

## **Next Meeting – Feb 12<sup>th</sup> at M. T. Barrels in West Dundee**

Back on the road again for Club Wort, this time to M.T. Barrels on 98 West Main. Ed Pawelko has arranged for a guided tour of the brewery, and the brew master, Frank Simai, will be showing us around and answering our questions. See everyone at 7:30 PM. Call (847) 426-4030 for directions.

## **Upcoming Club Events**

Saturday, February 16 – Club Wort Ind/Mich Pub Crawl. Last chance (if space) at Feb. Meeting.

Tuesday, March 11 – Monthly Meeting, Dirty Nellies. AHA Porter Contest. 7:30 PM.

## **The Proper Equipment**

At the January brew-in I got a first-hand look at our Club's equipment. I also got a feeling that some proper investment could make the task a whole lot easier. I was amazed that a partial mash/extract brew-in of 35 gallons with 6 people took over 7 hours. I am waiting anxiously for our committee to report back to us. I hope they present a whole concept, one that will show how the system will fit together using the equipment we now have plus new ideas to make the job a lot easier. Let the members decide whether the cost is too high – don't assume that we only want to spend a certain amount.

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### **INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

- 2** AHA/Area Beer Contests/Tastings
- 2** Classified Section
- 2** January Brew-In
- 3** Goose Island Rip-Off
- 3** Cooking With Beer; January Brew-In Pictures

## **Jan. 2008 Meeting Highlights**

Maybe it was too close to New Years, and members were still working off their hangovers, but only 11 members showed up.

Randy started the meeting talking about the proposed calendar of events for 2008. A brew-in has been scheduled every two months. All the other usual happenings – dues, elections, crawls, and parties – were on it.

Dirty Nellies asked for our help with their April fest. There was agreement that we would help out during the fest, as we figured they didn't need help bringing in brewers, although we were certainly open to that. Suspicions were that they merely wanted us to help them sell tickets. No one from Nellies was available to talk about it, however.

Next was the introduction of our three guests. Shawn and Jason had attended meetings before. They did not join the Club again. Michael Hudak is a friend of John Guilfoil's, and is interested in learning to brew. He has visited over 300 breweries and micro-breweries. Michael is our newest member.

The AHA Dark Lager contest received two entries. As it turns out, Elliot submitted both and won with the Schwarzbier from the June Nellies brew-in. His other beer was the Positively Porter that he had lagered, but the members saw through the deception.

Randy talked about the January brew-in (see story in this issue). It would be a partial mash/extract with 6 people coming to his house.

At meeting time, the pub crawl was in doubt as only 27 out of the needed 40 people had committed. Paul did a pre-crawl, and every location he visited was very enthusiastic about hosting us. If there wasn't going to be enough to cover the bus, a Chicago crawl option was available which would pay for itself with 27 participants.

The members agreed to travel to M.T. Barrels for the next meeting, assuming it could be arranged.

The most important topic was covered next: the balance in the Treasury. Phil Piotrowski felt that suspending the dues payments in 2008 made sense. I proposed that we invest in enough equipment to enable the Club to brew 60 gallons on its own equipment. It was decided to form an equipment committee to report back to the membership with a plan. Randy, Elliot and Jim Holbach, I believe, volunteered to sit on the committee. Elliot then showed a fancy wort-chilling device, incorporating both a self-priming pump and a terminator. Since the expense, even with us supplying our terminator, would be \$700, it was decided to look into producing our own version.

Randy said he was contacted by a Ray Hill, a brewer from Missouri, who wanted to talk to us. It was decided to invite him to our March meeting. Randy then reminded everyone about the April elections, and asked that everyone consider serving in some capacity.

Rich Sieben gave the Sieben's Beer update. Supposedly, 25 barrels were being brewed, but he couldn't contact the brewer as his voicemail was full. This latest batch will be kept in barrels in the hope of getting more outlets to carry Sieben's.

Brad Griffin volunteered to update the information on the Club's website. Fred Schumann said he had friends who might help re-design it, and would have them look at it.

The official meeting ended with a toast to Ralph Schneider, wishing him good health.

## **AHA Beer Contests**

March 2008 – Porter (12)

April 2008 – Any beer that had extracts comprising at least 50% of fermentables.

July 2008 – Meads (24, 25, 26)

September 2008 – Imperialized versions of any style.

