



THE

Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB

March 2024

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April 16 @ 49th State

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The Prez Sez

By Liz Greer

I believe....and hopefully am correct... spring is here! My house has been an igloo all winter and has transformed into a waterfall. Maybe I will install gutters this summer.

Today I am going to do some spring cleaning! This includes organizing my brew, going through my brew gear, and making sure I have a clean vessel ready for the wort share distribution in a couple weeks. This is a "gimme" (freebie) from Denali Brewing at the Talkeetna "Beer Trippin" event (see the event information in this newsletter or on the Facebook Page). But REMINDER! *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 6th between 2pm – 8pm. If that time doesn't work or if you only have glass carboys, contact Mike at 907-250-4818 for alternate arrangements.*

Part of my brew gear spring cleaning will be to collect excess stuff to bring to the April meeting! Last year's book and gear swap was very successful. Lots of stuff was moved around and only a couple small boxes of things were left unclaimed. Now if we can figure out how we did that last year, we will do it again on April 16th Tuesday after Talkeetna.

HEADS UP–May 4th will be our annual group brew for [National Homebrew Day!](#)

Here is a summary of the events over the next three months:

- April 12-14 – Beer Trippin' in Talkeetna! & Golden Carboy Competition, See Flyer
- April 16 – Club Meeting & Brew Gear/Book Exchange at 49th State Brewing Company 7:00 p.m.
- April 17 & 18 (Tentative) Tartside Challenge Wort from Turnagain Brewing
- May 4 – Group Brew for National Homebrew Day! At Arctic Brewing Supply, See Flyer
- May Meeting TBD
- June 14-16 GNBC Campout at Eklutna

If you have any thoughts on some fun activities, please let me or one of the officers know. Remember we have more information on the club at: <https://greatnorthernbrewers.org/>

Secretary's Corner: Mead Madness

By *Gwen Higgins*



In case you missed it, last month's club meeting was all about mead, which in its simplest form is fermented honey water. It seems to me, with absolutely no data to back this up, that mead is experiencing an increase in popularity. In my younger years, I mostly associated the beverage with Vikings and people in the Middle Ages, but recently there seem to be more meaderies popping up and more mead available for retail.

Karl Morgan, an expert meadmaker himself, gave an enlightening presentation about all things mead, including history, styles, and tips for better results. Some of my favorite pieces of information from the presentation include:

- There are different, often highly specific, names for varieties of mead containing various additional ingredients. You may be familiar with melomel (mead with fruit), metheglin (mead with herbs and/or spices), and braggott (a combination of malt and honey used as fermentables). But have you ever heard of an acerglyn (honey and maple syrup), a bochet (mead made using caramelized or burned honey), or a rhodomel (mead with rose)?
- There are also names for different strengths of mead. A hydromel is a light or low-alcohol mead. A short mead is made using less honey and intended for immediate consumption. On the other end of the spectrum is a sack mead, which is generally at or above 14% alcohol content.
- Tej is an Ethiopian and Eritrean beverage made with honey, water, yeast, and a shrub called gesho.
- In Alaska, breweries can brew a braggot, but a meadery can't.
- For best results, mead should be fermented at a low temperature, which reduces the formation of fusel alcohols.
- If you're going to make a melomel, press your fruit rather than pureeing it in a blender, which can release too much additional sugar and tannins.
- If your mead turns out drier than you hoped and you want to back-sweeten it with additional honey, make sure to rack it off several times to remove residual yeast and prevent explosions.

In addition to the presentation the team from Hive Mind Meadery showed up with several of their meads to sample, Shelly brought some of Steve Schmitt's meads, and club members brought a variety of homebrewed and commercial meads to share. Thanks to Karl, Hive Mind, Shelly, and everyone who contributed to a great meeting!

Beer Research: A Bad Day at the Brewery

By *Rick Levinson*

While homebrewers occasionally suffer a brewing disaster, commercial breweries can have disasters on a much grander scale. Commercial breweries are notoriously dangerous places with a sad history of industrial accidents, especially in the years before OSHA and EU-OSHA. Breweries have large heavy equipment, enormous liquid volumes, high temperatures and pressures, dangerous chemicals, and harmful gasses, which

when combined with new, poorly-trained, or overworked employees, can lead to accidental dumps and spills, equipment and facility damage, serious injuries, and sometimes even fatalities.

