



THE

Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB

FEBRUARY 2015

The Prez Sez

by Peter Hall



There's so much going on that I can't believe it. It's been a real ride through surviving beer week, getting through this crazy winter that hasn't happened, and even my talking about spring

events in this article. I'm feeling quite calm in spite of all the confusion. The GNBC board has already been a huge help in ushering in 2015. I have thanks to give and events to make you all aware of. Please allow me to take you on a four month ride.

Beer week was the smash hit that we all knew it would be. So far, I've heard nothing but good things about the GNBC and BGA meeting at the Snow Goose. I think it went quite well. My son Clark certainly had a great time. Thank you, Snow Goose, for being the congenial host that you always are. Thank you to all of the generous people that contributed to a slightly modified and very successful raffle. Thank you Greg Koch for spending some time with our unusual and remarkable club. Especially, thank you to all of the GNBC and BGA members that pitched in to make this meeting such a great success. Like I said before, I have so far heard all good things about this meeting. If you have something to share with me, I would still like to hear from you. Who knows what is in store for the future of this meeting? So long as we continue to have all the great support, I know it will be a tremendous success.

Homebrew competitions are always right around the corner. The Big Fish homebrew competition was stupendous and I'm very excited to see the commercial iteration of the winning beer. The Fur Rondy competition is right around the corner and I hope that you already have some brews ready. This competition happens to be on Saturday, February 21, just a couple short weeks after the beginning of the next BJCP classes which start on February 8th. I'm sure that there will be no problem attracting enough judges for this the Rondy competition, but I've been surprised in the past. The bottom line is that this event needs your support in both judging horsepower and in stewarding the beer for the judges. Please review the article below. In the related article, you'll find all of the important details like when are where to drop off your entries and when to be where to help judge or steward.

The Prez Sez

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What's In A Glass?

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Talkeetna Beer Tripping always manages to creep up on me. This year is a little different I think. It will actually be one week earlier than it has been in the past. The funky winter is also to blame. Beer Tripping is a short month and a half away! Plan to be in Talkeetna on the weekend of March 27th-29th. This is the sixth year for this event and Joe Michael is working hard with Denali Brewing to put together another stupendous weekend. I know that Talkeetna appreciates seeing us there in their beautiful albeit a little slow early spring. We get to take over the town!



April is just a little slower, but that is ok. We need a break now and then. A breather is great, even if short lived. We will still have our usual monthly meeting, which is a potluck, and another homebrew competition. I don't yet have anything figured out for Snow Goose Breakup Competition. I worked with the board to figure out categories for 2015, but didn't get very far. I will get that finished up and mass mail it out to everyone ASAP.

It's hard to believe, but I can mention the National Homebrew Day event in May within my usual newsletter timeline of three months. After a not-so heated debate with the board, we have all decided to move our annual Brewathon back to the first Saturday in May. We will be back in line with the AHA and all of our other friends to celebrate National Homebrew Day. Last year was a great experience. It was fun to learn that you will have equal attendance at an outdoor event on one of the worst "spring" days in Anchorage ever, as you would on one of the best spring days ever. I have a feeling that we won't have a lot of snow pile problems by early May. Whatever happens, the event is slated for Saturday, May 2nd. Plan to be there. If you are able, please also plan to teach someone new to brew on that day.

There is a lot to be happy about in the GNBC. We have great friends all around Alaska. They all can still only do so much to keep us running the way we do. I have a ton of help from the executives and board that make my time appreciably easier. We all still count on the rest of the GNBC to clue us in when we can do better. We regularly need help for things like the competitions and brewathon. Please let me know anytime you see a place that you can help. Send me any questions/comments/concerns at president@greatnorthernbrewers.org

Keep your brews hot and beers cold, and stay tuned for more detail on upcoming events (especially those beyond February) in upcoming newsletters.

