



THE

Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB

November 2025

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November 18, 2025

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Contact information via our website

The Prez Sez

By Elizabeth "Liz" Greer

I understand I missed a good meeting in October! Darn work sometimes gets in the way of beer...er...fun. Oh well, I guess I can't drink...er...attend them all. Thanks to VP Ira Edwards for covering and Andre for the presentation.

November will hopefully be just as good. Ted Rosenzweig from Turnagain Brewing will be presenting on sour beers – and we will have our 2026 board and officer elections. I hope you will consider running for a position – especially if you have never held one before. The club needs people like you to keep it going. The Board was discussing the idea of a new position called Present Elect. That way the President can turn over duties over the course of a year with the expectation that the President elect would run for President the following year. Of course they would still need to be voted in. Creation of this office will require approval of members. Please consider.

BREWS NEEDED! Hopefully we will have a good turnout for this year's Big Fish competition. Dust off some old ferments or brew some new ones! More information in this Newsletter.

Upcoming events:

- November 7 - AK Beer Awards Ceremony @49th State Brewing
- November 18 – Tuesday General Meeting – Sours & Elections with Ted Rosenzweig
- December 13 – Big Fish Competition @Humpys (Tentative)
- December 20 – Holiday Party @ Anchorage Brewing Company

2026 plans are also underway including the reception for the Beer and Barleywine Festival. More information to come on that!

Meantime - If you have thoughts about 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/>

Secretary's Corner: October Meeting Recap

By Gwen Higgins

Munich's Oktoberfest is the largest best known celebration of beer in the world, with many other cities hosting smaller versions of the event. It is fitting that the club chose to highlight the event at last month's meeting, which featured a presentation by Andre Koehrer, complete with lederhosen. The presentation focused on the two most popular beer styles found at Oktoberfest: Märzen and Festbier. Both of these lagers are malt-forward and come in at around 6% ABV. However, the Märzen has a more amber color and more malty richness and depth, traditionally from Munich malt. Festbier, on the other hand, is lighter and has more of a biscuity malt flavor, with the majority of the grain bill being pilsner malt. Guests at Munich's Oktoberfest today are more likely to be served a Festbier, but this was not always the case. Märzen was the original beer served at the event, and it is still what you're most likely to get if you order an Oktoberfest lager in the United States.



In addition to Andre's presentation, he brought a delicious Märzen that he brewed, as well as commercial examples of both styles. Other attendees brought a variety of Alaskan Oktoberfest beers, mostly Märzen, as you'd expect from American examples, but Scott Clendaniel brought a Festbier from Girdwood brewing, which was quite tasty.

Membership News

By Steve Johnson, membership@greatnorthernbrewers.org

Thirty-five (or so) members came together for the meeting on the third Tuesday of the month, October 21st, creating scenes I intended to photograph as evidence that the club is thriving. Focused or distracted by door prize ticket distribution, payments for membership, conversation, half a dozen versions of Märzen, and Andre Koehrer's talk about Oktoberfest and Oktoberfest beers, I took no photographs. From the meeting, I came away with \$513 for the club treasury and memories of another fine gathering of the Great Northern Brewers Club. As of today, October 28th, the club has 51 paid annual members and 40 lifetime members. Last year, on the first of November, those numbers were 41 annual members and 39 life members. Being "ahead of last year to date" on annual memberships gives me confidence that the club is on the right track in terms of paying the rent and other expenses. I expect the number of annual members to increase again in November, December, and January. Lifetime memberships are mentioned in brief on the club website, but not otherwise documented. The current fee is \$350, subject to change by the Board of Directors.

In order to avoid PayPal fees on large payments, the club accepts payment for Life membership only in cash or by check. Payments for Life memberships are kept in a bank account separate from that used for month to month expenses. From the club perspective, the uncertainty involved in accepting a Life membership payment is the unknown number of future annual payments for liability insurance for that member. Those payments continue whether or not the member is involved with the club. If you are interested in purchasing a Life membership, send an email to membership@greatnorthernbrewers.org or talk to me at a meeting.

