



THE

# Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB

## August 2025

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September 16, 2025

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Contact information via our website

## The Prez Sez

By Elizabeth "Liz" Greer

I hope you are all having a fun summer! August is here and the fireweed is in bloom. That means fall is soon to follow. But before the days get dark and chilly, a few more fun events. I am off to Ninilchik for Salmonfest Music weekend. Last year, our friends from the Kenai Peninsula Brewing and Tasting Society had a very nice bottle share Saturday afternoon. I hope to join again with home brews and stash craft beers.

A big event in August is the State Fair Aug. If you can help judge or Steward at the State Fair Craft Beverage competition Friday Aug 8 @6pm or Saturday Aug 9 @10am, please contact the Competition Superintendent: Vanessa Willis [akfaircraftbeverages@gmail.com](mailto:akfaircraftbeverages@gmail.com). Several of the club members have already signed up to help...and hopefully, you can make it to the fair and check out the winners!

The Board is making plans for some interesting presentations at our fall meetings. No meeting in August, so use the time to do a little brewing for the fall.

Here are some of the upcoming events below to put on your calendar, with more info in the Newsletter!

**August 8, 9 - State Fair Competition and Judging**

**August 15 - Rogers Park Mini House Crawl on Friday**

**September 16 – Tuesday General Meeting - uncommon fermentations with Simone Lange from the Buzzed Beetle.**

**September 20 - Talkeetna Brewfest**

**September 20 – Valdez Oktoberfest**

**October 21 – Tuesday General Meeting – Oktoberfest Beers**

Note: the October meeting will be OKTOBERFEST themed. Consider brewing a marzen, Vienna lager or other Oktoberfest brew!

**November 18 – Tuesday General Meeting - Sours**

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: BBQ & Tartside Challenge Recap

*By Gwen Higgins*

The weather cooperated for the annual GNBC barbecue at Jeff Loughrey's house. In addition to a plethora of delicious food and beers, the event featured judging of Turnagain Brewing's Tartside Challenge. Turnagain Brewing provided participants with a gallon of their sour beer base, which they could modify however they wanted. As usual, the competition produced a variety of creative flavor combinations. Judges tasted each of the entries and ranked their top three choices on their ballots. After the votes were tallied, the top three finishers were:

**1st PLACE:** Blackberry-Lemon by Simone Lange

**2nd PLACE:** Kiwi-Blueberry by Johnathan Povelite

**3rd PLACE:** Cherry Sour by Liz Greer

Turnagain Brewing will brew a batch of Simone's Blackberry-Lemon Sour this month.

Thanks to Ted and Mary from Turnagain for sponsoring the challenge, and huge thanks to Jeff for hosting the BBQ!

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## 4th of July in Talkeetna

*By Foamy*

Howdy Campers!



Here's a shout out to all of those who contributed to the success of another fabulous display for the annual Talkeetna fourth of July Parade with a special thanks to the Lambs for the use of the trailer and to Liz Greer for providing the motive power. And, no, she used her car, she didn't drag it herself. This was a first for Mrs. Foamy and myself as in previous years we've had other commitments requiring our incredible musical talents in Willow and Anchorage. But this year, we finally made it to Talkeetna. Not an overly long parade but Talkeetna isn't overly long so I guess that makes sense. There was a group effort in the official decoration of the float with members of the GNBC, Yoder Roaders and some beer fans. I'd offer a special thanks to the

leader/coordinator but nobody wanted to fess up to being that person even for a chance of eternal fame and glory in a local newspaper, but it was still an awesome job. Some of us rode in style on the picnic table that just fit on the float savoring a bevvy of choice while passing out candy (and definitely not chucking it at small children) to an appreciative audience on a beautiful sunny day. I'm assuming that there will be pictures posted along with this quick note but the ones that the voices in my head took were great!

I am looking forward to seeing what next year's will look like!



## Reading About Beer & Brewing

*By Steve Johnson*

### **Is Sierra Nevada Pale Ale really an example of Extra Special Bitters? Why did SNPA receive a World Beer Cup award in that category?**

A May entry in the [Beervana blog](#) lays out some facts and links to learned discussions in [Vinepair](#). Old news to many: Historically, in England, bitters was a name given to beer distributed in kegs and sold on draft. That beer was known as pale ale when bottled for distribution and sale. Bitters and best bitters were the normal categories in England, differentiated by alcohol content. Fullers invented Extra Special Bitters and trademarked the name for a higher alcohol product.

