



# THE Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB  
DECEMBER 2016

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## The Prez Sez

*by Kevin Sobolesky*

Greetings, brewers! Winter is in full swing and the chill can reach your bones if you let it. Thankfully, all the stuffing of thanksgiving will have hopefully acted as a suitable salve for you soul; I know I needed it. As we let the results of our national elections settle in and shake us or excite us, we get to welcome our new leadership for the Great Northern Brewer's club. Here's the new lineup:

### Officers

President: John Trapp  
Vice President: Kevin Sobolesky  
Treasurer: Samuel Moore  
Secretary: Jim O'Toole

### Board Members

Brian Smith  
Peter Hall  
Mike Fisher

I hope to see you all at the Christmas party at the Zoo on the 10th! Please check out Peter's article with the details. I'm going as a ghostbuster, who else wants to fill out the roster? I got Spengler covered. He did, for fun, collect spores, mold and fungus.

The January meeting is just around the corner, check out the latest article on it and don't forget to get your TAPS card and volunteer for the Great Alaskan Beer and Barleywine Festival; it's a sure fire blast and, often, a hootenanny!

Cheers,  
Kevin "President for Life" Sobolesky

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## Secretary's Corner

by *Jim O'Toole*

**C**an you have too much beer? People who know me well enough to have seen my beer stash think that I do.

I have a metal locker near an outside wall that doesn't experience too much temperature fluctuation where I keep the oldest of my stock but I have another pile of boxes of various sizes that include some beers that have been there a while. I even have some beers that were left over from the Humpy's Big Fish Competition last year. I don't have any information on them other than what BJCP category they were judged in, so when I pour one, since they were free, I sometimes like it and sometimes pour it out.

The friend who turned me on to homebrewing says he got into it after many years of making wine and only being able to make wine that was as good as the lower priced wines in liquor stores, he decided he'd try beer as he has heard it is possible to brew beer far better than what was available commercially. He was an extract brewer who is constantly excited about the changes and advanced technology available to us now. Sadly, technology changes aren't enough to get him back into it, but he pays attention to what is going on and sends or refers me to interesting stuff about brewing when he finds it.

He used to get invited to a lot of parties when he lived in St. Louis and Houston and the invitations would always be far ahead of the event because people knew he'd brew up a couple of five gallon batches as his "potluck" contribution. I know he's probably bragging a little but he says he got invited to a lot of parties.

And he also says he "never threw any out."

I remember him talking about trying to clone commercial beers and how he'd tried to brew Guinness but couldn't get it exactly right. When trying to clone Harp he got pretty close, but there weren't many options for people wanting to brew beer at home in the 90's.

As I contemplate the next brew kettle or conical fermenter that I don't have room for, I think about how lucky we are to have the kind of brewing equipment available to us. My set up is as rudimentary as it gets and involves clearing my kitchen counters and hauling everything out of the garage before I can start brewing. There isn't a whole lot of room.

I still think about adding more gear all the time, especially when I read or hear about new ways to do things. Brew-in-a bag sounds like a great way to brew, but I don't think I want to screw an eye bolt in the ceiling of my kitchen.



One new thing I find intriguing is something I touched on during my Europe trip and which I shared in my slide presentation at the November meeting. On a train ride from Milan, Italy to Zurich, Switzerland, I met a couple from Minnesota whose son had won an entrepreneurial contest in college and used the cash prize as seed money to get his business going. It's called Sprowtmalt and involves a system that will allow homebrewers to malt their own grains. Details regarding how it works are pretty skimpy but I've been in touch with the guy and he says he is about to sell some of the equipment along with a supply of barley to some people and the company will monitor how things work. Here is what the website says under "How do I use Sprowt home malting equipment?" – "Plug into 120vac, run a hose to a faucet, and run a second hose to a bucket or drain. Follow directions to connect to wifi. Power on, choose a recipe from the display, your phone, or computer, and put your weighed seed in the vessel." I'm just about finished figuring out how the Star Trek transporter worked and now I've got to think about adding a wifi component to my brewing.

Sprowt wants to do a crowd funding thing (I'm an idiot about those things) and hopes to raise enough money to get the systems on the market in a year or so. The designer has a website and asked me to turn everyone on to it. As I said, details regarding the system are minimal but the guy lists his email address and says he'll talk to anyone about what he is up to. The website address is <http://sprowtmalt.com/>. His name is Christopher Abbott and he writes great emails.

