



THE

Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB

NOVEMBER 2014

The Prez Sez

by Peter Hall



Longer nights and bigger beer are ahead of me. I'm honestly looking forward to it. I would say that I appreciate winter and summer equally; I'm just not a fan of the transition between the two. Now that it is colder, and is going to stay

that way for several months, I am back into a regular and predictable brewing schedule. The GNBC calendar really fills out in the winter months too.

First and foremost, it's election time. We have three board positions up for a vote and all of the executive spots. I'd rather not say right now who is running. I feel it may dissuade others from throwing their names in the hat. I've already alluded to running again, so there is one little piece. I promise you, my feelings will not be hurt if you decide to run against me. If you have any questions about the available spots you can send me an email at president@greatnorthernbrewers.org

We are going to send out 2014 with a bang. This is the 20th Annual Humpy's Big Fish Homebrew Competition year. Humpy's and Midnight Sun are cooking up some wild prizes to help celebrate this momentous occasion. If you are yet to enter into a competition or to judge one, this is the one to get started off right. The time is now. This is already the largest competition that the GNBC puts on and this year should be a big one. You can come out to Sub Zero at 612 F St at 10 am on December 6th to see how easy and fun it can be.

Keeping the party rolling, we will be headed back to the Alaska Zoo for our annual Christmas party. We were at the Zoo last year and from what I heard/experienced, it was a smashing success. So we decided to go back there again. This year we will be partying Speak Easy circa 1925 (or so) style. Big Fish should wrap up with enough time for you to eat something before heading out to the Gateway Hall at the zoo at 7pm. More information follows.

The Prez Sez

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NEWSLETTER EDITOR

DEBBIE GRECCO

The GNBC has cleaned up yet again at the Valdez homebrew competition. Thank you Brian Noonan for working to make sure we are a part of it. We are happy to send our beers down with a small entry fee and then come home with much more than we left with. For all of us, it was either "just" a great experience or even some extra cash. Thank you Valdez for inviting all of us down. And thank you GNBC for doing such a great job of representing yourself so well.

Looking ahead my traditional three months puts me smack in the middle of Beer Week. There is so much going on and so much still to plan that I can only mention some amorphous cloud off in the distance. Beer Week is in January and there are a ton of events, including our big beer week meeting.

I struggled to formulate my message. I procrastinated terribly in getting it done. Hopefully I managed some sort of clarity. I was sure that the Hall-o-ween fuzz had worn off, until I tried to write. If you have any kinds of questions/comments/concerns *or you want to run for a board or executive position*, please email me at president@greatnorthernbrewers.org Keep your brews hot and beers cold.

Prez Peter



Secretary's Corner

by Jeff Shearer

The Secretary's Corner will be a bit abbreviated this month. Don't mistake this for it being a slow time of year for all things homebrew and beer-related. It's mostly due to negligence on my part. Last month's club meeting covered a variety of topics. There was a bit of serendipity in that we briefly tossed out an idea for a future club brew project while Peter brought a bottle of Russian Imperial Stout that was a result of the last club brew project. Though many details are yet to be worked out, we're thinking we'll brew a sour ale for the next project. If you have ideas, send me a note. Otherwise, stay tuned.

I'd be remiss if I didn't briefly share the wonderful experience I had this past weekend while visiting Bellingham, Washington. I always try to stop by a couple breweries or brewpuds when visiting a new area. Chuckanut Brewing and Kitchen was among my stops this time around. If you're ever in northwest Washington, put Chuckanut on your list.

For a relatively young brewery (established in 2008) their list of awards and accolades is impressive. Unfortunately, their 2014 GABF gold medal winning Dunkel was not yet on tap. But their Fest Bier (Vienna lager), Bohemian Pilsner, and Munich Helles were among the best brewed lagers I've tasted in a while. I won't prattle on anymore; just know this place is worth checking out.



If you've been dragging your feet on buying GNBC glassware, your time is running out. We have just over a case left. Glasses are \$7 each. That case will go quickly at the January club meeting. The GNBC Board has decided to not order glassware for 2015. That makes January 2016 the earliest opportunity to buy glasses again if you pass on this year's stock. Don't say you weren't warned.

TAP (Training for Alcohol Professionals) classes are held at CHARR's Charlie H. Selman Training Center located at 1503 W. 31st Avenue, Suite 101 Anchorage, AK. This certification is required if you pour or steward at any fests or competitions. For a schedule of upcoming classes, go here: <http://alaskacharr.com/training/tap-schedules/>

Rules of Conduct:

All GNBC Members have been asked to sign an updated Rules of Conduct form. Please contact Ross/Membership Coordinator for a form or you can obtain a Rules of Conduct form at our next GNBC meeting. This implementation will continue at each meeting for the current year/ annual membership.

We will have some new procedures for our events and meetings. Our monthly meeting will now have a designated start and ending time, as well as a last call to serve homebrew at 9 pm. Lights out, closed up and a final walk through will be conducted at 9:45pm by a GNBC officer/ board member.