In the US, new products for the craft beer market resulted in more and more categories and changes in standards in the Brewers Association's list of styles. When I compared the 2024 and earlier style descriptions for American Pale Ale (and Strong American pale ale), the 2024 parenthetical description of "fruity" character stands out: "(berry, tropical, stone fruit, and other)". My skimming of the recent guidelines shows the parenthetical addition first appeared in the 2017 guidelines.

Sierra Nevada Pale Ale might be the same beer that it was forty years ago, but hop varieties and the Brewers Association guidelines have changed. And maybe Sierra Nevada Pale Ale really was an ESB forty years ago, even though the folks who invented ESB thought it didn't fit the category.

### **Hop Oils, Kalsec, Bells Brewery, and One Wort Stream: Five Distinct Beers**

Until recently, I associated brewing supplier Kalsec (founded as Kalamazoo Spice Extraction Company) only with the skunk proof hop oil in clear glass bottles of Miller High Life. I thought Kalsec worked strictly with the

largest brewers in the world. My perspective changed after conversation and emails with Ken Wheaton, a biking and cider buddy who worked at Kalsec before moving to Alaska 17 years ago.

Ken mentioned that the owner of Kalsec was an early investor in Bells Brewery. Larry Bell was a frequent visitor when Ken worked at Kalsec. Ken shared a [link to an interview](#) with Larry Bell on his time as a homebrewer and homebrew shop operator and his life in retirement, including his taste in beer. Though the interview appeared in a Michigan bicycling club newsletter, I think the link is worth sharing even to those who never move around on two wheels.

For those with interest in commercial brewing processes, I recommend Kalsec's articles at <https://www.kalsec.com/hop-products>, particularly by an image in the section on rapid recipe development, <https://www.kalsec.com/hop-products/insights/rapid-beer-recipe-development>. The inclusion of Gin and Tonic in the image labeled One Wort Stream: Five Distinct Beers made me wonder: How many breweries in Alaska are using Kalsec products?



Source: <https://www.kalsec.com/hop-products/insights/rapid-beer-recipe-development>.

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## Ask Foamy!

Hello Campers!

Foamy here once again. I was sincerely hoping that I'd see a few questions in the old email box. But alas and alack, no such luck. Perhaps I neglected to include an address in my last missive or perhaps no one has a question. Both seem unlikely. In the case of the former:

[askfoamy@yahoo.com](mailto:askfoamy@yahoo.com)

Or I imagine that the lovely folks managing the newsletter would be happy-ish to forward it [on](#). In the case of the latter, really? No queries, questions, demands, requests (use your thesaurus here if you wish)? OK, so I'll pick a pet peeve (yes, I have many) and rant about it.



Let's talk about samples and tasting flights at breweries. Having been on both sides of the bar, I see the merits of these. I suppose that my problem arises when someone has to discuss the merits of EVERY DAMN beer before they just bite the bullet and order something. When they want a taste of the beer before they decide if they want a flight it adds more wait time to the folks behind them that know...more or less...what *they* want. Have a little courtesy and be aware of those behind you. I suppose that I am more understanding when the beers are ridiculously expensive. If I'm coughing up \$15 for a single beer, I may want a sip first though I generally just dive in even at high prices. But when a 6oz pour is \$4 or \$5, be adventurous!

Finally, and I feel that I shouldn't have to say this...TIP the server! Unless they are rude and/or useless, they are providing a service. A vital service.

Now, do I have a solution for this horrible condition? In a perfect world; yes. Have separate lines for those that know what they want and for those that need hand holding. Remember, I said "in a perfect world". I know this isn't likely to happen due to staffing, space and whatnot but it is a dream that I have. In the meantime, how about just being aware of the person behind you.

Drink on!

Foamy



*mini*  
**HOUSE CRAWL**



Join us for a progressive evening of food, beer,  
and good cheer at the Mini House Crawl

**Friday, August 15!**

We'll be walking from house to house, enjoying a  
three-course potluck-style feast with beer in  
hand.

***APPETIZERS***

**Time:** 6:00 PM

**Where:** Scott and Maria's house - 1274 Annapolis Dr.

**Who brings what:** If your last name starts with A-H, please  
bring an appetizer to share.

Then we'll stroll about ½ mile to...

***MAIN COURSE***

**Time:** 7:15 PM

**Where:** Pat and Mark's house - 3428 Purdue St.

**Who brings what:** Last names I-P, you're on main dish duty!  
After dinner, we'll stretch our legs for 0.9 mile to...

***DESSERT***

**Time:** 8:30 PM

**Where:** Shelly's house - 1819 Rogers Park Court

**Who brings what:** Last names Q-Z, please bring dessert.

Bring your favorite homebrew or something special to share, and  
come ready for a fun evening of food, friends, and fermentation.



# 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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