about the advantages of a lager versus an ale yeast. In either case, fruity esters are not necessarily what you want in a smoke beer. Here are some recipes I have brewed over the years.

Bamberg Baby (5 gallons) Classic Rauchbier.
10 lbs Weyermann Rauchmalz
.12 lbs Black Patent
1.5 oz Hallertauer pellets 90 minutes (21 IBUs)
Mash Schedule: 122 degrees
After ½ hour pull first decoction
149 degrees mash
167 mash out
1054 og 1015 fg
Munich Lager Yeast





This is an all grain beer using a decoction mash. Decoction mashing involves taking out a portion of the mash, bringing it to a boil and then adding it to the rest of the mash to increase the mash temperature. For details on decoction mashing see Greg Noonan's book "New Brewing Lager Beer." I think this one turned out well but did not quite meet my Bamberg dream.

Brewathon Smoke Bomb (6 gallons) May 3, 2003 Rauch Doppelbock

10 bs Rauch Malt
14.5 lbs Dried Light Malt Extract
.12 lb Black Patent Malt
2 lbs Cara-Vienna
2.75 oz Tettnanger Tettang 60 min. .5 oz at 2 min
White Labs Bock Yeast
OG 1095. FG 1028 (11/11/03)
Kaurasened with ½ gallons and .5 lbs DME with German Bock Yeast at Bottling

This was a very strong beer with good rauch character. At first a little too hot in terms of alcohol, this beer improved greatly as it aged. Perhaps brew it smaller or add some Munich malt for complexity.

Rauch Wine II, August 2002 (5 Gallons)

15 lbs Rauch Malt
5 lbs Munich
1 lb Wheat Malt
2 lbs Biscuit Malt
1 lb 80 l Crystal Malt Smoked in Little Chief with 2/3 pan of Apple Wood and 1/3 of Hickory
1 lb Caramunich
.5 lb Flaked Wheat
.5 Flaked Oats
2 oz Chocolate Malt
1 oz Perle 60 min
1 oz Centennial 60 min
1.5 oz Cascade 30 min
1 oz Cascade 5 min
1 oz Cascade steep
56 IBUs
Mash 150 for 90 minutes
OG 1.118 FG 1026
Wyeast 1056 California Ale Yeast
2 hour boil

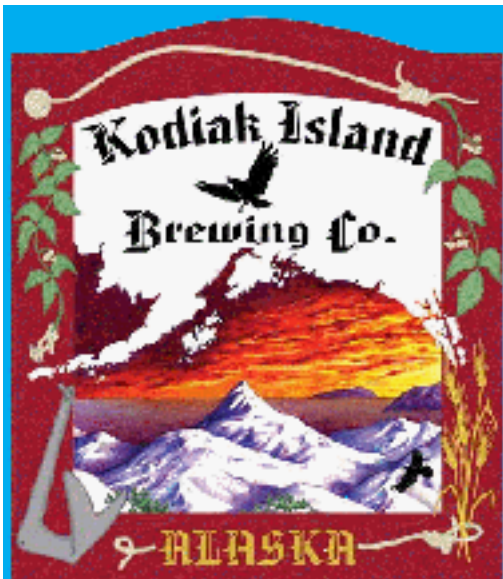
I really liked this beer. It had the complexity of a barley wine with the rauch character. I have experimented with the recipe in

several other batches. I am not sure if I have improved upon this attempt. The challenge is the smoke/hop interplay. Hop bitterness is needed so the beer is not too sweet but too much masks the smoke character. There is a similar interplay with the aroma hops as well.

Fritz Maytag's Big Smoked Unit (Imperial Smoked California Common)

Brewathon May 2004. 10 gallons
30 lbs Rauch Malt
2 lbs Munich Malt
2.5 lbs Crystal Malt 40 l
1 lb Toasted Malt
1 lb CaraPilsner
Mash at 150 for 70 minutes
.5 oz EK Goldings 90 min
1.75 oz Northern Brewer 60 min
.75 oz Northern Brewer 45 min
.50 oz Northern Brewer 30 min
.50 oz Perle 15 min
.7 oz Amarillo 10 min
.3 oz Simcoe 10 min
1.0 oz Cascade 5 min
54 IBUs
California Common Yeast
OG 1096 FG Unknown

This beer had deep smoked character from a fresh bag of rauch malt. Hops and fruity character of the yeast complimented the smoke. We served this beer at the AHA National Convention in Las Vegas using oosik tap handles. It was well received by the attendees.



