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Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB
SEPTEMBER 2016

The Prez Sez

by *Kevin Sobolesky*

Howdy Brewing friends!

As we notice the weather is turning cooler, we realize that we can brew again! The hectic nature of the summer is waning and our garages are cool enough to ferment a wide range of beers once more. For me, that means a slew of meads made from locally produced honey with additions such as hops, spruce tips, raspberries, blueberries, and rhubarb! I will probably only get a few of those made this year, as always, one's ambition exceeds their reach.

This also means that the GNBC monthly meetings resume. The first is September 20th at 49th State Brewing co in Anchorage at 7pm. As usual, bring your homebrews and potluck dishes to share. As unusual, we will have a themed meeting this time, and the theme is: **Festbier**.

We will provide a secret festbier and have a guided tasting for everyone to enjoy and discuss. We strongly encourage everyone to bring their fest biers to share (Octoberfest, Vienna Lager, Schwarzbier, Bock, Munich Helles, Hefeweizen, Weizenbock, Pilsner, etc).

The E.T. Barnette homebrew competition in Fox, Alaska, hosted by Silver Gulch Brewing, was completed with a hat trick of Alaskan wins, keeping all that sweet, sweet, prize money home. Mike Cragen was able to lock in best of show his Munich Helles, a subtle and challenging beer to brew, for sure.

See the full results here:

<http://www.mosquitobytes.com/Den/Beer/Events/ETB2016/ETB2016.html>

Upcoming homebrew competitions include the Valdez Oktoberfest and Anchortown Invitational on October 1st, and October 23rd, respectively. See their respective articles for details.

Our sour maestro, Brian Hall, has returned from the National Homebrewer's Conference (now "HomebrewCon") and wrote up his experience. I wish I could have made it there, it sounds like an amazing time with tons of fascinating people. (I hope he'll be kind enough to share his East Coast Yeast connection.)

If you are free this Labor Day weekend, please attend John Craig's Labor Day weekend camp-out up by Talkeetna for a chill, good time with our favorite venerable veteran beer fan.

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Also, it's time to point out that Elections are coming up!

All officer positions are 1 year terms, and board positions are 2 year terms.

3 board positions are currently up for re-election. Hint, Hint.

To recap, our officers positions are:

President

Vice President

Secretary

Treasurer

We could definitely use the help! Remember, the club is only what the membership puts into it, and that can be much more than the sum of those parts.

Valdez Oktoberfest details

Oct 1st, see the details at:

<http://www.valdezalaska.org/oktoberfest-home-brew-competition>

Entry Instructions

1. 3 bottles (12 oz) requires per entry
2. Entries must be received by:
 - Dropped off in Anchorage at Arctic Brewing Supply September 27
 - Delivered in Valdez to the Valdez Visitors Information Center by 5 PM September 28
3. There will be five categories judged. These categories are:
 - a. IPA Category 14 (English IPA, American IPA, Imperial IPA)
 - b. Pale Category 10A
 - c. Stouts Category 13 (Dry, Sweet, Oatmeal, Foreign Extra, American, Russian)
 - d. Oktoberfest Category 3B
 - e. Specialty Beer Category 23
4. Please select the appropriate category for your brew and enter it on the Registration Form.
5. Complete the Registration Form and Attach your Recipe. Submit your form and payment in advance to the Valdez Convention and Visitors Bureau PO Box 1603, Valdez, AK 99686 or Fax 907-835-4845.

Judging will take place at the Oktoberfest Celebration on October 1st in Valdez.

- All categories will be judged during the day on October 1st (schedule to follow) and Best of Show will be judged the evening of October 1st.
- Awards will be presented at the final event on October 1st.

This event is following the BJCP guidelines as outlined at www.BJCP.org.

Prizes

- There will be a Best of Competition Award given of \$500.00
- There will be a \$250.00 First Place and \$150.00 Second Place award given for the IPA, Pale, Stouts and Oktoberfest Categories.
- A \$100 Gift Certificate to Arctic Brewing Supply will be given to the winner of the Specialty Beer Category.