Prez Peter



Secretary's Corner

by Jeff Shearer

So much for New Year's Resolutions. Last month I proclaimed I'd start off the year by brewing the biggest of the beers, anticipating a Barleywine, Russian Imperial Stout, and Eisbock as my first three brews of 2015. I also mentioned something about my brewing plans likely changing by February - and they have. Within the next couple months my wife and I will be moving to Missoula, MT. So my brew kettle will remain idle until I'm set up in Big Sky country. I'm excited to explore the craft brewing scene in Missoula and can't wait to get involved with their homebrew club. The friendship, comradery, and great beer I've enjoyed in my time with the GNBC will be at the top of my list of what I'll miss about Alaska. We have a great club and I can't just walk away cold turkey, so I'll stay involved to the extent I can - maintaining my membership, following and contributing to the newsletter, and maybe sending in a beer or two for the competitions. In preparation for the task of packing up the household and moving, I'm liquidating my supply of hops and yeast. Come to the February club meeting, I'll donate everything to the raffle. I'll even donate a surprise item....

Events:

Fur Rondy Homebrew Competition

Saturday, February 21st - Snow Goose Restaurant (basement), judging starts at 10:00 AM. Entry drop-off will be Saturday, February 14th at Arctic Brewing Supply. See details in this newsletter

Talkeetna Beer Trippin' Weekend

Friday, March 27th - Sunday, March 29th. You're doing yourself, and your liver, a disservice by not attending this event. Too many details to list here, look for event info in the March newsletter and club email postings.

Rules of Conduct:

All GNBC Members have been asked to sign an updated Rules of Conduct form. Please contact Ross/Membership Coordinator for a form or you can obtain a Rules of Conduct form at our next GNBC meeting. This implementation will continue at each meeting for the current year/ annual membership.

We will have some new procedures for our events and meetings. Our monthly meeting will now have a designated start and ending time, as well as a last call to serve homebrew at 9pm. Lights out, closed up and a final walk through will be conducted at 9:45pm by a GNBC officer/ board member.

Miscellaneous:

TAP (Training for Alcohol Professionals) classes are held at CHARR's Charlie H. Selman Training Center located at 1503 W. 31st Avenue, Suite 101 Anchorage, AK. This certification is required if you pour or steward at any fests or competitions. For the latest training schedule, check out their website: <http://alaskacharr.com/training/tap-schedules/>



EVENTS

Every First Thursday

Moose's Tooth First Tap

Every Friday

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

14.....*Arkose Brewery Valentine's Beer Meets Chocolate 2 pm \$25 pp*

14.....*Entries due for Fur Rondy Homebrew Competition 10 am - 5 pm Arctic Brweing Supply*

17.....*GNBC Monthly Meeting 7 pm at the Snow Goose*

21.....*Fur Rondy Homebrew Competition Judging 10 am downstaurs at the Snow Goose*

13.....*St. Pats in the Mats (benefit with beer) Palmer Train Depot 6 -10 pm Pay As You Go*

27-29./...*Talkeetna Beer Trippin' Local Talkeetna Establishments Various Times/Pay As You Go*



Suds's Corner

by John Craig

Editor's Note: John Craig is one of the oldest, longest-standing members of Great Northern Brewers. He's also a huge contributor to the club, having participated in events, organizing them and writing countless columns in the over 30 years of his club membership. Whether he contributes to the newsletter or not, every month your editors receive a warm, hand-written letter from John, and this month was no exception.

This month, John enclosed the original March 1994 edition of our monthly newsletter and asked us to reprint his infamous Sud's Corner article for this month. Here's a blast from the past from the true patriarch of our fine organization.

"Beer...beer...beeer, ninety-nine bottles of suds on the shelf, take one down, pass it around. Ninety-eight bottles of suds in the wash tub, take one out, chugh-a-lug, pass it around. Damn, do I enjoy beer...with all of the beer tastings, Rondy events, and Holiday cheers. I feel like one, big, fat, bloated beer hog. Sometimes this old oink-oink goes overboard on a good thing. I had a D.W.I. four years ago sure don't need another one in my lifetime. Beer has opened up my feelings, made me some friends, and even gotten me in trouble at times. With a full moon on this year's birthday, who know where this could lead me. When pigging out on suds, be careful of those muscular beers that can make us rubust or crabby; these patterns could be trouble for a normal suds drinker.

