



THE

# Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB

APRIL 2008

## The Prez Sez

by *Ira Edwards*

**A**pril. Whoo Hoo, winter is winding down and spring is finally on its way (or until the next snow storm...). All my cross country skis are waxed and put away for the summer, and my back country and telemark skis are in full time use after work in the mountains. With all this snow and sunshine there is no better way to enjoy the pre-meltdown time than a good ski. I'm sure the snow machiners amongst us will chime in that there is nothing better than a good sled ride, but to each their own. If you really want to combine skiing and snow machines, there is always the annual Arctic Man Competition coming up. A lot of people even have good beer up there (or they did last year. Ok, back on topic...



April is going to be a big month for the GNBC membership. Just in case you have been hanging out on the dark side of the moon, we are hosting the First Round of the 2008 National Homebrew Competition for the Northwest region. We will receive several hundred entries from the region that will be shipped up here, and I hope the club will do its part by entering the finest of our local talent. I know I have a few beers, meads and ciders to enter. Not only are we gonna show the rest of the homebrewing world that we know how to put on a great contest (read: getting results back in a timely manner), we are going to clean up as a club with all of your great beverages! This is all going to take a good amount of work by the club to get this monster going, but the most important part is that we need your help to make this event a huge success. Alaska has more people who have been certified in beer judging than any other area, and we have plenty more folk up here who appreciate good beers and can write a coherent sentence about what they just tasted. We will be judging at the Snow Goose on Saturday and Sunday, April 12-13. Please sign up with Jason Ditsworth if you can help on the morning or afternoon sessions each day. If you are up to it, you can judge all 4 sessions. If you are not a BJCP judge, no worries. We will pair you up with a more experienced judge on each panel. Come and show your support for the club and help evaluate the regions finest beverages!

If you have friends or family that are not capable of evaluating a good beer, but are perhaps interested in gardening with fermentable results, I have an event for you. On Saturday April 12, the Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers Association (APFG) is having their annual Tree Grafting workshop at Dimond Greenhouses. There will be apple (and often pear and cherry) rootstock to buy for less than \$10 per tree, and the club membership brings plenty of scion wood to graft onto your new tree roots. The event is free and it is a membership drive for the APFG. Great ciders have come out of this workshop. Call the Dimond Greenhouses for details and directions.

The Prez Sez

Secretary's Corner

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2008 National Homebrew  
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Homebrew Competition  
Recap

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Announced

New Brew in the Mat Su

GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB  
PMB 1204  
3705 ARCTIC BOULEVARD  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99503

GNBC WEB SITE:  
WWW.GREATNORTHERNBREWERS.ORG

NEWSLETTER EMAIL  
bushy@alaska.com

PRESIDENT: IRA EDWARDS  
ira\_j\_e@hotmail.com

VICE PRESIDENT: KARRI CANEPA  
kacanepa@uwalumni.com

TREASURER: BRECK TOSTEVIN  
keegan@gci.net

SECRETARY: DENA SESSLER  
sessak@mtaonline.net

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SHAWN WENDLING  
cpsw@gci.net

DENNIS SESSLER  
sessak@mtaonline.net

CARL HALL  
C\_HALL.PND@AUC.COM

JOHN TRAPP  
johnctrapp@hotmail.com

Don Lewellyn  
dlewelly@fastenal.com

NEWSLETTER EDITOR  
DEBBIE GRECCO  
bushy@alaska.com

Moving right along, we had a great time last month putting on the umpteenth annual Snow Goose Break-Up Home Brew Competition. Read on later in the newsletter for an article and results. That Brings us to the next Great Northern Brewers sanctioned homebrew competition: the fall harvest competition that is replacing the Alaska State Fair Competition. We are still looking for a volunteer coordinator for this event, but rest assured that the board will help out in getting it organized and planned out. Ken Pajak at Cafe Amsterdam has kindly offered to donate his establishment as a judging venue, so it will be right in town and easier to get home without having to drive from Palmer on a Sunday night.

After Nationals, the next big event is the National Homebrew Day on the first Saturday in May. This will be again hosted by John and Rose Craig. Read on for more information.

