



THE

Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB

April 2023

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Next Meeting
April 18th– 49th State

The Prez Sez

By John Trapp & Liz Greer

Chalk up one more month down; March is in the history books. We've had a pretty good winter, temperatures haven't gotten too high, which means crawl spaces are still cool enough for lagers. Yep, I'll always push for a good lager, brew them while you can. Our March meeting was a huge success, had a nice "Irish Beer" talk from Rick, drank some Irish Beers and swapped some Irish stories. Also, here's some great news about the club, Steve Johnson has been doing a phenomenal job as the membership coordinator (not an easy task) and GNBC's membership is back up to levels we saw in 2019 and earlier. Our events are filled with members, meetings are almost at capacity – be sure to pour Steve a homebrew next time you see him.

Here's the 3 month calendar:

- April 14th to 16th: Talkeetna Beer Tripping! Make your plans accordingly. See Mike Cragen's article.
- April 18th: Club Meeting at 49th State Brewing Company 7:00 p.m. (Book Swap)
- May 6th: Big Brew Day (aka Brew-a-thon) Brewing demonstration at Arctic Brewing Supply
- May 24th or 25th: Club Meeting at location and time – TBD.
- June 9th- 11th: Summer campout at Eklutna, Friday noon until Sunday noon.

One more thing before we move on to new business, I hope we had a lot of takers on Turnagain Brewing Company's Tartside Challenge wort share. This is a wonderful opportunity for home brewers to play around with some sour wort. Dr. Ted has a lot of confidence and vision in the club and always looks forward to sampling what we come up with. Be sure to thank him next time you see him.

April will bring around Talkeetna Beer Tripping. See Mike's article on this and make your plans and accommodations accordingly. This has always been a huge hit with the club as well as Denali Brewing Company, so plan on attending for some springtime fun in Talkeetna. Also, our April meeting will be a book swap, or book exchange. If you have any brewing books you've read and don't need any more, or if you're looking to pick up a different brewing book, show up at the April meeting. Don't forget to sign up for the Denali wort share. Last year was an incredible

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Contact information via our website

batch of the Mother Ale that GNBC played with and made some tasty stuff. The finished beers will be sampled at the May meeting.

The first Saturday in May is Big Brew Day (Brew-a-Thon) and Arctic Brewing Supply is putting on a brewing demonstration at the shop. Plan on swinging by to say hello, buy some supplies, or watch the demo. Pete and Lisa are great friends of the club and have the best Home Brew store in the state, so show your appreciation for all they do for us.

Our summer campout will be back at Eklutna Campground the weekend of June 9th thru 11th. Mark your calendars and plan on having a camping good time. Our group dinner on Saturday is going to have a theme, and I'm thinking it should be "Something That Goes Oink". Think about it.

Until next time, keep brewing because life is good.

Cheers

The Secretary's Corner

By Gwen Higgins



Mugwort, a common ingredient in gruit.

Our March meeting, being so soon after St. Patrick's Day was all about Irish beer. Rick gave an excellent and informative presentation about the history of brewing in Ireland, and there were several examples of different styles of Irish beer to sample.

However, these did not include the first ales brewed in Ireland, which were gruits brewed without the use of hops. As Rick noted in his presentation, hops are not native to Ireland, so Irish brewers dating back to the Bronze Age used a blend of other herbs to flavor and preserve their ale. Historically, the term "gruit" referred to this botanical blend used throughout Europe before hops became common, which often included dandelion, common heather, ground ivy, horehound, mugwort, sweet gale, and yarrow. Depending on the region, the blend could also include spices like ginger, nutmeg, anise, and juniper. Today, "gruit" or "gruit ale" refers to beer made with other plants instead of hops.

The Protestant Reformation helped speed the ascendancy of hops as the primary flavoring for beer. While the Catholic Church taxed the ingredients for making gruit, no such tax was levied on hops. Newly Protestant areas of Europe began to favor hops over other herbs. While gruit ales are far less common today than they were in Medieval Ireland, commercial examples can be found today. My first experience with gruit was A River Runs Gruit from Rock At Brewing in Vermont, which tastes like chamomile tea, but if it were beer. If you see a gruit on the shelf at the liquor store, pick one up, or try your hand at brewing one yourself.