Download your entry packet at:

<http://valdezalaska.org/sites/default/files/2016%20Registration%20Packet.pdf>

Let's all rally at the September brew club meeting at 49th State!

Secretary's Corner

by Jim O'Toole

I didn't submit a Secretary's Corner item for the newsletter in July because I spaced out writing it. I wish I could say this was because I was off traveling in some exotic place but the truth is I was buried in some projects at home and was exhausted.

I have a couple of perennial beds that came with the house when I bought it 20 years ago and I neglected them enough to where the horsetail and grass nearly took them over. I cleaned one of them up but the other was so overrun that I needed to dig it up and get rid of the soil that was too contaminated to use again.

The hole I ended up with was 22 feet long, 3 feet wide and 2 feet deep. If it was just soil that I removed, you and all my other friends would not have to listen to this whining but what most people don't understand is that I live in Muldoon where much of the ground is rocks. When I started the project I figured I would separate the rocks by size, with small, medium, and large rocks getting their own piles but the piles grew together and I ended up just tossing them all together for removal when I was done. I eventually lugged off 12 wheelbarrows full of them in addition to the 100 or so large garbage bags of soil that I paid someone to haul off for me.

The perennial beds are right up against the back of the house and the concrete block foundation. As I dug I kept noticing that the foundation sealer that was applied when the house was built back in the early 1960's was eaten away to the block in some places and it was the roots of the plants that had pressed into it that caused it so, as happens so often with a simple project, I realized I was going to have to reseal the foundation so I dug even deeper to make sure that I sealed all of the defects.

Of course this meant that I had to scrub the foundation clean before painting it. I wore out one scrub brush and bought another one as I scrubbed it twice to be sure I removed everything that would keep the seal from sticking to the wall.

Once the "hole" was ready for refilling I built a new barrier between the flower bed and lawn with 2x12's, landscape timbers, heavy duty fabric, and plastic lawn barriers so that the only things that will grow in there will be things I plant or the unavoidable flying dandelion and cottonwoods that are easy to remove if spotted early enough.

I realized, soon after I decided to build this formidable barrier that I was going to have to do the same thing to the perennial bed on the opposite side of the back deck and, while in the middle of that I decided to build a nice barrier around the



EVENTS

Every First Thursday
Moose's Tooth First Tap

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

17.....*Talkeetna Brewfest
Don Sheldon Community Arts
Hanger 2-6 pm \$55 pp*

20.....*First Fall GNBC Meeting at
49th State Brewing - Anchorage
7-9 pm Downstasirs*

24.....*Bodega Fest 1-6 PM Lucy Cuddy
Park-Midtown Anchorage*

30-1.....*Valdez Oktoberfest and Homebrew
Competition*

18..... *GNBC Meeting at 49th State
Brewing - Anchorage
7-9 pm Downstasirs*

23.....*Anchor Town Invitational Homebrew
Competition*

29.....*Mighty Matanuska Brewfest
Raven Hall-Alaska State Fair
grounds-Palmer 6-10 pm \$30 pp*

15,..... *GNBC Meeting at 49th State
Brewing - Anchorage
7-9 pm Downstasirs*



crawl space vent that is partially hidden by the plants but which allowed some water to enter the crawl space when the sprinkler system watered them.

Digging down a foot I encountered a rock at a depth of ten inches; not a big deal as I had yanked a million rocks out of the holes already but, as I kept digging I got to wondering if I had found the top of a mountain. I kept going and weighed the boulder that came out.....45 pounds, less than half the weight of the biggest rock I pulled out of the other bed which came in at a trophy king salmon sized 80 pounds but a real pain in the ass.

Without going too much deeper into this sad story I'll tell you that the project also involved removal and replacement of two fence posts and a section of chain link fence at the corner of the house and more digging around the side of the house where I had removed a patch of roses 20 years before and where another perennial bed had given way to weeds and which I had dug up a couple of years ago with intent to replace the soil and plant grass. This patch is memorable for me because it was the first time Jim "Doctor Fermento" Roberts and I ever spoke when he came across the street to tell me I was "embarrassing" him when he saw me working my ass off around my place when all he was doing was maintaining his own home, holding down a full time job, brewing beer in his garage, writing beer articles for various publications, being married, and raising two kids.

