

THE Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB
FEBRUARY 2018

State of the Brewnion

by *Mike Cragen*

The beer scene in the great white north is alive and thriving! Alaska Beer Week was a great success and I, for one, am inspired to fire up the kettle and craft a bold, boozy barleywine.



GNBC's industry meeting on Thursday night was a huge success. We owe an enormous thanks to Dave McCarthy and Jason Motyka of 49th State. This event wouldn't have been possible without their support. A particular highlight from GABBF was Kassik's three-peat Barleywine Gold.

The picture above is of our vice president, Eric Minor and me. As a new to GNBC board member this season, he has already begun to alter the club for the better. Eric's an active, avid brewer with a shiny Blichmann system. Eric is our head of our member happiness department . . . he always accepts high fives and beer!

There's a lot to look forward to, here are the highlights of the next 3 months:

February 17th – Fur Rondy Rotary Beer Festival - Performing Arts Center 3-7pm
February 20th – Monthly meeting at 49th State Brewing Co. 7pm - educational session on water chemistry with Jordan Couture
March 4th – Fur Rondy Homebrew Competition at 49th State, judging starts at 11am
March 20th - Monthly meeting at 49th State Brewing Co. 7pm
March 23-25th – Talkeetna Beer Trippin' hosted by Denali Brewing Co.
April 17th – Monthly meeting at 49th State Brewing Co. 7pm
April (exact date TBD) – Resolution Open Beer Competition

It's time to start thinking about brewing for Homebrewer of the Year (HBOTY). Fur Rondy is your first chance to start building up points (see article below for more details). Also, Beer Trippin' in Talkeetna will be your only chance this year to gain HBOTY points for meads and ciders. Denali Brewing Co. will once again hold a separate non-BJCP homebrew competition. The Best of Show winner will have the privilege of brewing the headline beer with Denali for the 2019 Beer Trippin' weekend. This year's beer will be a Citra-Mosaic Pale ale with cryo hops and torrified wheat.

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You may have noticed that our website recently changed. A grand thank you goes to Mike Fisher for his hard work on the new site. The new platform allows us to easily update and edit information. Feel free to pass along suggestions so we can continue to improve it. Also keep an eye out for the new calendar, which will help remind everyone of the various upcoming events and competitions. In addition, we welcome any and all feedback for making GNBC a more relevant, educational, and entertaining society for all members.

The Final Wort (the last batch I brewed) is an oversized Imperial Stout. The boil finished at 1.100 and I added candi sugar at high krausen and 5 days after to give an adjusted OG of 1.112. Dry English ale yeast was used with half of the batch, with a Belgian yeast on the other 5 gallons. Many thanks go to Christophe Venot for on his ideas with this batch. As always with The Final Wort, I'll have it at a future club meeting for you to try and critique.

Lagers and ales, ciders and pales,
Mike "Keggin" Cragen



Secretary's Corner

Jim O'Toole

An old friend sent me a newspaper article a couple of weeks ago. I've mentioned him in this column before as Sandy is the guy who encouraged me to start home brewing and, in fact, spotted the homebrewing kit that Kathy had bought me a few months prior and practically demanded that we fire it up. He hasn't brewed anything in many years so he has been living the homebrew life vicariously through me.

Considering all the things Sandy and I have shared in the 50 years I've known him there are a number of things that help us connect with each other and one of the primary ones is beer. Back in November 2016, at our monthly GNBC meeting I showed a series of photos I took while traveling around Portugal, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, and Germany with him and a lot of those photos had to do with beer.

Sandy has retired from the job that sent him to many places around the world so that trip served as the last of five trips he and I made to Europe. We did a week long beer hunt around his home state of Virginia earlier that year and supported each other through a grueling week of more than 25 beer joints and more than 75 different beers that I had never tried before.

One of those places was Devil's Backbone Brewing which had just recently been purchased by Anheuser-Busch as part of their massive effort to re-capture some of the market they lost when people realized there was beer available in their area that actually had some taste.

The article is entitled, "Brew Giant Has Big New Thirst: Data." It gives a background of recent brewing news including the fact that Bud Light accounts for at least one of every six beers sold in this country but that, between the years of 2010 and 2016, "the value of Budweiser sales fell 17 percent and Bud Light sales slipped 14%."

It also pointed out that in 2011 there were half as many breweries in the United States as there are today and AB-InBev developed a corporate strategy of, "If you can't beat 'em, buy 'em" and began with the \$38.8 million purchase of Goose Island Brewing, a brewery I discovered while stuck at O'Hare Airport a couple of years prior to this.