What is commonly thought of as the worst brewery disaster of all time occurred on the afternoon of October 17, 1814, in the London neighborhood of St. Giles Rookery. Known as the "Great London Beer Flood of 1814", a brewery explosion sent a tidal wave of beer through a poor family neighborhood resulting in many deaths, injuries, and tons of free beer.

It began at the Horse Shoe Brewery of Messrs. Henry Meux and Co, a large brewery building complex that dominated the poor, predominantly Irish, tenement neighborhood. Founded during the reign of King George III, it was one of the two largest breweries in London, and famous for its porter. It produced more than 100,000 barrels each year, and was the fifth largest producer of porter.



Henry Meux



Meux's Brewery, London

Around 4:30 pm on October 17, George Crick, a storehouse clerk, was inspecting the 3-story tall wooden vats girdled with heavy iron hoops which each contained the equivalent of 4000 casks of the fermented black beer. As he looked down from his perch, he noticed that a 700-lb iron hoop had slipped off one of the enormous vats that stored a 10-month-old batch of porter. Having been with the company for 17 years, he knew that this happened 2 to 4 times each year without a major complication. Still, because the vat was over 22 feet high and filled within 4 inches of the top, he notified his boss, who thought that no harm would immediately ensue. He then penned a letter to have a brewery worker fix it at a later date.

Around 5:30 pm, there was a massive explosion from inside the beer storehouse area that produced a boom heard five miles away. George Crick rushed to the storehouse and witnessed the compromised vat, which held the equivalent of 1 million pints of beer, had burst into splinters. The blast set off a chain reaction, breaking off the stopcock from an adjoining vat that also contained thousands of barrels of beer, and then the combined weight of 570 tons of discharged liquid smashed other stored hogsheads of porter. The force of the explosion blew out the building end-wall, which was 25 feet high, 60 feet long, and 22 inches thick at its broadest point, as well as a large part of the roof, and it sent bricks raining on the tops of houses and on pedestrians in nearby streets. This was followed by a tsunami of beer at least 15 feet high that roared through the narrow streets of the neighborhood and knocked in the houses, washed people from the first-floor rooms, and flooded cellars. Decrepit hovels and houses flanking the brewery crumbled under the force of the tidal wave. In blocks farther away, houses still sustained great damage. With no street drainage, the beer had nowhere to go except into basements and cellars, many of which were occupied by tenants who became trapped. Many survivors had climbed atop furniture to avoid drowning.



19th Century London Brewery Storehouse



The Rookery, St. Giles, about 1800

Rescuers waded through waist-high beer and picked through the tangle of bricks and wood debris in search of people trapped in dwellings. People came from all over London to drink the flooded porter and a big party atmosphere ensued. Eyewitnesses told of besotted mobs flinging themselves into gutters full of beer, drinking the escaped porter, and hampering rescue efforts. Rescuers had a difficult time silencing the partiers and gawkers in order to hear the cries and groans emanating from the ruins. The *Bury and Norfolk Post* newspaper reported that "When the beer began to flow, the neighborhood, consisting of the lower classes of the Irish, were busily employed in putting in their claim to a share, and every vessel, from a kettle to a cask, were put into requisition, and many of them were seen enjoying themselves at the expense of the proprietors." This may have been overstated as the popular press at the time did not like the immigrant Irish population. However, mass drunkenness was witnessed by a number of people.

Initially, there were only 8 deaths, but eventually, some 20 deaths were attributed to the incident, though some people contend there were other circumstances surrounding many of the deaths. Most of the fatalities were women and children who were pedestrians on the street or who were crushed or drowned in nearby collapsed homes.

The thought was that if the accident had happened just an hour later when men would have been home from work, many more lives would have been lost. Many brewery workers were seriously injured, but somehow, they all survived. Some casualties were people who were injured when trampled or suffocated by the crush of hundreds trying to get free beer. One death was attributed to "alcohol coma".

The destruction went for many blocks around the brewery, and the devastation was compared to the great fire of London. For months following the Great London Beer Flood, the entire region stank from stale ale despite the efforts from local fire brigades to pump out and then wash streets and cellars. The remains of the brewery became an overnight attraction, and watchmen charged people a penny or two to visit the ruined building, which helped pay for repair costs. Many of these visitors also generously donated money for the victim's funerals.

