



THE

# Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB

## May 2025

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### Next Regular Meeting

May 20, 2025  
TBD

GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB

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Contact information via our website

## The Prez Sez

By Elizabeth "Liz" Greer

Wow a lot has happened since our last Newsletter, including Beer tripping in Talkeetna Great fun, people, and weather! No slowing down either. Beers from the Denali Wort Share bubbling – one a little too much – and getting ready to fill a few more carboys at our Group Brew Saturday May 3! Several fun events coming up to put on your calendars. More info on several of these in the Newsletter

- May 20<sup>th</sup> – Denali Wort Share Share – Location Pending
- June 7 – GNBC Ladies Brewbie's Run for Women
- **June 19-22: - Camp out at Trail River, Moose Pass Area**
- July 4: Club Float in the Talkeetna July 4<sup>th</sup> Parade
- July 15: BBQ and Tartside Challenge
- August: State Fair Competition and Judging

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!**

Denali from  
the deck of  
the  
Talkeetna  
Lodge after  
Bourbon  
Tasting

## Gear Swap Natter

*By Steve Johnson*

Our April 2025 meeting featured the club's second annual Gear Swap and the formerly standalone Book Swap. Sipping a beer, my mind meanders from the actual objects at the swaps to the associations they carry for me.

In 2024 I brought to Gear Swap one corny keg and a book or two and went home with a half barrel boiler. At last year's Big Brew, Peter Dohm named that half barrel Jaws, because of the ragged hole in the top of the half barrel.

Despite the ragged opening and the danger posed to hop sacks and brew in a bag setups, that half barrel boiler appealed to me. It included a thermometer, a feature lacking in the half barrel I have been using for the last nine years. A feature lacking despite that I own a thermometer that could be installed...if I had the correct drill bit and knew how to drill stainless steel, which becomes harder as the steel becomes hotter and is best drilled while cooled by a stream of water.



If my older half barrel acquires a hole suitable for a thermometer, via machine shop skilled in such matters, next April Jaws may return to Gear Swap. Others may then wonder who cut or commissioned the ragged hole in that half barrel. Meantime, Jaws made a return appearance at the Big Brew at Arctic Brewing Supply on May 3rd.

To the 2025 Gear Swap, I brought another corny keg, reducing my keg holdings to match my needs. But I did not bring home another steel item, heavy or light. My sole hardware disappointment was in missing out on a Phil's Filler, a patented all metal bottle filler long out of production, superior to any other manual bottle filler I have used. My Phil's Filler fell apart over a decade ago. I recognized another Phil's Filler in a large carton of the assorted brewers jetsam. That carton went to a new home well north of Anchorage. I hope the new owner recognizes and appreciates the rare bottle filler now in his possession.



As in 2024, I was disappointed not to find a copy of Leon Kania's book *The Alaskan Bootlegger's Bible: Makin' Beer, Wine, Liqueurs and Moonshine Whiskey*, second edition published in 2019. Though I have browsed that book in a library, and the book is still in print, evidently I don't want it enough to buy it. What I would really like, even more than a free copy of the book, is to talk to someone who knew the author, who died in 2013

and is buried at Ft. Richardson. Was Leon Kania only a diligent compiler of information? Had he actually done much of what he wrote about? That information would be worthy of an article. And certainly a beer or two.

By the end of this year's swap, most of the books and magazines were gone. Apparently no one else wanted the July-August 1992 issue of The New Brewer, so I took it home. In an article on Full Sail Brewing, I learned that the founder of Wyeast Laboratories, Dave Logsdon, was one of the four original employees of Full Sail when it was founded as Hood River Brewing in 1987. If not for Gear Swap, I would likely never have known that.

If Gear Swap is held next year, I'll be back, likely with more gear to swap. Perhaps some books, too.

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## Spring is in the air, for sure this time...

*by Ira Edwards*

Guess what? Spring is here again in Alaska, and it is SOOOO much nicer than last year. This means that the time to plant the gardens flower beds. All of our wonderful fruits that we use for eating and brewing will start flowering and begin to provide us with their bounty again this summer and fall. This load of goodies includes the various things you might have growing in the dark corners of your yard like strawberries, gooseberries, currants and raspberries. Then we move onto the tree fruits that grow well here like apples, sour cherries, and pears. Now is the time to take care of your plants to make sure they set the fruit to grow for the summer. Don't over fertilize them after they start flowering. Make sure that they don't dry out and kill the flowers, and try to keep the weeds down at least a little bit (don't get too anal on me here...)

