

THE

Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB

SEPTEMBER 2015

The Prez Sez

by Peter Hall



I'm happy for this season of change. Some things are ending, and many more things are now getting rolling. You can't count on tracking down an Alaskan in the summer

time, much less a GNBC'er. We have no problem keeping in touch though. The GNBC hosts a number of events all year long that the board works to be sure are interesting enough to be attended. Those events are now going to be getting bigger and a little more frequent. Now the board, as well as all the rest of the very helpful GNBC members, have to prepare for the beginning of the 2015-2016 GNBC membership year.

The board would never really be able to get things done without the help of some very active club members. Some even invite us all into their homes from time to time. Jeff Loughrey and Cathie Straub were extremely welcoming for the GNBC August barbeque. Many of us have been to their home before, and it may be the sunny dispositions of the attendees, I don't recall ever being on that stately hillside deck without the sun shining. Thank you for hosting us all!

Brewing is much easier, for those of us without cooling systems, when the heat is actively running in our homes. You learn where exactly you have the right environment to leave your fermenter for a few days without any wild changes. I don't know how much opportunity you have all had to prepare beer for the Anchortown competition, but know you have even more warning. If you get to it right away, you have plenty of time to make a fresh beer for the competition on October 25. This is just part of the shake up that is hopefully making it easy for us to receive a lot of entries for them. The Equinox Mead Competition, as a standalone competition, will not be happening this year. Those categories for HBOTY will instead be absorbed into either Anchortown or Big Fish Competitions. Nothing has been set yet, but be sure that we will still be judging meads and ciders this fall.

We are a strong and dedicated group. Many of us have been around for numerous years and whatever variety of challenges that may face a sizable social club. We don't necessarily make things easy for our membership coordinator though. I am personally one of the terrible procrastinators that make her job just a little harder by putting off

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renewing until the last moment. You could probably all guess that I would be happily back for another year. To be official, and eligible for all the great GNBC benefits, I need to renew my membership either online (preferred), in person, or by mail (all totally ok too) as soon as possible. Check out Kat's article and renew your membership ASAP.



With the change of season comes the changing of the guard. Elections! I want names! I guess you

could submit yourself or make nominations to anyone on the board, but hopefully those names will eventually make it back to me. There is room on the ballot for all of the executive spots (prez, vice prez, secretary, treasurer) as well as a couple board positions. I will not be running for a 4th year as president. I was on the fence about coming back for a 3rd year, but this time I mean it. I will continue to serve in some capacity though. I want to see names on a ballot

before I insert myself in somewhere. Nothing I dislike more in our elections than an unopposed candidate. That is a little bit of an exaggeration. I'm happy so long as there is someone willing to fill a position. I do really like to be able to present the winners.

Please contact me at president@greatnorthernbrewers.org if you

have any questions, or would like to throw your name in the ring.

Keep your brews hot and beer cold,
Prez Peter

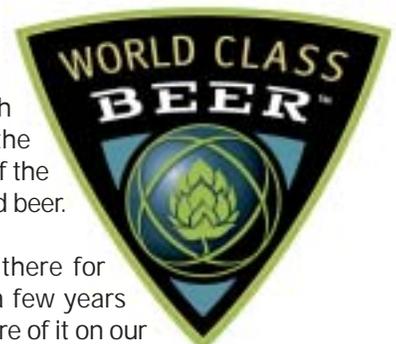
Secretary's Corner Sept 2015

by Jeff Shearer

Hopefully I'll get this done in time to get in into the September newsletter. Things have been a little nuts lately with the primary thing happening being an out-of-season visit to the island of Kauai.

We normally hit Hawaii in April but Kathy had some time off work and we decided to hit Kauai during a time when I knew it was going to be too hot for me. I was right...temperatures in the 90's with humidity running around 85% had me hugging the air conditioner in the condo we rented and many of the excursions outside the condo were in pursuit of cold beer.

We love the island of Kauai after having gone there for around a dozen years in a row but a diversion a few years ago to the big island has us planning on seeing more of it on our annual trip. One of the things we like about the big island and where we stay there is that it is just a few minutes walk to the Kona Humpy's where



Billy Opinski has finally managed to jump through a bunch of hoops thrown at him and get some Alaska beers (Midnight Sun of course leading the way) on tap. They still allow "Happy Hour" in Hawaii so, on those days when we have little to do, a short walk down Alii Drive has us on the open air upper floor, sipping cold ones, and watching the amazing assortment of people walking by as well as the ocean beating on the sea wall directly across the street, a great place to watch a sunset.



