



Brewsletter

For the Salt City Brew Club of Central New York

March 2007

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Paul Shafer

Vice President

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Rob Helfrich

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Todd Relyea

Brewsletter Editor

Bill Benz

Regular Monthly

Meetings are on the Second
Tuesday of the Month at
7p.m.

The Next Salt City
Brew Club Meeting is
March 13th at:

La Cuisine Restaurant
435 N. Salina St.
Syracuse, NY

The President's Draught

By Paul Shafer, Club President

Greetings, fellow beer lovers. I hope everyone at last month's meeting enjoyed our new digs. It sure was nice to hold a meeting without having to compete with people having dinner or background music. I thought it was nice that Mike had some food put out for us, and I enjoyed the selection of beers available.

It's March Madness month, so what better beer to taste this month than Barley Wines? We will be sampling four different breweries' barley wines, along with any home-brewed versions. Don Cazentre, beer columnist for the Post Standard, will be sharing his knowledge of barley wines with us.

Last month's brewing topic was recipe formulation; this month's topic will be mashing. Can you see where I'm going with this? If anyone would like to give a presentation on a brewing topic, please see me so we can make arrangements.

*Cheers,
Paul*

Secretary's Report

By Rob Helfrich

Club Meeting - La Cuisine
February 13, 2007

Our first meeting at La Cuisine was a success, despite the pending snow storm which likely kept a few members from attendance. The folks at La Cuisine were very accommodating. The beer selection was first rate and quite reasonably priced. They also provided a complementary buffet of hot conquisto dip and chips. For those who ordered an entrée, I also suspect you were not disappointed. The upstairs banquet room also had plenty of space for our meeting.

We staffed and organized our various committees for the upcoming year, which included Homebrew Competitions, Club Parties and Brewery/Distributor Meeting Invitations.

Mick Barnes will once again chair the New York State Fair Homebrew Competition. However, Mick warned it is his last year. He will be looking for an "apprentice" to take under his wing to learn the ropes. Although his shoes will be tough to fill, I suspect he has the system and process well established. Kevin Flood will be in charge of the stewards, Pete Garofalo will be handling the judges and Bob Santore will crunch the numbers. We anticipate all of those members who completed the BJCP judge certification program will be available to utilize their new skills. If you enter the contest, you may want to avoid Steve Roberts flight, as he will be looking to score his first "13".

We discussed the potential to schedule a few club parties this year. We will likely have our Oktoberfest at Weber's. The German food was certainly a hit. The Christmas party will likely be held at La Cuisine. I would suspect the buffet will be fantastic. That leaves the summer parties. In the past, we held a "Spring-fling" and a summer party hosted at a member's house. This year we will try to rent a pavilion at one of the local parks. Green Lakes and Pratt Falls were suggested. Cindy Wren volunteered to check into it.

We also want to ensure we have a variety of breweries invited to visit our meetings during the year. In the past, some of our best meetings were when brew masters visited and shared details of how they make their beer. Always amazed how homebrewing parallels commercial processes. Dave Mesko and Warren Cruise will chair the Brewery/Distributor Meeting Invitations committee.

Continued
Next Page



"I have to think hard to name an interesting man who does not drink." -- Richard Burton

Brews Calendar

March 24th 2007

Hudson Valley Home Brewers 17th annual Home brew competition

March 24th, 2007

Entry deadline March 16th, 2007

Info at: www.hvhb.org

April 20th-21st

**National Homebrew Competition
Mid-Atlantic Region 1st Round**

Entries due April 2-13 2007

Info at:

www.beertown.org/events/nhc/index.html

May 18th, 2007

Amber Waves of Grain

Buffalo, NY

Entry Deadline May 5th

Info at:

www.niagarabrewers.org/awog/

May 19th 2007

11th Annual B.E.E.R. Brewoff

Nesconset, NY

Entry Deadline May 12, 2007

Contact Peter Algerio at:

petebeer@optonline.net

June 15th 2007

8th Annual NY State Fair

Homebrew Competition

Syracuse, NY

Entry Deadline June 7, 2007

November 10th 2007

**Knickerbocker Battle of
The Brews**

Albany, NY

Info at:

www.thoroughbrews.com/

Secretaries Report Continued

Tastings for the evening focused on Pilsners. Three varieties were sampled: Prima by Victory, Lagunitas Pils and Pilsner Urquell. Lagunitas is a Czech style brewed in California. Pilsner Urquell was imported from Czechoslovakia. Typically, this is one of the finest pilsners available, however our samples were clearly spoiled or contaminated. Must have been the long boat ride.

