

THE Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB
NOVEMBER, 2017

The Prez Sez

by John Trapp

One of the happiest times of the year has come and gone. Hopefully you took advantage of the Oktoberfest activities and whooped it up. If not, better luck next year. GNBC had another fantastic meeting in October. A big thank you goes out to Dennis Urban for coming in and talking about the importance of sanitation in your brewing. We will be following up this topic in the November meeting with "off flavors" so plan on attending.



Here's the three month calendar of events:

November 11th – Bodega Fest, not sure where, but sorry for posting wrong date last month.

November 21st – Monthly Meeting at 49th State Brewing Company, 7:00p.m.

December 2nd – Humpy's Big Fish Home Brew Competition

December 9th – GNBC Christmas Party once again at the Alaska Zoo!

January 18th – Thursday meeting of Beer Week for Barley Wine Fest at 49th State Brewing Company

The November meeting is when elections take place, so please show up. We have candidates for all positions, but there's always room for more. If you were interested in running for a seat as a board member or officer position you can e-mail me and I'll be sure to get your name on the ballot. Just look at the newsletter and my contact info is there.

December 2nd is Humpy's Big Fish Homebrew Competition. Peter Hall is organizing this so please read his article on it. This is always a good competition to enter with lots of great prizes. Dig through the crawl space or closet and find something good to enter. Don't forget, this is also a great competition to judge so plan on that too.

The GNBC Christmas Party is all set for December 9th at the Alaska Zoo, the same place we've had it for the last four or five years. I think we're still working on a theme, but I'm pretty sure it will be "beer" related if you get my drift. This is a pot luck dinner, so think of something good to share and bring your homebrew.

The Prez Sez

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Our January meeting is just around the corner. For those of you that have not attended before, it is by far our biggest meeting of the year. It's held on the Thursday of beer week (Jan 14th thru 20th) and you'll need to have your membership card to get in. So please pay your dues and don't miss out. We'll have more news as the date grows closer.

I almost forgot, a big thank you goes out to Mike Fisher for coordinating the Anchor Town Invitational Homebrew Competition. See his article on the event. Congratulations goes out to Eli Logan for winning Best of Show (BoS) with his Pale Ale (Eli won BoS at Valdez the day before with the same beer). Also, Tony Strupulis' Imperial Stout with Birch Sap was chosen as the brewer's choice to be brewed at King Street. Congrats to both on your tasty victories.

This month's "Meet Your Local" article features Broken Tooth Brewing Company's Head Brewer - Tyler Jones.

Remember, be safe and drink responsibly when out and about and keep those carboys filled. Until next month, Cheers.



Secretary's Corner

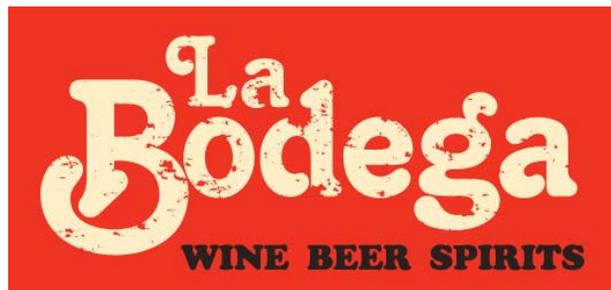
by *Jim O'Toole*

I've never really developed a taste for ciders. Even when I was a kid and was offered the Shirley Temple version of cider I didn't think much of it. My lone attempt at brewing a cider with apples from my backyard tree was a complete failure a few years ago so I pretty much lost interest in the style.

A couple of years ago I volunteered to be a server at Bodega Fest - the first time Pamela held it at the Alaska Aviation Museum - and it was as much fun as I could have at a beer festival where I got in free, worked serving for a couple of hours, and then hustled around trying to drink up the sample tickets before my ride home got tired of waiting for me to call and made me take a cab home.

I was assigned a space in the back of the main museum building and had four ciders to serve. I was a little disappointed because I assumed there wouldn't be much interest in what I had on the table and that I wouldn't be very busy.

The doors opened and within two minutes I had six people standing in line in front of me and, for the next two hours, there was not one instant where I wasn't pouring a cider for someone. I was amazed and when my relief arrived I went to the front table for my sample glass and tickets and mentioned to Pamela how busy it was. She said it wasn't a surprise to her as "Ciders are getting very popular." Who knew?