Talkeetna Beer Trippin'

By Mike Cragen



Beer Trippin' in Talkeetna is back on April 14-16! If there's one out-of-town event you make it to this year, this should be the one. Denali Brewing Company (DBC) is inviting GNBC members to join them for a weekend of beer, brewing, and booze. This event is all about homebrewing and homebrewers . . . not a traditional beer festival. Denali WILL be having their Golden Carboy Homebrew Competition that weekend; however, GNBC will NOT be hosting the Equinox Mead Competition this year. The winner of the Golden Carboy will help DBC brew the headlining beer/cider for next year's Beer Trippin' weekend. Get those brews ready for this fantastic competition. Beers and ciders can be entered on Friday, April 14th during the welcome gathering at Denali's Brewpub.

Denali has great events planned and some noteworthy opportunities. Stay tuned for the finalized schedule, which should be coming out soon. Highlights include a distilled spirits discussion with Sassan (DBC owner), two group breakfast opportunities, a bonfire, beer and games at the Teepee, and many more events! This is a family-friendly event. Bring the wife, husband, kids, dogs, and rabbits – there's fun to be

had by all! Although there's plenty of accommodation options in Talkeetna, be sure to book soon so your favorite places don't get snagged away from you.

DBC is once again brewing a wort, which they'll be providing to GNBC members. This post-boil wort is yours to finish. Try any combination of hops or yeasts. Whatever comes to mind. It is the expectation that if you receive wort from DBC, you bring your creation to the May/June GNBC meeting – date to be determined at a later point. Denali Brewing will be attending and eagerly sampling your brews. You'll have to be in Talkeetna for Beer Trippin' to collect the wort into your own sanitized vessel(s). Also, the wort is only available if you RSVP for it with Mike Cragen at: mikecragen@yahoo.com Kegs (no glass carboys) must be brought to Mike's house on Sunday, April 9th between noon – 8pm. If that time doesn't work or if you only have glass carboys, contact Mike at 907-250-4818 for alternate arrangements.

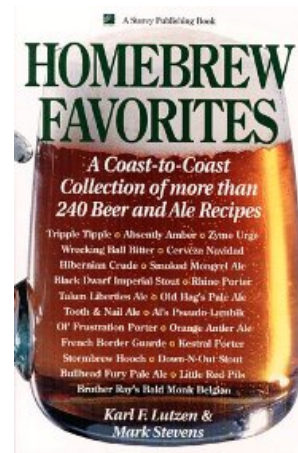
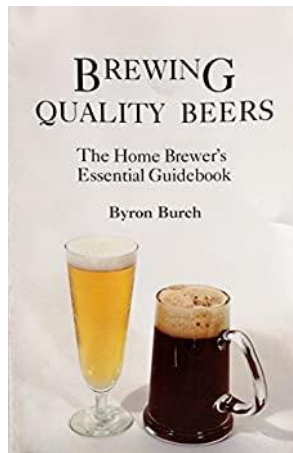
Reading about beer and brewing

By Steve Johnson

For the April meeting, the theme is a book swap. Members are encouraged to bring beer and brewing related books and magazines, surplus to their needs, that might be useful or interesting for other members of the club. The club is not building a library--the books need to go away at the end of the meeting.

Forty two books on one shelf, plus one oversize volume shelved separately: that is the bulk of my physical beer and brewing collection, supplemented by a stack of magazines and two small boxes of newsletters and ephemera acquired over the years. Though I've held on to most of the books I acquired, I have started to thin the collection. I will bring a few items to the April meeting. A book swap seems a better destination for surplus items than the recycling bin.

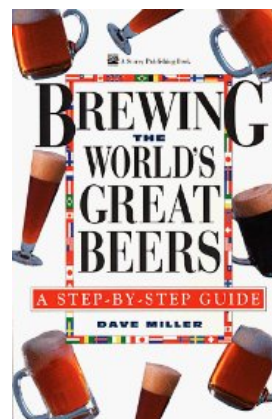
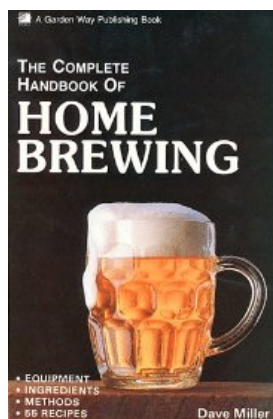
As it happens, I'm more inclined to write about the books I will not be bringing to the April meeting, rather than the few items ready to go out the door. Perhaps some of my keepers will wind up among the items others bring to the swap. Most items mentioned below qualify as obsolete by current standards.