One of the things that caused me, at least, to withdraw from Kauai was the closing of Waimea Brewing Company several years ago. It was quite a way off from where we stayed but when we made it to the south shore of the island it was always on the itinerary. The beers were nothing special but they were brewed there and, obviously, fresher than anything else we could get there. I don't know what happened to their brewing equipment but the place was closed for a couple of years before we stopped going to Kauai and this time it was open as just a restaurant with primarily Kona Brewing beers on tap. Better than nothing but not enough to make me want to drive 45 or so miles when the same beers were available at almost every other gin joint on the island.

So, it was a great surprise as we drove down Rice Street in Lihue and spotted "Kauai Beer Company" with an open sign and tables with chairs on the sidewalk. A ten minute drive from where we stayed, this became one of the only reasons to leave the condo and the A/C. As it turned out, I would have driven much further to visit this place as they had a beer list that demonstrated that there are people in Hawaii who are "getting it" regarding craft beer.

Not satisfied with providing the standard stout, porter, pale ale, IPA, and blonde, these guys seem to be going full blast into attempting to educate the palates of their customers with a Munich style helles, a Vienna style lager, a German style schwarzbier, an oatmeal pale ale, a German style doppelbock, a Belgian style saison, and a rotating nitro tap that I didn't get to.



I could list the food menu items too but you would be slobbering on your keyboards if I went much further than the Kiawe crusted coconut sweet potato ravioli, the beer braised and smoked pork belly, and the house made beer braised beef and pork bratwurst. I'll wait while you grab a paper towel.

But the thing that got me going was that saison and it was the reason why I kept going back.

And it got me thinking about the upcoming Beer Judge Certification Program (BJCP) test on September 12 which I am scheduled to take.



EVENTS

Every First Thursday
Moose's Tooth First Tap

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

15.....GNBC Monthly Meeting
7:00 pm at the Goose

10.....Bodegafest at the Anchorage
Aviation Heritage Museum (Lake
Hood) 3:00 pm - 8:00 pm

15.....GNBC Monthly Meeting
7:00 pm at the Goose

23.....Entries Due for Anchor Town
Homebrew Competition at
Arctic Brewing Supply

25.....Anchor Town Homebrew
Competition Judging
10:00 am at King Street Brewery





I've attended the BJCP class twice now, once as a steward (a great deal for anyone with an alcohol servers certificate) and once as a paying attendee. If you've never taken the course or looked at the BJCP style guidelines you would be just like me before a couple of years ago when I first responded to a request for people to serve the beer to the people taking the class and was astounded at how detailed this beer judging stuff can be.

Doc Fermento has reported many times that passing the BJCP test was more difficult than getting his four year Personnel Management degree that he has used to support this beer habit since he retired from the US Air Force. I remember reading this and wondering if he was serious and now I can say that I believe him.

I'm going to take this test next week with absolutely no expectation of passing it. I just want to take it to experience how difficult it is and get an idea of how much deeper I will have to get into this beer judging stuff to be able to get a passing score.

What got me thinking about this was reading the Kauai Beer Company's description of their Pomelo Saison; "3 lbs of fresh, local pomelo zest give this saison a lively citrus aroma and flavor." As I have been expanding my own palate the last couple of years and getting into Belgian beers that I had been avoiding and having studied a little of the BJCP information I knew that saisons are generally a little fruity in the nose and flavor categories of the judging but I had absolutely no idea what a "pomelo" is. So I looked it up and found one definition that says, "Citrus maxima, is a natural citrus fruit, with the appearance of a big grapefruit, native to South and Southeast Asia."



They grow them in Hawaii too and what they do to this saison is amazing. It is simply one of the best beers I've had in a while and I can't stop thinking about it. Another thing I think about is how it would be judged as I, and almost anyone who doesn't live in Hawaii, would have no idea what a pomelo tastes or smells like. BJCP judging standards allow for a lot of variation in ingredients in beer styles but, when you say a beer has something in it, it has to be there. How do you judge a beer when it has something in it that you have no experience with?



One of the things that puts me at a bit of a disadvantage when judging beer is that I've found that, as I age (pushing 70 now) I've discovered that my nose and taste buds don't pick up as much as they used to. During some of the BJCP classes I can honestly say that I couldn't pick up a lot of the features that others were discussing in the beers that we sampled but I'm not

going to let that stop me from trying to get better at it.

So I'm going to take the test, flunk it, and get some experience in judging beer like the pros do. I'm also going to keep working on my palate with the Belgians. And I am going to keep thinking about that saison and looking for something that compares to it. It's a tough job, I know, but I'm up for it.



Calendar of Upcoming Events:

The author cannot guarantee that these events will not be sold out.