Remember if you have ideas for educational segments or guest speakers, or beer/ homebrew related events feel free to post them on our Facebook page or contact me at shearer.jeff@gmail.com.



EVENTS

Every First Thursday
Moose's Tooth First Tap

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

18.....GNBC Monthly Meeting at the
Snow Goose 7:00 pm

15.....Alaska SeaLife Center (Seward)
RBCA 8th Annual Beer & Wine
Tasting 7-10 pm: \$38 pp

29.....Entries Accepted for the Humpy's
Big Fish Homebrew Competition
10 AM - 5 PM

6.....Judging for the Humpy's Big Fish
Homebrew Competition 10 AM
at Subzero

6.....GNBC Speak Easy Christmas
Party at the Alaska Zoo
7-11 PM

9.....Hard Rock Cafe
Alaskan Brewing Company Beer
Dinner Time/Cost TBT



20th Annual Humpy's Big Fish Homebrew Competition

by Peter Hall

For the twentieth year, the Humpy's Big Fish Homebrew Competition remains one of the biggest Homebrew competitions in Alaska. Midnight Sun Brewing Company has graciously offered brew this year's grand prize winning beer, within reason. What this means is if the winner is a five year old, oak aged, smoked gruit, we'll probably need to brew the runner's up beer, again, within reason. Humpy's Great Alaskan Alehouse is once again hosting the Club and the competition at SubZero.



The judging will take place on December 6th. Tasting will begin promptly at 10:00 AM, at SubZero located at 612 F St in downtown Anchorage, next to Humpy's. All are welcome to help judge, even if you've never judged before. This is especially valuable if you have never judged before because this is a great competition to get acquainted with the judging process. Don't fear that you are new to this; you will be paired with other qualified judges that will walk you through the whole thing in a casual, noon-judgmental atmosphere.

Entries will be accepted Saturday November 29th at Arctic Brewing Supply from 10am to 5pm. There is no entry fee for GNBC members, and all categories are open for entry. I'm sure if you are in the running for Home Brewer of The Year (HOBTY), you already know those categories, but categories include, Category 3: (European Amber), Category 5 (Bock), Category 13 (Stout), Category 17 (Sour), and Category 19 (Strong ale). This year's side challenge is Category 26b (Braggot).

Contact Peter Hall at president@greatnorthernbrewers.org with any questions.



Palmer, Alaska

Speak Easy Christmas

by Jason Lewis

Calling all those who want to take a walk on wild side! This year's Christmas party is fast approaching so grab your best prohibition (~1925) themed outfit and some homemade fermented suds, then foxtrot down to the Alaska Zoo on December 6th for our annual holiday bash!

There will be a prize for best costume and Hot Dish will perform a set to bring in the holidays in ole bluegrass fashion!

This year's party will start at 7 pm and end at 11 pm. If needed, you may leave your vehicle in the zoo parking lot for the night. Getting home safely is the most important part. A carpool with a DD is far more agreeable than a ride in the paddy wagon. So dust off the spats and bring out the barley wine and we will see you at the party!!

Grab me at the meeting, and call (503-957-4871) or text if you can help or want to arrange rides.

GNBC Member Beer Dinners Return

by *Julie McDonald*

Hey GNBC members! It's been a long time since our Club has had structured beer dinners, but this fun club feature is returning.

First, let me say thanks to Ira Edwards for stepping up to host a dinner. It's been a few years since we've had anyone interested in hosting.

Here's a reminder about how this works:

1. If you want to be on the beer dinner email list, please contact me at juzy@gci.net and let me know. We will also post beer dinner info on the club's Facebook page.
2. Once you receive an email or see the FB announcement, read through the details thoroughly.
3. Email, text, or FB message me ASAP with your choice of course and to reserve your spot(s).
4. Dinners are open to GNBC members and a +1. If you don't have a +1 when you are claiming your spot, let me know.
5. You don't need to know your specific pairing when you reserve your spot, you can work on that after. But I do need to know what course and a second choice of courses should your first one already be spoken for.
6. Remember that dinners can be filling, so smaller portions are usually appreciated in order for us to enjoy each course.
7. If you have to cancel, email/text/FB message me ASAP so that I can fill the spot(s).

The November beer dinner has been announced and filled already. However, we are looking for hosts for upcoming dinners. The hosts really do nothing more than offer their homes, provide ambiance, and plates, utensils, etc. We have had plenty of dinners where paper plates and plastic utensils have been used so don't feel like you need to pull out your best china although we won't discourage you if that's what you want to do.

Some of us really get into the whole entertaining thing while some of us are best suited to just a casual, laid back approach.

Hosts also get to decide on theme and max number of guests. So, if you only have room for four people plus yourself, that's fine. We've had dinners range from 20-ish guests to as small as six total guests. That's the great thing about hosting, you get to make the rules.

I take care of all of the coordination via email, Facebook, and club meetings when I can attend.

December and January are typically busy months with holidays and local beer activities going on. If you'd like to pick a date in one of these two upcoming months go ahead. We can put the info out there and see who is interested. If it doesn't work out, we can push it out to February. So, just shoot me a quick email if you want on to the list or if you want to host.