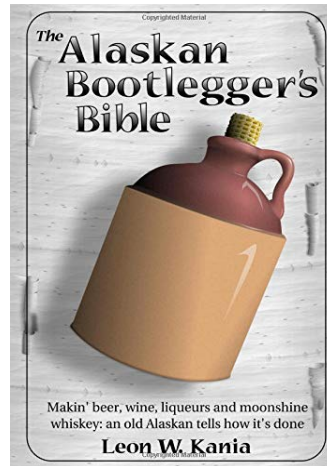
The first brewing book I purchased was Byron Burch's *Brewing Quality Beer: The Home Brewer's Essential Guidebook* (Second edition, Joby Books, 1986). I thought this guide would be superior to the thicker volumes then available at the brewing supply store. In fact, I found Burch's book quite confusing -- I was expecting something as straightforward as *Joy of Cooking*. In retrospect, most of Burch's advice and procedures seems sound, though poorly organized. I have seen references to a revised third edition, from the early nineties, but have not seen it. I would probably spring for that third edition, just to see what changed.

Among the earlier brewing books in my collection, several titles emphasized recipes rather than process. Among examples are *Homebrew Favorites: A Coast-to-Coast Collection of more than 240 Beer and Ale Recipes*, edited by Karl Lutzen and Mark Stevens (Storey Publishing, 1994) and the followup collection *More Homebrew Favorites: More than 260 New Brews* (Storey Publishing, 1997). In the late nineties, I found them fascinating reading and a source of ideas when I was brewing every month, year in and out.

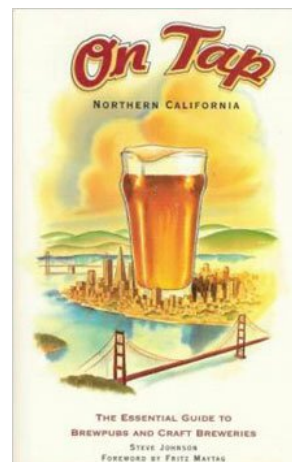
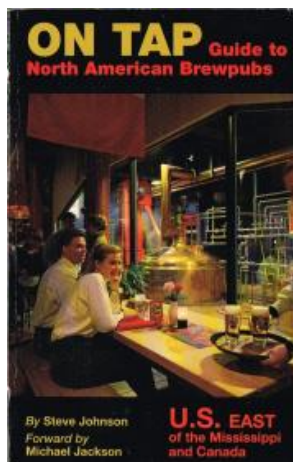
For procedures, during those same years I relied on two books by Dave Miller: *The Complete Book of Home Brewing* (Garden Way/Storey Communications, 1988) and *Brewing the World's Great Beers: A Step by Step Guide* (Storey Communications, 1992.) *The Complete Book* is far more advanced and I am sure I spent more time trying to brew the world's great beers.



I wonder if anyone will bring to the swap table a copy of *The Alaskan Bootleggers Bible* by Leonard Kania (Happy Mountain Publications, Wasilla, 2000, 2016)? This book begins by describing the harvest of a whale. When I first encountered the book at Arctic Brewing Supply around 2008, I was put off by the reference to bootlegging in the title and the inclusion of distillation techniques. I've never owned a copy, though I read the first edition in the Consortium Library Alaskana Collection. After reading the book's many anecdotes and McIverish techniques, I was more interested in learning about the author than in following the recipes. Leonard Kania apparently lived in Wasilla until his death in 2013. Some members of the brew club may have known him, casually or to a greater degree. I'd like to hear from anyone who has information or an anecdote to share.



I was reminded of the *Bootlegger's Guide* when I encountered, and quickly purchased, another book that includes recipes for fruit and vegetable wines and infusions in addition to beer brewing: *The River Cottage Booze Handbook* by John Wright (Ten Speed Press, 2013). Though I've yet to use any of the book's recipes for wine, infusions, beer, cider or mead, the book passes muster with me as good cookbook reading. If I can get myself back to monthly brewing (or infusing?), perhaps I will try one of the recipes. Wright's book was first published in "somewhat different" form in the United Kingdom. Some readers will find the British English usages and UK focus a distinct turnoff.



In our Internet age, printed guidebooks to brewpubs and breweries are now obsolete as practical tools for beer tourism. After decades pass, they retain mostly historical and personal value at best. I've held onto several of the books I used to locate breweries and pubs in the long ago. Two of the books I used were written

by one of the world's many other Steve Johnsons. In 1993 he published the second edition of The On Tap Guide to North American Brewpubs: Vol.1 East of the Mississippi. Michael Jackson provided the introduction. In On Tap Northern California, he updated the information as of 1996. Fritz Maytag provided the introduction to that volume. If another book by Steve Johnson turns up at the swap, it will probably go home with me.