Digging down to find the bottom of the horsetail roots in this area revealed some severe flaws in the foundation sealant along the entire 24 foot length of the foundation so I had to dig down about three feet, scrub the foundation, reseal it, build another landscape barrier and fill this and the other "holes" with topsoil that I had delivered.

All of this took me about three weeks and most of you, who are still reading this, are probably asking what this has to do with beer.

Well I did all of this during that incredible stretch of temperatures that were hitting the 70's and 80's and I was drinking a lot of beer to keep hydrated while sweating my way through the project. I even ignored the warning sign regarding drinking alcoholic beverages on the inside of the sauna where I retreated nearly every day after I put the tools away. I took a beer in there with me every time.

And I discovered something about beer temperature.

I've gotten into some minor arguments with people about proper beer temperatures over the years since I've discovered good beer and I think I've even convinced a couple of people that the temperature of beer is an important consideration for full enjoyment. A guy I worked with said, "I like my beer ice cold" but told me later that he experimented with drinking ales a little warmer than his lagers and found that you really do get more flavor by doing this.

A friend of mine has a landlord who immigrated here from Germany and he asked me if I drink my beer cold or warm and he later acknowledged that his bias toward warm beer was unfounded even though he still thinks Brits are fools.

My kids' grandmother used to drink Rainier in a glass (classy) but would fill the glass with ice cubes before she poured the beer into it.

In the winter my garage/beer storage area stays around 50 degrees but during hot stretches like we had recently it gets up to 60 degrees or so and I have to refrigerate the beer before drinking it. If it's an ale I usually let it warm up in a glass a little but, while sweating away in the dirt in the yard I was guzzling them right out of the bottle and, when I set them down for a few minutes the sunshine warmed them to the point where normal beer temperature was just not as satisfying. Sometimes a beer of any kind tastes better "ice cold."

So I'm including this chart below from homebrewersassociation.org and will continue to try to drink my beers at proper temperature for the style I'm drinking but when it's hot out I hope no one will revoke my cherished "beer snob" membership if I go for the chill no matter what it is.

Calendar of events:

September 20th
7:00PM
GNBC meeting
49th State Brewing Company



Bodega Fest
 Saturday September 24
 1:00-6:00PM
 Lucy Cuddy Park-Midtown Anchorage
 \$39 for 12 samples (limited to 300 people)

October 23
 Anchortown Invitational Homebrew Competition

GNBC Christmas Party
 Saturday December 10, 2016
 Alaska Zoo

Beer	Suggested Temperature
American Mainstream Light Lagers	33° – 40° F
Pale Lagers, Pilsners	38° – 45° F
Cream & Blonde Ales	40° – 45° F
Nitro Stouts	40° – 45° F
Belgian Pale Ales, Abbey Tripels	40° – 45° F
Wheat Beers	40° – 50° F
Lambics	40° – 50° F
Dark Lagers	45° – 50° F
American Pale Ales & IPAs	45° – 50° F
Stouts, Porters	45° – 55° F
Strong Lagers	50° – 55° F
Real & Cask Ales	50° – 55° F
Belgian Dubbels	50° – 55° F

Data from *Tasting Beer* by Randy Mosher.

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



General Serving Temperature Rules:

- All beers should be served between 38-55° F.
- Lagers are served colder than ales.
- Stronger beers are served warmer than weaker beers.
- Darker beers are served warmer than lighter beers.
- Macro lagers are served as cold as the Rockies.
- Serve beers a few degrees colder than the target temperature, to accommodate for warming from the glass and the drinker's hands.



Anchor Town Invitational Homebrew Competition

by Mike Fisher

The 2016 Anchor Town competition will take place on Sunday, October 23 at King Street Brewing Company, with entries accepted at Arctic Brewing Supply on Saturday, October 22. That means you have 6 weeks or so to source your ingredients and brew your beers (if you haven't done so already), but in the meantime I am seeking *your* help with putting on the competition.