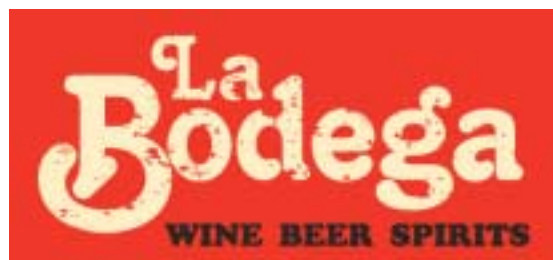
juzy@gci.net

MEETING SETUP

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

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

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



Holiday Shopping Made Easy! GNBC Logo Gear For Giving or For You

by *Julie McDonald*

It's just about time to get holiday shopping underway. What makes a great gift for your special GNBC homebrewer? GNBC logo gear, of course! Check out these two options:

1. Alaska Textiles – We now have a webstore at Alaska Textiles. Items are still being added to the store, but you can go check it out and if you don't see items that you want let me (Julie) know and I'll contact them and see about getting them added to our store.

- Check it out online at <http://gnbc.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 favorite browser.

- 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 its way!!!! The holiday shopping countdown has begun!



Vanilla Robust Porter

by *Jeff Shearer*

I've been involved in enough homebrew competitions to know that nothing makes a judge cringe more than being asked to evaluate the Spice / Herb / Vegetable beers. A common problem with many Spice / Herb / Vegetable beers is that they lack balance. When adding a spice to a beer, the spice should complement the flavors of the base beer, not overpower it or be buried under something else. Balance is key.

I've only tried a few habanero pepper beers. Of those, I've never actually finished one. But you can make a good habanero pepper beer if you know how to balance the heat of the peppers at a level that complements the base beer. Case in point: Jeremy Voeltz (2014 Ninkasi Award winner) won a gold medal at this year's National Homebrew Competition with a habanero IPA, beating out 483 other S/H/V beers. Another trap we sometimes fall into is thinking that we can 'save' a bad batch of beer by adding spices. Adding spices to a bad beer only gives you a bad spiced beer; it doesn't fix a mistake. If you take away nothing else, know that balance and a solid base beer are key to brewing a good Spice / Herb / Vegetable beer.

The Vanilla Robust Porter recipe below has won me more awards than any of my other recipes. There's just something about the flavors and aroma of vanilla beans and a good Robust Porter that work very well together. For this recipe, you'll see vanilla beans listed. Yes, they're expensive, but I believe they make a difference. I've tried vanilla extract, even the fancy extract, and it just isn't the same. I use two different chocolate malts for complexity but you could go solely with the darker chocolate malt. After 7-10 days on vanilla beans in the secondary, taste the beer daily until the desired vanilla flavor is reached. Generally, two weeks gives me the flavor balance I'm looking for. Medium toast French oak cubes further add to the vanilla character of this beer and produce a wonderful Wood-Aged Beer, if you're feeling adventurous. Aim for 1.0 to 1.5 ounces of medium toast French oak cubes (not chips) per five gallons. Again, age beer on oak for about 10 days and then start tasting daily until the desired oak character is reached.

Batch Size: 6 gallons

OG: 1.063

FG: 1.015

IBU: 39

Color: 33 SRM

Alcohol: 6.4%

Boil: 60 minutes

Pre-Boil Gravity: 1.051

Pre-Boil Volume: 7.5 gallons

Extract: Weight Percent

Pale LME 9.34 lb (4.24 kg) 77.6

Munich LME 1.22 lb (0.55 kg) 10.3

Steeping Grains:

Crystal 40L 0.5 lb (0.23 kg) 3.4

Chocolate 400L 0.37 lb (0.17 kg) 2.6

Chocolate 200L 0.37 lb (0.17 kg) 2.6

Black Patent 500L 0.24 lb (0.11 kg) 1.7

Hops:

Galena (13% AA) – 20 grams @ 60 minutes

Willamette (5.5% AA) – 28 grams @ 15 minutes

East Kent Goldings (5.0% AA) – 21 grams @ 0 minutes

Yeast:

White Labs WLP001 Cal Ale, Wyeast 1056 American Ale, or Safale US05 dry yeast.

Once fermentation is complete, rack the beer to secondary with 2 whole vanilla beans (per 5 gallons). Slice open beans, but do not scrape inside of beans. Age beer on vanilla beans until desired vanilla flavor is reached, then keg / bottle beer.

All Grain Option:

Replace Pale LME with 11.25 lb (5.1 kg) of US 2 Row malt. Replace Munich LME with 1.5 lb (0.68 kg) of Munich 10L. Mash at 154 F for 60 minutes.

* Recipe calculated for 70% mash efficiency. Use malt percentages to scale batch size. Interested in sharing a recipe with the club? Send recipes to shearer.jeff@gmail.com



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 \$30.99 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: November 18th, 2014
7:00 pm at the Snow Goose**