Paul Shafer led our technical discussion, which focused on Pilsner recipe formulation. Grain selection is, not surprising, Pilsner. Vienna malt is not uncommon as an adjunct. Very few specialty grains are typically used with the exception of perhaps some Carapils. There was some discussion regarding the use of 6-row, which has a low starch to husk ratio but often adds some astringency. Hop bills typically are Saaz for aroma and bittering. The style is not normally dry-hopped although Pete Garofalo has had some good results. Other hops to consider are Hallertauer or Tettnanger. Key is to stick with German or Czech hops. When considering Yeast, a pilsner Lager variety should do the trick. The challenge brewing a Pils is fermentation temperature. Lagers need to ferment at 40 to 50 degrees. However, wintertime in Central New York provides cold basements, which should work just fine. The club had plenty to discuss when considering water. Pilsners should be brewed with soft water. Most of the water in Syracuse is hard, which is great for IPA's, Stouts, and American Ales, but not good for pilsners and wheat beers. The high pH also causes harsh tannins to wash through. Pete Kirkgasser suggests brewing with 50% distilled water. Other suggestions were to add 4 ml of lactic acid or phosphoric acid to 10 gallons of wort.

Lastly, we raffled the prizes from the Brewfest. Congratulations to Bill Porter who won the brew kit. Mike Pytlak won the \$50 certificate from Middle Ages Brewery.

If you haven't paid your dues, don't forget at our March meeting. Individual's membership is \$20 and couples are \$30.

Happy Brewing,

Rob Helfrich

Stryker's Suds

"Marvelous Meads"

Lack of boredom is the great thing about the hobby of home brewing. There exist an infinite number of styles and tastes you can master or create. As an example, you should consider brewing a mead. It's very easy to do and the results are typically quite good. Brewing meads may add an entirely new dimension to your brewing experience.

Mead is simply yeast fermented honey water. It would be presumptuous for Styker to profess his expertise on the subject. There are a few folks in the Club who are much more knowledgeable. However, we will give it a shot.

Meads have quite a history. Inca and Aztec Indians brewed meads. In fact, meads are likely the first alcoholic beverages ever concocted. Ancient Greeks, Romans, Egyptians and Scandinavians also were known as mead-makers. Since the style seems to have survived the test of time, there must be something here.

The process is amazingly simple. Mix honey in water, add yeast. Yep, that's it. No mashing grains, sparging, boiling or cooling. Just mix the stuff together and wait for it to bubble. But leave it to home brewers to find a way to make it more complicated. You can make it dry, sweet or semi-sweet. If you want to add fruit, it's now defined as Melomel. More specifically, combining apples is called a Cyser, and grapes a Pymment. Adding herbs and spices makes a Metheglin. If you want to blend your mead with beer, it becomes a Braggot. This all just supports my point. There are so many aspects to this hobby, that it becomes a never-ending experience.

All said, my first attempt making a mead was not pleasant. Eventually, the resulting beverage was just fine. Making it, despite the simple procedure, was a disaster. I first decided to try the art of mead making while shopping at P&C. I noticed several large jars of honey were significantly discounted. I should digress and mention the downside of making mead is the cost. Honey is not cheap. I needed 15 lbs for 5 gallons. At \$3.00 a pound, it adds up. I also tossed in two pounds of extra dark maple syrup for good measure. I bought distilled water to mix 50/50 with tap. I read somewhere pH is important for proper mead fermentation. I stirred all the ingredients in my glass primary carboy. Added the yeast (Wyeast Mead) and proceeded to move the carboy to the corner of my basement. I thought I was all done. I wasn't. Something happened that never occurred in nearly ten years of brewing. My carboy cracked as I gently placed it on the basement floor. Actually, "crack" is an understatement. It was more like the bottom of the carboy disappeared in a 5-gallon stream of sticky, gooey mess all over the basement floor. Thank God I have been too busy brewing to even consider finishing my basement. I had to use a high-pressure power washer to clean the mess. Not to be deterred, I bought a new carboy at Ed Wren's shop, got some more honey and yeast and started all over. Despite the final product cost over \$150 to make, it wasn't bad. Very enjoyable drink and was a big hit with my wife and in-laws.

Cheers,

Stryker

Weird But True

NAKASHIBETSU, Hokkaido - A brewery here has succeeded in producing a low-malt beer with milk, after the drink was suggested as a product that would help use up surplus milk.

The drink, called "Bilk" will go on sale on Feb. 1. It reportedly has a fruity flavor that its brewers hope will be popular among women.

The idea for the drink was conceived after dairy firms threw out a huge amount of surplus milk in March last year. The son of the manager of a liquor store in Nakashibetsu, whose main industry is dairy farming, suggested the idea of producing the milk beer to local brewery Abashiri Beer.

Since one-third of the drink is milk, the drink has been viewed as a good way to use up milk in the town. The drink got the thumbs-up from 30-year-old resident Kaori Takahashi, who took part in a tasting session.

"It's got a fruity taste, so it will probably go well with sweets as well," she said.

Each 330 ml bottle costs 380 yen. For the time being sales will be restricted to Nakashibetsu, with six liquor stores selling the drink.

Available: <http://www.japanprobe.com/?p=1059>, Accessed: 3/07.

You know you're a Homebrewer:

IF you measure beer in gallons.

IF you have more than 10 gallons of beer in your home right now.

IF you don't think 10 gallons of beer is a lot.



Next Club Meeting: March 13th at

La Cuisine Restaurant
435 North Salina St
Syracuse, NY

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