First and foremost, we need entries, so please think of what you would like to showcase this year. As mentioned earlier, all beer categories in the 2015 BJCP Style Guidelines will be judged but the ones that will score you points toward GNBC's Homebrewer of the Year award are Standard American Beer (1), International Lager (2), Brown British Beer (13), Irish Beer (15), Dark British Beer (16), and American Wild Ale (28). The side challenge for this year's competition is called "Funky Fermentables" and is intended to highlight non-traditional beer ingredients. You are left to your imagination and judges will evaluate just how funky the ingredient(s) is/are (as in "different but good" or an homage to blues, not "I fermented this in my laundry hamper") and how well they fit into the beer.

Second, we need judges and other helpers. The more judges we have on Sunday, the better. If you can't make it on Sunday, come hang out at the brew shop for some of the day to collect entries. (Warning: This has been known to result in spontaneous recipe formulation and purchases.) I won't turn you away if you can help with sorting entries, getting them to King Street's cooler, or helping with other logistical needs.

If you are able to help, please get in touch with me at vp@greatnorthernbrewers.org. Also use that address if you need to make alternative drop-off arrangements, such as shipping beers to me from outside the Anchorage area.



Summer Campout Recap

by *John Trapp*

This year's summer campout was held in August instead of our usual June timeframe due to a scheduling snafu when reservations were being made. We may not have had as much daylight, but we did have a great time up at Eklutna Campground. In fact, the weather was fantastic during the day and only rained late at night. Heck, Saturday afternoon it was sunny and warm down by the lake while reports of heavy downpours came in from Anchorage. Yep, anyone that didn't venture out because they thought it would be raining missed a good time.

Since I joined the brew club back in 1998, I've always been a tent camper at this event. I think there was a year or two that I slept in the back of my pickup truck, but that's only a slight step up from tenting it. I also learned the hard way that the tent needs to be set up right when you get there and not at midnight after you've been drinking home brew for five hours. Well my friends, the Trapp Family bought a motorhome this year! All I can say is "what the hell was I waiting for"? I do need to credit my wife Cyndi on this one, as she encouraged us to buy one even though I swore I would never be an RV'er. Let me tell you this, you can be full of food, "slightly" inebriated as well as warm, dry and comfortably sleeping – all at the same time! I won't go on any further with this, but I do have a tent for sale if anyone is interested.

I pulled into the group campground around 7 on Friday evening and found six or seven campers all set up with fires roaring and home brew flowing. It was just me and the old hound dog on Friday evening. Cyndi and Allan were going to join me Saturday for some bike riding, rock skipping and the group meal.

It was nice to sit around the fire, relax and chat for the evening all while enjoying some tasty brews. Saturday morning the rain had stopped and the sky cleared up a bit so I took the dog down to the lake for a little exercise while I waited for the rest of the family to arrive. Once they got there we headed back down to the lake so my boy could throw rocks.

After we were done with lakeside activities (hours of rock throwing fun for a 2 ½ year old), we got back in time to start dinner for the traditional Saturday night group meal. Four or five more families had arrived from Anchorage so the campground was filled with kids, dogs and the occasional car driving to the next site. The group meal theme was comfort food, and I definitely felt comfortable eating it, lots of it. GNBC potlucks are always a favorite of mine and the variety can't be beat. Thanks to everyone that contributed to this outstanding meal, it's what makes this club great. The bonfire lasted late into the next morning and everyone had a great time.

Next year's campout will be down at Trail River in June, hopefully around the weekend of the 17th. I'll be there with the motorhome, camping in style.

Club Elections

Originally written by Breck Tostevin (2009) with contributions by Julie McDonald (2016)

We will be having club elections in November and as is the case every year, each of our executive officer positions is available to run for.

We also have 3 board seats that are up for election. These seats are two year terms. Since we are a volunteer organization, it is the efforts of our officers, directors and club members that make this club function.

Many people have ideas about what they would like to see the club do but the only way it is going to happen is for US TO DO IT OURSELVES. As Breck likes to say at work, "There are people who go to meetings, and then there are those people who get things done."

We want to encourage both long-term and newer members to run for a club position and/or take on a club project.

Here is a brief description of what each position entails.

