



THE

Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB

FEBRUARY 2008

The Prez Sez

by Ira Edwards

Hello to all GNBC Members and friends. I hope everyone had an enjoyable time with the festivities surrounding the Great Alaska Beer and Barleywine Festival last month. Our January Meeting in the Snow Goose Ballroom was a great hit with all kinds of visiting dignitaries and brewers coming up to see what the club is all about. I got some really good compliments at the festival, so it appears we left a good impression on a few of them.

Sam Calagione of Dogfish Head Craft Brewery was our guest speaker, and I have to say that he is one of the best speakers I have heard on any topic and certainly the most animated one to talk at our GNBC meetings. It is sure a good thing that Sam came up this year instead of last year, as then we would have gotten to watch the clash of Budweiser vs. Dogfish Head. Much better to keep them in separate meetings...



February is shaping up to be another great month. Coming up Next week on Feb 9 is the Fur Rondy Homebrew Competition. Be sure to get your entries in and come and help judge. Every year, this is one of our larger competitions and is a great time to be had by all. Fur Rondy loves this competition because it does not cost them anything (a great thing in the hard financial times they have had the last couple of years). I will be giving a talk this month on sour beers and presenting a tasting of the Aged Labic and Gueuze that former GNBC member Chris Anderson and I have worked on the last few years. The beers are aging nicely and have won a couple of nice awards recently. I'll be bringing a magnum of the Gueuze that got 2nd Place at the National Homebrew Competition last year and several varieties of Fruit lambics to allow folks to discover how different fruits interact in the aging process with sour beers.

February is also the annual Swap Meet at the GNBC monthly meeting, so if you have an extra brewing equipment and gizmos that you feel someone else can put to good use, Bring them t the meeting. Make sure to put your name and a price on the item in case things get mixed up. I know I am looking for 5 gallon Sanke kegs that have damaged valves. I have a line of spare parts to repair them. If you are making keg kettles to bring, please be aware that they cost breweries a lot of money and the keg shells need to be acquired legally. Last year I saw a cut up keg with a local brewery label on it at a non GNBC person's garage, and he was not aware of how many kegs just up and "disappear." Please keep that in mind when building, buying or selling your brewing contraptions.

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GNBC House Crawl
Resurrected

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Secretary's Corner

by Dena Sessler

If you missed the meeting on the 17th of January, it was another phenomenal time! The evening started at 6:00pm up in the pub of the Goose for a tribute to Dr. Fermento's son-in-law and all of the 4/25th soldiers from Ft. Richardson who didn't return with their unit. The beer is called Spartan Warrior Imperial Stout. The ingredients were donated by the Snow Goose and the proceeds of the sale of each pint are being donated to a memorial on Ft. Richardson.

At the regular club meeting downstairs in the theatre, Ira Edwards announced that the GNBC was recognizing Marty Compton for all of his contributions over the past years. Ira then recognized all of the local breweries. John Burket recognized all of the visiting breweries he had up here for the Great Alaska Beer and Barley Wine Festival. Then, Sam Calagione owner of Dog Fish Head Brewery and author of Extreme Brewing was introduced as the featured speaker. He is a fantastic guy who gave a great and colorful talk. Hats off to Alaska! We have an incredible beer culture up here. With the National average of 3% drinking craft beer, Alaska weighs in at 12%. Dog Fish Head opened in 1995 and was the smallest of 1200 commercial breweries in the country. Sam started with a homebrew Brew Magic system that he souped up to make it more commercial friendly. He used a Polaris heat exchanger and bumped up the BTU's on the burners so he could produce about 2-3 batches in 7-8 hours 5-6 day's a week for their pub which yielded about 11-12 gallons with head space for the boil. He used converted Sankes with sanitary ball valves for fermenters. He said he would waddle the beer into a small room with a rack and air conditioner, check the gravity, waddle it into a cold room over night where the yeast would break, and then transfer it into a Hoff Stevens keg and shake it until it was carbonated, and roll it out on tap. He said it was pretty F*\$#*D up practices for a commercial brewery but it worked.