Katherine's Smoked Love Juice

Smoked Russian Imperial Stout, May 2009 (7 gallons) Partial Mash
9 lbs Rauch Malt
6 lbs Light Dry Malt Extract
1 lb Roast Barley
1.5 lbs CaraMunich 60
1 lb Chocolate Malt
.5 lb Black Patent Malt
OG 1082 FG 1018
2 oz Amarillo 60 min
2 oz EK Goldings 10 min
2 oz EK Goldings 1 min
Wyeast Scottish Ale Yeast
Cold Lager while in Secondary

This beer was inspired by a beer I had at Kassik's Kenai Brew Stop on the 2009 Kenai Bus Tour. I loved Frank Kassik's version but I thought I could make it even smokier. I am not sure I have succeeded in enhancing the smoke character because of the dark grain character of my version. This recipe could be improved with Dextrin malt to improve the body. Remember to ferment the Scottish Ale at a lower temperature. Perhaps tone down the roasted barley and do an all-grain version with all rauch malt instead of the dry malt extract.

So here are some smoke beer recipes you can experiment with. I would be interested in discussing and sampling your efforts.

GNBC Survey Executive Summary

by *Tim Bisson*

The following is a brief synopsis of what the survey revealed about what GNBC is, what members want from our club and what those members think of our club.

In February 2009 we sent out 156 surveys to GNBC club members, beer distributors, and professional brewers. We got 106 surveys returned for a 68% response rate. This is an impressive response rate and shows that people care about the club. It also shows that our survey results are representative of what members believe about our club. Thanks to everyone who completed the survey.

The survey was designed to learn about overall member satisfaction with the club, the newsletter, monthly meetings, events GNBC sponsors and other topics. It also had many open ended questions so members could express ways to improve the club and anything they wanted to comment on. And there were many great comments. There was also interest in learning club demographics and member brewing habits (what, how often, etc).

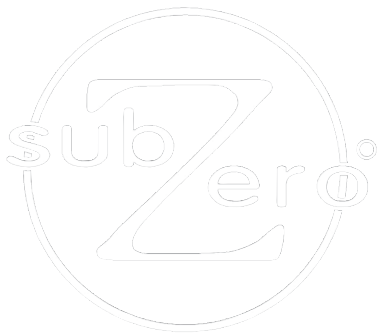


Survey General Results

GNBC is primarily comprised of men between the ages of 40-60 who have been brewing more than five years and have been in the club more than three years. In general, over half of GNBC club members are satisfied or extremely satisfied with every aspect of the club. 80% of the club is satisfied or extremely satisfied with the club as a whole. But, 5% is somewhat dissatisfied and one percent is extremely dissatisfied with the club as a whole. In general people are happy with club.

Member's Dissatisfactions/Areas for Improvement

There are many places where improvements can be made. The biggest place for improvement is in the educational value of the club. 23% of the club is neutral or less satisfied with the educational value of the club. This was also expressed in many comments that more education should be provided and more emphasis should be on homebrewing techniques and less emphasis on drinking. Also, 42% of the club picked "learn more about brewing" as their primary reason for joining the club. This is quite telling especially since there were five options to choose from.



There is also some dissatisfaction with the management of the club. 21% of the club is neutral or less satisfied with the management of the club. Comments included that leadership's commitment is lacking, board members are in "token" positions, and future leaders need to be recruited.

The newsletter is another area for improvement. 73% of the club is satisfied or extremely satisfied with the newsletter. But, 18% is neutral or less satisfied with the newsletter. Comments about the newsletter included a desire for timelier posting, articles on technical

aspects of homebrewing, and to have the newsletter mailed to some members.

There were also many positive comments that members are learning a lot, are impressed by club's leadership and love the newsletter. Not everything was negative; Some recommendations are highlighted here.

Recommendations

- Increase emphasis on education during meetings including style discussions, equipment discussion and technical matters.
- Have more group brews.
- Create a way for people to find a brewing partner or a loose mentor type relationship.

- Decrease emphasis on drinking at meetings. Bring more homebrew and less commercial brew.
- Encourage (recruit) more people to get involved in sharing their brewing knowledge at meetings and by submitting articles.
- Snail mail the newsletter to people for a fee. (\$1/newsletter?)
- Complete and post the newsletter by the first of every month.
- Include more newsletter articles on brewing technical matters.

Overall, survey results indicated overall general satisfaction with the Club but some dissatisfaction in specific areas. A more thorough analysis is underway and a more detailed report will be presented in a future edition of the Club newsletter.

Blackcurrants Free for the Taking!

by *Dennis Sessler*

Editor's Note: The technical (non-brewing) portion of this article was extracted from Wikipedia at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blackcurrants>.

The **Blackcurrant** (*Ribes nigrum*) is a species of Ribes berry native to central and northern Europe and northern Asia. It is also known as French "cassis". It is a small shrub growing to 1-2 m tall. The leaves are alternate, simple, 3–5 cm long and broad, and palmately lobed with five lobes, with a serrated margin. The flowers are 4–6 mm diameter, with five reddish-green to brownish petals; they are produced in racemes 5–10 cm long.