Well, that is all for this fine month. If you have a topic you are passionate about or have had a great beer or brewing experience either traveling or in Alaska, write an article to share with the membership. We would love to hear about it! Until we next brew again, enjoy your beers meads and ciders responsibly. Take care.



## Secretary's Corner

*by Dena Sessler*

**H**ello fellow GNBCer's. The club met on March 18<sup>th</sup> 2008 at the Snow Goose. The items discussed were as follows:

The bus trip to the Kenai Peninsula is scheduled for the 29-30<sup>th</sup> of March, so by the time this newsletter gets to you it will have already been a screaming success! Kerri planned on two day adventure packed with tours, tasting, and dining. Stay tuned, as I am sure she will have a great time to report!

This month the GNBC will be judging the first round of National Homebrew Competition for the Pacific Northwest Region. Pyramid Brewing Company will be barging up all of the entries from the lower 48, and we expect 300-500 entries. We have a huge need for judges, so tell your friends. You don't have to of have ever judged a beer before; you just need an interest and passion for good beer. Budweiser and Miller drinkers need not apply.

The 22<sup>nd</sup> of March was the date for the Snow Goose Break-Up Homebrew Competition. There were 21 entries and I must say, there was not a bad beer in the bunch. Big congratulations go out to Steve Jayich for winning Best of Show again this year with his Kolsch. Congratulations to all that medaled and for those of you who entered.

If you still haven't picked up your Fur Rondy ribbons and score sheets, they are available at Arctic Brewing Supply.

The 24<sup>th</sup> of March was the annual Humpy's Big Fish Homebrew Competition awards. Once again the Humpy's Big Fish Awards were a huge success. Billy Opinsky always takes care of us all. Even though Flash's Trippel wasn't carbonated enough yet to serve, he did have Tracey Lewellyn's elegant Orange Blossom mead for sale.

On April 4<sup>th</sup> the Anchor Pub will be hosting a Mead dinner at 7:00pm. They will be serving Indian and Thai food paired with 5-6 different meads from Celestial Meadery. The Anchor Pub is located right behind the Glacier Brew House on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

The Beer Judge Certification Program (BJCP) course will be held again next year in January after all of the holidays on Sundays at Café Amsterdam. The course is taught by Dennis Urban, Jason Dittsworth, Breck Tostevin, and Steve Schmitt. The cost of the course is \$150.00 and well worth the money. Even if becoming BJCP certified doesn't interest you, taking the course will give you a greater understanding and appreciation for craft beer. It will also make you a better brewer, so if you are interested, please get in touch with one of them and put your name on the list.

Ken and Shaunna Pajak of Café Amsterdam have volunteered to host a fall homebrew competition in lieu of the State Fair. The competition will take place sometime in late August and is in need of an organizer. If you are interested please contact Ira Edwards.

The education portion of the evening was a talk by Jason Dittsworth on judging for the National Homebrew Competition. The Club needs help judging, so almost anyone that has a sincere appreciation of good beer is welcomed! BJCP judges or those with professional credentials will be pre-assigned to judging panels. If you are planning to judge please send Jason an e-mail at [jdittsworth@gci.net](mailto:jdittsworth@gci.net), letting him know what categories that you plan on entering in Nationals so he can assign you a style that you can judge. Nothing would stink more than to show up to judge and not being able to because the panel that you are on happens to be a category that you entered. We are expecting 300-500 entries and the people that are entering are serious about their homebrew.

Participants wouldn't bother entering if they thought that their beer was less than great. That doesn't mean that it won't be, but don't express that on a score sheet. It's not appropriate to say that this beer stinks, its swill, or I wouldn't feed it to my dog. Most people that enter want constructive feedback about the beer / mead/ cider that they made.

If you feel that a beer deserves a 19, that is fine but you had better be able to back it up and let the brewer know what you feel that they could do to improve that beer. If you aren't sure about how to state the improvements, use words like might, should, could, or possibly to qualify your comments.