President (elected):

- *master organizer of the club and our leader
- *provides direction and achieves club goals and objectives with and through the officers, board members and general club membership
- *organizes the agenda for club meetings including the business items and educational presentations
- *looks down the road six months or more to make sure events are assigned to an organizer and that events are being planned and implemented
- *writes the Prez Sez article each month to inform the membership about events and to inspire them to participate
- *runs the club meetings and board meetings
- *is ultimately the person to make sure things stay on track and in the best of circumstances inspires us to participate and improve our homebrew club

Vice-President (elected):

- *is the President's right hand person and is a leader in training
- *is in a co-leadership position and works in concert with the President to provide club insight, direction and motivation
- *is in charge of the club tote box that contains the all important beer cups, name tags, raffle tickets, plates and utensils for our meetings
- *steps in when the President is unable to attend board or club meetings or events

Secretary (elected):

- *is the official club recorder and historian for the club, and keeps minutes of the meetings and keeps track of dates of events and presents them in a monthly newsletter article
- *takes on special projects for the President

Treasurer (elected):

- *handles and keeps track of the club finances and monies, keeps email list on the club website

Board Members (elected):

- *act as participating advisors to the officers and do so by attending board meetings, writing newsletter articles and assisting in the general management of the club
- *takes on at least one special project each year (a competition, event, or project) in order to make the club function

Membership Coordinator (volunteer position, not elected):

- *maintains the membership records
- *acts as a contact point for all membership related questions and information
- *processes all new and renewed membership applications
- *purchases (is reimbursed by the club) all needed materials for membership processing

Newsletter Coordinator (volunteer position, not elected)

- *the point person for all newsletter submissions
- *submissions are collected and sent to the editors

Newsletter Editor (volunteer position, not elected):

- *edits, format and publishes a highly professional newsletter each month that appears as a pdf link on our Club website
- *is constantly in need of support in terms of article and photo submission from both the club management and membership
- *requires some degree of literary fluency, editing skills and the ability to perform simple newsletter layout and publication skills using popular layout software such as Adobe PageMaker or Microsoft Publisher
- *we are so very fortunate to have Deb Grecco and Jim Roberts acting as our editors for a very long time, and we thank them for their endless devotion to the club and their continuing newsletter efforts

Social Media Administrator (volunteer position, not elected):

- *uses newsletter info and whatever info is sent directly to update Facebook and Instagram accounts
- *creates and maintains Facebook events pages for various club activities
- *collects information from various online or other social media sites for sharing with the club's social media accounts
- *maintaining social media account profiles and tending to followers and inquiries

Another role the club seems to need is recruiting people to give educational presentations at our monthly meetings. There is great talent both within the club and within the local brewing community: it just needs to be tapped and directed.

Other Opportunities:

There are lots of opportunities to run or assist competitions, events, presentations, and the like. Here is a list of some of our past and current events:

- *Kerri Canepa organized the Kenai Bus Trips
- *Lisa Peltola, Pat Ryan, Kat Karabenikoff, and others have organized the House Crawl
- *Kevin Sobelesky currently runs the Beer Judge Certification Program Classes with presenters Breck Tostevin, Jason Ditsworth, Pete Devaris, Dennis Urban and others
- *Julie McDonald has organized the club beer dinners in the past and has created and runs the club's social media accounts
- *many have taken turns organizing the Summer Campout and other member-only club events
- *Jeff and Cathie Loughrey have hosted the summer BBQ for decades
- *Dennis Sessler, Ira Edwards, John Trapp, Dan Bosch, Jason Ditsworth, Breck Tostevin and many others have run and assisted in a plethora of club home brew competitions
- *John and Rose Craig have hosted a decade of Brewathons and now Kevin Sobelesky has taken over the hosting duties for that annual event

The bottom line is that just about anyone in the club has something to contribute and the contributions don't have to originate from within the officer or board positions. This is your club and we implore you to not only bask in the club's educational, social and fermented riches but to step forward and contribute some of your own talent to support the above positions or to provide something unique. The opportunity to help shape the club in the years to come is in your hands and we need your participation and input to keep things lively for all GNBC members.