Dogfish Head bottles say "off centered beers for off centered people," so obviously they had no aspirations of brewing light lagers and they knew they wouldn't be brewing beer for the masses. Brewing that frequently got boring, so Sam would find himself wandering into the kitchen of the pub and grabbing apricots, pumpkin, chicory, licorice root, or raisins. The worst that could happen was 10 gallons of bad beer. And it did happen a few times. Sam said that the worst was he was adding lavender to a beer and read it in ounces but added it in pounds. The beer was called High Alpha Wheat with peppercorns and lavender buds. One of the comment cards from the pub said it tasted like toe kissing Laura Ashley.

The mid-90's presented challenges for Calagione and Dogfish Head. People were only doing beers, for the most part, with 4 ingredients. The year after they opened, in 1996, Dogfish Head started distributing and built a 5 barrel brewery when a cannery went out of business. The first beers that they distributed were Chicory Stout made with organic Mexican coffee, licorice root, and St. John's Wort, which makes it the worlds only anti depressant, depressant. The other was an ale made with maple syrup from Calagione's dad's farm and vanilla beans. It was one of the first craft beers aged on oak and had a price tag of \$13.00 a six pack. It was a hard sell, but one of the comments was it tastes like trees but it got me F*\$#@\$D up. Since that time they have just been trying to spread the word about great beers. They have gone from the smallest brewery in the country to one of the fastest growing breweries producing about 52,000 barrels. They separated their restaurant brewery from their distribution brewery in 1996 and built a 30 barrel brewery out of the ruins of a Dannon yogurt factory.

Dogfish Head wasn't brewing consistent beer on brewing equipment until 2001. Their average beer is 9% ABV and they make 28 beers for distribution. Every year they try to introduce two new beers and remove one that isn't selling well. They are more experimental than they have ever been.

Dogfish Head beers that create the most excitement are the ones that are based on historical recipes. Chateau Jiahu is a beer that is based on a 9,000 year old recipe made with Hawthorn fruit, Sake yeast, Sake rice, Barley, and local honey. With the discovery of this ancient beer through remnants in clay pots, molecular evidence now dates beer older than wine. Theobroma, the tree of knowledge, is a historical recipe which is the oldest known fermented chocolate beverage, discovered in Central America. It is made with chilies, chocolate nibs, and chocolate powder. Paulo Santo Marrone, which means holly wood, comes out in 1 1/2 months. This beer is aged on an exotic wood from the brown holy tree which Sam says gives the beer an amazing caramel and vanilla complexity. The average Coors, Miller, or Budweiser beer uses 20 pounds of barley per barrel, craft beer uses 40 pounds of barley per barrel, and Dog Fish Head uses 75 pounds of barley per barrel. Hopefully we will be seeing more of Dog Fish Head's beers up here soon.

This year's Great Alaska Beer and Barley Wine Festival was another other amazing time with much more control than in years past. The event was sold out both nights due to the online ticket sales this year. The event was at capacity by 6:30 pm Friday night and the doors closed. Saturday was a repeat. So if you didn't volunteer or buy your tickets online, you didn't get in. Saturday's Connoisseurs' Session was a much nicer and quieter atmosphere and the breweries served special beers brewed specifically for that session. This event cost \$10.00 more than the general admission, and the proceeds went to the Alaska Brewers Guild,. The event was well worth it!

The winners of the barely wine competition were also announced. **Pelican Pub and Brewery of Pacific City, Oregon took gold with their Stormwatcher's Winterfest. Our own Sleeping Lady Brewing Company took silver with Old Gander and Deschutes Brewery of Bend, Oregon took bronze with their Super Jubel.** Congratulations to all of the winners, with a huge round of applause to Clay and Greg of the Goose, our local winners. Make sure you stop by the brewery to shake their hands next time you are at the Goose!

Don't forget about the Fur Rondy competition on the 9th of February. Entries are being taken from 11:00am-6:00pm at the Snow Goose, not Arctic Brewing Supply on the 8th of February. Judging will take place at the Snow Goose starting at 10:00am on the 9th. The winners will be announced at our next club meeting on the 19th of February and there will be special prizes for the Best of Show (BOS) Mead/Cider and Beer. Speaking of our next club meeting, Ira Edwards will be giving a talk on Lambic's and is bringing a Magnum of his Gueuze which took 2nd at Nationals. I am looking forward to it and seeing all of you on the 19th.