On the same token, if it is a phenomenal beer, give it a phenomenal score. Don't hold back points in the fear that the next beer might be better. You can always go score that you should give is a 13. If you don't think that a beer is worthy of a

# EVENTS

*Every First Thursday  
Moose's Tooth First Tap*

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

*Every First Friday  
First Friday at McGinley's Pub  
5-8 PM: 279-1782*

*05.....Ring of Fire Meadery Tasting at  
Cafe Amsterdam: 6:00 PM*

*11..... Midnight Sun Brewing Company  
Planet Mars Beer Release at the  
Brewery: 6:00 PM*

*12.....National Homebrew Competition  
Homebrew Competition Judging  
at the Goose: 10:00 - ??*

*13.....National Homebrew Competition  
Homebrew Competition Judging  
at the Goose: 10:00 - ?*

*18.....Ring of Fire Meadery Mead Dinner  
at the Princess Hotel in Fairbanks:  
6:00 PM*

*05 - 08...Goblets of Gold Mead Competition  
Entries Accepted at Arctic Brewing  
Supply*

*03.....Zymergist Borealis National  
Homebrew Day/Big Beer  
Celebration: Chena Pump House,  
Fairbanks*

*03.....Brewathon 2008 at Jade Street  
Brewery (John Craig's House):  
8:00 AM*

*23 - 25...Great Alaska Craft Beer and  
Homebrew Festival - Haines*

ribbon, then don't give it a score over 30. Please make sure that you bring pre-printed labels with your name, BJCP rank if applicable, and email address on them. If it is noticed that you are intentionally not writing your name on a score sheet, you will be asked to leave. Make sure that you fill out the entire score sheet. There are boxes to the left to mark descriptor definitions and at the bottom right a box to check stylistic accuracy, technical merit, and intangibles. I have received many score sheets that have nothing more than a name, bottle inspection ok, and overall impressions, a good beer or fine attempt. It is extremely frustrating and I can guarantee that a person new to home brewing that gets a score sheet back like that probably won't enter again.

It is also a good idea to go to <http://www.bjcp.org> and familiarize yourself with the categories and subcategories ahead of time. There is no better way to practice than to get a commercial example of the style, sit down with a score sheet, and judge that beer. You can also go to <http://www.bjcp.org> to download the template for your labels.

There are going to be a lot of eyes watching us. Not only did Steve Schmitt and Jason Dittsworth chastise the people in Portland and Seattle for doing a terrible job, but they volunteered the GNBC to take it over. The AHA is likely looking at this event to see if we could handle hosting a National Conference someday. If we do a great job, that is a great possibility! If the GNBC just fills out score sheets with attention to detail, we have already done a better job. We are all looking forward to the challenge of hosting a phenomenal event so please come out to lend a hand in any capacity you can. Not only are judges needed but Steve Schmitt has a lot of other duties that he needs help with, so please contact him if you can lend a hand. Steve can be reached at [sschmitt@alaska.com](mailto:sschmitt@alaska.com)

Well that's it for this month, see you all at the meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> of April and hopefully in some capacity at Nationals!



## 2008 National Homebrew Toast and Brewathon

by John "SUDS" Craig

**I** Love Beer! Beer, Beer, Beer, and more beer is making me thirsty for our annual GNBC Brewathon. In this event, we worship the Beer Gods up in Suds' Heaven. This is the reason Rose and I are inviting homebrewers over to Jade Street Beer Gardens on Saturday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> for the event. The event is part of a nationwide coast-to-coast brew day (even in outer space). Homebrewers gather to make as much beer, mead or hooch as possible in a one day session. We start brewing at 8:00 AM and celebrate the "Coast to Coast Homebrew Toast" at 9:00 AM sharp, brew all day, cook, socialize and wrap up around 9:00 PM.

The objective is to have about 10 brew stations set up in the yard for everyone's use, but if you're particular and like to share with others, bring your own brew supplies, equipment and don't forget propane, burners, your own carboys for your beer, and even rubber boots; it can get sloppy and wet out there. This is as much an educational event as it is social and you should invite curious non-brewers to attend with you and show them the foamy ropes. This is much of a brewing equipment road show as it is a brewing session, so plan to demonstrate your set up and learn from others at the same time.

As always, there will be a BBQ/Potluck all day long, so bring along something for the grill and something to share with others, and don't forget your stash of homebrew. What makes the event great is a big array of something people can dip into, throw on the grill and toss on a plate while drinking great homebrew.