Please consider running for a club position and take action to make things happen in the Great Northern Brewers Club! If you have interest in running for any of our elected positions, please email one of our board members. All board contact info can be found in our newsletters and on the club's website at <http://www.greatnorthernbrewers.org> You can also nominate yourself or others at one of our monthly meetings leading up to the November elections. See you at the September meeting!



Suds Corner

by John 'Suds' Craig

As the air gets cooler, leaves change colors and birds fly south, Rose and I, with dog "Brewer" would like to invite Great Northern Brewing Club members to and end of summer Camp-out at our place just outside of Talkeetna.

At Grizzly BEER Camp during labor day weekend, we have lots of tent camping sites, and a limited number of R.V. and travel trailer pads. We will have an open grill and camp-fire for everyone to share, beer is always welcome to enjoy with all of your friends.

Here's how to get there:

Head to Talkeetna spur road, stop at Denali Brewing Company for a beer on your way in;

At mile 3, Yoder Road, turn right;

Go 4 miles to Montana Creek;

Go straight 2 miles to Yoder Hill, which is South-Southfork Road;

Go straight 1 1/4 miles to Craig's Place, that's our cabin;

Pull in and enjoy!

See you at Sud's Moose Snort Saloon and Beer Garden!



Membership Renewals

by Kat Karabelnikoff

It's that time again for Membership renewal. Summer has gone by so fast it seems this year and I figured it was time I give everyone a friendly reminder for NEXT MONTH. Yes, September is coming up quickly and that means we have one month left and then we are officially back to having a regular monthly meeting so please RENEW your memberships now and you will be able to pick up your 2016/2017 membership card at the September meeting, and if you renew by **September 17th** your name will be entered into a special drawing to be given out at the September meeting (yes you have to be present to win this). If you can't make it to the September meeting don't worry, Any cards not picked up at the meeting will be mailed out that week. The cost for membership is \$30.00 annually per household (don't forget to include your spouse's name so they can have their own membership card and get the benefits too.) or \$350 for a lifetime membership.

You can renew your annual membership online on our website <http://www.greatnorthernbrewers.org/membership.html> with a credit or debit card or send a Check or Money Order (made payable to Great Northern Brewers Club) to:

GNBC Membership Coordinator

c/o Kat Karabelnikoff

9601 COPPER DRIVE

Anchorage, AK 99507

If renewing online or via mail please don't forget to include your Name (and spouse's too if applicable), Full Street Address (street, city, and zip code), Phone Number, and Email.

You can contact me Kat Karabelnikoff at membership@greatnorthernbrewers.org if you have any questions.

I look forward to seeing all the familiar and new faces at the September 20th Meeting!

Cheers, Kat K

Oktoberfest is Coming

by John Trapp

Are you ready? One of my favorite festive times of the year, Oktoberfest, where you eat, drink, sing and dance for no apparent reason other than having fun. Sure, Thanksgiving is nice, Christmas is great, and who doesn't love the 4th of July. But those celebrations revolve around specifics that start and end over the same day. But some of you are saying "isn't Oktoberfest the celebration to commemorate the wedding of King Ludwig back in 1810"? Technically, yes, but they had so much fun that this has turned into a Beer Festival. Plus, it lasts 16 days! So put on your lederhosen, dirndl, or favorite drinking shirt and come out to celebrate Beer!



South-central Alaska does a pretty good job of celebrating this, and I hope to see as many GNBC'ers at the events. You'll need to look up the specifics on a few venues as they haven't released the dates yet, but follow the Ohm Pah band Alaskablaskapelle as they supply authentic music to most of the events.

Alyeska Resort Oktoberfest – usually they do 2 weekends out at the day lodge and it should coordinate with the weekends of September 16th -17th, and 23rd – 24th.

Humpy's Oktoberfest – once again, usually done twice for the season, once during the end of Sept. and the other a week or two into October. This is truly an eating and drinking event (Chicken dancing is encouraged but not required). Last year they held the second seating at Williwaw, lots of room and looked like a traditional O-fest beer hall. Check for dates, typically done on Sunday evening.