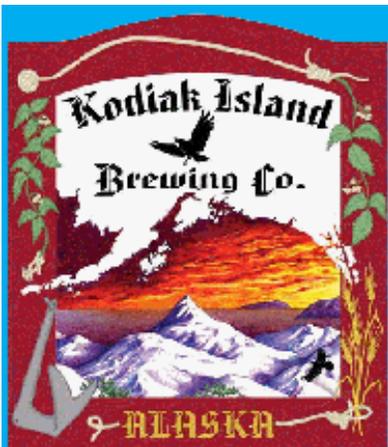


I've been "engaged" to the same woman for 20+ years and she has worked hard to get me healthier. I eat better than before I met her and I have managed to convince her that I drink good beer and that it is good for me. She's never been much of a beer drinker and, if I wasn't such a "recovering Catholic," I think I would be able to submit her name to the Pope as a candidate for sainthood, not just for tolerance of my beer drinking, but for her actual support of it by offering to be my designated driver on more than several occasions and never giving me any grief when I over consumed. Yeah that happens sometimes.



So, when she started experimenting with ciders a few years ago I was a little troubled. I mean, if she's drinking when we go out, who is going to drive home? But, of course, she is a lot more sensible than I am and her search for good ciders has been a lot more responsible than my world-wide search for great beer. Neither of us have driven in any state of impairment all these years but I have to admit that she has driven my car home at times when I was the one who drove us wherever we were.

So, to be the great boyfriend, I suggested we go to the recent La Bodega inaugural cider dinner at Kinley's and she agreed. She agreed so much that before I could do anything, she bought the tickets. So much for being the "great boyfriend" but at least I tried and I think I should get a few points for that.



The dinner was packed which shouldn't have surprised me given the aforementioned popularity of ciders, not to mention the popularity of anything that the folks at La Bodega do. My daughter in law's brother is a manager at Kinley's but he wasn't working so he was with us as was his girlfriend, my daughter in law, her mother, her dad, and her dad's girlfriend. We live in a crazy world where a group like that gets along but we do and we did that night. In fact, it was a great and fun evening.

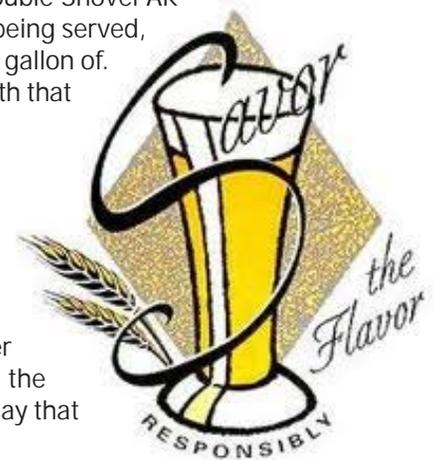
If you've been to Kinley's, you know what the food quality is there and you know that they have always had a great tap line. They are closed now for renovations and the word is that they will have an even better dining and libation experience when they reopen. In my opinion they began any improvement the night of that cider dinner.

The dinner courses included an avocado, toasted pistachio, fried shallot green salad, a cornmeal crusted halibut, seared pork tenderloin, braised short ribs and an apple and cherry compote, fry bread, caramel ice cream for dessert.

And then there were the ciders which weren't my dad's ciders in any way, shape, or form. I had no idea people were doing ciders like the ones served that night and some of them were absolutely mind blowing. A Double Shovel AK Traditional Cider was on the table when we sat down and then, when the food started being served, we were handed a Rekordrlig Wild Berry Cider from Sweden that I could have finished a gallon of. I would have passed on the rest of the food if they would have just kept filling my glass with that stuff.

A Thistly Cross Traditional Cider out of Scotland followed that one and that was followed by one from E. Dupont out of France, then a Quebrada del Chucao from Chile, then a Julian Apple Pie cider from California, and we finished with another one from E. Dupont, their Pommeau de Normandie.

I traveled through Normandy a few years ago and was surprised to see the large number of apple orchards and cideries everywhere but, as I hadn't been educated on ciders at the time, I stuck to trying to find good beer there. Not to dismiss French beers but I have to say that - given what I know now - I should have paid more attention to the ciders.



I am certain that my 60+ year love affair with beer is not going to wane anytime soon but I am willing to experiment a little more with the amazing variety of ciders that are available to us these days. Being close minded about what I drank didn't serve me well when I was in France and the La Bodega cider dinner convinced me that it is time to expand my options when I'm looking for something to enjoy wherever I am. I will just have to be sure Kathy doesn't drink it all.