We've had lots of fun over the years at this annual event, so we hope to see you at 8757 Jade Street (west on Dimond, past Jewell Lake Road and right on Jade Street. We're at the corner of Jade and 88<sup>th</sup>. If you get lost, call us at (907) 243-6540. There is lots of parking along Jade Street, but please respect our gracious neighbors who have tolerated (and participated in) this event over the years. Try not to block driveways or mailboxes and access to other people's property. Common sense should prevail. Keep our driveway open as well as ordered by the Fire Marshall as part of the permit we need to have a campfire in our back yard.

We hope to see you at this great event. May the beer Gods be with us!



## 2008 National Homebrew Competition Update

by Steve Schmitt

First off – a round of Thank You's: To Pyramid Brewing in Seattle for receiving the entries from people in America and to Alaska Distributors for shipping the pallet of entries to Anchorage, to the Snowgoose Brewpub for allowing us to have the entries dropped off, stored, and judged at their establishment, and to Alaskan Brewing for their continuous support and donation of merchandise to distribute to the judges at the event. Thanks to everyone for making this event a success – and it hasn't even happened yet!

So, remember that we will be hosting and judging the 1<sup>st</sup> round of the National Homebrew Competition, the NW Regional, in Anchorage, on April 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> (Saturday and Sunday) at the Snowgoose as usual. We will begin at 10am each day and continue till we're done. If anyone is interested in helping organize the event, assist as a steward during the judging, or judge some beer, let me know.

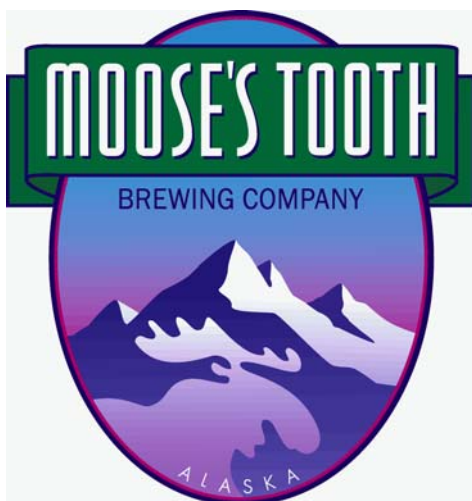
Entries may be dropped of at the Snowgoose beginning March 31<sup>st</sup> through April 11<sup>th</sup> during normal business hours at the Goose. Make sure they're open before heading down there on Sunday or Monday because they may (or probably) will be closed.

**More importantly – don't expect anyone at the Goose to help you with your entries – they are simply going to accept the bottle.**

For information regarding entering refer to the AHA website ([www.beertown.org](http://www.beertown.org)) or Zymurgy Magazine. EXPLICIT instructions for entry are available on the web site. This year they will only accept online entries so check into this in advance.

Remember – there is a 2-week window for dropping off your entries. Entries will not be accepted any other time or at any other location. Online entry will close at 4pm (Alaska time) on Friday, April 11<sup>th</sup>. **The deadline for entering the competition will be 6pm, Friday the 11<sup>th</sup>.** If your entry isn't in my hot little hands at that time it won't be judged. It might get consumed – but it won't be judged.

We would appreciate people dropping off their entries early so we can organize the competition early – if possible try to drop off your entries on or before Wednesday, April 9th. We will store all of the entries in boxes, in the dark, and in a big cooler so they will be safe and well cared for.





## Brew-A-Thon 2008

*by: Ira Edwards*

Yeah, I know that it is still April and that this is an article for the May newsletter, but I am putting it in this newsletter because it will not make it out in time for an important event next month. After Nationals, the next big event is the National Hombrew Day on the first Saturday in May. This will be again hosted by John and Rose Craig at the Jade Street Brewery. This fine locale is on the corner of Jade Street and 88<sup>th</sup> avenue. Just go west on Dimond Blvd until you pass Jewell Lake and the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> right off of Dimond is Jade Street. Park on the street and try not to block the fire hydrants this year.