Homebrew adds zest to life. It makes it fun to be thirsty. Makes it fun to be hungry. There are thousands of different beers in the world. It's a matter of searching, looking, and finding the beer that fits your desire and mood at that point in time.

With my fifty-two years on this planet earth, I wonder how many more suds drinking days I have left. Bless the Suds. Homebrew is in my veins. I can remember crawling for a beer when I was a kid, sometimes as grown-ups we still act like you know-whats.

I'm proud to be an American, my ancestors left Tennessee in covered wagons to bereak into virgin prairie in Nabraska. As a kid, brothes, sisters and cousins all worked in the fields, helping with the chores, growing grain to be made into bread and beer.

Homebrew runs in our family. We always enjoyed Saturday nights taking turns sharing the washtub as we bathed. Afterwards, a homebrew, while drying in front of the warm wood stove. I was the kid sneaking around sipping your beer when your back was turned. Also, the same brat that swallowed the old cig-butt left iin a beer can, and about gagged to death.

After a tour in the Navy, a friend and I made our first batch of homebrew in 1966, using my dad's brew recipe from the early 1950's. With a trip to Safeway, it was Blue Ribbon malt, a ten pound bag of sugar, and Fleishmann's cake yeast found in the dairy section.

Believe it our not, my tastebuds have changed a lot over the years. But to this day, I do miss an old-time homebrew that was tasty in its own way...with a yeasty smelling taste and sweet and sour tang that was true in its own way. Sometimes known as old-tight-wad brew, this was the same stuff that would explode at warmer temperatures. In the old days you could always spot a homebrewer with the stains on the ceiling. This homebrew is the ture champagne of beers. With about ten years in a cool enviornment, it will give you one of the best beers in your lifetime...bubbles of life to never be forgotten.

On this cold winter night, while digging out some old beer notebooks, I have had some flashes from the early 1970's. My neighbors of 22 years were homebreweres and they invited me to their club meeting - as Marianne and Homer Jones brought the cheese and snacks. I have an old Alaska Fermenters newsletter form 1980 that I would like to share with anybody interested. As far as I know, it is the oldest brew newsletter to be found iin the whole State.

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

Also in the late 1970's at the Fur Rondy event for homebrewers, there was a fellow brewer there who gave beer classes at a community school within Anchorage. A true homebrewer named Herb Brasseur with over 200 batches under-over his belt. That was lots of suds. We do have a 200 club award, with a free tour of Bird Creek Brewery. As far as I know, Dave Yanoshek has the most five gallon batches with his number 96 brew...should we also have a 100 Club award 86,76,69. Anyhow, "Brasseur" which is french for beer, got a lot of us started back in the old days.

As Herb retired and left the state, Pat and Randy Oldenburg got our club started and rolling; they put in a ton of work to make it what it is today. It's enjoying homebrew that brings us all together, members and volunteers keep things going. We can also thank Jim Roberts and Doug Simpson for hours of hard work, plus all the others who keep our club strong.

And now for a Saint Patty's day wish:

BEER...BEER...take one down, pass it around,
Foggy mist with beer farts in the air,
Drink no more beer before its time,
Bag-pipes huffin' and puffin',
Corned beef and green suds,
Cheers on Saint Pats...
-Suds



Fur Rondy Homebrew Competition

by Jeff Shearer

Late winter in Anchorage brings our town's annual celebration – Fur Rondy! Once again the brew club is following suit. The **Fur Rondy Homebrew Competition** will be **Saturday, February 21st** in the basement of the Snow Goose Restaurant. Judging will start promptly at 10:00 AM. We're excited to have **Arkose Brewing** in Palmer join us this year!

This is an AHA / BJCP registered event. The competition is open to all styles of beer, mead, and cider. Points will be awarded towards GNBC's Homebrewer of the Year competition by placing in the following categories: Pilsner, Scottish & Irish Ale, IPA, German Wheat & Rye, Fruit Beer, and the Side Challenge (English Mild, see below).

Awards will be provided for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place finishes. Special awards will be provided for Best of Show Beer and Best of Show Mead / Cider. Additionally, random awards may be presented at the competition organizer's discretion.