See Dr. Fermento's beer column in the Thursday, November 2 Anchorage Press for his sudsy take on his experience at Bodegafest at the Aviation Museum.

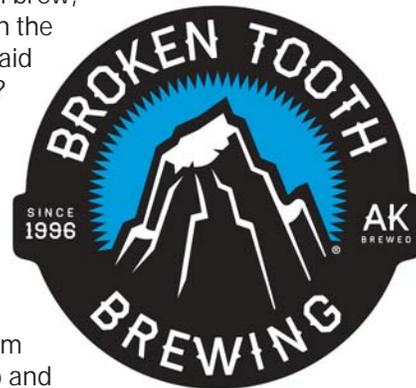
Meet Your Local

Broken Tooth Brewing Company Head Brewer – Tyler Jones

by John Trapp

I hate to admit this, but it has been close to 15 years since I was in Moose's Tooth (sorry, Broken Tooth) brewery. I still remembered how to get there, but I felt a little ashamed when I pulled into the parking lot. What kind of beer drinker am I? I was there to talk with Tyler Jones, the head brewer of Broken Tooth. Normally whenever I see Tyler it's at a beer event, and we usually chit chat about the event or what we think of a certain brew, definitely nothing deep. So as we started talking it became very clear that Tyler has been in the brewing business a long time. When I asked him when he started at Moose's Tooth he said "1999, after Railway Brewing closed. Who even remembers Railway Brewing Company"?

That was a long time ago, but yes, I do remember Railway. We're almost pushing 20 years here, but I still recall it. My next question to Tyler was if there were any beers that he created. Immediately he said Darth Delirium. Well, if you're going to create a beer, it's pretty hard to beat that one. Tyler pointed to the plaques and medals and said he's almost lost count how many that beer has won. I've definitely drank my fair share of it over the years so I couldn't deny it's one fantastic beer. I mentioned the Chugach Session beer and Tyler said that was his too. I told him it's great to see a lighter beer come out and told him about our small fry challenge in the club and the "JAB's" we were producing.



Tyler grew up in Rochester, NY and modeled the Chugach Session after Genesee Cream Ale, which he says he drank a lot of. I had to laugh because my grandparents use to have that in their fridge when I would visit them in Cleveland, Ohio. It's a 100% Polish household, and when I turned 15 I was considered a man. According to them, a man that needed to drink beer! I loved visiting them.

Back to Tyler. I asked him when he took over as Head Brewer at Broken Tooth and he said 2012. I also asked him what the volume was that the brewery was pumping out annually. He said around 5500 barrels, down from 6000 BBL's. I asked why the decline and Tyler said they installed a more efficient tap system at their restaurants, so they don't waste as much. I'm glad to hear that, but still pretty shocked they wasted 500 barrels per year of damn fine beer.

We talked about IPA's and Tyler said they have 6 different IPA's on tap right now. Believe it or not, IPA's are still selling like hotcakes. We pondered if - or when - the towns palate will change and stop buying so many IPA's. It's been going strong for over 15 years and I still haven't seen a break anywhere on the West coast.

I asked Tyler what else he had coming up for release, and he said every Monday is Broken Tooth's release day. He mentioned Smoked Willy Porter, their Seasonal Beer - a lighter bodied winter warmer - and an Ice Bock. It all sounds great to me. Head down to Moose's Tooth for some pizza or over to Bear Tooth Grill and Theaterpub - the only place to see a movie - and fill up on the great beers that Tyler Jones and the rest of the crew at Broken Tooth are making. Thanks Tyler, and keep up the great job.

Anchor Town Homebrew Competition 2017 Recap

by *Mike Fisher*

Seven dedicated judges gathered on October 8 in the upstairs tasting room of King Street Brewing Company to judge this year's Anchor Town field of 29 beers. After a full day of challenging work, category winners and a Best of Show emerged.

This year's Best of Show (BOS) came from **Eli Logan** with an amazing American Pale Ale. Best of Show round judges commented on the amazing aroma and an overall impression that challenged some familiar and favorite commercial pale ales. Congratulations, Eli! And not just for Anchor Town. Eli's beer took Best of Show in Valdez the day before, as well, making for a weekend sweep.

