



THE

# Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB

## October 2025

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October 21, 2025

## The Prez Sez

*By Elizabeth "Liz" Greer*

It was a lovely day in Anchorage as I sat outside at ABC sipping one of their new low ABV beers... perfect for a sunny cool autumn afternoon. The couple I was chatting with are headed out on cruise tomorrow ... rather risky this time of year, but I told them they are lucky as Whittier will be beautiful tomorrow. They were sampling a few of our local breweries which I had to brag about a bit and of course told them about way more than they will have time to try. Thinking about it, we are very lucky to have great local breweries, but I have to wonder if the increase in tasty commercial brews has led to the decline of home brewing. I have found myself brewing less over the last few years. I have found brewing in smaller batches (usually 2 gallons) allows me to experiment with some different styles and can be less involved than a larger batch. Still fun!

I know many of our members do not brew on a regular basis – but there is no foul in that! GNBC is not just about brewing... our mission includes:

 To educate people about beer, beer tasting, beer judging, and brewing techniques based on shared knowledge and experience

 To engage in enjoyable social activities focused on homebrewing as a common foundation

 To promote the hobby and enjoyment of homebrewing

 To promote the responsible use of alcoholic beverages

So, drink or brew or just learn! Your membership is appreciated! What will also be appreciated is to consider volunteering to be a club officer or our Board. It does not take a lot of commitment and is needed to keep the club successful. Elections are at the November meeting.

GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB

GNBC WEBSITE

[www.GreatNorthernBrewers.org](http://www.GreatNorthernBrewers.org)

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**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Nathaniel Gingery 2024-2025

Sue Krawiecki 2024-2025

Lisa Saperstein 2025-2026

Cody Baggett 2025-2026

Scott Clendaniel 2025-2026

Contact information via our website

**Upcoming events:**

- **October 21** – Tuesday General Meeting – Oktoberfest Beers
- **November 18** – Tuesday General Meeting – Sours & Elections
- **December 6** (Tentative) – Big Fish Competition
- **December TBD** – Holiday Party

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/>

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## September Meeting Was Very Interesting!

*By Elizabeth Greer*



Simone Lange, club member and owner/brewer at the Buzzed Beetle, gave a presentation on some of the curious fruits, vegetables, flowers and other oddities she ferments and uses in her brews: fermenting a-typical sugars and adjuncts.

Be sure to drop by her place, she is now brewing alcoholic concoctions and well as many delicious mocktails.

From the website:

***At Buzzed Beetle, flavor comes first. We brew everything — from Hard Seltzers, Mocktails, T-ines (tea-based NA wines) to Gourmet Sodas — we use as many organic and locally foraged ingredients as possible. No shortcuts, no "natural flavors," no weird chemicals.***

***Wildflowers like dandelions, lilacs, and fireweed are carefully harvested, de-petaled, and steeped into tea bases that give our drinks their delicate botanical backbone. Even our syrups, infusions, and garnishes are made right here — by hand — in the brewery. (Yes, we really did pit pounds of Bing cherries to make our house-made maraschinos.)***



Check out the Buzzed Beetle at 3024 Mountain View Drive, Suite 106, Anchorage <https://www.buzzedbeetle.com>

## October 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting

Oktoberfest Styles with a presentation by Andre Koehrer.

7pm at 49<sup>th</sup> State Brewing - East Barrel Room



## Membership News

*By Steve Johnson*

By the numbers: at the beginning of October, practically all of the annual memberships in the Great Northern Brewers Club have expired. This happens every year. Our year begins on October 1st and ends on September 30th, similar to other corporate bodies known to us.

On the first of July, as reported for the purposes of our alcohol liability insurance, the club had 152 members: 39 life members and 113 annual members. As of today, October 2nd at 1:00pm, the number of life members is unchanged, as far as we know, but the number of paid-up annual members is twenty-two. Last year on this date, twenty-eight annual memberships were paid up.



It is probably too early to think about trends, but whatever else should I write about? After no regular meetings, and no rent payments for meeting halls in May-August, the start of the club's fiscal year is also the second month of rent payments for the Barrel Room at 49th State for the September-November and February-April meetings. The club has also made the payment for liability insurance, another one of our larger annual expenses--\$5.52 per member per year, including the life members who paid their dues years ago.