I doubt I will get into malting my own grains, though. With minimal storage space I barely have room for the La Bodega Beer Club beers I just picked up. The seasonal beers that are on the shelves that were revealed in Bodega's latest email are tempting, and I have to drink a bunch of stuff already on hand before I can stock up.

I hope you all had a happy Thanksgiving and that your Christmas season is, at least, as happy.

#### Calendar Of Upcoming Events

GNBC Christmas Party  
 Saturday December 10, 2016  
 Alaska Zoo  
 Theme is "Movie Night."  
 Come dressed as your favorite, or least favorite, movie character

GNBC/ABG "Meeting"  
 49th State Brewing Company Theater  
 Details Forming – Stay Tuned!  
 THURSDAY  
 January 19 2017



# EVENTS

Every First Thursday  
*Moose's Tooth First Tap*

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

03.....*Humpy's Bigfish Judging  
 Bootleggers Bar (formerly ZubZero)  
 10:00 AM*

10.....*GNBC Christmas Party  
 The Alaska Zoo 7:30 PM  
 The Gateway Complex*

19.....*GABBF Insustry Meeting  
 Anchorage 49th State Brewing Co.  
 7:00 PM*

20-21 *Great Alaska Beer and Barleywine Festival*



# 2016 Humpy's Big Fish Competition

by *Peter Hall*

The Humpy's Big Fish Homebrew Competition continues to be one of the biggest and highest profile Homebrew competitions in Alaska.

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 examples, 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 make the cut for brewing at Midnight Sun.

Humpy's Great Alaskan Alehouse is once again hosting the GNBC and the competition at the Bootleggers Bar that's connected to the alehouse but separate.

The judging will take place on December 3. Tasting will begin promptly at 10 am, at Bootleggers Bar located at 612 F St in downtown Anchorage, next to Humpy's.

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

I really need high turnout from you qualified judges. I would like to ask that if you do come, please plan to be there until at least 2 in the afternoon. The final best of show round will need to be done no later than 3. 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](mailto:alaskabrewer@gmail.com) with any questions.





## GNBC “Movie Night” Christmas

*by Peter Hall*

The GNBC has been welcomed back to the Alaska Zoo Gateway complex for our annual Christmas Party. 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.

This will be a night at the movies for the club. Come as whatever movie character, director, set piece, or in any other movie themed costume you can come up with. Get as inventive as you like. Ideally you are not so obscure that even after explaining what your costume is nobody gets it, but have some fun.

The Usuals, a local band, will be there to help keep the mood light. This band has actually played for us before, but not under this rad formalized band name. Welcome then into the club with a tip, if you so see fit. I'm sure you will.

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](mailto:alaskabrewer@gmail.com)



# Great Alaska Beer and Barleywine Festival Industry Meeting

by Jason Ditsworth

Each January marks the return of the Great Alaska Beer and Barleywine Festival (GABBF) and Alaska Beer Week. The GNBC has long been a supporter of the GABBF barley wine competition by supplying BJCP certified judges and beer stewards, and has also been the host for the Thursday night meeting for brewers, brewery owners, special guests and other beer industry workers. The industry meeting will happen again this year and it's scheduled for January 19, 2017, at 7:00 PM, at 49<sup>th</sup> State Brewing Co. We owe a huge thank you to 49<sup>th</sup> State for helping us continue this tradition. Get down there and have a pint and some food. Try the pretzel – trust me!

There will be many more details regarding the format of the Industry Meeting in the January newsletter and future emails or Facebook posts. However, you can plan on it being very similar to last year – homebrew will be welcome and food will be catered by 49<sup>th</sup> State. There will also be commercial beer available. One notable change is that we will not be having a raffle. The raffle takes too long and we lose people's attention. There may be one or two door prizes, but this is yet to be determined. This year's special guest speaker will be John Maier from Rogue, thanks to GABBF promoter Aurora Productions.

This is a private event so only people that RSVP will be allowed to enter. As a GNBC member you will be allowed to enter, but you must present a valid State or military identification card. There will be no exceptions.

To make this event happen we need sponsorship and volunteers to help setup and cleanup. We will also need people to help check people in at the door. We will need about 4 to 6 people to help setup on January 19 between 5:00 and 6:00 PM. We will also need 6 to 8 people to help with cleanup after the event (10:00 PM). If you are interested in helping please contact me at [jditsworth@gci.net](mailto:jditsworth@gci.net). If we don't get sufficient volunteers I will be recruiting starting with board members and officers, then club members. Remember, this is your club and our event so please step up and help out.

Cheers!



**T**he 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*

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**NEXT MEETING: December 10th, 2016  
The Alaska Zoo 7:30 PM**