



THE

# Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB

## April 2025

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### Next Regular Meeting

April 15, 2025  
49th State Barrel Room

GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB  
GNBC WEBSITE  
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Contact information via our website

## The Prez Sez

By Elizabeth "Liz" Greer

The sun is out! The snow is disappearing! Spring is here! All the spring events are coming up so get ready.

One of my favorites is Beer Trippin in Talkeetna. So much fun. A little different every year so check out the plans for this year. You WILL have fun and beer! Also – a couple wort shares. These are fun and an opportunity for brewers of all levels to create a concoction from the same base wort.

- April 4 & 5 Turnagain Tartside Wort Share. More information in this newsletter
- April 11-13: Beer Trippin' Talkeetna with Denali Brewing. Denali Wort Share too! More information in this newsletter.
- April 15: Our annual Gear Swap event – bring stuff you don't need, take home stuff you would like!
- May 3: National Homebrew Day and Group Brews at Arctic brewing
- June 20-22: - Camp out at trail River, Moose Pass Area
- July 4: Club Float in the Talkeetna July 4<sup>th</sup> Parade

Here are the suggested meeting support roles – snacks are always welcome!

Month	Last Name A-J	Last Name K-P	Last Name Q-Z
April	Food	Setup	Cleanup
May	Setup	Cleanup	Food

If you have thoughts on some fun activities, please let me or one of the officers know. More information on the club and events on the Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/Gnbc1/> & website  
<https://greatnorthernbrewers.org/>

-Cheers

## Secretary's Corner

*By Gwen Higgins*

The theme of the March meeting was brewing with cherries, and the club welcomed Glacier Brewhouse head brewer, Drew Weber, to give a talk on the subject. Glacier has a history of releasing cherry beers, such as its Cherry Ale, Chocolate Cherry Stout, and Cherry XXX. Drew discussed the varieties of cherries they use in their beers, including both tart and sweet cherries. He also talked about the benefits of brewing with cherries in various forms, like puree, juice, and frozen, if you don't want to deal with pitting pounds of fresh fruit.



Another topic of discussion was when to add the cherries during the brewing process to achieve the desired result, whether post-fermentation to add back some sweetness, or during fermentation for a drier finish. Adding fruit during the boil can add more of a cooked fruit or jammy character to the beer, but he cautioned that the beer can turn to actual jam if the pectin in the fruit is allowed to develop. Drew stressed that the same advice for brewing with cherries can be applied to pretty much any fruit, though some fruit flavors come through in beer better than other.

To accompany the presentation, meeting attendees brought a variety of homebrewed cherry beers, ciders, and meads, as well as commercial examples of beers brewed with cherries. Thanks to Drew for the informative talk, as well as everyone who brought beer to share.

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## Membership Report

*By Steve Johnson*

For membership year 2024-2025, our club raised dues for the first time since 2013. For memberships that included a spouse or partner in the same household, dues increased from \$30 to \$50. For single members, dues remained unchanged at \$30. The Board of Directors increased dues for two-person memberships in part because of the per member fee of the club's alcohol liability insurance.

The purpose of this column is to compare membership numbers and income for the prior year and the current year. Though the subject may seem more suited to a board meeting than the club newsletter, the data are easier to present in print than in the social atmosphere of the board meeting.

## Membership Year, October 1 to March 28th

	Single annual members	Dual annual members	Dues, gross, single member	Dues, gross, dual member	Total gross dues	Total annual members	Life members	Total members
2023 - 2024	25 (25 members)	59 (118 members)	\$750	\$1770	\$2520	143	39	182
2024 - 2025	38 (38 members)	33 (66 members)	\$1140	\$1650	\$2790	104	39	143

As summarized in the chart above, last year, on March 28th, 2024, the club had 143 annual members and 39 life members, 182 members in all. This year, on March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025, the club had 103 annual members and 39 life members: 143 members in all. The club now has 39 fewer annual members than last year.

Despite the decrease in the number of annual members, total dues increased by \$270. Depending on the per member cost of alcohol liability insurance, assessed on the first of July each year, the decrease in the number of members should lower our annual cost of insurance by about \$200.