EVENTS

Every First Thursday

Moose's Tooth First Tap

Every Friday

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

08.....*Entries for Rondy Homebrew Competition Accepted at the Goose 11:00 AM - 6:00 PM*

09.....*Fur Rondy Homebrew Competition Judging 10:00 AM at the Goose*

16.....*Ring of Fire Special Release Mead at Tap Root Cafe*

19.....*GNBC Club Meeting at the Snow Goose 7:00 PM*

03.....*Tap Root Flemish/Sour Beer Tasting 5:30 PM*

18.....*GNBC Club Meetig at the Snow Goose 7:00 PM*

19.....*Snow Goose Breakup Homebrew Competition Entries Accepted 12:00 PM*

22.....*Snow Goose Breakup Homebrew Competition Judging 10:30 AM*

CAFE



AMSTERDAM

National Homebrew Competition – 1st Round Judging

by Steve Schmitt

Over the past few years the judging for the 1st round of the National Homebrew Competition has taken place in Portland or Seattle with the 2nd round judging taking place at the National Conference (Cincinnati this year). One thing led to another and the AHA has decided to accept the GNBC's offer to host the event in Anchorage in April of this year. Plans for future editions of the event include judging in Anchorage, Seattle, and Portland on a rotating basis of every three years.

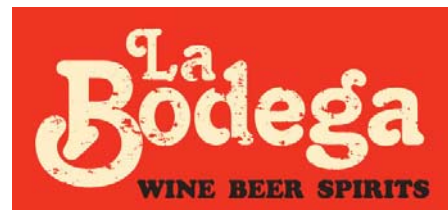
So, what does this mean for the GNBC? To start with, this will be an excellent educational event for the club. We plan to discuss beer evaluation and judging at the February and March meetings and host the Snowgoose Competition prior to Nationals to warm up everyone's taste buds. And hosting the judging in our own back yard will give us the advantage of submitting our best beer for the judging without sending it to Portland or Seattle.

So, who can judge? To start with we need every BJCP judge we have to assist in the event. We're planning on having 500 entries so the event will take us two days to complete. Also, just like any other homebrew judging the GNBC conducts, we need (and want) anyone with an interest in beer to help judge. As always, we pair experienced judges with less experienced beer lovers on a judging panel. The bottom line is that we need anyone and everyone to help whether you're an inexperienced homebrewer, BJCP judge, or a commercial brewer. We're equal opportunity BABY!

Specific information regarding entry for the 1st round of National will be published in Zymurgy Magazine, on the AHA website (www.beertown.org), and we'll have DATA on the GNBC website as well. Local entries can be dropped off at the Snowgoose Brew Pub between March 31st through April 11th, however, we would like to organize the entries early so the cool thing to do is drop off your entries prior to Wednesday, the 9th of April. If possible, please be cool.

Anyone interested in assisting in organization of the event is cordially invited to contact me at sschmitt@alaska.com. Thanks and we'll see you in April.

THE BOTTOM LINE: Judging will take place at the Snowgoose Brewpub, Saturday and Sunday, April 12th and 13th, 2008. Starting at 10am and finishing when we're done. Everyone is invited – tell your friends....



Continued from front cover...Prez Sez

The Club is in Full swing planning for hosting the Pacific Northwest judging of the first round of the National Homebrew Competition in April and Hopefully this will turn into an annual event that we can be proud of. I know it is supposed to be on a rotation between the different Pacific Northwest venues, but I hope we can put on such a good show that everyone will want to keep the GNBC as the host club. Not too hard to do a good job, and we have some top notch organizers...Read up on the website or details as they emerge as well as this and future newsletters. Mark the date as April 12th and 13th, 2008 as a time not to miss. And remember to work on your Taxes before that weekend, and not afterwards.

Well, that's it for this month. I'll see you at the meeting on the 19th! Enjoy your Beers, Meads, and Ciders responsibly this month and remember to stay safe out there.

New Date For The 2008 Snow Goose Breakup Homebrew Competition

by Ira Edwards

Note to the Club: Unfortunately this article did not make it into the January newsletter, but there is still time to brew the styles for this comp and get the satisfaction of helping develop a commercial beer to be enjoyed on the deck of the Goose this summer.

Due to the upcoming and huge First Round Judging of the National Homebrew Competition in April, **we are moving the Snow Goose Comp to March 22 at the Snow Goose.** Entries can be dropped off after 12pm on Friday, March 19 and will be entered in the database at that time. You can contact Clay or Greg at the brewery to arrange an earlier drop-off if needed and they will be stored in the cooler. Follow the signs to the judging, which will commence at 10:30am on Saturday March 22, 2008. Please show up early to sign in and get organized into judging panels.