Entry drop -off will be Saturday, February 14th from 10:00 AM till 5:00 PM at Arctic Brewing Supply. You will need to provide three 12 oz. bottles for each beer entry. Mead and cider entries may be three 12 oz. bottles or one 750 mL bottle. All entries must have proper BJCP recipe forms (<http://www.bjcp.org/sitemap.php>). Entry fee is \$5 / entry for non-GNBC members. Please contact me (shearer.jeff@gmail.com) to make other arrangements to submit entries.

Judges: we need judges of all ranks: BJCP certified, non-BJCP, experienced, and novice. Never judged before? No problem, we'll pair you with an experienced judge. For the BJCP judges needing a bit of incentive, we'll have gift certificates to a local establishment as a thank you for your help.

Fur Rondy Side Challenge: this year's side challenge will be an English Mild. The side challenge winner will have the opportunity to assist Arkose Brewing in brewing their Maiden Mild this spring!

A Mild (BJCP category 11A) is a low ABV malt-focused session ale often served on cask. The small grain bill means you can go from grain to bottle in a couple weeks. Brewers competing for Homebrewer of the Year, the double points earned for a win in the side challenge means an English Mild should be next on your brew list.

Beer Judge Certification Program 2015 Class

By Kevin Sobolesky

Howdy folks! It's time for another BJCP class!

As some of you know, this class is intended to train the student to judge home-brew competitions in the manner and technique of the BJCP in preparation of taking the BJCP tasting exam. This class will teach BJCP tasting and grading methods as well as the history of brewing and regional beer styles over the 10 classes. At the end of the class, there will be a 12 seat BJCP Judging Exam in May and then another 12 seat Judging Exam and Written Proficiency Exam in September and October, respectively.

Each class will have a lecture portion about some aspect of beer history, production, and/or ingredients, and during the class we will taste several beers exemplifying the classic styles as defined by the BJCP and teach the judging and scoring methods.

Exams:

May 10th - Beer Judging Exam (12-seat tasting)

Sep TBD - Beer Judging Exam (12-seat tasting)

Oct 17th - Beer Written Proficiency Exam

Seats for the exams will be open to enrollment during the BJCP class.

Note that you need to take the Online Entrance Exam before you are eligible to sit for the tasting exam, and then you require a passing score on that before you are eligible to sit for the written exam. Also be aware that the Entrance exam result is only good for a year after taking it, so it's recommended only to take it once you've secured a seat for a tasting exam. Also, you require 5 experience points from judging events before you can sit for the written exam.

More details can be found here: <http://www.bjcp.org/examcenter.php>

Experience Points:

These are awarded for judging in BJCP sanctioned home-brew competitions, and can be retroactively applied to your judge rank if you judge prior to taking the exam(s). Judging home-brew events is the best way to prepare for the BJCP class and the exams, so please participate! Even if you've never judged before, it's a fun and informing experience and well worth the cost of free beer!

Style Guidelines:

There's change-a-coming! The 2014 Style Guidelines will become official in 2015. There are major changes to how beers are grouped and several additional and renamed styles. This means that during 2015, the home-brew judging exams happening in the first half of the year will use the 2008 guidelines, while the rest of the year will use the 2014 guidelines. This means that the May tasting exam will be 2008 and the September tasting exam and October written exam will use the 2014 guidelines. Students will be provided a copy of both for the class, and example beers will be identified by their old and new style categorizations.



How to sign up:

Contact me at metkonig@gmail.com or in person at one of the home-brew club meetings (I will have a small presentation at the January meeting). The class is capped at 30 people, on a first come first serve basis. We will start a waiting list if anyone does not show up for the first class. If you have any questions please direct them to me.