The Great Northern Brewers Club's annual Brew-A-Thon is a part of the American Hombrewer's Association and the National Homebrew day, with details found at <http://beertown.org/events/bigbrew/index.html>

This year, the theme brew is a memorial brew to commemorate Michael Jackson, a great beer writer who passed away last fall. Link to the AHA website for details of the brew. The GNBC event is a little different than the event in other clubs. Other clubs make a lot of beer on this day, but do it in a commercial brewery. We brew it on our own homebrew equipment. It is a great chance to see everyone's brewing gadgets and to make up plans on how to modify your own gear. We also have a big BBQ potluck with the basics provided by the club. The plan is to start the brew day at 8am on the first Saturday of May (the 3<sup>rd</sup> this year), and the National Toast will be at 9am.

I'll see you all there!



# 2008 Snow Goose Break-Up Report

by *Ira Edwards*

I want to thank everyone who entered beers and came to help out with judging and stewarding our little contest. The 2008 Snow Goose Break-Up Homebrew contest was a bit bigger than last year and had plenty of judges to get us through the day. More help is always better, but we had enough this year which was great. The main purpose of this contest is to help the fine folks at the Sleeping Lady Brewing Company develop a beer that will sell well in the summer month and be one to enjoy on the awesome deck they have at the Snow Goose. Gary Klopfer and his brewers Clay and Greg have really put together a fine selection of beers this last year, and Gary is very generous in his support of the GNBC, so this little contest is the least we can do for him.

Congratulations go to Steve Jayich, who won the contest for the second year in a row. This year it was with his Kölsch. Other folks who made it to the Best of Show round were Flash Lubitsh-White and Dena Sessler. Sadly, my single beer did not make it on to the final round...Read on for the results.

## 2008 Snow Goose Break-Up Homebrew Competition Results

Class 6 – Light Hybrid Beers

1<sup>st</sup> Steve Jayich **BEST OF SHOW**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Don & Tracy Lewellyn  
3<sup>rd</sup> John Trapp

Class 7 - Amber Hybrid Beers

1<sup>st</sup> Steve Jayich  
2<sup>nd</sup> Flash Lubitsh-White

Class 8 – English Pale Ales

1<sup>st</sup> Flash Lubitsh-White  
2<sup>nd</sup> Rory Petrik  
3<sup>rd</sup> Dena Sessler

Class 9 – Scottish and Irish Ales

2<sup>nd</sup> Flash Lubitsh-White

Class 10 – American Ales

1<sup>st</sup> Flash Lubitsh-White  
2<sup>nd</sup> Mark Thorndike

Class 11 – English Brown Ales

1<sup>st</sup> Steve Jayich  
2<sup>nd</sup> Don Lewellyn  
3<sup>rd</sup> Dena Sessler

Class 12 – Porters

1<sup>st</sup> Flash Lubitsh-White

Class 13 – Stout

1<sup>st</sup> Dena Sessler  
2<sup>nd</sup> Todd Rock  
3<sup>rd</sup> Ira Edwards





## We Need Judges!!

by *Scott Stihler*

**W**e need BJCP judges and/or experienced brewers to help judge the AHA/BJCP sanctioned E.T. Barnette Homebrew Competition! Last year we have nearly twice as many entries as the previous year and seven fewer judges. We got through it but it wasn't pretty. Last year's numbers in terms of both entries and judges has us running scared.

On top of that there was a really nice article about the competition in the November/December issue of *Zymurgy*. When we were approached about them writing that article we were very hesitant. However, since the draft they sent us was all based upon information readily available on our webpages how could we really say no? It was a nice article but it could result in even more entries this year.

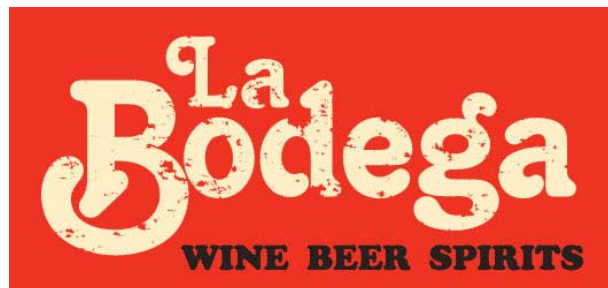
So now we are REALLY running scared. We need YOUR help! We need judges, lots of judges for this year's competition!