Now Anheuser-Busch-InBev has joined with SABMiller with a \$100 billion merger and it looked like the small breweries were going to be overwhelmed with offers to purchase and get them into the AB-IB-SABM family. One good thing that came of this, as far as I'm concerned is that, as a result of this merger, the big boys can no longer purchase a craft brewery in the United States "without allowing for US Justice Department review of the acquisition's likely competitive effects." I really would have loved to have been a fly on the wall when the beer executives were hit with THAT while they were smoking their cigars and toasting what they thought was going to be their opportunity to rule the world.

Prior to this merger Anheuser-Busch stated that the craft breweries they purchased would not be forced to make any changes in their beers and, from my perspective, they have honored this as, though I try to support local, independent breweries every chance I get, sometimes I see Goose Island's Four Star Pilsner or Goose IPA on tap, I'll try it and I can detect no difference between them and when I drank them ten or more years ago.

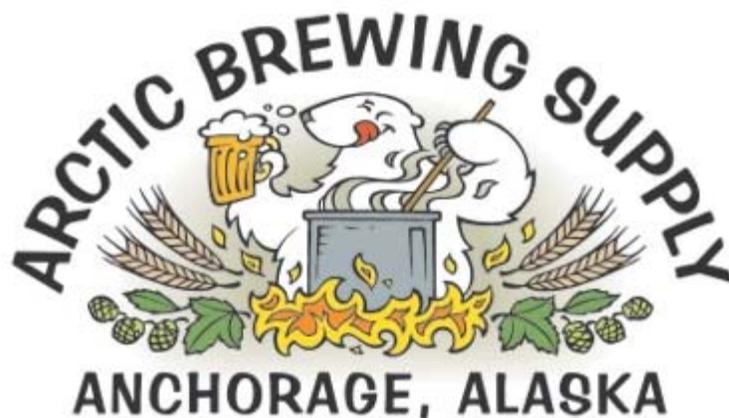
So, with the US Justice Department watching them closely, a rapid decline in their sales and, realizing they can't buy up every craft brewery in the world, the beer conglomerate came up with what they think is a lucrative strategy. They formed a new division, called it ZX Ventures, and charged it with buying information regarding beer trends around the world. The idea is to "get ahead of the market" by investing "in e-commerce delivery systems, beer rating applications, and homebrew suppliers, all of which supply data points that can tell them about trends" in beer consumption around the world.

So, if I'm reading this correctly and maybe stretching things a bit, if the bosses in Belgium and South Africa discover that there has been a sudden surge in the sale of *brettanomyces* yeast at Arctic Brewing Supply off of Dimond Boulevard here in Anchorage, they will consider ramping up the production of Belgian style beers at one or more of their breweries and getting them distributed here. Or, if suddenly, scores of a certain style of beer on one of their beer rating websites surge, they can decide if they should start producing that style and getting it out to the areas where some of their other "spies" have noticed an increase in their consumption.

My innate reluctance to trust big, multi-national corporations has me wondering what the downside to this is. My fear is that this one might start to manipulate the market to match up with product that they can produce at a cheap price. What if they pick up a huge supply of a certain type of hop and corner the market on them in order to be the only ones producing a high demand beer, thereby giving them control of where they are sold and for how much.

What if they determine that sales of a certain style of beer are sliding and they begin to manipulate the scores of those beers on the websites they control in order to give a false impression of the quality of the beer. Sales will go up as long as there are people willing to buy them solely based on what they have been told by the website.

I guess I'm saying that there may be some good to this but I still want to support those local, independent breweries who don't have to siphon off any of their income to foreign corporations. If some of these brewers can figure out how to watch what this ZX Ventures outfit is coming up with, maybe they can get ahead of the game and produce something that will prove lucrative for them.



These independent craft brewers have been incredibly successful (Anheuser-Busch would not be buying them if they weren't) because they have produced a quality product and given their customers what they want. I hope that they can keep up with the big boys and that those of us who support them continue to give them our beer money. So far they have been pretty good at determining what we want. So, unless Anheuser-Busch screws around and gets King Street to change their Pilsner, I'm going to wish Anheuser-Busch a lot of luck with this. Anything that makes it easier for us to acquire good beer is fine with me.