The November meeting is set for Tuesday the 18th at the usual time and place: 7:00- 9:00pm, East Barrel Room, 49th State Brewing Company. Members are asked to help with meeting room setup, cleanup at the end of the meeting, and providing home-prepared food. Tasks are distributed by last name, rotating by month. Of course, everyone is invited to bring beer, especially homebrew. Setup starts about 6:30. We try to be done

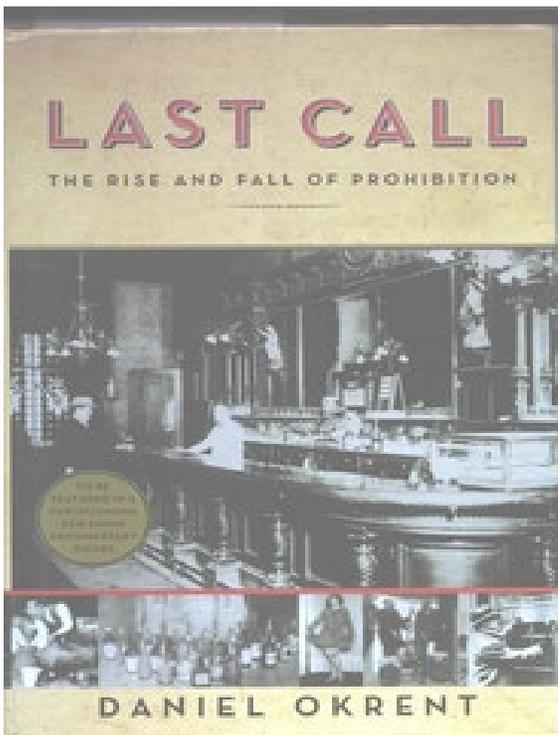
with cleanup and out of the room by 9:00. Here's the meeting task rotation for November:

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

Reading About Beer and Brewing & Related Topics

By Steve Johnson

Daniel Okrent. Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition. Scribner, 2010. 468 pages. 18 pages of photographs and illustrations. Also available as an e-book from bn.com.



Why am I writing in 2025 about a book published in 2010? The book came to my attention just a few weeks ago, in a Little Free Library. Some hours with the book convinced me that the book deserved a note in the newsletter. Not far from mind was the thought that the prohibition era remains the backdrop to the home brew beer hobby in the United States. The historical prohibition era also inspires attention to our era's anti-alcohol movements.

This book is less about gangsters and bootlegging and more about the social and legal movements that brought about, and eventually ended, nationwide prohibition in the United States. Some of the same influential people who supported prohibition in 1920 turned against it in 1930. The downfalls of prohibition organizations and leaders are described in enjoyable detail.

The book's detailed notes and bibliography show in depth research in all of the relevant sources: newspapers, journal literature, books, oral history interviews, archives and manuscripts. The book also shows its age because the bibliography does not include links to sources on the Internet or to Prohibition focused websites.

Though Last Call qualifies as a serious book of history, Last Call is also a seriously easy and enjoyable read. New to me, in whole or part, were amusing and intriguing facts. Did you know that wine grape acreage in California increased in the early years of prohibition? That was due to the increased planting of the Alicante bouschet grapes for the "pressed grape brick" trade. Mixed with water and sugar, these bricks yielded a beverage permitted under regulations of the Volstead Act: home production of up to 200 gallons of fermented

fruit juice per year per household. Such production was not legal in prohibition era Alaska, where the “bone dry” law preceded national prohibition.

Further along the “did you know” line were taxes on malt extract and wort, collected from manufacturers rather than purchasers, enacted late in Prohibition in Michigan and perhaps other states. Last Call did not go into detail on this fascinating angle. In theory, records of the taxes collected could be used to estimate the amount of homebrew produced by purchasers of the extracts and wort.

Because my bookshelves are past full, I will be happy to give away my copy of Last Call at a Brewers Club meeting. Print copies are available for loan at the Anchorage Public Library and UAA Consortium Library. A nine hour audio version, condensed, is available on the Hoopla Digital Library at the Anchorage Public Library website. Last Call was one of the sources for Prohibition, the Ken Burns three episode documentary broadcast on PBS television in 2011, also now available on Hoopla at the Anchorage Public Library website and likely on other streaming sites.

For those with a taste for history related to beer and brewing, I recommend this book.

BJCP examinations are BACK!

By Ira Edwards

I took my BJCP class in Anchorage over 20 years ago, and with all of my activities, have been a nationally ranked judge for about that long. It was a great experience, and I have since taken wine and cider judging courses in Alaska and out of state, and I can say that the Beer Judge Certification Program curriculum is the most in-depth thing out there for judging beers, meads, and ciders. For many years, I helped teach a few of the topics in the BJCP courses run by GNBC, but since COVID, I have been living out of town, so I lost touch with the classes. Well, it turns out that we have not run any BJCP exams to get people certified in quite some time. I aim to remedy that.



