



THE

Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB
NOVEMBER 2015

The Prez Sez

by *Peter Hall*



Winter isn't officially here, but GNBCer's don't seem to care too much what season it is.

Either you can fill your freezer or you can fill your fridge (with beer). I recently stocked up with a couple cases of Jubelale and have everything ready to brew this weekend. I'm feeling quite comfortable in this lead up to transitions for the GNBC and the Holiday season.

Elections have arrived! I'm still actively working on filling out the ballot, but am 99% sure that there is at least someone available for every spot. You may understand that 99% does mean that I could still use more assurance. If you would like for me to include your name on the ballot, it is not too late to throw your name in the mix. Please let me know as soon as possible though.

My run as president is ending. I will still be active in leadership. Please be at our November meeting to participate in preparing our club to continue to be robust in the future. Your participation in club affairs going forward and your vote matters. Let's make this count.

Some time ago, the GNBC somehow figured out how to fit in two of our biggest events of the year into the Holiday season. The GNBC will be back at the Zoo for our annual Christmas party on Friday December 4th. "Supers" is the theme. I'm depending on our organizers to make sure this event is as meaningful and lively as always.

The 21st Annual Humpy's Big Fish Competition will be held on Saturday December 5 at 10 am. I will need a lot of help at Big Fish! Please review the articles below for more info.

Alaska Beer Week is once again on the horizon. It sneaks up on me every year and always seems difficult to pull into focus. Our January meeting will take place on the Thursday night before the Great Alaska Beer and Barley Wine Festival as it always has. Very little has been formalized about that meeting, but I (or the next president) will keep you up to date as things evolve. This is a very important time for our club and puts us in the face of our industry peers more than at any other time of the year, so your support and participation is essential.

The Prez Sez

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This is a big transitional time for the Club. I need your help to keep our Club moving forward. Leadership opportunities are available for you if you want to help our club to continue to be one of the best in the nation. I'm actively soliciting your support. If you have any questions/comments/concerns, please contact me at president@greatnorthernbrewers.org

Keep your brews hot and beers cold.

Prez Peter



Secretary's Corner

Jim O'Toole

I'm starting this while sitting in the Nashville, Tennessee airport, waiting for a flight to Seattle and home. I'm here because I and my hockey loving girlfriend decided to make the trip to see the UAA Seawolves hockey team play at the University of Alabama-Huntsville. Huntsville joined UAA's league, the Western Collegiate Hockey Association (WCHA), a couple of years ago and some other fans we know made the trip last January and said it was a good trip to make. We had always wanted to do a "road trip" with the Seawolves and have traveled to St. Paul, Minnesota three times to see the WCHA finals but this was our first regular season trip. We were also encouraged by Alaska Airlines adding Nashville to their list of regular destinations seeing as how Huntsville is just a couple of hours drive from Nashville and it goes through some country that I have traveled through before and have enjoyed.

We came down a few days early in order to spend a couple of nights in Nashville, one of my favorite towns, and enjoyed much of what Music City has to offer. We toured the Ryman Auditorium, the venue for the original Grand Ol' Opry, and took someone's advice and toured the Johnny Cash Museum. I would highly encourage anyone visiting Nashville to do both of those tours and pay the extra few bucks for the back stage tour of the Ryman. The tour guide there told some stories that you would not get anywhere else including how Minnie Pearl decided to keep the price tag on her famous hat and how a drunken Johnny Cash smashed all the stage lights one night when he was so wasted he couldn't get a microphone detached from the mic stand. He was removed as an official member of the Opry for this but later, after he sobered up a little, was invited back to perform many times. He was never re-instated as member of the Opry though.

I could discuss the food down here, the barbeque, the hush puppies, the southern fried chicken, etc., but this is not going to be an essay on food. You all (sorry) knew, or at least hoped, this was going to have something to do with beer. And it does. Eventually.

We landed in Nashville, rented a car, and drove to the hotel we had booked which was a \$9 cab ride or a 30 minute walk to the heart of the more touristy part of the city, Broadway, where there must be 50 bars playing live music, seemingly day and night. As we walked around one night and, at 11AM the next day, there were bands playing everywhere. We didn't go in to see if they were bands that were just starting for the day or bands finishing up from the night before but I discovered that Nashville takes their title of "The Music City" seriously and they display it with a lot of pride through their bars, restaurants and lighted signs. They also, I am happy to say, like their beer and support a lot of breweries in the area.

