



THE Northern Brewer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB
MARCH 2018

State of the Brewnion

by *Mike Cragen*

Greetings beer aficionados!

FeBREWary had numerous GNBC highlights. First, a huge thank-you goes to Rick Levinson and Liz Greer for the enlightening homebrew display at the Fur Rondy Rotary Beer Festival. We had a bit of a hiccup with the monthly meeting location.

Thank you, everyone, for your patience and understanding. The meeting was lively, well attended, and extremely educational. Jordan Couture's presentation on water chemistry left me with several ideas to implement into my own process.



Photo by Kinzey Reeves

If you're an Alaskan brewer, MarZENch is the month for you. First and foremost, we have the Fur Rondy Homebrew Competition in a just a few days. Entries will be accepted at Arctic Brewing from 4:00-6:00 on March 2nd. Judging will take place at 11:00am Sunday, March 4th at 49th State. We need judges, and no experience is necessary. Additional information can be found later in this newsletter.

Here's a complete list of all upcoming GNBC events:

March 2nd – Fur Rondy Homebrew Comp Bottle Drop-off 4-6pm at Arctic Brewing (bottles can be dropped off at Arctic before this date, if needed)

March 4th – Fur Rondy Homebrew Competition downstairs at 49th State, judging starts at 11am

March 20th - Monthly meeting at 49th State Brewing Co. 7pm – Educational session with Christophe Venot on sour/funky beers

March 23-25th – Talkeetna Beer Trippin' hosted by Denali Brewing Co. (more information below)

March 31st – Curling from 1-5pm at Anchorage Curling Club (Government Hill) – see the Secretary's Corner for more information

April 17th – Monthly meeting at 49th State Brewing Co. 7pm

April 28th (exact time TBD) – Spring Breakup Open Beer Competition at Resolution Brewing Co.

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GREAT NORTHERN BREWERS CLUB
PMB 1204
3705 ARCTIC BOULEVARD
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99503

GNBC WEB SITE:

WWW.GREATNORTHERNBREWERS.ORG

NEWSLETTER EMAIL

bushy@alaskan.com

PRESIDENT: MIKE CRAGEN

president@greatnorthernbrewers.org

VICE PRESIDENT: ERIC MINOR

vp@greatnorthernbrewers.org

TREASURER: SAM MOORE

treasurer@greatnorthernbrewers.org

SECRETARY: JIM O'TOOLE

secretary@greatnorthernbrewers.org

KAT KARABELNIKOFF

membership@greatnorthernbrewers.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MIKE FISHER

mikefisher.ak@gmail.com

BRIAN HALL

iheart314@gmail.com

RICK LEVINSON

relevins@gci.net

LIZ GREER

eagreer2001@yahoo.com

PETER HALL

alaskabrewer@gmail.com

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Debbie Grecco

bushy@alaskan.com

May 5th – Brew-a-thon hosted by Kevin Sobeleski (details to come in April newsletter)

May 15th – Monthly meeting at 49th State Brewing Co. 7pm

May 17th – Haines Homebrew Competition entry due date. Bottle drop-off at Arctic anytime on/before May 17.

May 25-26th – Haines Beer Festival and Homebrew Competition

March 23-25 is Beer Trippin' in Talkeetna. Denali Brewing Company (DBC) is inviting GNBC and all brewers to join them for a weekend of beer, brewing, and booze. This event is all about homebrewing and homebrewers . . . not a traditional beer festival. GNBC will be hosting the Equinox Mead and Cider Competition (more details later in newsletter). Denali has a non-BJCP competition the same weekend. The winner will help them brew the headlining beer for next year's Beer Trippin' weekend. If there's one out-of-town event you make it to this year, this should be the one.

Denali has reworked the schedule of events this year and added some noteworthy opportunities. First, DBC is brewing a wort, which they'll be providing to GNBC members (maximum of 10 gallons per person). This pre-boil wort is yours to finish. Try any combination of hops or yeasts. Whatever comes to mind. Plan to bring your creation to the May GNBC meeting. Denali Brewing will be attending and eagerly sampling your brews. You'll have to be in Talkeetna for Beer Trippin' to collect the wort into your own sanitized vessel(s). Other highlights include: Saturday brewery tours with shuttle service from town, homebrewers bottle share on Friday night, baking with beer Saturday morning, and an interactive session with DBC brewers to get feedback and pick their beer-soaked brains.

March offers brewers two opportunities to gain Homebrewer of the Year (HBOTY) points. The Fur Rondy Comp is your first chance to starting racking up points. Then, the Equinox Mead and Cider Competition in conjunction with Beer Trippin' in Talkeetna will be your only chance in 2018 to get points for mead and ciders. HBOTY winners from past years are not competing this year, so it's up for the taking. Also, the GNBC is awarding the 2018 HBOTY winner with a \$250 cash prize.