The increase in dues for two-person memberships helps explain the decrease in annual members: Of the thirty-two annual memberships that did not renew for 2024-2025, twenty had two names on the membership record. For 2024-2025, ten annual members, who formerly listed a spouse/partner, renewed at the single rate of \$30.

Because of year to year turnover in club memberships, I find it difficult to draw conclusions from data for two years. Despite that difficulty, the data show that the dues increase for two-person memberships was successful in increasing dues income. The decrease in the number of annual members should also lower the club's insurance bill for the year.

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## Beer and Brewing in Australia

*By Steve Johnson*

"Beer tour" was not the theme of my recent travel to Australia. The trip was organized around a family wedding in Western Australia, near Perth, and a family oriented four-day journey on the Indian Pacific Railroad, starting in Perth and ending in Sidney. Prior to setting off, I did not engage in the local beer research usually undertaken before travel. My mistake!

Nonetheless, I did drink, read, and think about beer and brewing during those 24 days of travel. Here are some notes.



Beer is heavily taxed in Australia. The tax increases with ABV and the resulting beer, local or imported, is expensive, though not as expensive as distilled beverages. Published sources suggested that only Finland and Norway have higher beer and liquor taxes.

In contrast, wine is taxed at a much lower rate under the Wine Enhancement Tax (WET), a flat tax based on volume, designed to support Australia's vast wine making sector via rebates to local producers from WET funds.

ABV based taxes probably account for the low alcohol brews-- 3.5, 4.0 and 4.2 per cent—that seem to be more common than in the United States, though higher alcohol beers are widely available. Although I was pleased to see and sample styles uncommon in the U.S. --bitters, milds and dark milds-- stores were mostly well stocked with familiar styles seen here in liquor stores in Anchorage-- IPAs, double IPAs, Hazy IPAs, Malted IPAs, as well as hard seltzers, low carb lagers, and so on.

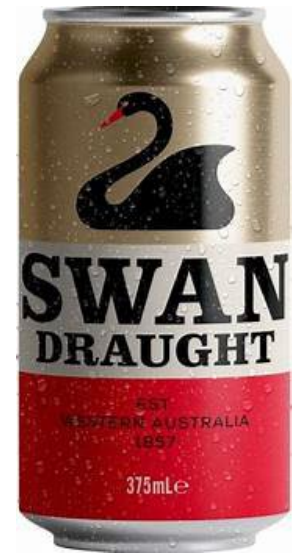
Alcoholic ginger beer, as well as the non-alcoholic variety, seemed available everywhere that beer was sold or served. At least some of the hard ginger beer uses alcohol derived from wine and hence is taxed as wine rather than beer. A six per cent ginger beer tasted like non-alcoholic ginger beer hardened with a neutral spirit. That was disappointing.

Despite the appearance of high prices for beer and other products and services, the then current exchange rate-- about 65 cents US for an Australian dollar-- reminded me that Australia was a bargain in February 2025. Posted prices, for goods and services, include the alcohol taxes and the 10 per cent Goods and Services Tax. And there is no tipping—restaurant and other hospitality workers are said to be paid a living wage. Family friends strongly discourage us from leaving tips.

Before my visit to Australia, my knowledge of Australian brewing was largely limited to the role of Australian home brewers in pioneering the brew in a bag

style. During my visit, I learned that only Coopers is a major Australian owned brewery. Most local breweries, including Little Creatures, are owned by larger companies which in turn are foreign owned. Since my return home, I also learned that, had I done research in advance, I might have toured the Little Creatures brewery in Fremantle and, later in the trip, had a meal at Felons Brewery on the beach in Manly, not far from the nearby 4 Pines location that was closed --at noon on a Friday!--when we visited.

Here's to timely research—and beer where we find it.