Starting just two days after the catastrophe, a coroner's inquest began to investigate the cause of the accident and to determine liability. The coroner's jury visited the brewery site and flooded neighborhood, viewed the bodies of victims, and interviewed dozens of witnesses, rescuers, and party participants. After a month, the jury rendered its verdict. The incident had been an "Act of God" and that the victims had met their deaths "by casualty, accidentally, and by misfortune". Because of this finding, no compensation was paid to the families of the deceased or to those who had lost their homes and possessions.

Not only did the brewery escape paying damages to the destitute victims, it applied for and received a waiver from the British Parliament for excise taxes it had already paid on the thousands of barrels of beer it lost in the flood. Though the brewery was nearly bankrupted by the incident, it did survive and was rebuilt. The Meux family brewery later went through several mergers before finally being snapped up by the Allied Breweries conglomerate (now the Carlsberg Group). The infamous building was demolished in 1922, and the Dominion Theater was erected and still stands on that site.

Tonight, drink a toast to the memory of those who died in the Great London Beer Flood of 1814, who were victims of man's desire for flavorful well-aged porter.

Celebrate National Homebrew Day on May 4, 2024

with the

Great Northern Brewers Club

and

Arctic Brewing Supply!



8401 Sandlewood Place



In 1988, May 7 was announced before Congress as National Homebrew Day, and every year, the first Saturday in May recognizes this day!

Tentative Schedule: 10am to 4pm

10:15 am - Beer Toast

10:30 am – Batch #1 & #2

1:00 pm – Batch #3 & #4 (including the Beginner Batch)

We will probably be doing some beers and a cider and/or seltzer.

RSVP : President@greatnorthernbrewers.org Let us know if you would like to: **LEAD** a brew batch, **JOIN** a brew batch, **LEARN** to brew, or **DROP-IN** for the toast and/or support. Also if there is someone you would like to brew with. Drop in OK if you have not RSVP'd

What to bring: brew pot, brewing supplies, snack/pot-luck, and if weather is nasty – canopies appreciated.

If you have never made a beer, or a novice... please join! ... it is fun and you can learn more about brewing.

...May the 4th be with you!

Talkeetna Beer Trippin' 2024 Schedule of Events

Denali Brewpub (Main St/Downtown.) Hours: 12pm-9pm for food. Drinks till 10pm on Fri. & Sat.

Spur Road Tasting Room & Brewery (Mile 2): 12pm-8pm

Golden Carboy Homebrew Contest submissions

@ Denali Brewpub Beer Hall (Main St.)

Friday night drop off only: 6pm-9pm, Please contact Mike at (907) 250-4818 if alternate arrangements for entry drop-off need to be made.

Wort Share Drop off! Drop-off in Anchorage before Monday, April 8th.

Drop off your wort share containers/kegs (5 gal) at Mike Cragen's house: 3912 Dandelion Wine Circle. NO GLASS. Please leave a small amount of sanitizer in container – they will do a rinse. Denali Brewing Company (DBC) will pick these up and bring to Talkeetna. Contact Mike for more details. (907) 250-4818.

Keg and Growler fill drop offs @ Denali Brewpub & Spur Rd. Tasting Room

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, April 12th & 13th

Drop off your kegs and growlers, let us know what you want in them and we'll have them cleaned, filled and ready to take home on Sunday. Keg pick-up will be at Spur Rd. Regardless of where you dropped them off.

Weekend Schedule:

Friday, April 12th

- 6pm - 9pm - Drop off entries for the Golden Carboy Homebrew Competition at Denali Brewpub (Downtown Talkeetna). Please contact Mike at 907-250-4818 if alternate arrangements for entry drop-off need to be made. Entries close at 9pm Friday night.
- 6pm - 9pm - Meet and Greet! Bottle share at the Denali Brewpub (Downtown)

Saturday, April 13th

- 10am - Breakfast! Club Breakfast at the Swiss Inn (F Street in East Talkeetna)
- 10am-12 - Golden Carboy Judging at Denali Brewpub (Downtown). If interested in judging let Justin know at (402) 639-4535.
- 12:00 - 2:00pm - Bonfire at the Cragen Yurt
- 2:00 - 4pm - Tequila Discussion - Process and Tasting w/ Sassan at Talkeetna Alaskan Lodge. \$20 per person. Free Shuttle from Denali Brewpub to lodge and back.
- 4 - 6pm - Beer & games at the Talkeetna Inn (Teepee/Downtown)

Saturday Continued...