When not in fruit, the plant looks similar to the redcurrant shrub, distinguished by a strong fragrance from leaves and stems. The fruit is an edible berry 1 cm diameter, very dark purple in color, almost black, with a glossy skin and a persistent calyx at the apex, and containing several seeds dense in nutrients.

There are many cultivars of blackcurrant, including: Amos Black, Ben Alder, Ben Avon, Ben Connan, Ben Dorain, Ben Gairn, Ben Hope, Ben Lomond, Ben Loyal, Ben More, Ben Sarek, Ben Tirran, Big Ben, Boskoop Giant, Cotswold Cross and Wellington XXX. New varieties are being developed all the time to improve frost tolerance, disease resistance, machine harvesting, fruit quality, nutritional content and fruit flavour.

Culinary Uses

In the UK, blackcurrant cordial is often mixed with cider to make a drink called Cider & Black available at pubs. Adding a small amount of blackcurrant juice to Guinness is preferred by some to heighten the taste of the popular beer. Macerated blackcurrants are also the primary ingredient in the apéritif *crème de cassis*. Japan imports \$3.6 million in New Zealand blackcurrants for uses as dietary supplements, snacks, functional food products and as quick-frozen (IQF) produce for culinary production as jams, jellies or preserves. In Russia, blackcurrant leaves are often used for flavoring tea. Sweetened vodka may also be infused with blackcurrant leaves or berries, making a deep yellowish-green beverage with a sharp flavor and astringent taste.

Blackcurrant berries have a distinctive sweet and sharp taste popular in jam, juice, ice cream, and liqueur. They are a common ingredient of Rote Grütze, a popular kissel-like dessert in North German cuisine and Danish cuisine. In the UK, Europe and Commonwealth countries, some types of confectionery include a blackcurrant flavor, and in Belgium and the Netherlands, *cassis* is a favored currant soft drink. In the United States, Blackcurrant 'flavor' is rather rare in candies and jellies compared to UK candies. Blackcurrant syrup mixed with white wine is called Kir or Kir Royale when mixed with Champagne.



Cooking

Other than being juiced and used in jellies, syrups, and cordials, blackcurrants are used in cooking because their astringent nature brings out flavor in many sauces, meat dishes and desserts. It was once thought that currants needed to be "topped and tailed" (the stalk and flower-remnants removed) before cooking. However, this is not the case as these parts are easily assimilated during the cooking process. If one prefers, the whole blackcurrant stem with fruit can be frozen, then shaken vigorously. The tops and tails are broken off and fruit can be separated easily.

Ok, now that you all have that Wiki stuff, it's time to get to the nitty gritty. I have been raising blackcurrants for about four seasons. My first four plants were transplants from my boss when he sold his house. Over the next year Dena and I bought about 10 plants from a nursery. After two seasons the ones purchased from the nursery were ripped out and burned, some kind of fungus would affect the leaves causing them to wilt, turn brown and die. I tried all sorts of treatments only to find out that the four original plants were unaffected by the disease. I had another 10 solid plants ready to replace the bad ones. Today we have about 16 plants all ranging from two feet tall to about five feet tall. Next summer I will be building a trellis line much like wine grapes are grown on. This will aid in providing much needed sunlight and air to the middle of the plant, as well as making the harvest time much shorter. The variety that I have is a vigorous grower. I perform a spring and fall pruning to keep the plants manageable. All the clippings are planted in 4-6 inch pots, the leaves will fall off and in about two months, the clipping will have new roots. The following spring I plant in rows about 5-6 feet apart. If they are left unpruned this variety will grow out of control, making harvest time a true bear. Every year around the end of August or early September I harvest all the berries. I simply pick all the debris off and lay on a cookie sheet to freeze. Then I place the berries in freezer bags until ready for use. Like most fruit, the longer you wait to harvest, the riper (sweeter) and the longer you wait to freeze the fruit will be. I use a steam juicer to turn the berries into juice that is free of pulp, then hot water bath the jars for 10 minutes to preserve till use. Uses you may be wondering, well Dena and I have plans to brew beers, mead and fruit ciders with this tasty juice. The juice can also be used to make jellies, and syrups amongst other things. Remember every spring and fall I prune these monsters back and will gladly give the clipping away to any GNBC member. The clippings are easy to grow into a mature plant and in no time you will have fruit producing plants of your own. Monitor the GNBC Facebook page set up with the most up to date info and blogs on everything beer and food related. I will post there this spring if anyone is interested in clippings, till then BREW ON.



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