



THE

Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB
FEBREWARY 2016

The Prez Sez

by *Kevin Sobolesky*

Hello brewing friends! This would be the first Presidential article by yours truly, Kevin Sobolesky. I'll be taking over to let Peter Hall take a step back after his three years of dutiful service to the club. Thank him the next time you see him as he's worked hard to sail the USS GNBC through some rough waters.

I've been a member since 2010 or so and have been impressed with the talent and camaraderie that exists in the GNBC, that I got involved in running some of our events for the past several years. Many of you know me from having run the Beer Judge Certification Program (BJCP) class for the past two years as well as hosting Brewathon in the spring. Now, as President, I'll be doing what I can to continue this tradition of brewing education and good cheer.

I missed a tremendous night in Anchorage, but have been told all about it. January's annual Great Alaska Beer and Barleywine Festival Thursday night GNBC gathering went off without much more than a hiccup. This is all due to the hard work of GNBCers, the Brewers' Guild of Alaska (BGA), our local distributors, and especially our hosts. David McCarthy and Jason Motyka of 49th State Brewing Company welcomed us in and provided a fantastic atmosphere. Fred Bowman of Portland Brewing shared funny and interesting history of early craft brewing. Garret Marrero shared overflowing enthusiasm for the future of brewing, and commiserated about the logistics of brewing in far flung places. This night took a lot of planning, and was very well worth the effort. Thank you Jason Ditsworth, Rick Armstrong, Ryan Makinster, John Burket, Julie McDonald, and all the GNBCers that stepped up on that night. An extra special thanks is due to James Roberts and the BGA members who contributed to the event. The future looks very promising for January and the GNBC.

Looking to the future, we have a bevy of events to keep us engaged and busy during this dismal winter.

The BJCP class is going to start on the 21st, see the re-print of last month's article for details. If you have any interest in learning more about classic styles of beer and developing your palate, even if you have no interest in judging, it's an excellent learning experience and a thoroughly fun time. The exams after the class are available for those who do want to become ranked judges. If anyone is interested in getting involved in helping to assist with the class, such as steward, or admin, please let me know!

The Prez Sez

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Talkeetna Beer Trippin' is coming together and looks to be April 1-3 this year, a week later than last year. Once again Joe Michael has come up with an excellent t-shirt graphic and our hosts at Denali brewing are excited to have us. Everyone always has a blast taking over the town and going up to judge and deciding who gets the Golden Carboy is one of the highlights of the homebrew judging season. Stay tuned for more details.

The Home Brewer of the Year categories got a shake up this year, now that the 2015 BJCP guidelines are in effect. I'm finalizing that now and will have it mailing listed out soon.

The Fur Rondy competition is planned for February 20th this year, stay tuned for more details.

Brewathon will coincide with National Homebrew Day on Saturday, May 7th. A big outdoor brew party with grilling, suds and cheer, what's not to like? Anyone can bring their gear and brew, and anyone interested in learning is welcome too. It will be hosted at the same place as the last few years, however, I won't be in town to host, so we need a few people to step up help with setup / cleanup. Please let me know if you'd like to volunteer. Any event is only as good as the efforts made by those who wish it to see it succeed.

Surely, we at the GNBC are proud of the events we host and the resultant joy and cheer we can foment in people's lives. We are only able to do it with the hard work of our club members who step up and make these things happen. Let's continue to make this our focus and enjoy many more years of camaraderie and sharing passion for homebrew.

Cheers,

Prez "Kneel before Zod" Kevin



Secretary's Corner

by JIM O'TOOLE

At a GNBC board meeting on Monday night we talked about direction of the club and what we could do to make it more fun and, maybe, more meaningful for the homebrewers that we are.

One direction that was agreed upon was one of the club being a better source of information and education. This will help all of us become better brewers and more educated regarding beer and brewing.

I recalled a meeting a couple of years ago when someone made a presentation on beer brewing water chemistry and I remember being astounded at the whole concept of this because up to that point I thought, "water is water." Knowing that Anchorage provides us with water at our household taps that has won awards for being some of the best municipal water in the world, I didn't think that it would make any difference as long as I let it sit a while to let the chlorine burn off.

I wish I or someone else on the board could remember who it was that gave this presentation but I remember that he had his laptop with him loaded with a program that allowed him to enter Anchorage water qualities and the type of beer he wanted to brew and the program would tell him what he needed to add to the water to get optimum results.

This completely blew my mind and so I started looking into it and learned a lot. Taking the Beer Judge Certification Class a couple of times taught me that the primary reason certain beer styles became popular in various places around the world was solely because of the ingredients occurring naturally in the water in that area. Pilsner Urquell would not be the original pilsner if the water in Pilsen was not what it was. Who knows what Pale Ales would be if not for the water chemistry around Burton on Trent in England?

The next beer I made was a Kolsch that I had brewed a couple of times before and, after adjusting the chemistry of the water I used, I was convinced that there was something to this as the beer was far superior to the others I had brewed.