Brewer Awards

Alec Venechuk	3 Gold, 1 Silver
Anthony Strupulis	1 Gold, 2 Silver
Elisha Logan	1 Gold
Eric Minor	1 Gold, 1 Bronze
Jeremy, Cam, and Al	1 Silver
John Trapp	1 Bronze
Mike Cragen	6 Gold, 1 Silver, 1 Bronze
Mike Fisher	1 Gold, 1 Silver, 1 Bronze
Mike Wahlig	1 Bronze

Shane and Dana of King Street participated in the Best of Show round. At the end of the day, they were left with three strong contenders for this year's Brewer's Choice. A second tasting of all the Best of Show beers later in the week, with their full crew, allowed them to land on a winner: **Anthony Strupulis'** Imperial Stout brewed with Birch Sap.

This year's entries spanned several categories, with Pale American Ale, Fruit Beer, and Spice/Herb/Vegetable Beer each receiving four entries. I had set a theme of harvest beers for this year's contest and entrants delivered. We Alaskans know that there are really multiple harvest seasons in Alaska, whether we're collecting spruce tips and birch sap in the spring, plants during the summer, or berries and other fruits and vegetables in the fall. I would like to recognize brewers for entering these special harvest beers: Alec's porter with spruce tips and vanilla beans, and his Blonde Ale with spruce tips and sweet orange peel; Anthony's imperial stout brewed with birch sap in place of water; Eric's raspberry beers; Graham's spruce tip IPA; Jeremiah's rhubarb and apricot beer; Jeremy, Cam, and Al's Blonde Ale with raspberries; and Mike's saison with shredded beets.

At the end of the day, we had a lot of amazing beers, judges, and hosts. I want to offer huge thanks, in no particular order, to all the entrants, Pete and Lisa at Arctic Brewing Supply for hosting our collection process and donating gift certificates and other prizes for winners, all the judges, and all the folks at King Street for letting us take over their upstairs tasting room for the day.



2017 Humpy's Big Fish Competition

by *Peter Hall*

The Humpy's Big Fish Homebrew Competition continues to be one of the biggest Homebrew competitions in Alaska. Big Fish stands out as one of the highest profile homebrew competitions in the state.

Midnight Sun Brewing Company has graciously offered brew this year's grand prize-winning beer, within reason. Commercial brewery constraints help us temper what goes forward for brewing. What this means - for example - is that if the Competition winner is a five year old, oak aged, smoked gruit, this might be the best beer, but one that might not fit the schedule at Midnight Sun.

Humpy's Great Alaskan Alehouse is once again hosting the GNBC. We are yet to be sure of the exact room we will be sitting in, but I will have that information ready for the December newsletter.

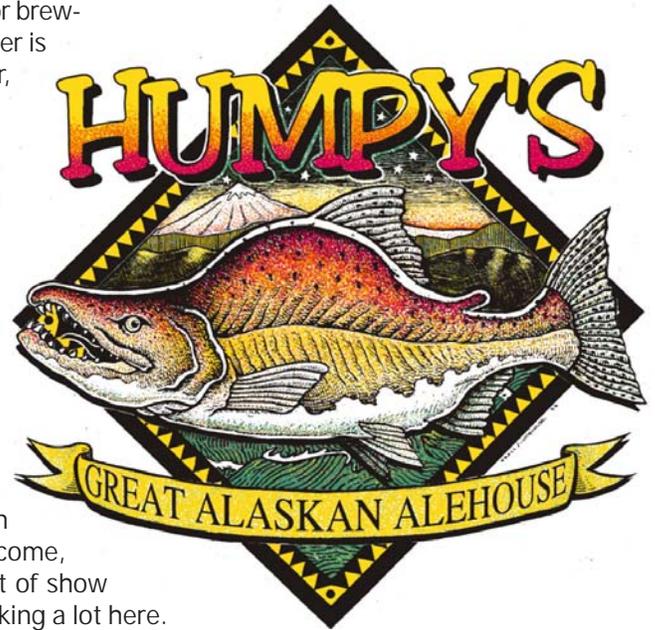
The judging will take place on December 2. Tasting will begin promptly at 10 am.

The Christmas Party had been scheduled for one week later, so hopefully not so much issue of early morning arrivals as years past.

Qualified judges: please put December 2nd on your calendar. We all know that Humpy's takes good care of us. This judging event can be one of the best of the year. The quality of the event largely hinges on judge turnout, so help me out! I would like to ask that if you do come, please plan to be there until 2 pm in the afternoon. The final best of show round will need to be done no later than 3 pm. I know that I am asking a lot here. All are welcome to help judge, even if you've never judged before.