If you don't have your own place or space to grow these goodies, fear not. There are countless people around town that use fruiting trees and shrubs ("Bring Me A Shrubbery!!!") as ornamental decoration and these people have no intention of using the fruit. Try to find the owner, office, building, or property manager for the place in question and just ask if you might grab the fruit later. Make sure to tell these folks that you will not damage anything and point out a side benefit that they won't have to clean up the fallen fruit. Crab apples are sometimes a good item to blend into the bulk juice, but we are looking for real apples here, even if they are as small as golf balls or tennis balls.

I'm sure that some of you know that I have a passion for apples and making cider. This is not just for making fresh juice, but for making the fermented cider that makes a great drink. The juice I've been blending seems to make both a good cider and a wonderful cyser (apple mead). I am asking all of you to keep your eyes out this month for the blooming fruit trees. I have all the equipment to grind and press out the juice of these apples, pears, and cherries, so I am willing to let GNBC members come over and make some more juice later this year. At this time, it should be part way through hunting season, so I bet I'll be able to fire up the grill while making juice. Last year was a bit of a bust for fruit production, but I have had several folks helping out the last few years and I hope to have more this year. Find ways to ask if the tree owners use the fruit, and if you don't care about apples at all, just let me know about the trees and I'll ask the owners myself. Often



all it takes is the promise to clean up the yard and rake up all of leaves after you're done picking. Most people really do not use their apples.

Keep your eyes open and let's hope that some more people in the GNBC can get into one of the simpler aspects of brewing: cider making. This is not to say that you cannot get all technical about it, but I like to just clean it up, let the juice ferment naturally (works 95% of the time) and blend later. Take care and let me know if you have any questions about cider making. I am constantly re-working my equipment and methodology and methodology and always have a drinkable, if not damn good, cider around the place.

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## Club Clothes!

You can now order GNBC Hoodies and Tee Shirts online! The Teespring link has been updated and is ready to roll. Nice Looking Blue Recommended, or pink for the Brewbies Run for Women! Here is the link to use:

<https://my-store-59c1d0.creator-spring.com/listing/greatnorthernbrewersclubshirt>



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## Old San Juan, Bend, and the Himalayas

When Meagan and Ben Wilson lived in Alaska, they were GNBC members. Now Outside, they occasionally post on their long running beer blog, The Hoppy Half Pint, [hoppyhalfpint.com](http://hoppyhalfpint.com). Two recent posts reward a visit to their site, whether or not you are planning to travel to San Juan or to Bend. Or the Himalayas.



Cervecería del Callejón – Old San Juan “Cervecería del Callejón has a local, community focus. The owner is a proficient brewer, creating clean beers that can be fermented at warm temps.” Meagan and Ben visited during the recent, island-wide power failure in Puerto Rico. The brewer uses several Kveik yeasts and uses only natural carbonation in the keg.

Dubbel header – Monkless vs Rochefort “The problem I have with Belgian beers is that they’re strong, and delicious. For a city of not-quite 108 thousand people, Bend has a lot...”

For the Himalayas, read on at [hoppyhalfpint.com](http://hoppyhalfpint.com).

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## Upcoming Competitions for 2025

*By Ira Edwards*

*Extract from the April 2025 Article:*

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.

### **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.

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## Beer Trippin' 2025 - Recap

*By Mike Cragen*

The weekend was a great combination of events, friends, fun, sun, and . . . BEER! Before I get into those details, first a sincere 'thank you' to Sassan and all the great folks at Denali Brewing Company! Once again, they went out of their way to make us feel welcome and provide an amazing opportunity for all of our members.

Denali Brewing Co. hosted the Golden Carboy Homebrew Competition.

Here are the results:

Golden Carboy – Mike Cragen – Kölsch

Best of Show – Sam Shea –

2nd overall

3rd overall –

GNBC members received xxx gallons of wort from DBC. This year

Again, thank you so much to all the good people at Denali Brewing Company and Talkeetna as a whole. We had a fantastic time and couldn't have asked for better weather, better friends, or better beer!