We'd be stoked to see everyone at 49th State on Tuesday, March 20th for our monthly meeting. Christophe Venot will be presenting on sour beers, and the processes and subtleties involved.

The Final Wort (the last batch I brewed) is a Weizenbock. For those unfamiliar with the style, a Weizenbock is a strong, dark, German wheat ale. This was my first crack at this style and the brew day went exceptionally well. Target was 1.070 and I hit 1.069. I set fermentation temperature at 64°F and was happy my carboys had a blow off tube. As always with The Final Wort, I'll have it at a future club meeting for you to sample and critique.

Enjoy your creations . . . worts and all,
Prez BrewMikester



Secretary's Corner

by *Jim O'Toole*

I don't know if you need to be a fan of the game of Curling to appreciate what the US Olympic Men's Curling Team accomplished in Korea a couple of weeks ago. Along with Jessie Diggins and Anchorage's Kikkan Randall's gold medal win in the cross country skiing sprint relay, there wasn't a better moment for me in these games. There were some great ones but any time a USA athlete does something that no other USA athlete has ever done, I move it up the list.



I am an Olympics nut. Always have been and expect I always will be. My interest was increased even more when I moved to Homer a long time ago and the realtor I used to help me buy and build a house turned out to have been a member of the USA Olympic cross country ski team in 1976 and became a good friend. These were the games when two of my other most thrilling Olympic moments happened; Bill Koch's silver medal for the USA in the 30km cross country race and Austrian Franz Klammer's run down the downhill course in a suicidal but successful attempt to win a gold medal in his home country at Innsbruck. I swear he came down that hill with the attitude that said, "I'm going to win this or die." I had always been interested in cross country skiing but never lived in a place where it was practiced or practical so having a teammate of Bill Koch's in Bela as an instructor while we skied on the reservoir and the hills above Homer was special.

When I first came to Alaska I lived in Ketchikan and the only live TV I could get was the Canadian Broadcast Company from a station in Terrace, BC. I got to know the names of Canadian Football League players, became a huge hockey fan, and, because the only other sport shown regularly was Curling, I became a fan of that game too and always wanted to try it.

I finally got my chance about six years ago after I joined the GNBC and found out we had an annual event at the Anchorage Curling Club (ACC). I was first in line, standing outside the door when the ACC rep showed up to open the door that day and I had a great time.

I'm not a total klutz athletically but I gotta tell ya, this was far harder than it looks and more fun than I ever thought it would be. Like so many other sports, balance is a key. When you push off with your foot to get the stone throw started you are almost on one knee and sliding on some of the most slippery ice that can be manufactured. It is regular ice but after it freezes the club sprays drops of water on it that creates dimples so there is less friction for the stone to slide on. When it was my turn to throw them, I was on my butt as often as I stayed upright and I was exhausted every time it was my turn to be a sweeper. I doubt that I have ever done any kind of exercise that would help me push down on a broom while sliding sideways on slippery ice and I suspect even someone in great physical shape would feel some unfamiliar muscles the day after spending some time on the ice. That's a throwdown, Mike.

The stones themselves are interesting pieces of equipment. They are made of polished granite that comes from only two places on earth, an island off the coast of Scotland and a quarry in Wales. They weigh around 40 pounds and it is amazing how greasy the ice feels underneath them.

The game is one of the oldest known to man. There is a stone in a museum some place in Scotland that was found with a date of 1511 inscribed on it. We're talking human history here.

The GNBC has rented the Anchorage Curling Club for the Saturday afternoon of March 31 from 1:00 to 5:00PM. The ACC requires that anyone wanting to curl sign a waiver form so be prepared for that. They also ask that we don't use heavy lugged shoes on the ice. They have slip-on coverings to go over your one shoe that will let your non-sliding foot stick to the ice but clean, flat bottomed shoes are best.

Other than that just come prepared to have a good time. Bring a spouse. Bring a friend. They, nor you for that matter, have to play. If you prefer you can simply consider this another opportunity for members to socialize and show that we are more than just a beer drinking club although I do want to tell you that the ACC has great craft beers on tap. You might need one or two to get warm up and get loose. Bring a snack to share with everyone if you can to help soak up the beer and give us more energy for sweeping.

I hope to see you there.



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.

