



THE Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB

MAY 2008

The Prez Sez

by Ira Edwards

Hi Ho, Hi Ho, it's off to brew we go...

Well I hope you all got the notice that the umpteenth annual Brew-A-Thon at John Craig's house was delayed by Mother Nature. It seems that April has deposited almost a third of the total snowfall this whole year. What a month of long days and great skiing (and snow machining for you motor heads in the club), and nice warm weather. Anyways, we are having the Brew-A-Thon on Saturday, May 10 this year, the day before Mother's day. So you can brew beer with the guys and gals of the GNBC on Saturday and hang out and be a responsible family member on Sunday. See the Articles in last month's GNBC newsletter (April 2008) if you need directions to the event.



Our foray into the National Homebrew Competition was a great success! Thanks to everyone who showed up to judge and steward for the event. Jason Ditsworth and Steve Schmitt pulled off an extremely well organized event. We had so many BJCP judges show up each day that we were turning people away from the judging tables. I believe that Jason said that we finished off 21 or 22 of the categories in just 2 sessions on Saturday and left the bigger flights to Sunday, which were also finished pretty early in the day. All the entries made it up here just fine, with one bottle leaking, but that entrant had almost all of his bottle caps seated off center, so he was lucky they did not all pop off. This is the most entries that we have ever judged and we were not even stressing to get it done. I would imagine that if we had more space, we could have pulled the whole thing off in one day. In judging 2 flights in an 8 hour period, I only sampled 1-1.5 oz off of 27 entries plus the calibration beer. A great lunch was available and not a single person had so much to judge that they could not give great comments. (OK, I heard that the Smoke and Wood aged beer judges were done for the day after that category, but come on...). Hopefully this will show the AHA that we know how to put on the bigger events and give us a shot at hosting a larger competition sometime down the road...

Back to April activities, now. A couple of weeks after the big Brew-A-Thon is the ever popular GNBC House crawl on Saturday, May 24. Think of a Pub Craw, but instead we stop at member's homes via a rented coach bus and have some food, games and beverages at each stop. Pat Ryan is organizing the event this year, so make sure to contact her to get your seat reserved before they sell out. I know this is Memorial day weekend, but what better way to get the weekend started.

The Prez Sez

Secretary's Corner

2008 National Homebrew
Competition - The Final
Chapter

Minnesota Brew Cruise

ET Barnette Homebrew
Competition Needs Judges

Spring Is In The Air

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

C. HALL
hall_ce@yahoo.com

JOHN TRAPP
johnctrapp@hotmail.com

Don Lewellyn
dlewelly@fastenal.com

NEWSLETTER EDITOR
DEBBIE GRECCO
bushy@alaska.com

If you really want to get out of town for the Holiday, there is always the Haines Brewing Festival. The judging for the homebrew contest starts on Friday morning, May 23, followed by a multi course beer diner in Haines. Then during the weekend is a great Beer Festival with most of the Alaskan breweries and a few out of state ones as well. There is music and good food to be had there at the Haines Fairgrounds.

Well, that's it again 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.

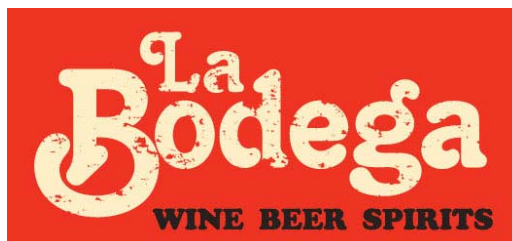
Secretary's Corner

by Dena Sessler

It has been a busy month for the Great Northern Brewers. The GNBC Board of Directors met at the Snow Goose on the 8th of April 2008, to discuss the following topics: Nationals, the Brewathon, the Golf Tournament with Humpy's still needing an organizer, the Fall Homebrew Competition, in lieu of the State Fair Homebrew Competition, a call for judges for the ET Barnett competition in July, the Summer Camp Out over Father's day weekend, and the GNBC House Crawl on the 24th of May.