9/12 - Seward Brewing Company Fall Beer Dinner

(might be too late for this one-only 25 seats available)

6:30PM

Cost: \$75

9/18 - Denali Brewing Company Brewfest Beer Dinner

7:00PM

Cost: \$75

9/19 - Talkeetna Brewfest

Sheldon Community Arts Hangar

2:00-6:00PM

Cost: \$50

9/25 - Yukon Beer Festival

Whitehorse YT

Friday and Saturday at 6:00PM

Cost: \$32.04

Saturday afternoon session at 1:00PM

Cost: \$26.87

9/26 - 4th Annual Capital Brewfest

Juneau Arts and Cultural Center

1-5:00PM/Cost TBD

Ticket sales begin 7/1

10/10 - Bodegafest

Anchorage Aviation Heritage Museum (Lake Hood)

3:00-8:00 PM (note the difference from last year)

Cost: \$35 in advance \$40 at the door

Tickets are available now

10/25 – Anchortown Competition

King Street Brewing Company

10 AM Judging

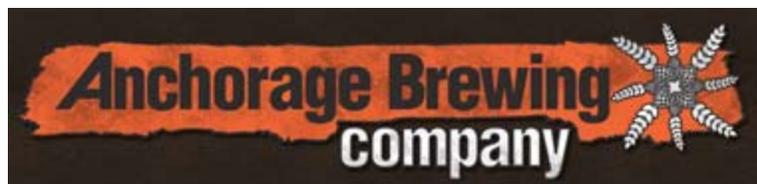
Entries accepted on 10/23

MEETING SETUP

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

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

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



Anchor Town Invitational Homebrew Competition

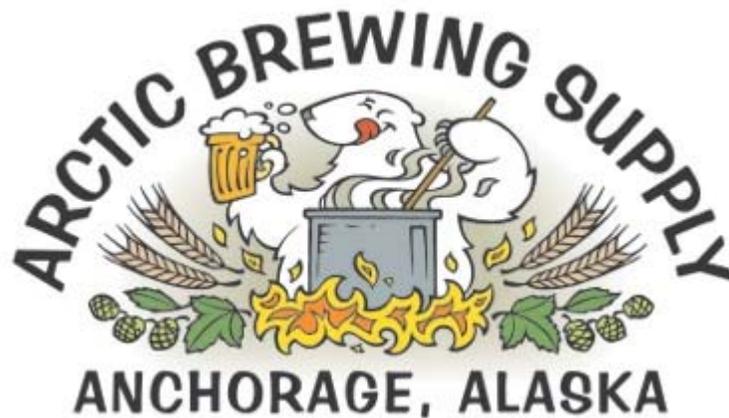
by Mike Fisher

The 2015 Anchor Town competition is less than two months away. Judging will take place at King Street Brewing Company starting at 10:00am on Sunday, October 25. Entries will be accepted on Friday, October 23; the plan is for entries to be accepted at Arctic Brewing Supply, but that is being confirmed.

As announced before, all beer styles are welcome, but the styles that count toward the 2015 GNBC Homebrewer of the Year award are:

- 6. Light Hybrid
- 12. Porter
- 13. Stout
- 18. Belgian Strong
- 22. Smoke Flavored/ Wood Aged

We need entries! We need judges! Please plan to enter your best beers in the competition, and please stop by October 25 to participate as a judge. If you have questions, want to volunteer for judging or drop-offs, or need to make alternative drop-off arrangements, please contact me at mikefisher.ak@gmail.com



Membership Renewals

by *Kat Karabelnikoff*

September is HERE!! In two weeks we are officially back to having our regular monthly GNBC meetings on the 3rd Tuesday of the Month, so please RENEW your memberships now before they expire at the end of the month and if you renew by September 12th you will be able to pick up your 2015/2016 membership card at the September 15th meeting, along with a special ticket for a membership renewal prize (you must be present to win this one). **Yes that's right, you will be entered to win something "extra special" just for renewing online or by mail before the September Meeting.**



I will be handing out renewed membership cards at the meeting **from 7pm-8:30p** (I'm catching a flight that night so I will not be able to stay the full meeting) You will also be able to renew your membership at the September Meeting with cash, check or debit/credit card at the meeting but will not be entered to win the "extra prize".

If you can't make it to the September meeting don't worry. Any cards not picked up at the meeting will be mailed out that following week.

The cost for membership is \$30.00 annually per household (don't forget to include your spouse's name so they can have their own membership card and get the benefits too.) or \$350 for a lifetime membership.