# Upcoming Competitions for 2025

*By Ira Edwards*

Hi All from your new GNBC Veep! I am a 25+ year member and former Prez and just about every other board position. I was originally elected to the VP slot before I even joined the club officially, and only found out when John Trap (the Prez) showed me the newsletter and congratulated me. I laughed and said I didn't remember running and was going to pay my dues in person that week at the club meeting. The previous meeting when the elections happened I was in Nikiski talking apples and pressing juice at an orchard down there. John said "I thought someone asked you..." Nope. LOL. This time around, I actually agreed AHEAD OF TIME to work the VP Slot with Liz and put some focus on competitions and judging within the club. Since Covid there has been a marked downturn in comp entries. I can completely understand as I moved to Palmer and have been working on my new home and soon to be orchard. My brewing time has been SUUUUPER limited as a result.



Homebrewing competitions are not just about winning. I think the best part is getting honest feedback on your beverages. And as a judge who brews I think it is also awesome to be able to judge unique recipes to keep up to date with what is happening in the brewing community and perhaps work that into my future brews. I personally like beers, meads and Ciders that don't really fit into any exact BJCP (Beer Judge Certification Program) style and I use to Carpet bomb competitions and enter the same beer in multiple categories just to see where it fit best. I have also won several medals at the national homebrewing competition after winning the regional qualifications in those categories. I am also a National level BJCP judge for the last 20+ years and I want to work with the club on getting some judging educational programs going again and perhaps run some exams and get people certified as well. Please contact me on your interest in BJCP classes and exams...

Below is a list I have started with upcoming competitions that you can start brewing for. I encourage you to participate and learn more about the brewing process as well as the judging process.

## **American Homebrewers Association - National Homebrew Competition.**

<https://www.homebrewersassociation.org/national-homebrew-competition/>

This event is happening right now, so it is a little late to get rolling for this year, but I encourage you to look at this event and plan for next year. GNBC has participated in judging the regional event a few times in the past and we have had many great judges travel up here to help.

## **Turnagain Brewing Tartside Challenge**

Wort pick up at Turnagain Brewing 4/4 5-7 pm and 4/5 3-5 pm. Ferment and age the beer anyway you want and then it will get to be judged at Leff Loughrey's July 15 Club BBQ

## **Denali Brewing-Golden Carboy**

April 11-13 Beer Trippin Talkeetna including GOLDEN CARBOY Homebrew competition. See the short announcement in the April 2025 newsletter.

## **Southeast BeerFest**

May 23-24 in Haines. For more than 30 years they have had a homebrew competition alongside the beerfest. More details to come. <https://seakfair.org/beerfest/>



### **Alaska State Fair Homebrewing Competition**

Aug 9-10 probable judging dates. There is a new beverage administrator at the fair and I will work with them to ensure that this will be a BJCP registered event so you can get judging experience points.

### **Valdez Oktoberfest Homebrew Competition**

Will occur during the festival September 19-20. More details to come soon.

<https://www.facebook.com/valdezoktoberfest/>

### **Big Fish Early**

December 2025 at Humpy's/Sub Zero. This is one of GNBC's oldest events and usually resulted in the winning beer being brewed by Midnight Sun Brewing Co. This will be a BJCP registered event so you can get judging experience points. I intend to run this competition. More details to come soon.

There are sometimes other competitions that come up and I will let the club know as plans develop.

Cheers all!

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## **Enter the Turnagain Brewing Tartside Challenge!**

*By Gwen Higgins (based on information from Ted Rosenzweig)*

Turnagain Brewing is once again partnering with GNBC to sponsor the Tartside Challenge. The brewery provides entrants with a gallon of the base they use for many of their sour beers to customize as creatively (and deliciously) as possible. The provision of the sour base and small batch size makes this a great competition for those just getting into brewing or competing.



### **How to Enter:**

1. Pick up entry form when you pick up your wort.
2. Come by Turnagain April 4, 5-7 pm or April 5, 3-5 pm to pick up your wort.

### **Judging:**

Sample everyone's creations and vote for your favorite at the annual club BBQ at Jeff Loughrey's house in July, date TBD. Turnagain will brew the winning beer, or as close to it as possible, given the larger scale.