I met with Clay and Greg at the Sleeping Lady Brewing Company to talk about the future of the Comp and to see what they wanted to get out of it. We decided that we still want to make it a smaller contest and limit the styles to those that could be brewed and would sell well during the summer season on the Deck at the Goose. We also wanted to make a contest that would appeal to more brewers and allow them to use their creativity to achieve the goal of helping develop a profitable beer. Gary and the staff at the Snow goose have been very helpful to the club over the years, and it should be an honor to see one of our own come up with another beer for them. Who knows, your beer might be so well received, they might make it a regular addition and place it next to the Urban Wilderness Pale Ale, another former contest winning entry developed with a fellow GNBC member, Dennis Urban. You never know...

So, we decided to divide the contest into 3 categories: English ales, American Ales, and Hybrid Beers. We will take the winners of each general category and come up with a best of show to be brewed right away. Now it is not open to all styles that might fall under these categories, but only the ones with lower starting gravities and lower alcohols. Now I know what you are thinking, but remember that we want a SUMMER beer here, and not a winter warmer barleywine... and that is not to say that we don't have dark and flavorful ales that go down well in the summer. For all beers, we want to shoot for something with a starting gravity of around 1.060 or lower. Ok here are the categories:

1. English Ales Division : **MUST USE AN ENGLISH YEAST AND SHOW ENGLISH ALE CHARACTERISTICS IN THE BEER.**

Category 8 – English Pale Ales (All 3 subcategories accepted)

Category 9 Scottish and Irish Ale

9A – Scottish Light 60/

9B -Scottish Heavy 70/ (remember the Gravity limit)

9D – Irish Red Ale

Category 11 – English Brown Ales (All 3 subcategories accepted)

Category 12 – Porters

12A – Brown Porter

12B – Robust Porter

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





Category 13 - Stout (**some of these can be entered in either the American or English ales division, but you cannot enter the same category in both divisions..**)

13A – Dry Stout

13B – Sweet Stout

13C – Oatmeal Stout

2. American Ales Division: YOU MUST USE Wyeast 1056 or White Labs WLP 001 or SafAle US-56 type of yeast (American Ale). The Goose uses 1056 in some of their beers and wants to use this yeast if this category wins.

Category 10 – American Ales (All 3 subcategories accepted)

Category 13 - Stout (**some of these can be entered in the American or English ales division, but you cannot enter the same category in both divisions..**)

13A – Dry Stout

13B – Sweet Stout

13C – Oatmeal Stout

13E – American Stout

3. Hybrid Styles: Any yeast is OK (as long as it is commercially available) but again, remember the gravity limits on the beer..

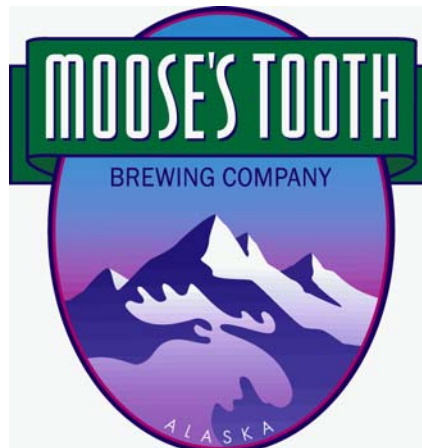
Category 6 – Light Hybrid Beer

6A – Cream Ale

6B – Blonde Ale

6C – Kolsch

Category 7 – Amber Hybrid Beer (All 3 subcategories accepted)





Annual House Crawl Resurrected!

by Pat Ryam

Head's up! Save the date on your calendars – May 24th – for the next GNBC House Crawl Extraordinaire. This is an event where we tour members' homes on an afternoon of camaraderie, sharing homebrewer's wares at their root. We go from house to house and enjoy members' local wares and participate in fun and games, good food and good fun. Stanley (our favorite bus driver) has reserved the FUN BUS for our brew club members to enjoy the event without having to worry about driving. I will collect fees for this event at both the April and May meetings. This is a designated driver event, so plan to get dropped off and get picked up. Details to follow. Good times ahead!



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 \$25 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: February 19th, 2008
at the Snow Goose 7:00 PM**