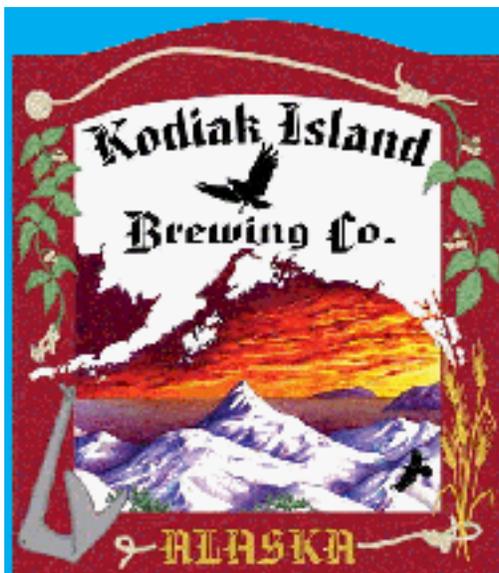
You can renew your annual membership online on our website <http://www.greatnorthernbrewers.org/membership.html> with a credit or debit card or send a Check or Money Order (made payable to Great Northern Brewers Club) to:

GNBC Membership Coordinator
c/o Kat Karabelnikoff
PO BOX 210923
Anchorage, AK. 99521

If renewing online or via mail please don't forget to include your Name (and spouse's too if applicable), Full Address (street, city, and zip code), Phone Number, and Email.

You can contact me Kat Karabelnikoff at membership@greatnorthernbrewers.org if you have any questions. I look forward to seeing all the familiar and new faces at the September Meeting!

Cheers, Kat K



A Lazy Man's Guide to (Great) Sour Beers

by Mike Fisher

Have you ever wanted to brew a sour beer but were hesitant to commit (or otherwise lacked) the time, patience, equipment, and ingredients for something that might not turn out well? Would you like to know an incredibly simple way to make a sour beer that uses proven yeast and a small-batch process to increase your odds of having something drinkable? If so, read on.

Brettanomyces is known to be unpredictable at times, and with lactobacillus and pediococcus you might wonder how much you'll need to survive the environment in which you're throwing them. Rather than leaving everything to chance, why not start out with a proven blend of yeast and bacteria that has already resulted in a delicious sour beer?

All you need to get started is a fermentation vessel, a cover for it, a finished beer you would like to sour (with appropriately low ABV and IBU numbers), and the dregs from a commercial sour beer. (If you want to use this method for primary fermentation, you'll probably want to begin the process with a starter.) The last item—a commercial sour beer—is the most critical, because you need to ensure that (a) the beer contains live yeast and/or bacteria and (b) the beer was bottle conditioned with the good stuff. If the yeast and bacteria you want were filtered or pasteurized or the beer was bottle conditioned with a different strain of yeast (not uncommon), then you're not going to get the results you want.

Selecting a commercial sour beer to use doesn't have to be complicated, though. Simply check out The Mad Fermentationist's blog at www.themadfermentationist.com and search for harvesting. You'll find a June 2, 2010 post titled "Harvesting Sour Beer Bottle Dregs" that contains a list of the commercial sour beers known to contain Brettanomyces and/or bacteria, as well as a link to the dedicated "List of Unpasteurized Sour and Funky Bottled Beers" page with an updated and expanded list.

When you're ready to get started with this method, the first step is to enjoy the commercial sour beer, leaving the dregs and a little bit of beer in the bottom of the bottle. I usually let the dregs warm a bit before pitching them, and I always use a lighter to sterilize the mouth of the bottle before pitching. Next, simply sanitize your fermentation vessel and its cover, fill it with your finished beer, swirl and pour in the dregs, and put on the cover. Find a safe place to leave the beer and do your best to forget about it for a while. You can check on your beer every few months, but be sure to give it sufficient time to sour before bottling. Also be mindful of managing oxygen exposure; a little is good for your sour beer, but too much could lead to malt vinegar. When the beer has progressed to your liking, bottle it and enjoy.

I applied this method to sour a raspberry wheat beer I brewed with berries from my yard. After going through the secondary on top of the raspberries, I poured one gallon of the beer into a sanitized jug, followed by the dregs from two beers (Cuvée René Oude Gueuze and Surette) that contain both Brettanomyces and bacteria. I covered the jug with loosely-wrapped foil and hid it under a black plastic bag to block light. Ten months later, I bottled the beer. The gravity had dropped a few points, so the Brettanomyces had definitely been at work.

The original gallon of my raspberry wheat beer wasn't that great. It wasn't bad, but the raspberries were subdued and the beer wasn't anything special. The soured version, on the other hand, tasted amazing and the raspberries came through prominently with the background sourness and tartness.

Rather than toss my "house" blend (which might contain some local wild yeast since I didn't pasteurize my raspberries), I poured in another beer after bottling. This time I used a farmhouse ale that had spent the last seven months in primary and secondary with WLP670 American Farmhouse Blend. I'm happy with the beer, but I'm hoping that the tertiary fermentation will give it additional character.

If you'd like to try your hand at a sour beer, why not give this method a try? It's quick, easy, and cheap, and not only will you get to enjoy a great commercial sour beer but you'll have the satisfaction of having created your own homebrewed sour.

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:

Great Northern Brewers Club
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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: September 15th, 2015
7:00 pm at the Goose**