The general membership meeting at the Snow Goose on the 15th of April was followed a very busy and well organized weekend of National's judging. I know that it takes a whole group of willing and dedicated people to pull something like this off. Huge kudos and thanks need to go to Steve Schmitt and Jason Ditsworth. The GNBC and Homebrewers Association as a whole are very fortunate to have two such talented and dedicated individuals on board!!! Thanks again guys for a job well done! The whole weekend was a huge success and results were available 3 day's after judging, not 3 weeks as seems to be the norm.

May 3rd is National Homebrew Day, but we were surprised on the 25th of April with a record snowfall. John Craig got 20 inches at his house, so **the club Brewathon has been rescheduled for Saturday the 10th of May** to give the Craig's place a chance to dry out. If you still do brew on Saturday the 3rd of May, let Ira Edwards know how many gallons of beer or mead that you brewed. The theme this year is a tribute to Michael Jackson, and **www.beertown.org** has a list of recipes if you are interested in brewing one. Make sure and raise a glass at 8:00am if you are up for the National toast (which is still on May 3rd).



The greatest event of the year is scheduled for the 24th of May. It is the revival of the GNBC House Crawl. If you have never attended one, it is a great time! The crawl will start at 12:00 noon and last until about 8:00pm. This is a designated driver event, so if you are attending, make sure to arrange a ride home. The attendees are on a first come first serve basis, so if you want to go please **RSVP to Pat Ryan with a \$30.00 check payable to the GNBC, at 3428 Purdue Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99508.**

The Haines Brew Festival is coming up Memorial Day weekend. Most of the local Alaskan breweries will be in attendance and pouring their fine beer. There is always a dinner and entertainment. I hear that this year Rachael Juzeler of Alaskan Brewing Company is arranging some type of boat tour during the festival. It sounds like the trip will be definitely worth it!

June 13-15 is the annual Summer Camp Out at the Trail River Campground this year. The club is trying to arrange some type of drift boats on the Kenai, and there are always wildlife viewing and fishing charters available out of Seward for those interested. The theme this year is BBQ so bring your best recipe to share Saturday night.

The Golf Tournament with Humpy's is scheduled for the 26th of July. It is always a good time, but probably with more beer and festivities this year, if that is possible, since that day is also Billy Opinsky's (one of the owners of Humpy's) birthday. Last but not least, it is official; John Trapp will be organizing the Fall Homebrew Competition in lieu of the State Fair. The name of the event is the **Anchor Town Invitational** and will take place sometime in late August. The Brewer of the Year categories are as follows:

Category	Name
5	Bock
10	American Ale
13	Stout
15	German Wheat & Rye Beer
*4c	Dark Lager (special challenge for Schwartzbier only)

Stay tuned to the Newsletter for all of the upcoming details. That's it for this month. See you all on the 20th of May for the May Homebrew Club meeting at the Goose.



EVENTS

Every First Thursday

Moose's Tooth First Tap

Every Friday

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

*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

08.....Midnight Sun Brewing Company's release of EARTH at the Tap Root Cafe: 7:00 PM

09.....Midnight Sun Brewing Company's release of Earth at the Brewery: 6:00 PM

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

20.....GNBC Meeting at the Goose 7:00 PM

24.....GNBC House Crawl: Noon

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

06.....Midnight Sun Brewing Company Planet Beer Series Mercury Release at the Brewery: 6:00 PM

13.....GNBC Camp Out at Trail River

Minnesota Brew Cruise

I have to admit that when I heard I was going to Minneapolis I didn't really know what I was going to be getting into as far as good beer. I did a little research and found a place called "Town Hall Brewery" about a mile and a half from my hotel. I like to walk around when I get to a new city so that seemed like a good idea. It was a Sunday night but the brewpub was supposed to be open. It happened to be inexplicably closed. It later turned out that they had been closed all day for cleaning and decided to go bowling instead of opening for the night shift. I can't argue with that. At any rate I went back later in the week and found that they have a good choice of beers on tap. I'd gotten a tip from a fellow brewophile that their Masala Mama IPA was exceptional and a favorite on beerfly.com. I found it to be good but I could name three or four other IPAs I'd rather go with. It was decently aromatic and fairly bitter. I'd say it's less aromatic than Stone and slightly less bitter than Glacier Brewhouse's Double IPA. I then tried their Black H2O Oatmeal Stout. It was very dark but light on the tongue for a Stout. The oatmeal flavor was definitely there but not overpowering. A decent oatmeal stout. The last one I tried was the Hope and King Scotch Ale. I can't say that my tastebuds were as sharp at that point but it was a tad sweet, very little hops, (as a Scotch Ale should be). I

know those are fairly generic descriptions so if you want the brewer's take on them here's the site: <http://www.townhallbrewery.com/brews.cfm>