Calendar Of Events

February 17th – Fur Rondy Rotary Beer Festival - Performing Arts Center 3-7pm

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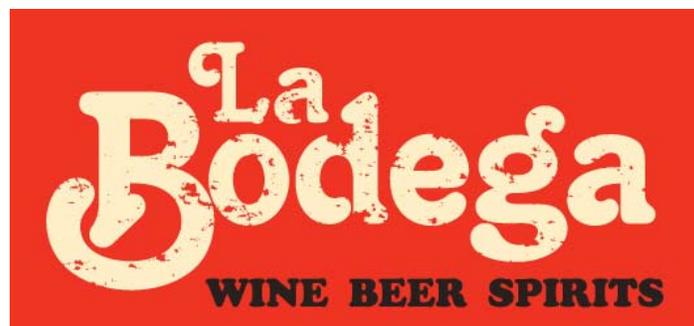
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Fur Rondy Charity Beer Tasting

by Adam Sikorski

Fur Rendezvous is kicking off the 2018 winter festival with a charity beer festival in partnership with Anchorage East Rotary. On February 17th, from 3-7pm, the Rondy Rotary Beer Festival will be happening at the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts. Proceeds from the festival will be used to support organizations that fight human trafficking in Alaska. Come enjoy great beer, great pizza, and great music all in support of a great cause. People who attend will be able to cast their vote for the People's Choice Awards. Trophies and awards will be given for Favorite Beer, Favorite Brewery, and Favorite Pizza. To learn more about the event, please visit www.rondyrotarybeerfest.com. Tickets can be purchased online via the website or in person the day of the event.



MEETING SETUP

A - J Food
K - P Setup
R - Z Cleanup

A - J Setup
K - P Cleanup
R - Z Food

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Sud's Corner

by John Craig

Happy New Year, with "Fur Rondy" fever, its mush, mush, mush you beer drinking dogs. After all this is the Chinese year of the dog. As I head down to the local watering hole, with so many beers on tap, my taste buds can get lost. As the foam touches my lips and my nose with a good bit of aroma, while rolling suds on the back of the tongue, you sometimes never know what to expect. This is true as I explore all the beers of the world, for I do love beer, as I get older it's what keeps me younger in my years. Been on Mother Earth for 75 years, bless the beer gods in suds heaven, with the tap-line up in the clouds waiting.

Do remember so many drunks, wild parties, it all started in my teenage years from a small town in Colorado. They had 3.2 beer and back then, then never ask for an ID as long as you looked grown-up and I was a big kid for my age. Sometimes it was school lunch at the Quench Bar, a 3.2 joint close to the school, and a rush back to class. Or the whiskey bottle that would roll out your locker, and once a bunch of us ditched school and spent the afternoon drinking Coors in the brewery tasting room, with no limit back then. Don't remember coming home, and we only did this once, as the school was going to kick us out and our folks were pissed. We saved ourselves for after our football game, party time around the campfire out in the middle of nowhere drinking cheap beer, with wild and crazy as the buffalo roam.

Graduated as a Englewood pirate, then it was ship-o-hoy, as a sailor on a U.S. Navy troop transport with a homeport in San Diego...and you had to be 21 years old in California. Last count in the brig at least 13 times. The Shore Patrol seemed to be around every corner. Thank God we drank horse-piss by the pitcher sixteen miles away was Tijuana, for a sailor all the joys of life..bad-bad hangovers and the girls were hot. I was lucky our ship spent three months in San Francisco, another three in Portland, and a couple weeks in Seattle for the world's fair. Half our crew got married on our return to home port. Made a couple 13 month trips to the Orient, more than once we had to swim back to the ship, as we missed the last boat. We were drunk swimming with the sharks, and it was dark as we went up the Jacob-ladder and sneak aboard ship. US Sailors never got past the water-front bars, we even had to carry our ship chaplain back aboard. With stories to be told from the troops landed on the beaches in our landing craft boats, and with 2000 troops aboard ship, we were busy. I was a stew burner "cook", baker, butcher, deck hand, we made the hotch (hooch) in the bakeshop in a well-hidden place, it was called "Raisin Jack", with water, yeast, sugar and raisin, you didn't drink much of this stuff. Nasty but good, it was great on a long voyage, out at sea. My favorite port was Hong Kong, and having fun in Japan, Korea, Formosa, Philippines, and sun bathing on the beaches of Hawaii.

Later on, Panama Canal, to cruise around Cuba, waiting for the "Bay of Pigs" invasion, which never happened, as we sweat below decks with 2000 troops, in the hot Caribbean. When ashore in Puerto Rico, Kingston Jamaica to get drunk on Blueberry Hill, and Panama City was Crazy — Many stories to be told, - ship-ahoy.