Don't fear if you are new to this; you will be paired with other qualified judges that will walk you through the whole thing in a casual, non-threatening, and learning atmosphere. If there is a competition to become acquainted with professionally judging beer, this is one of the best.

Contact Peter Hall at alaskabrewer@gmail.com with any questions.



GNBC Christmas Party

by *Peter Hall*

The GNBC has been welcomed back to the Alaska Zoo Gateway Complex for our annual Christmas Party on December 9th. Of course we are paying for the privilege, but they always seem happy to hear from me when I make the call to book again. Beer was the only suggestion I had for a theme, so I'm running with it. Come dressed as your favorite beer, or whatever else beer related.

The music will be a bit more casual this time around. Having bands has been great fun, but I feel like we have been torturing them a bit. I think we will get the same experience with music playing over some speakers. That is unless someone is eager to play for us. We are happy to host. We might even throw in some really good beer in exchange.

I hope to see you all at the Alaska Zoo Gateway Complex at 4731 O'Malley Rd at 7:30pm on December 10. The GNBC will provide some food, a jockey box with one beer already plugged in and plenty of CO2, service ware, and some decorations. You can show up with a smile and whatever you want to share.

Any questions/comments/suggestions? Contact Peter Hall at alaskabrewer@gmail.com

Rare Beer Offer

by Rob Mersing

Editor's Note: This was sent to Fermento - one of your newsletter editors - a couple of weeks ago. This was long before the explosive Anchorage Brewing Company Deal With The Devil Day held on Saturday, October 28 at the brewery.

If you follow social media, you know that this event was epic on a global scale. People came from Europe and the lower 48 states to attend. People camped out in the Anchorage Brewing Company parking lot to get a shot at one of 440 boxed sets of six different Deal With The Devil Barleywine bottles. Parking for the event pushed all the way north on King Street on both sides of the street in specially designated parking lots.

All 440 cases sold for \$300 apiece. By 6:00 pm, the mules that waited in line up to 18 hours posted sets for sale on Craigslist for as high as \$1,800 a boxed set. The sets are rare indeed, as is any vintage of Anchorage Brewing Company's Deal With The Devil Barley Wine.

Beer lover Rob Mersing isn't peddling boxed sets. He's got individual bottles of Deal With The Devil for sale and wants to sell them as a matter of financial need. The editors are only posting this article so that if you're a collector, you have choices. Feed the mules or help a guy in need. Rob's article follows.

My name's Rob Mersing. No, I'm not a GNBC member, but I know about you folks. I know that as much as you love to make and drink home brew, most of you also love commercial beer. Some of you are even avid collectors.

But it got me thinking about something. With the recent economic downturn - and my occupation in the construction industry - I've fallen on hard times. On top of that, my son had a specialized surgery in Baltimore. Of course my wife and I had to go with him. This pretty much broke our bank and maxed out our credit cards.

I'm not telling you this for sympathy or a handout; I'll survive. But I do have something you might be interested in that I hate to part with but the sale of which would help me out financially.

Anchorage Brewing Company's Deal With The Devil Day (DWTD) was Saturday, October 28th.

I read about the event in Fermento's article in the October 19 edition of the Anchorage Press where he writes his weekly beer column. I couldn't attend DWTD as much as I wanted to; I simply couldn't afford it, even though it was a pay as you go event.

I'm sitting on a case (12 ea. 22 oz. bottles) of Batch #2 (2014) Deal With the Devil Barley Wine, the subject brew at the recent Anchorage Brewing Company event. If you've been scoring along at home, you'll know this stuff commands a hefty price with the collectors out there. I'm willing to sell all of it at once or individual bottles. As much as I hate to part with this stuff, it will help us get back on our feet again.

As a serious beer aficionado or vintage collector, you'll appreciate that these beers have been well taken care off. They were purchased in November of 2014 and they're still in the box. They've been gracefully aging in my crawl space which stays at a consistent 55-60 degrees year round.

If anyone knows of beer collection sites I might be able to list this on if it doesn't go to you fine brewers, let me know. All I'm asking you to be reasonable with your offers.

Text or call me at (907) 229-3998 if you're interested or know where I can move some of this stuff.



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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 21
7:00 PM at 49th State Brewing Company Anchorage**