I also came across Surly Brewing Company while down there. I found their Bender Brown on tap at a place called "Grumpy's" on Washington Avenue. It's a strange one but good. I like experimentals and this definitely fits the bill. I can't describe it any better than they do so I'll just give you the website: <http://www.surlybrewing.com/beers.php>

It really is like a Brown Porter but hard to describe. Me thinks I'll have to drink 10 or 12 more to get it nailed down if you know what I mean. :) Surly puts Bender and their Furious Pale Ale in Cans with the line "Beer for a glass, from a can" on them. It really works through. I know it's sacrilegious but the cans don't transfer any funky flavors to the beer. I went to Haskell's liquor store on S. 9th Street in Minneapolis to find some local stuff to buy to bring back. I found the Surly beers in 4-packs of 22-oz. cans and brought back a 4-pack each of Bender and Furious. I gave a can of each to a buddy at Specialty Imports just in case they might find themselves interested. While at Haskell's I found a couple of beers from Flat Earth Brewing, specifically their Element-115 Lager and their Cygnus X-1 Porter. The Lager had a great flavor. There was enough malt used to balance out the flavor of the Lager Yeast (which is usually a turn off for Ale Lovers like myself). They used four varieties of hops in the brew but keep the IBUs to 39. It's a very drinkable beer and I really enjoyed it. The Porter was full o'chocolate and there was definitely some Black Patent Malt used in there as well. They also touted the inclusion of some rye in the brew as well. Let's just say that Flat Earth has made a great case for inclusion of more rye in beer. I'd like to have tried more but I got knocked out of the saddle with the flu while there so I had to keep it to those few brews. At any rate I'd definitely like to do more research at some point.

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2008 National Homebrew Competition Update – The Final Chapter

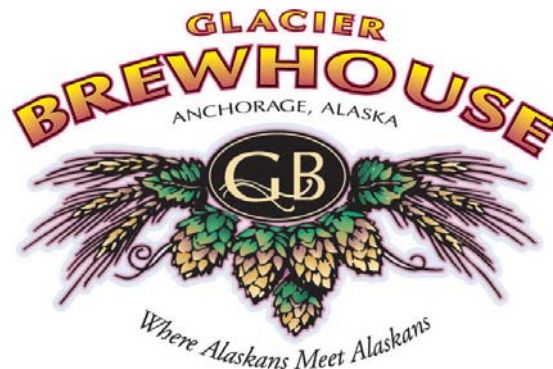
by Steve Schmitt

First off – I must acknowledge our friends and sponsors who donated their time, personnel, and resources to assist the GNBC in producing a STELLAR event: Pyramid Brewing in Seattle for receiving the entries from people in America and to Alaska Distributors for shipping the pallet of entries to Anchorage, the Snowgoose Brewpub for allowing us to have the entries dropped off, stored, and judged at their establishment, Alaskan Brewing for their continuous support and donation of merchandise to distribute to the judges at the event, Midnight Sun for their continued support and judging assistance, and Celestial Meads for providing calibration meads and leading the mead-judging flights.

Next – thanks to the 87 judges and numerous stewards who helped with judging the 463 beverages we evaluated. Special thanks to Bruce Mills, Debbie Roberts, Breck Tostevin, and Jason Ditsworth – because of their help I was able to (mostly) relax over the weekend.

We did an outstanding job in judging this event – I went over my score sheets and was impressed with the quality of the overall comments I received – I know that others will be suitably impressed as well. My only complaint is that my damn scores were too low – but I guess I just need to brew some good beer to improve on that.

Thanks again to everyone – we may be discussing this again next year...