The club's next monthly meeting is Tuesday, October 21st. From the Food / Setup / Cleanup chart on the club's website, <https://www.greatnorthernbrewers.org/club-meetings/>, I see that I am scheduled for Food. For me, that probably means baking bread or scones--something involving yeast or baking soda or baking powder and perhaps chocolate chips or lemon icing. If your last name falls in the A-J range, I hope you will also bring food to prepare us for the Oktoberfest and other beers we will enjoy over the course of the meeting.

For those with last names in the K-P range, assistance with meeting setup is requested. That usually amounts to setting up chairs and moving tables. For the Q- members, the member request is for after the meeting cleanup. In September we were finished with cleanup by 9:00, so it usually doesn't take long. All of these are ways to be involved that don't involve writing for the newsletter or finding a speaker or making a presentation.

Meanwhile, October is a great time to think about fermenting lager beer in the garage. The temperature in my enclosed carport mostly ranges between 50 and 60, depending on outside temperature and the setting on the thermostat. In my "brewing pay grade" the lower end of that 50-60 range works fine for lager yeast. The results may "taste like homebrew" but it works for me.

## Reading About Beer and Brewing and Related Topics

*By Steve Johnson*

In the category of “related topics” is Doug Vandergraft’s revised third edition of **A Guide to the Notorious Bars of Alaska**, published by Epicenter Press, 2024. Paperback \$22.95 and ebook (BN.com), \$9.95.

Doug Vandergraft is a fan of bars. His Notorious Guide seems the most complete source for long established bars in Alaska. The scope of his guide is licensed bars in operation for at least 25 years under the same or similar name and format. When bars close permanently, the author drops them from new editions of the guide, though some are mentioned in the book and are also listed on the author’s website, <https://www.notoriousbarsofak.com>. Though Vandergraft no longer lives in Alaska, he follows the bar scene closely, gathering information from state databases, individual newspaper subscriptions, newspapers.com, libraries, personal correspondence and personal travel. His website includes lists of his sources, presentations available online, and bar crawls/tours he has led. I purchased the new edition of Notorious Bars because of my interest in bars as important locations of social history and the occasional place to drink beer.

Vandergraft leads tours of bars at Alaska Historical Society and other conventions. In September, I took his bar tour in Fairbanks. The tour bus first debarked fifteen tourists at the Boatel, a bar no longer located in a floating hotel. (The floating hotel burned down.) The tour continued to the Midnight Mine, the Mecca, and International (Hotel) Bar. Our guide gave a brief history of each establishment before entering. After the second bar of the three-hour tour, I found the pace more compatible with gin on the rocks than beer. An afternoon visit would provide a quieter, less frenetic experience at many bars.

Vandergraft’s guide is not intended for, or useful for, those interested in locally brewed beer or even the beers served in long established bars. For breweries in Alaska, the sources of interest are the books by Bill Howell: *Alaska Beer: Liquid Gold in the Land of the Midnight Sun* (2015) and *Beer on the Last Frontier: The Craft Breweries of Alaska* volumes I and 2 (2012 and 2013).

For week-by-week accounts of developments in Anchorage and beyond, one can also read several years of columns by Dr. Fermento still posted on <https://www.Anchoragepress.com>. Although the site is a zombie-like relic of its former self, Fermento’s columns remain worth searching out and reading. Given the lack of a published collection of Fermento’s columns, I am tempted to compile a descriptive list of links to at least some of the articles by Dr. Fermento. Has someone already done that?

PS The Fairbanks bar tour did not visit the Humble Roots Beer Project, a brewery with a tap room and an interesting history. Adjacent to the Midnight Mine, Humble Roots began as an upstairs nano brewery **in** the Midnight Mine after the Mine’s purchase by the folks who later started Humble Roots. From the Humble Roots blog, I learned that the founders of Humble Roots undertook a year’s long process of obtaining zoning and other permissions before finally opening a standalone brewery and tap room in downtown Fairbanks. Prior to the Notorious tour, my wife and I visited Humble Roots. I found the Blonde ale quite worthwhile and the taproom welcoming. I did not taste the sours. Humble Roots has a full liquor license. Beer from Black Spruce was also on tap and bourbon and vodka were available.

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