I had been in Nashville before but Kathy had not so I had told her that Broadway was an exciting place but it was a Wednesday night in late October so how busy could it be? We found wall to wall people at 8PM because the world famous Tootsies, a bar across an alley from the Ryman Auditorium (the original venue for the Grand ol' Opry) where it is said you can never know what superstar musician might take the stage, was celebrating its 50th year in business and celebrated by closing off about four blocks of Broadway for a party. There was food, there were vendors of all kinds, live music, and thousands of people. Trying to find a place to eat was nearly impossible with minimum 45 minute waits up and down the street but we wandered into a place near the end of the street that butts up to the Tennessee River and found Nashville heaven. The Broadway Brewhouse, first of all had no live music so it was quiet but it also had a "Seat Yourself" policy and about 70 beers on tap. I can't find a list of those beers but several of them were from breweries we would all recognize but most of them were from Bible Belt craft breweries that are doing great things. I can't remember what I drank that night nor can I remember what I drank the other two times we went in there but they were all good beers. As were the beers available at the Bridgestone Arena, home of the Nashville Predators, where we watched a hockey game and enjoyed walking past dozens of craft beer stations on each floor of the building. I was starting to get the idea that the "deep south" is getting it regarding beer. This revelation had a long way to go to before the trip ended and Huntsville, Alabama, of all places, had a lot to do with showing me how far some places have to go to catch up with what is going on there.

Being the Bible Belt, where people say they take their religion a little more seriously than some other places, I wasn't sure of what to expect but, as a guy who likes an occasional nip of Jameson Irish Whiskey as a nightcap or two at the end of a long, hard day of traveling I thought I'd look for a jug. I asked someone in Huntsville where to get liquor and he launched into a rant about how anyone would be nuts to buy liquor there due to the price. He said he always buys his when he travels out of state or he has friends visiting elsewhere bring a supply back for him. He knew a great barbeque place though and, while following his directions to get there, we noticed a liquor store and decided to stop. They had 750ml jugs of Jameson six year old that you can find in Anchorage for around \$23 listed for \$36. The guy was right and we passed on the whiskey.

Past the whiskey section though there was a 50 foot or so long cooler full of craft beer from everywhere. And on the other side of the room was a bar. With bar stools. With a bartender. And 82 active taps of more "beers from everywhere" that you can buy by the growler or by the glass in reasonably proper for the style glassware and drink it there. I didn't ask about limits on how much anyone can consume as I couldn't stay for more than one (a Yellowhammer Saison De Détente) but I wanted to live there for a while. The beer list is four pages long with two columns on each page. Sierra Nevada (from the North Carolina brewery), Anchor, Ballast Point, Bell's, Founder's, Ommegang, WeiheStephaner, and Cigar City are some breweries I recognized but it was interesting to note that 9 of the 21 beers on the first page were Alabama beers and 4 of the others were from other areas

EVENTS

Every First Thursday
Moose's Tooth First Tap

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

17.....GNBC Monthly Meeting
7:00 pm at the Goose

4.....GNBC Christmas Party
at the Alaska Zoo

5.....Humpy's Big Fish Homebrew
Competition



CAFE



AMSTERDAM

of the Bible Belt as well as many beers from all over the world. Some I'd never heard of before were beers I would have loved to stay for; like Innis Gunn Toasted Oak IPA from the United Kingdom, or a Heavy Seas Small Craft Warning Uber Pils from Halethorpe, MD, or an Abita Andygator from Abita Springs, LA, a Helles Bock described as a "high-gravity brew made with pale malt, German lager yeast, and German Perle Hops." This is all on page one.

We spent a couple of days in Chattanooga also and the beer scene is the same there. Several places offered great beers including the touristy Rock City where they were celebrating "Rocktoberfest" with German food, dancing, and beer along with the everyday walk around an amazing geological area. Big River Grille and Brewing Works, Chattanooga's first brew pub and a multiple year winner at the Great American Beer Festival, and the Terminal Brewhouse, with its flattened beer can under glass bar top that had me reading some Old Frothingslosh foolishness from the Pittsburgh Brewing Company that I remember as a kid, gave me something to do while rain poured down for 36 hours.

I hadn't been in that area of the country since 2002 and much has happened since then; to me, in my appreciation of good beer and in finding others who have the same passion but, much more so, to that old Bible Belt where a mind blowing number of people are having a lot of fun and making a lot of money making great beers. The image of that old corn-cob-sucking hillbilly working his still has given way to a much more sophisticated bunch of people who are giving their neighbors and visitors the opportunity to enjoy great beers in places and in ways that even the open-minded people of Alaska haven't yet reached.