A board member tonight mentioned that she brewed a batch of something that she had brewed before but she used water out of that pipe coming out of the rock face down Turnagain Arm and she was amazed at how much different it turned out.

EVENTS

Every First Thursday
Moose's Tooth First Tap

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

16.....GNBC Monthly Meeting
7pm at the Goose

20.....Fur Rondy Homebrew Competition
*10:30 AM at 49th State Brewing
Anchorage basement*

21.....BJCP Classes Begin



But this is not going to be a treatise on water chemistry. It's not going to be a treatise on anything. What it is going to be is a reminder to the GNBC membership that we all want to become better brewers and there is a feeling that among the membership there is an enormous amount of knowledge that might help all of us accomplish that.

So we are putting out a call to our members to consider sharing your knowledge of any aspect of brewing that you are aware of and that you think any of the rest of us might learn from by making any kind of presentation you feel comfortable with at one of our monthly meetings.

A few meetings ago we had a photo presentation by one of our members who had the great fortune of being able to attend Oktoberfest in Munich last year and we could do something like that again. A few months ago one of our members gave a short presentation on glassware that convinced me to change the way I use and even wash my beer glasses. If you want to see photos of all the beer joints I've hit in Ireland or on other trips I've made around the US or Europe we can do that too but I also suggested that I could do a presentation on how I built my mash tun.

We have a member (recently elected to the board) who has been brewing massive quantities of beer and we might be able to talk him into showing us how he does it...not that most of us could handle brewing 50 gallon batches at a time but it would be awesome if we could see how HE does it.

Have you found a new combination of hops that you like? Are there mash or sparge (I just had to add the word "sparge" to my Word dictionary) temperatures that you've found to be great for brewing a certain style that you think the rest of us might like to know about? Pass your knowledge along and share it with your fellow brewers. That's what our Club is all about.

I'm really reaching here but I hope you are getting the idea. There is not much I enjoy more than hanging out in the basement of the new 49th State Brewing drinking beer with the great group of people who make up the GNBC but we think we could be a lot more than that.

So we are putting out the call for people to volunteer to pass on what they have learned about beer and brewing at one of our upcoming meetings. It doesn't have to be anything too technical or lengthy and we promise to pay attention.

Otherwise you might have to sit around watching my photos for the next few meetings.

Calendar of upcoming events:

2/16/2016
GNBC Monthly Meeting!
49th State Brewing Anchorage basement
7:00 – 9:30pm
A-J Setup, K-P Cleanup, R-Z Food

2/20/2016
Fur Rondy Homebrew Competition
49th State Brewing Anchorage basement
10:30 AM (further details soon)

4/1 – 3/2016
Talkeetna Beer Trippin'
Still tentative
Watch for further details

4/2/2016
Anchorage On Tap Beer Festival
Denaina Convention Center
\$40-60.00
5:00-8:00PM



Home-Smoked Beer Experiment: Part 2

by *Mike Fisher*

Part 2: Smoking Process

In the first part of this series, I gave an overview of my project and described how I built my homemade smoker. In this part, I will go over the smoking process

There are three components to the smoking process. On the lower shelf of the smoker I have a single, 1100W electric burner. On top of this I placed a stainless steel smoker box, filled with pre-soaked cherry wood chips. On the top shelf of the smoker, I have a 9"x13" baking dish filled with 4 pounds of American 2-row.

Prior to smoking, I filled a large bowl with cherry wood chips and let them soak. I drained enough to fill the smoker box and then got started. I put the electric burner on high and placed the smoker box on top. Then I sprayed down the malt with some water and mixed it up well before putting the top on the smoker.

I sprayed and stirred the malts every 10-15 minutes and replenished the wood chips every 20-30 minutes. I went through an entire bag of wood chips, a process that took about 2.5 hours. While I had originally planned for a shorter smoking session, I decided to spend more time in case the smoke didn't stick as well as hoped in the baking dish.

In fact, the bottom of the baking dish was definitely sticky from smoke residue. The malt was smoky, but probably not as much as it would have been with more surface area. (That said, I think it was more than smoky enough, though that will mellow as the bottles age for a bit.)

In hindsight, a screen would be a faster and more effective means of holding the malt. If I repeat this experiment, I will build a basket with window screen. The greater smoke contact will reduce the time per batch, and I will break the malts into multiple batches.

After adding so much moisture to the malt, I decided that I wanted to brew with it right away so that I wouldn't get any mold or other undesirables. When milling the smoked malts, they felt spongier though I didn't worry about the roller spacing. They were cracked open, but not as much so as if they had been dry.

Milled grains in hand, in the third and final installment I will give my recipe, talk about the brewing process, and share impressions of the finished beer.

MEETING SETUP

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

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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: Tuesday February 16, 2016
7:00 PM at 49th State Brewing Anchorage**