Lincoln's brew advice: Irish Stout

Lincoln Fang



Bitter chocolate, acidic coffee, and a hint of burned malt is Guinness's claim to fame. The brand may be the most well known for the Irish stouts but they would surely not be in anyone's mind when talking about sour beers.

As an ale style with a continuous history, however, Irish stouts in the past have been brewed/stored with certainly non-saccharomyces organisms. Those organisms, most likely Lactobacilles, gave the stout a sharp acidic bite. Currently, Guinness and brands likewise use food-grade lactic acid instead of a separate sour operation to blend into the regular beers.

I do firmly believe lactic acid cannot offer as much complexity as dosing in soured beers. An easy way to mimic a more traditional Irish stout is simply by adding a can of soured Irish stout to your boil. I will list an example of 5 gallon batch of Irish Stout below

All Grain:

Assuming a Brewhouse efficiency of 70% (please adjust accordingly)

For 6-6.5 Pre boil, 5.5 gal Carboy Batch:

7lb Maris Otter(or other British Pale Malt)

2lb Flaked Barley

1lb Roasted Barley

2.3 Oz EKG Hops

1 can of 2-week-old opened Guinness that's been sitting on your kitchen counter

1 whirlfloc tablet

1 packet of dry Nottingham yeast

Mashing in at 152 for 60 min, Add Sparge base your boil off rate, add 2.3oz EKG at 60 min left in the boil, add soured guinness at 10 min left in the boil and whirlfloc at 5. Cool wort down to 67, pitch yeast.

For a og 1.046, FG1.009, ABV 4.85%, IBU39, SRM 25

Extract with partial Mash:

Assuming a Brewhouse efficiency of 70% (please adjust accordingly)

For 6-6.5 gal preboil, 5.5 gal Carboy Batch:

5lb British Pale malt Liquid Extract

2lb Flaked Barley

1lb Roasted Barley

2.3 Oz EKG Hops

1 can of 2-week-old opened Guinness that's been sitting on your kitchen counter

1 whirlfloc tablet

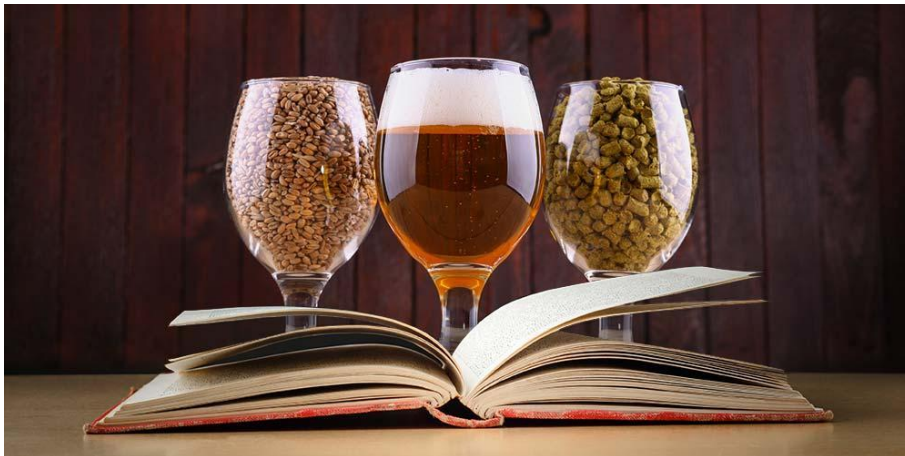
1 packet of dry Nottingham yeast

Mashing the three pounds of grains at 150 in 3 gal of water, after one hour, sparge the grains with 1 gal of water at 170F. Collect more water based on your boil off rate. Add 2.3oz EKG at 60 min left in the boil, add soured guinness at 10 min left in the boil and whirlfloc at 5. Cool wort down to 67, pitch yeast.

For og 1.045, FG1.009, ABV 4.6%, IBU39, SRM 25

April meeting: book and equipment swap

By Elizabeth "Liz" Greer



The April meeting will be a little bit different format than normal meetings. As many of us will be recovering from a weekend of Beer Trippin in Talkeetna, we thought we would do an exchange of sorts. First, we have a HUGE box of brewing and fermentation/distillation literature. Thanks primarily to member Mike Kiker, and with contributions from several others. If you have some related books, you are welcome to add them to the "stack"!

Second will be a gear exchange: If you have some extra brew gear, supplies, etc., which you don't need – bring them in so others in the club, who might have need of such, can pick them up. The format is under development....i.e. the "who gets to pick first and how much/many", but we anticipate to have at least a plan by April 18. See you there!

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