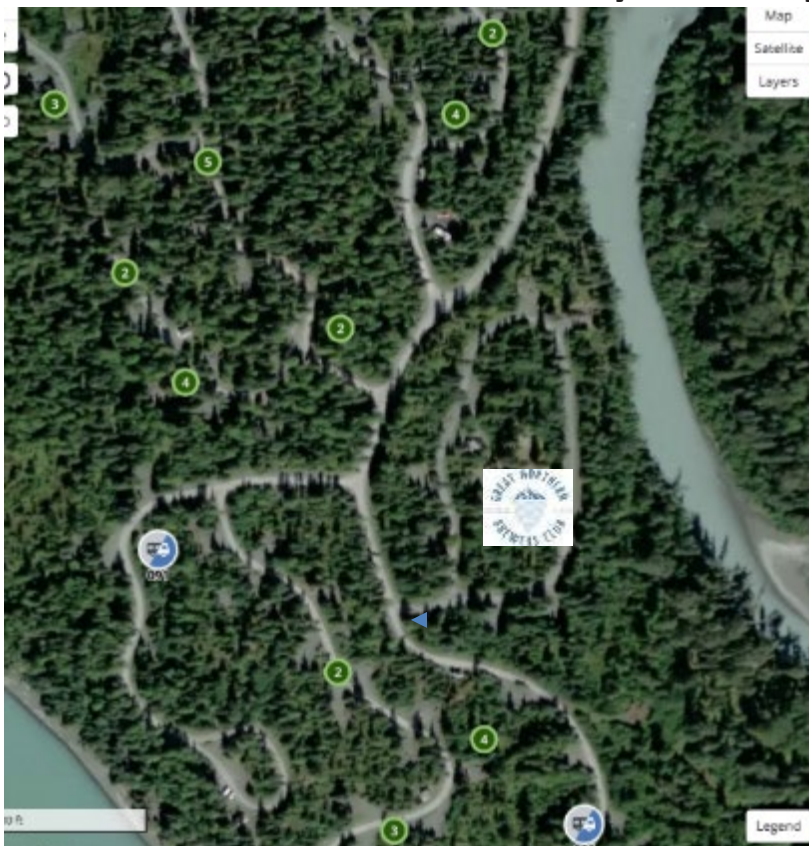






## Great Northern Brewers Club - Campout 2025 Trail River Campground

Thursday, June 19 @ 4pm – Sunday, June 22 @ 11am  
Potluck Party Saturday at 6pm (ish)



No charge for GNBC members and guests.

What to Bring: Pretty much everything and anything:

R.V.s, campers, tents, canopies, bikes, boats, games, food, something for the Saturday Potluck Party, and of course BEER!

There is a shared restroom

Pets are welcome as long as they are friendly and leashed if needed.



## In-Person Race Day Details for June 7, 2025 .....or you can run on your own



The Great Northern Brewer's Club has been supporting this event for many years. The gals do the run and guys sometimes support us by meeting on this running route with some libations!

### Distances

5-mile timed & untimed

1-mile untimed

Start/finish: UAA Campus near Cuddy Quad 3400 Seawolf Dr. Anchorage 99508

For more information or to sign up go to: <https://www.akrfw.org/>

Be sure sign up for team **BREWBIES GNBC**

### *About the Alaska Run for Women*

#### *Mission Statement*

*"To raise money for and awareness of breast cancer and women's health, and to showcase the talents of Alaska's women athletes."*

*This is accomplished through: an annual women's run/walk event that serves as a vehicle for fundraising, participation, awareness and competition, and grant making to organizations concerned with breast cancer research, education, outreach, prevention and early detection*





# Alaska State Fair 2025 Craft Beverages Competition



Get ready for the 2025 State Fair Craft Beverage Competition!

This year's event will include many Divisions and Classes to enter. There are also Divisions for Non- Alcoholic Beverages and Label Competition. Professionals are also encouraged to enter in a designated Sub-Category.

Entries can be:

- Dropped off at the Fairgrounds – Hoskins Building on **Friday, August 1, or Saturday, August 2**, from 11 am – 7 pm.
- Dropped off at Arctic Brewing Supply in Anchorage, July 16- 31 by 5pm.
- Mailed in. Mailing entries is highly encouraged.

*The Beer Competition Judging Sessions will be held on **Friday/Saturday August 8 & 9 pm at the Fairgrounds**. Judges and “TAPS Certified” Stewards, especially those with experience, are needed. Please consider supporting this event and helping out; contact the Competition Superintendent.*

*Additional Information:* <https://www.alaskastatefair.org/site/exhibit/craft-beverages-2025/>

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