- 6pm - Dinner at Denali Brewpub. No reservations necessary.
- 6:30ish - Golden Carboy Winner announcement at Denali Brewpub (Downtown)

- Saturday Night - Drinks and music with friends at The Fairview!

Sunday, April 14th

- 10am - Breakfast! Club Breakfast at The Latitude 62. No reservations needed

- Noon - 2pm - Tours of Denali Brewery (Mile 2 of the Spur Rd.)

- Noon - 3pm - Pick-up your wort at the Brewery (Mile 2 of the Spur Rd.)

- Drive home safely!

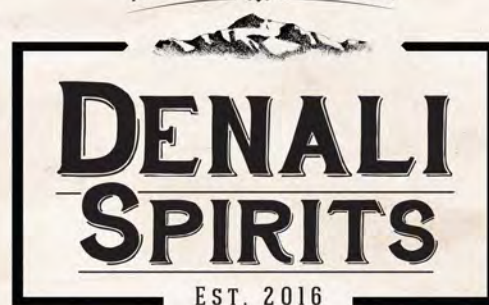
GNBC members are encouraged to take our wort home and make delicious beer. Everyone will be given the same starter wort. Then, at the May GNBC meeting, everyone can bring their finished beers for a taste and share.



Tequila Discussion

PROCESS & TASTING WITH DENALI SPIRITS' HEAD DISTILLER SASSAN MOSSANEN AT THE TALKEETNA ALASKAN LODGE.

TALKEETNA, ALASKA



SATURDAY APRIL 13TH FROM 2:00PM-4:00PM. \$20 PER PERSON.

FREE SHUTTLE FROM DENALI BREWPUB TO LODGE AND BACK.

PLEASE RSVP, SPACE IS LIMITED. TO RSVP- CALL DENALI BREWING OFFICE AND LEAVE A MESSAGE: (907) 733-2540



ABOUT:

Discussion include 3/4 oz sample of Denali Spirits:

Blanco Agave Spirit

Reposado Agave Spirit

Rye Barrel Aged Agave Spirit

Alder Smoked Whiskey Barrel Aged Agave Spirit

Panel conversation will have an overview of organoleptic attributes imparted on agave spirits and tequila from piña to glass.

McCarthy Brew-Venture!

Mark your calendars for the first GNBC Brew-venture to McCarthy on Labor Day weekend!

In the words of Warren Miller, "If you don't do it this year, you'll be a year older when you do!"

WHEN: Friday, Aug. 30 - Monday, Sept. 2

WHERE: McCarthy, Alaska, the gateway town to Wrangell - St. Elias National Park

WHAT: Explore America's largest National Park during the day, and relax with brews, great food and live music in the evenings.



Bob and Marie Logan slides, Archives and Special Collections, Consortium Library, University of Alaska Anchorage.

Itinerary

Friday: arrival and drinks at The Potato or the Saloon.

Saturday: spend the day exploring Kennicott, or go for a hike on the Root Glacier. In the evening, McCarthy Lodge will host us for a beer dinner (\$65+ per person). Please text Maria Benner if you are interested in attending the beer dinner: 907-351-4347. The room seats 40 people max.

Sunday afternoon: Maria and Scott will host the club at their cabin for a potluck and bottle share.

Monday: departure

Lodging

The owner of McCarthy Lodge, Neil Darish, has extended a special invitation to GNBC members for this adventure.

Accommodations: Ma Johnson's Hotel - 50% OFF from Friday, Aug. 30 through Monday, Sept. 2.

Hotel bookings will be by phone, or e-mail: 907-202-6717, Neil.Darish@McCarthyLodge.com rather than through the website so Neil can provide the discount.

Here are additional notes from Neil about the hotel rates:

We can override the 2-night minimum for club members that only can do 1 night.

First Night = \$165 for 1 or 2 people sharing a room, no taxes, includes breakfast.

Two Nights = \$329 for 1 or 2 people sharing a room, no taxes, includes breakfast.

For Club members who can be there Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights: third night for just \$90 per room (includes breakfast at the Salmon & Bear Restaurant across the street).

There are many other lodging options available in McCarthy and in Kennicott, including lodges, AirBnBs, and campgrounds. This website has some good resources: <https://www.wrangells.org/about-the-wmc-1-1>

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Maria Benner (907) 351-4347, mariabenner@outlook.com

Present your GNBC card at these suppliers for a members-only discount. See each store for details.



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