And the "revenooers" are not just letting them do it, they are helping them.

Calendar Of Upcoming Events

GNBC Monthly Meeting
November 17, 2015
7:00PM
Snow Goose



Humpy's Big Fish Homebrew Competition

The Humpy's Big Fish Homebrew Competition continues to be one of the biggest Homebrew competitions in Alaska. Big Fish still stands out as one of the highest profile homebrew competitions in the state.

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 Club and the competition at the SubZero Microlounge that's connected to the alehouse but separate.

The judging will take place on December 5. Tasting will begin promptly at 10 am, at SubZero located at 612 F St in downtown Anchorage, next to Humpy's.

The Christmas Party is just the night before. This is impacting on the judging the next day because most of you will attend the party and grow some obvious palate fatigue. I know that I am asking a lot here. I really need high turnout from you qualified judges. Drink and plan accordingly. 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.

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.

Entries will be accepted Saturday November 28th at Arctic Brewing Supply from 10am to 5pm. There is no entry fee for GNBC members, and all categories are open for entry. I'm sure if you are in the running for Home Brewer of The Year (HOBTY), you already know those categories, but categories include BJCP categories; 4. Dark Lager, 8. English Pale, 16. Belgian and French, 17. Sour, 19. Strong, *Side Challenge* Chocolate

Contact Peter Hall at president@greatnorthernbrewers.org with any questions.

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



A Large Field, Many Excellent Beers, Two Champions: A Recap of the Anchor Town Invitational Homebrew Competition

by *Mike Fisher, Competition Organizer*

On a bright, sunny day, 17 judges hunkered down at one point or another in the upstairs tasting room at King Street Brewery to sit back, relax, and have some homebrews. Their mission: to judge, score, rank, and select the categorical winners and overall Best of Show winner from 67 homebrews submitted by brewers from Southcentral Alaska, Southeast Alaska, and beyond (aka Montana).

The results of the competition may be found elsewhere in these pages, but here are some of the highlights from the competition.

We had two last-minute mead entries, categories opened up by the Equinox competition skipping a year, but fatigued taste buds just couldn't handle those final two entries, even though they—the meads, that is— sounded amazing. Perhaps they will appear at the Big Fish competition? The day was not lost, however, with those 67 entries divided into 16 flights, and then again into 17 (for purposes of Best of Show) to maximize use of the judges who stuck around.



My day as organizer began at 9am on Sunday (not counting my staycation on Friday at Arctic Brewing Supply or the sorting and prep time and—oh, honey, I have to go to King Street, for work, yeah, really for work, yeah—trip to King Street to drop off entries on Saturday... in all, not a bad few days) and the last of us felt pavement underfoot again by 5pm, making it a full work day for these hard working judges. Extra special thanks to the judges who managed to stick it out all day, or who left right before the Best of Show round because their own excellent homebrews had made it to that final round.

The Best of Show round was amazing. We split apart the American and Imperial IPAs for Best of Show and had one category that just didn't make the cut, bringing us to 16—that's $16+1-1=16$ for those following at home—selections. These were 16 excellent homebrews. And then there were three: a Berliner Weiss, an American Stout, and a Pumpkin Ale. After excruciating deliberations—because the three GNBC judges and a representative of King Street had to fight over only 12 fluid ounces of each—there emerged a winner: **Thomas Spain's Pumpkin Ale**.

Now the bad news is that if your excellent beer made it to the Best of Show round, it's all gone. The third bottle of your beer, if you submitted it, was given to King Street. The good news is that the folks at King Street drank them in the days after the competition and selected a beer they'd like to brew. The winner of this year's Brewer's Choice is **Tim Huddleson's Belgian RyePA**. Watch for the pro-am beer to be released in 2016, likely in the spring or early summer.

Congratulations to all of the entries. There was, sadly, one beer that was infected (in both bottles we opened), but the other 66 were pretty good. Because what homebrew isn't good? They were all great beers that showcased the talent possessed by brewers throughout this great state. And one great guy in Montana.

At the end of the day, the competition really came together well. We had 67 amazing beers, 17 amazing judges, some first timers whose beers placed, and some great hosts. It was a wonderful experience all around. I would like to offer a huge thanks, in no particular order, to all the entrants, Pete and Lisa at Arctic Brewing Supply (for putting up with me for 8 hours), all the judges, and all the folks at King Street (for putting up with me 8 hours on a different day, and later selected their favorite beer, too).



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