Anchorage German Clubs Oktoberfest – This is the granddaddy of the o-fest season. They are in their 49th year (I think) and it's held at the Egan Center. Most club members are in Traditional costume (for some it's a lifestyle) and there's music, dancing, food and drink. This year it's on October 7th and 8th.

Shwabnhof – Out in the valley off of Palmer Wasilla highway, I can't find much info for their o-fest, but I do know that Alaskablaskapelle plays it in the middle of October. Cool place and a nice change of pace.

49th State Brewing – considering they already did their "Augtoberfest" up in Healy back on August 5th and 6th, I'll assume they will be doing something good in Anchorage as well. They make some incredible German Lagers, so keep an eye out for festivities later this month.

Café Amsterdam – I don't know if Ken and Shauna are doing a dinner this year, but I heard last year's dinner was great. Once again, watch for announcements.

There's probably more that I'm missing here, but this list should get you rolling along. Bottom line is this, get out and enjoy the Oktoberfest season while you can. Plan ahead and make some great memories (or foggy memories) of dancing on tables, drinking liters of beer in a single gulp or eating more schnitzel than one person should be allowed to. Good luck and Happy O-Fest season.

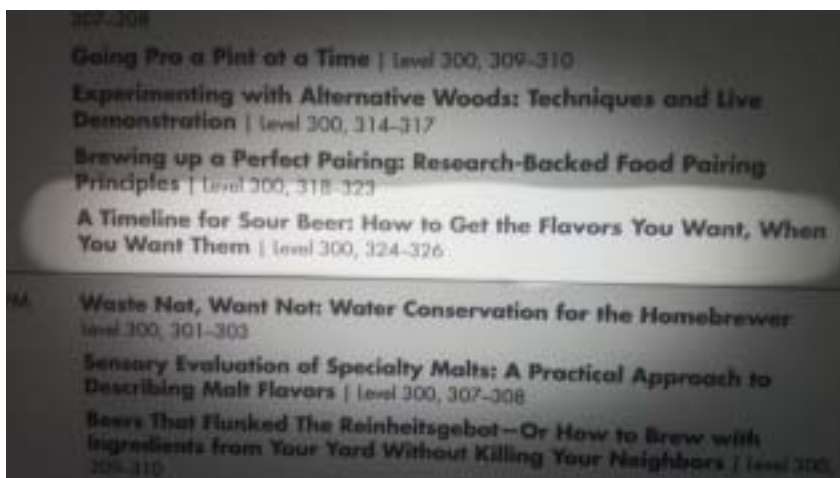
National Homebrew Competition Recap

by *Brian Hall*

The 2016 National Homebrew Competition (NHC) has just come to an end. For those of you who don't know, the conference "HomebrewCon", is formerly known as the National Homebrew Conference. It's a four day mashup of beer related seminars, vendors, socializing, late nights – and, of course, some serious sampling. The last NHC (I'm still having a hard time with the new HomebrewCon title) I attended was in 2013 in Philadelphia. While I had a great time there as well, this time I was far better connected and got to put a face to many of the people I'd been conversing with online for years. Here's what I remember.

I left Anchorage late Tuesday evening and arrived Wednesday evening in Baltimore. After dropping off the beer for my seminar, I checked in to the hotel and went to meet up with Eric of Eric's Brewing Blog and Marshall of Brulosophy. I converse regularly with both of these guys, but it was the first time we'd met up in "real life." Both are super awesome dudes. We scarfed some seafood and pounded some brews at Phillips on the water. We then headed over to Max's, a local watering hole with a great tap selection. We had some beers, talked about karaoke, then, had some more beers.

Thursday I spent the afternoon checking out the vendors and meeting up with many of the people who make some of the great products I love to use. I also made a few connections with others whose products I plan to use in the future. A highlight was chatting about wort chillers with the guys at JaDeD Brewing. They make a fantastic chiller that uses coils in parallel (rather than one long one that uses the same length in series). I also met up with Rex from the Brew Bag. Rex has a great sense of humor and is super helpful in answering all of my questions. Other vendor highlights were the *Devil's Backbone* Vienna Lager, aromatizing hops at the Lagunitas booth, and blending with the guys from Love2Brew. Fantastically enough, I chatted more with the Love2Brew guys to work out some flat rate shipping to Alaska.