Where: Cafe Amsterdam (Next time you see Ken and Shauna say thanks!) 503 E. Benson #3

Cost: \$50 a person due at the first class

When: Sundays at 5pm, starting on February 8th

Current schedule:

Feb 8, 15, 22

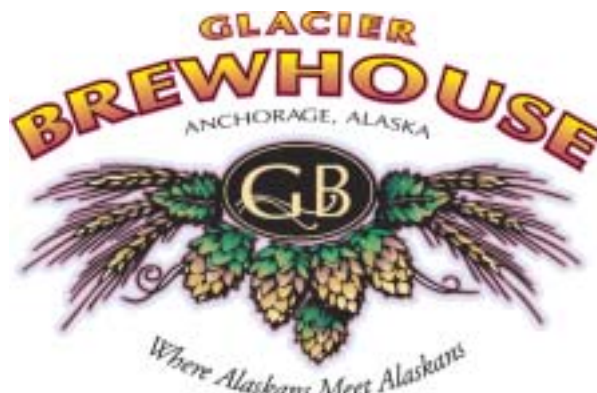
March 1, 15, 22, 29

April 12, 19, 27



Stewards:

We will be needing volunteers with valid TAPS cards to help pour and serve the beers for the class. This is a great way to get exposure to the class material for free or if you don't get a seat. If you are interested, please contact me at metkonig@gmail.com.



What's in a Glass?

By John Trapp

What's in a glass? Beer you might say, or other tasty forms of booze, and I would probably agree with you. But chances are if you don't wash your glasses by hand with a soft sponge and clean rinsing soap, you will have detergent residue in your glass with that tasty booze. This can lead to your favorite and often expensive malty beverage having an off flavor. This isn't exactly how you want to drink fine beers or quality whiskeys! Ever since I joined the brew club back in '98 I've been very conscience about clean glass, whether it is a carboy, growler or beer mug. The important thing is to keep your glass clean so nothing affects the taste of your hard work.

This first came to light when I had a few friends over at my house drinking Belgian beers and fine whiskey. One friend made the statement that the booze tasted better at my house. Initially I thought "sure it does, I have cheap friends that like to drink my booze". But a few weeks later I was over at this same person's home drinking the same thing when it dawned on me, yes, it did indeed taste better at my house. I never apologized for calling him cheap, but I did realize the difference was how I took care of my glassware. I make sure that any glasses used for beer or whiskey gets cleaned by hand with a dishwashing soap that rinses clean.

I've been using regular joy dishwashing soap as well as regular dawn. Notice I said regular and not "Mountain fresh" or "Super Lemon" or any other crap that makes your glassware smell and taste horrible.



A good clean glass shouldn't smell or taste like anything at all and impart a "neutral" aroma which is really no aroma at all. Unfortunately, it's becoming more and more difficult to find the regular stuff, but well worth the effort looking for it. I also use the blue non-abrasive sponge so I don't scratch the glasses.

I think it was in 2006 or maybe 2007 when George Rauch (I think that's his name) with Anheuser Busch came up for the Great Alaska Winter Beer and Barley Wine Festival. He wasn't invited, and no one could believe that someone with AB would come and speak to the homebrew club. Well, he did come up (on his own dime) and was a fantastic speaker. One of his topics was the history of glasses and bottles in bars. George talked about how bars and taverns across America used to have wonderful glassware to serve beer out of. Throughout the late 40's and into the 50's most customers in the bar preferred to drink their beer out of the bottle instead of the glass. Why was that? We as brewers know that a glass will open up the bouquet and aroma of a beer and enhance your beer drinking pleasure. Well, as it turns out the late 40's and 50's is when automatic dishwasher was being installed in bars, taverns and restaurants across America. This would leave a residue of dishwashing detergent in the glass that would affect the taste of the beer. So naturally, people started asking for bottles to get away from the glass.

My good good friend Paul Wheeler with Haines Brewing Company said he was at a brewer's conference and heard George talk about the problems of drinking beer out of a bottle. Most of the audience said the problem was that the beer was Budweiser, but George made a few good points about carbonation and aroma; basically all the problems a glass would take care of. There were more jokes at his expense, but he made his point. And now I'll make mine. Don't use a dishwasher to wash glasses that will hold homebrew, good quality craft beer or fine whiskey. Use a blue sponge and good dishwashing soap, and if possible rinse the glass under filtered water. Trust me, your friends will appreciate it and so will your taste buds. Cheers.



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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: February 17th 2015
7:00pm at the Snow Goose**