Please! Please! Please! Please! Please! Please! Please! Please! Please! Please!

Okay enough of my begging (for now). Judging will take place on Saturday, July 12th starting around 10:00 a.m. at the Silver Gulch Brewing and Bottling Company located in Fox, Alaska

The styles of beers that will be judged have been changed from what it as been in previous years. The seven judged categories will be: Bock (5A-D); English Pale Ale (8A-C); American Ale (10A-C); ; Porter (12A-C) ; Stout (13A-F); India Pale Ale(14A-C) and Fruit/Spice/Herb/Vegetable Beer (20/21A).

Once again judges will be allowed to save money of shipping by pre-registering their competition entries. All they need to is fill out the Entry and Bottle ID forms and include fee payment for each of their entries and then simply drop off the entries on the day of the competition. Note that the idea of the pre-registration is to allow the Registrar to log the entries before hand. Therefore, the preregistration information and payment must be received BEFORE Saturday, July 12<sup>th</sup>.





Please send your pre-registration and payment to:

**Scott Stihler**  
**P.O. Box 84988**  
**Fairbanks, AK 99708**

I hope you can help us out with judging the E.T. Barnette Homebrew Competition.

For more information about this competition please go to the following URL:  
<http://www.mosquitobytes.com/Den/Beer/Events/Events.html>

***If you are interested in judging*** ...or have any questions please contact Scott Stihler at [stihlerunits@mosquitobytes.com](mailto:stihlerunits@mosquitobytes.com) or (907) 474-2138.



## New Brew in the Mat Su

by *Kevin Tubbs*

**G**reetings Great Northern Brewers Homebrew Club members. I took over the Mat Su Resort on lake Wasilla about a month ago. Might take me 350 years to pay it off, but I am expecting to knock that down to 349 if the brew club knows I'm back on the plank.

Come on out and expect to have a great time here. We have a full service restaurant, two full bars, a new beer tasting room, a private banquet room, an outside barbecue area, a boat launch and some of the best live music around. The 12 unit hotel and private lakefront bungalows are great for folks who don't want to drive back to Anchorage after a nice time on the lake. The facility encompasses 13 acres on and around the lake.

I brought my first REAL beers in last week...Chimay Grand Reserve led the charge. You know I have taken over when Chimay is on the menu in Wasilla. I envision 99 bottles of beer on the wall with something like 30 draft ales. I have some Midnight Sun, Some Kassik's Kenai Brew Stop, and Moose's Tooth beer on tap already. I expect we will be the number one beer spot in the valley in a very short time.

Brewsday Tuesday Beertastings are back on line, and the distributors have been AWESOME about lining us up with great beers to sample. Imagine...some I have never even seen?? wow.

I hope you folks can come out and check the new operation...Password for GNBC members to receive discounts on accommodations is "beerpouch"...wink~ expect a lot of news to come~ Please pass the word and consider this my personal invitation to have the gang come out for an EVENT.

I would really like to have a GNBC meeting here in my NEW Yukon Yacht Club on the lake. The Yukon Yacht Club is just one of the bars I have open here now...I have the IDEAL venue for a road trip, and you don't even have to drive all the way into Wasilla to get to me. Just take the Parks Highway to Seward Meridian Road. Take a right and follow it to Bogard Road...take a left and look on the left hand side for the nearly destroyed sign...(I'm fixing that)...anyway, cheers to you!

Check out the digs at [www.matsuresortak.com](http://www.matsuresortak.com)

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Great Northern Brewers Club  
Attn: Treasurer  
PMB 1204, 3705 Arctic Blvd  
Anchorage, AK 99503

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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:

Online: bushy@alaska.com  
Phone: 333-8985  
Mail: 6933 Soyuz Circle  
Anchorage, Ak 99504

GNBC Web Site: [www.greatnorthernbrewers.org](http://www.greatnorthernbrewers.org)



**Great Northern Brewers Club  
PMB 1204  
3705 Arctic Boulevard  
Anchorage, AK 99503**

**NEXT MEETING: Tuesday April 15th, 2008 at the Goose**