Note the style guideline numbers and letters after each beer. You can check at [www.beertown.org](http://www.beertown.org) to get the style info.

## **Classified Section**

Nothing for sale at this time.

## **January Brew-In**

It was 25 degrees, there was snow on the ground, and here I was thinking, "What great weather." You see, we were scheduled to do the Vienna Lager brew-in the Saturday before. That day it was 5 degrees with a 20+ mile wind blowing. However, as I succinctly put it, "Brewing is supposed to be fun, and while we might be able to accomplish it, it won't be fun." We all agreed to a week's delay.

Randy Drumta's garage was already warm from the water heating when I arrived. This was his first brew-in in the garage, and he was pleasantly surprised that the drain in the floor was working, as he had never really used it. Although Jim Brewer had to leave soon after we started, 5 members (Rich Sieben, Randy, Jim Holbach, Phil Piotrowski, and I) along with Jim's friend Patrick soon got the brewing going.

Rich had his RIM system working on the partial mash; at least until the paddles stopped turning and the liquid stopped circulating. He spent the next half hour or so trying to re-fit the turning mechanism over the paddle shaft. We then decided to bail out the liquid so he could get a better look. We grabbed a stainless pot and filled it.

Unfortunately, no one noticed the thermometer hole

in the pot until Phil commented on the slippery floor. In the meantime, Rich discovered that the pin on the shaft was bent due to the weight of the grain. Jim attempted to fix it, but the paddle wasn't up to it. We then shifted to hand stirring with a paddle.

It was lunchtime by then, and so we dined on chili and grilled cheese sandwiches. There was a variety of beer that had been kept cold in the snow. Jim made the corniest joke about having a flat tire, and then whipping out his bottle of Flat Tire after we offered to help him with it.

We had two visitors that day. Elliot Hamilton stopped by to take pictures and eat lunch. Mark Procter came in the afternoon to drink and help out.

The remainder of the afternoon consisted of boiling the wort in our three kettles, running the wort through the terminator to cool (the cold water that day doing a little too good of a job cooling), and then pitching our yeast. We had a leakage problem using the terminator until we realized that there was no reason to have two hoses joined with a leaky connector: we just needed one of those hoses as it was long enough. The clean-up worked wonderfully when we could use the hot water from the cooling process. No one wanted to work on the last kettle as there was only the ice-cold water from the hose. The day ended around 4:30 or so with everyone taking home their Vienna.

## Goose Island Rip-off

*Posting from bulletin board forwarded by Roger Santagato*

Upon arriving, we were greeted by a menu consisting of about 1/3 of the choices that were previously included on the beloved Goose Island menu (granted, the same wonderful beer menu remains). When we asked our server if the menu changed permanently, he vigorously noted that it has changed, but "the quality has improved significantly," due to the higher-quality beef and larger burger.

What was eye-popping was the much higher prices for the sandwiches and burgers (take note critics of the Paramount Room), which had increased from \$8.95 from \$13! In addition, if you wanted to sub something else for fries, that was an additional \$2 (it was standard previously). Previous favorites, including Turkey Burgers and Buffalo Burgers, are now off of the menu.

We were told, however, that we can substitute chicken for the burger, but it was the same \$13 + \$2 price for a chicken sandwich and mushrooms. \$15 for a grilled chicken sandwich? If the selling point is more quality beef and larger burgers for the price, then why the same chicken sandwich for a full \$6 more?

## Cooking With Beer

This dip goes well with bread, tortilla chips, pretzels or sturdy crackers.

2 T Unsalted butter

½ C Each: Chopped onion and chopped smoked sausage

12 oz. Dark beer (no style specified by the ignorant food editor)

8 oz. Cream cheese

2 T Dijon mustard

4 C Shredded white cheddar cheese

6 Drops Hot pepper sauce

Melt butter in saucepan over medium heat and cook onion until it softens, 3 minutes. Add sausage and cook until hot, 8 minutes. Drain fat. Add beer, cream cheese and mustard; cook, stirring, until the cream cheese has melted. Remove from heat and stir in cheddar cheese a handful at a time, then the hot sauce. Put into greased 1-quart baking dish and cook 25 minutes at 350 degrees, or can refrigerate for 3 days and then use, warming to room temperature before baking.

# Jan. 2008 Brew-In Pictures

*Pictures by Elliot Hamilton*