ET Barnette Homebrew Competition Needs YOU to Help Judge!

by *Scott Stihler*

We need BJCP judges and/or experienced brewers to help judge this year's E.T. Barnette Homebrew Competition!!! Last year we got through the judging but it was not pretty. Not only did we have nearly twice as many entries as we had the previous year but also many of our usual judges had prior engagements resulting in a total of seven few judges than the we had in 2006.

Last year's numbers in terms of both entr ts of judges for this year's competition! Please! Please! Please! Please! Please! Please! Please! Please! Please! Please! Please! Okay enough 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 pre-registration information and payment must be received BEFORE Saturday, July 12th.

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.

PLEASE! PLEASE! PLEASE! PLEASE! PLEASE! PLEASE! PLEASE! PLEASE!

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 or (907) 474-2138



Spring is in the air, maybe...

by *Ira Edwards*

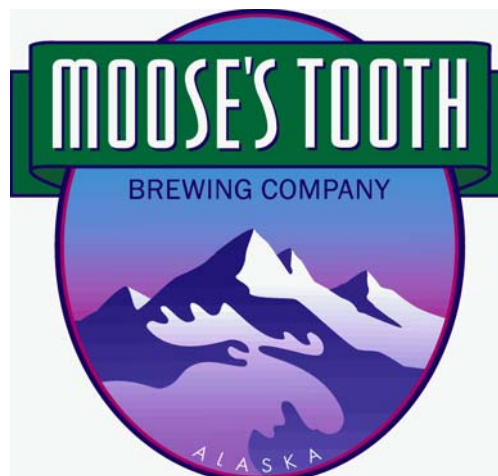
Guess what? Spring is here again in Alaska, albeit REALLY late this time around. This means that the time to plant the gardens and the flower beds will soon come, and all of our wonderful fruits we use for eating and brewing will start flowering and get ready to give us their bounty again this summer and fall. This load of goodies includes the various things you might have growing in the dark corners of your yard like strawberries, Gooseberries, Currants and Raspberries. Then we move onto the tree fruits that grow well up here like Apples, Sour Cherries, and Pears. Now is the time to take care of your plants to make sure they set the fruit to grow for the summer. Don't over fertilize them after they start flowering. Make sure that they don't dry out and kill the flowers, and try to keep the weeds down at least a little bit (don't get too anal on me here...)



If you don't have your own place or space to grow these goodies, fear not. There are countless places around town that use fruiting trees and shrubs (Bring Me A Shrubbery!!!) as ornamental decoration and have no intention of using the fruit. Try to find the office, building, or property manager for the place in question and just ask if you might grab the fruit later. make sure to tell them you will not damage anything and to point out a side benefit that they won't have to clean up the fallen fruit. Crab apples are sometimes a good item to blend into the bulk juice, but we are looking for real apples here, even if they are as small as golf balls or tennis balls.

I'm sure that some of you know that I have a passion for apples and making Cider. Not just fresh juice, but the fermented cider that makes a great drink. The juice I've been blending seems to make both a good Cider and a wonderful Cyser (apple mead). I am asking for all of you to keep your eyes out this month for the blooming fruit trees. I have all of the equipment to grind and press out the juice of these apples, pears, and cherries, so I am willing to let GNBC members come over and make some more juice later this year. That should be part way through hunting season, so I bet I'll be able to fire up the grill while making juice. Last year was a bit of a bust on fruit production, but I have had several folks helping out the last few years and I hope to have more this year. Find ways to ask if the tree owners use the fruit, and if you don't care about apples at all, just let me know about the trees and I'll ask myself. Often all it takes is the promise to clean up the yard and rake up all of leaves after your done picking. Most people really do not use their apples. Keep your eyes open and let's hope that some more people in the GNBC can get into one of the simpler aspects of brewing, Cider making. This is not to say that you cannot get all technical about it, but I like to just clean it up, let the juice ferment naturally (works 95% of the time) and blend later.

Take care, and let me know if you have any questions about Cider Making. I am constantly re-working my equipment and methodology and always have a drinkable, if not damn good, cider around the place.



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:

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



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

NEXT MEETING: May 20th, 2008 7:00 PM at the Goose