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)

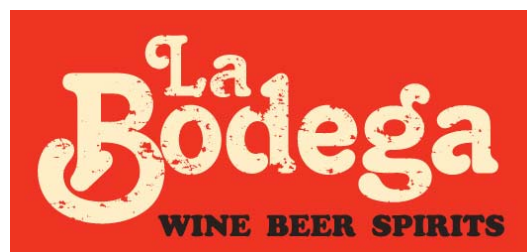
Non-HBOTY

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 phone number, 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. You'll need three 12 oz bottles or two 22's. 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



MEETING SETUP

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

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

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

Denali Brewing Company's - Equinox Mead Competition

by John Trapp

It's time once again to drink the nectar of the gods. Denali Brewing Company will be hosting the "Spring" Equinox Mead Competition on Saturday March 24th at Twister Creek tasting room in Talkeetna. This coincides with the ever famous Talkeetna Beer Trippin weekend. So if you have 2 bottles of mead or cider stashed away in the crawl space, go and get them! Please fill out a recipe sheet and properly label the bottles (and make sure you're entered in the right category). Speaking of; all categories are open as well as ciders. But wait, it gets better. There's no cost! Free! Nothing to loose but maybe winning the whole enchilada. You can drop off your entries at Arctic Brewing Supply on March 16th, or bring them to the club meeting on March 20th. Also, we will be excepting entries in Talkeetna at Twister Creek Tasting room on Friday evening the 23rd - 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm, and also Saturday morning 9:00 am to 9:30 am. The judging starts at 10:00 am so plan on judging too. I hope to see lots of participation in this event. I know we have some excellent mead makers in the club, so lets show them what we have.



Sud's Corner

by *JohnCraig*

My first batch of homebrew was back in 1996. I used 1 can of Blue Ribbon Malt, 7 pounds of sugar and yeast from the grocery store from the dairy case. I have come a long way in my brewing days. Now days my friends brew the beer and I help them drink whatever they have, for I am not picky about what I drink because beer is life for me.

If you are interested in our homebrew club history, I have every newsletter from the beginning and have a ton of club pictures from the wild and crazy days of the past. Let me know , I would like to share them with you as we drink beer and gab away.

Back in the good old days it was against the law here in Alaska to make homebrew. We were just a bunch of homebrewers and moon-shiners, which made it more fun when you knew you were and out-law brewer.

The state wasn't going to let our club put on a display at an event during Fur Rondy. We were pissed. Thank the beer Gods for Pat and Randy Oldenburg, who were the founders of our club. They were our life savers. If it wasn't for them we would still be out-law brewers.

We made phone calls to Juneau to tell the legislature our feelings. I guess they felt sorry for us as they passed a law to make it legal for us to make homebrew.

As this old geezer gets older, my doctor told me to cut back to three pints a day, rather than a growler a day, darn it!

I'm so proud of myself. I am surprised I lived this long. Someone should have shot me many years ago. Lucky for me, beer saved me. For I was an out-law brewer.

As the days get longer and spring time is near, it's time for me to make up a batch of smoke beer, my all time favorite. May the Irish be with me this St. Pat's day as the corned beef and green beer keep me happy. Enjoy and God bless beer or I wouldn't be here.

Until next time, Happy Homebrewing. Suds

Spring Breakup Open Competition

by *Eric Minor*

The Spring Breakup Competition, hosted by Resolution Brewing Company, is a new competition that will steer the focus away from guidelines and focus on creativity and overall drinkability. It is a non-BJCP sanctioned event and will not use BJCP guidelines. BJCP scoresheets will not be utilized, but voluntary feedback sheets will be available. All judges will be given 3 tickets to award to any beers they find enjoyable, creative, or appealing. The tickets can all be given to one beer, or be split amongst 2 or 3 different entries.

HBOTY points will be awarded as follows:

- 1st Place (Best of Show & Brewer's Choice) – 6 Points each. If a beer is BOS and BC, only 6 Points will be awarded.
- 2nd Place – 5 points
- 3rd Place – 4 points
- 4th Place – 3 Points
- 5th Place – 2 points
- 6th Place – 1 point

Resolution will determine a "Brewer's Choice" beer to brew. It may not necessarily be the Best of Show winner, though. The date is set for April 28. The exact time is yet to be determined. Stay tuned for updates.



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Great Northern Brewers Club
Attn: Treasurer
PMB 1204, 3705 Arctic Blvd
Anchorage, AK 99503



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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:

Online: bushy@alaskan.com
Phone: 333-8985
Mail: 6933 Soyuz Circle
Anchorage, Ak 99504

GNBC Web Site: www.greatnorthernbrewers.org



Great Northern Brewers Club
PMB 1204
3705 Arctic Boulevard
Anchorage, AK 99503

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