With the sun dogs dancing in the sky, on this cold winter day, I can hear the dogs barking up on the trail, or it may be a ground-hog waiting for Spring break-up. This Feb-burry, I will take my sweetheart out for Valentine's Day, she will be in my beer mug and will love her dearly. As I bless the beer Gods up in Sud's Heaven, and sign beer songs late into the night while chugging suds to the joys of life. As we dunk our heads in a barrel of beer, as we are being saved, may the beer Gods be with us...

Mush, mush you dogs, happy Fur Rondy.

SUDS

2018 Fur Rondy Homebrew Competition

It's time for the 2018 homebrew competitions to start in Alaska! We are proud to announce that the 2018 Fur Rondy Homebrew Competition will take place at 11:00 on Sunday, March 4th at 49th State Brewery. This is the day after the Ceremonial Iditarod Start, so it shouldn't be quite as congested as last year. Fur Rondy, 2018 is a BJCP certified event, so you will gain BJCP experience points for judging.

49th has graciously agreed to brew the Best of Show beer or Brewer's Choice (in case the BOS winner isn't realistic for them to brew, sell, etc).

Your highest score in each category is the only one that will count towards HBOTY points (*you may NOT get points for multiple beers in a category*). Points will be awarded as follows:

1st – 3 points

2nd – 2 points

3rd – 1 point

If your HBOTY entry wins BOS or Brewer's Choice, you will receive an additional 2 points (if one entry wins both BOS & Brewer's Choice, you'll only receive the 2 extra points).

Homebrewer of the Year (HBOTY) points will be different for this competition. Each entry will need 2015 BJCP category/subcategory for judging purposes. Also, one of the below categories needs to be designated. If above category isn't specified, competition organizers will place the beer into what is deemed to be the most appropriate category.

What this means is that all lagers will be lumped into one grouping to "compete" against each other for place/points, while simultaneously being judged according to their separate BJCP category/subcategory. In other words, for all lagers there will be only one 1st place, one 2nd, and so on.

Fur Rondy Homebrew Competition (March)

HBOTY

Lager

Stout/Porter

Imperial (8% & up)

Belgian/French

Wheat

SIDE CHALLENGE – SMaSH – double HBOTY points (1st – 6 pts; 2nd – 4 pts;

3rd – 2 pts)

Non-HBOTY

IPA/Pale

Wild/Sour/Brett

Other (any other category may be entered but will not be eligible for HBOTY or BOS). No Meads/Ciders.

*49th State will determine a "Brewer's Choice" beer to brew. This isn't necessarily the BOS winner, though.



Entry drop-offs will NOT need BJCP Entry/Recipe forms. We just need name, contact information, 2015 category/subcategory, and one of the 8 general categories listed above. Entries will be accepted at Arctic Brewing on Friday, March 2nd from 4pm until 6pm. Entries may be dropped off at Arctic Brewing previous to March 2, just be sure to have above mentioned paperwork completed. If you have questions, please contact Mike at: president@greatnorthernbrewers.org

Beer tasting and palate training class 2018

by *Kevin Sobolesky*

What it is:

We are hosting a beer tasting class that will teach you all about classic beer styles, off-flavors and how to improve your homebrew!

Over the 9 week course, we'll meet on sundays for a couple hours to enjoy fun lectures on topics covering beer history, ingredients, processes, and faults. During each class, we will have guided tastings of classic beers to train your palate and learn about the wide variety of beer styles. By the end of the course, you will have tasted over 40 classic beers! This class is perfect for homebrewers, servers, distributors, and package store employees.

How to sign up:

Contact Kevin at metkonig@gmail.com or in person at one of the homebrew club meetings. The class is capped at 40 people, on a first come first serve basis. We will start a waiting list if anyone does not show up for the first class (usually a safe bet to have a few no-shows). If you have any questions please direct them to Kevin.

Where:

Cafe Amsterdam (Next time you see Ken and Shauna, say thanks!)
503 E. Benson #3

Cost:

\$50 a person due at the first class

When:

Sundays at 5pm, starting on February 18th

Current schedule:

February	18, 25,
March	4, 11, 18, 25
April	8, 15, 22, 29



The Northern Brewer is a monthly newsletter published by the Great Northern Brewers Club for distribution to all club members. Subscriptions are a part of club membership and may be obtained by joining the club. Membership is open to everyone over the age of twenty-one. Please send \$30.99 to:

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The Great Northern Brewers Club and the American Homebrewers Association remind you to....Savor the Flavor Responsibly

The *Northern Brewer* welcomes letters, opinions, articles, ideas and inquiries. You can contact the editor, Debbie Grecco at:

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**NEXT MEETING: February 20th, 2018
7:00 PM at 49th State Brewing Company Anchorage**