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# Talkeetna Beer Trippin' – Golden Carboy Homebrew Competition

*By Ira Edwards*

Denali Brewing Co. will be having their Golden Carboy Homebrew Competition during this fun weekend. The winner of the Golden Carboy will help DBC brew a beer/cider for next year's Beer Trippin' weekend. This is assuming that it is commercially feasible to brew said beverage. :-)

Get those brews ready for this fantastic competition. This is not a BJCP competition so no need for follow those guidelines, but we will use the guidelines to give you the very best evaluation of your beverage. We need three 12oz bottles or an equivalent amount of beer/cider. You do not need to attend Beer Trippin' personally to enter this competition. There are three ways to enter your beers/ciders:



- Bring them to the Denali Brewpub Brew Hall (Main St) from 6pm-9pm on Friday, April 11th.
- Bring them to Arctic Brewing supply at 8401 Sandlewood Pl, Anchorage, AK 99507 up until closing on Thursday April 10.
- Bring them to Mike Cragen's house on or before, Monday, April 7<sup>th</sup>. Contact Mike at 907-250-4818 for arrangements.

Your entries need to be in a 6 pack holder and have your name and base beer or cider style on them as well as any special ingredients that you want evaluated.

The judging will take place starting at 10am at the Denali Brewpub Brew Hall. Judges are needed. Experience is not needed and new judges will gain experience that will help evaluate your friend's beverages and possibly ways to improve your own brewing.

Denali has great events planned and some noteworthy opportunities. The tentative schedule for the weekend is also in this newsletter, with minor changes a possibility.

## Beer Trippin' 2025

*By Mike Cragen*

Beer Trippin' in Talkeetna is back on April 11-13! 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. This is not a BJCP competition so no need to follow those guidelines. We need three 12oz bottles or an equivalent amount of beer/cider. You do not need to attend Beer Trippin' personally to enter this competition. There are 2 ways to enter your beers/ciders. First, you can bring them to the Denali Brewpub Brew Hall (Main St) from 6pm-9pm on Friday, April 11<sup>th</sup>. The second way is to bring them to Mike Cragen's house on or before, Monday, April 7<sup>th</sup>. Contact Mike at 907-250-4818 for arrangements.



Denali has great events planned and some noteworthy opportunities. A schedule of events is coming soon. This is a family-friendly event. Bring the wife, husband, kids, dogs, and pups – 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. Consider staying at the Talkeetna Alaskan Lodge who have offered us a 30% discount for the weekend. Just book online with the promo code: SPRING. They've been generous enough to offer shuttle rides (no additional charge) between downtown and the Lodge during the Beer Trippin' weekend.

DBC is once again providing up to 10 gallons of wort 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 Tuesday, May 20<sup>th</sup> GNBC meeting – location 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](mailto:mikecragen@yahoo.com) Kegs (no glass carboys) must be brought to Mike's house on or before Monday, April 7<sup>th</sup>. Again, contact Mike at 907-250-4818 for alternate arrangements.



There's a lot of interest in Beer Trippin' 2025! If you have any questions, please contact Mike at the number listed above. We are greatly looking forward to seeing longtime members as well as new beer enthusiasts!

Cheers,

Mike

**DENALI BREWING &  
GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB PRESENT:**





**• BEER TRIPPIN' WEEKEND 2025 •  
• Golden Carboy Homebrew Competition •  
• Talkeetna, AK - April 11th, 12th, & 13th •**

This year at Beer Trippin Denali will be adding a little something in addition to beer ... A Bourbon tasting! See fly below. Tickets at

[https://www.opentable.com/booking/experiences-availability?rid=1287889&restref=1287889&experienceId=451243&utm\\_source=opentable&utm\\_medium=tm\\_s\\_email&utm\\_campaign=shared](https://www.opentable.com/booking/experiences-availability?rid=1287889&restref=1287889&experienceId=451243&utm_source=opentable&utm_medium=tm_s_email&utm_campaign=shared)

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2:00PM-4:00PM

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**\$25** FOOD ONLY

**\$45** FOR FOOD & DRINKS

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- JOIN US AFTERWARD ON THE TALKEETNA LODGE DECK FOR GAMES AND SOCIALIZING

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