I attended Tasty's talk on Fast Lagering in the afternoon with a few others – it was a great "to the point" talk on making Lager beer in much less time than traditional methods. Afterward, we swung by my hotel room to get a sample of some sour beer, then headed out to nab some some food at Luna Del Sea. Crab cakes were great. After dinner we all attended the Craft Beer Kickoff Party, where we drank from many breweries near and far.



Craft kickoff!

I was also pumped to meet Ed Coffey of Ales of the Riverwards. Ed was another Yeast Bay beta tester from a year ago, and someone who I chat with regularly about all things bread and beer.

Friday morning I got up and headed out to see the talk "Brewing Wild" on spontaneous beer. Brian Wolfe and John Wilson did a great job of providing an informational and entertaining talk on strategies for brewing using yeast you won't find anywhere but outside. After that, I went back to prep for my seminar. The seminar went well and while I didn't have as much beer to serve as I would have liked, the beer that did make it was still in fantastic shape.



Giving my seminar. Lambic sample in foreground.

After giving my seminar, I finally got to relax and decided to attend Jeff Mello's seminar on Wild Yeast. Jeff is working on making a yeast bank with yeast from around the world that have never been used before. An ambitious goal! After Jeff's talk we proceeded to another highlight of the trip: Milk the Funk meetup!

Milk the Funk is a resource for all things funky when it comes to brewing. Their wiki is a fantastic resource for sour and wild brews. Here I met Mike, The Mad Fermentationist, Matt from SourBeerBlog, Scott from ScottJanish.com, and many other interesting and genuine people. I served my Lambic v3, my Framboise (now 4 years old!), a Brett IPA, and a Kriek I plan on writing about soon. I also had a NE Style IPA (another upcoming article) which wasn't sour/wild (gasp!) but was a great palate cleanser. I was really impressed with the quality of everyone's beer, especially a couple of the bottles from Matt Miller.



Rowdy.

After removing most of the enamel from our teeth, we headed to Chipotle for a quick burrito, then back to the convention center for Club Night. If you've never been to an NHC, you should probably go simply because Club Night is amazing. For one night, every homebrewer who wants to can serve their own beer! I tried as many beers as I could. Some were simply amazing. I had several great Lambics, a fantastic Berliner Weisse from Clarence at Midnight Homebrewer's League and played around making a blend of IPAs from Mike and Scott's beers from the DC Homebrewer's Club. There were other countless great beers but I simply can't recall the name of each one!

Saturday I awoke feeling excited and refreshed. With a little skip in my step, I went down to attend the Homebrew Blogger's Roundtable. Moderated by Chip Walton, this presentation was hosted by Ed, Marshall, Derek, and Matt (of A Ph.D in Beer.) The seminar was informal, yet inspiring – hence this post! After the roundtable, I stayed to watch Malcolm and Marshall share information they'd collected in mash length, boil length, and fermentation temperature in Modern Perspectives on Traditional Methods. Great speaking, guys!



After the presentations, I took a brief siesta, had lunch, and came back to watch Mike talk about Dry Hopped Sour Beers. To summarize: Mike is an enthusiastic and inspiring speaker. I get the sense he'd done this before, but his talk was motivating, funny, and easy to follow. All of the beers he served were great, although his second offering, a slightly more soured, one-month-old pale beer was my favorite. It was the talk that I was most interested in after having tried similar methods recently. There is a fine line between too hoppy and too sour when brewing this style: one which I plan on investigating more thoroughly soon.

After the seminars, we freshened up and went to the grand banquet.



I shared a table with Eric, Marshall, Malcolm, Matt, John Palmer...



After the banquet, we headed out for a few more beers at Max's. I had a light sampler of local brews, we downed some grub and headed back to the hotel. The next morning was final goodbyes and a short plane ride home.

Would I go back to NHC? Hell yes. I'm already starting to brainstorm about Minneapolis for next year!



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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: September 20th, 2016
7:00 PM at 49th State Brewing Anchorage**