As a National Level Judge, I am qualified to administer the testing, and so I am going to get rolling on that. It has to be scheduled at least 4 months in advance, and not longer than 24 months in advance. So I am thinking about finding a set of dates after ski season and before salmon and trout fishing season starts in June. I have some other GNBC members who are qualified to help proctor the exams and tastings, so what I really need now is a pretty solid list of people who have taken the classes and now want to take the exams. I can schedule a maximum of 12 students per exam, but there is a process to get a waiver to host a larger session. Since we have not held an exam for such a long time, I am confident that we can get the waiver. If I get a solid interest in 70 students who want to test, I will need to schedule another exam session later next year, after I am done with field work and hunting. LOL.

BJCP has a pretty awesome online study guide for the exam, and there is an online pre-test to allow you to be qualified to sign up for the certification exam and tasting. Please email me ASAP if you have interest in a spring 2026 exam or a fall 2026 exam, and when you took the BJCP classes. I need that information to register to host an exam session and possibly apply for a waiver to the class limit of 12 students. My Address is rooster.skier@gmail.com. I will be signing up with BJCP before the GNBC Christmas Party in December, so I will repost this article as a reminder a couple more times. Cheers!

Big Fish Competition

By Ira Edwards

I am happy to announce that the Humpy's Big Fish Homebrew competition is BACK! Humpy's was one of the first bars in Anchorage to feature a ton of microbrews (they opened up 30 plus years ago with 40 beers on tap!) and the owner, Billy Opinsky has been a good friend of mine for at least the last 25 years. He has been supporting Homebrewing in Anchorage and Alaska for all of that time as well and is a very good friend of the GNBC. So, go digging in your cellars for that aged bottle of goodness, bottle what you have aging in your kegs or get to brewing a new batch of award-winning beverages!!!

Here are the details:

Judging will take place at Sub Zero Bistro & Microlounge on Saturday, December 13 (attached to Humpys on 612 F St, Anchorage, AK 99501) . Judging STARTS at 10 am, but please show up a little early to get signed in to judge. This will be a BJCP-registered contest, so you will get experience points for helping to judge. If you are not a BJCP judge yet, please come anyway to help out and learn a lot about evaluating all the great options that I am sure will be entered.

This competition is open to ALL BJCP styles

Entry - 3 bottles. Preferably 12oz, but we will take what you have. They need to be in a 6pack holder. Each entry needs to be accompanied by a BJCP entry form (https://legacy.bjcp.org/docs/BJCP_EntryRecipe.pdf)

Entries will be accepted by Arctic Brewing supply (8401 Sandlewood Pl, Anchorage, AK 99507) during Normal Business hours during that week until I pick up the entries at 6 pm on Friday, December 12, and shuttle them to SubZero

One of the awesome aspects of this contest is that Midnight Sun Brewing Company has agreed to brew the winning beer. It has to be a commercially brewable recipe, so if they feel it is not brewable, then they will brew the next-place-winning beer. The winning brewer(s) will also have the opportunity to help brew this beer. It will be on tap at Humpys, MSBC, and potentially other MSBC accounts.

Judging will wrap up early to mid-afternoon, and we need to be cleaned up before they open at 5 pm. As a benefit for the judges, stewards, and helpers, Humpys will bring over a bunch of their award-winning Eggs Benedict after we are done and will have light snacks available during the judging to keep our palates cleansed. If you do not want to judge the beers or are not able to judge because you entered too many categories, I would love your help in stewarding to help send out beers to the judging table and to help get them out of the cooler in time to serve at the appropriate temperatures. Stewards can also earn BJCP administration points.

Please let me know if you have any questions whatsoever. See you all there!!



BIG FISH HOMEBREW COMPETITION

Saturday December 13, 2025 @ 9:00am

SubZero- 612 F Street

*Entry Drop-Off at Arctic Brewing Supply, Dates TBD
8401 Sandwood Pl, Anchorage, Phone:(907) 561-5771
or drop off in advance.*

***Open Competition — No Fees — Multiple Entries Allowed
Judges Needed — No Experience Necessary!***

SIDE CHALLENGE!

Midnight Sun Brewing Co: Best Commercially viable to Brew

Beers will be judged according to the 2021 BJCP Style Guidelines

All beers will be placed in and judged in groups. See the scoring guide on the GNBC website at <http://greatnorthernbrewers.org/competitions/>

Eligibility for GNBC Homebrewer of the Year and Best of Show round limited to select groups. Top entry from each group will also be eligible for Brewer's Choice.

For each entry:

- *Three 12oz. bottles (two okay for non-BOS eligible styles)*
- *BJCP entry form (http://www.bjcp.org/docs/SCP_EntryRecipe.pdf)*
- *Bottles should not have any writing or labels on the glass.*
- *See article in GNBC Newsletter for full details.*

NOTE: Each person may only enter one beer per category/subcategory

Have some Questions? Contact: Ira Edwards vp@greatnorthernbrewers.org

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