

Christmas Party – Dec 9

By now, everyone should be sick of seeing Barry's emails and responded to his invitation to the Club Wort Christmas Party. At the bargain price of \$5 for dinner, how can you go wrong? Hopefully you kept a map leading to Barry's clubhouse. If not, I'm sure he will send it out again. AHA Belgian and French ale contest will be held .

Upcoming Club Events

Tuesday, Jan. 13 – Monthly meeting, Dirty Nellies, 7:00 PM. AHA Belgian and French Ale contest.

Saturday in Jan or Feb – Club Wort Pub Crawl, date, time, and locations TBA.

Thanks

As I write this the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, I want to give out some thanks for 2008. Thanks to our officers, Randy, Brad, Mark, Dan, Bill, and Eric. Thanks to Jim A and John for the library and the tasting. Thanks to the equipment committee Randy, Elliot, and Jim H. Thanks to the pub crawl organizers Paul, John, and Mike H. Thanks to Barry for the Christmas party. Thanks to Mark and Laura for the picnic. Thanks to Jim T for the Great Taste and the grain buying. Thanks to Jay D for the whiskey barrel. Thanks to Wort News contributors Barry, Elliot, Brad, Eric, Roger, and Phil.

November 2008 Meeting Minutes

Written by Elliot Hamilton

This tainted reporter was ready to perform violent acts at Dirty Nellie's upon learning that due to a band playing in "our" space, we'd have the privilege of sitting at the bar for our meeting. Fortunately for all involved, the staff offered their basement conference room. It was a bit cozy (but quiet) and even Mr. Taint approved of the venue.

C-W continues to show its strength with 14 members and three domestic partners in attendance. Numerous homebrews (but only one contest entry) kept the meeting lively.

Barry Filerman, expecting that no one would have suggestions (we try to please) came ready with tiny catering menus for the upcoming holiday party. Everybody was able to vote on what they'd like to see at the serving trays. Barry and Karen promised a fair election; expect to see the results on December 9th. The membership voted to charge \$5 to those attending the party, with the club treasury paying for the remainder. Barry will be generating interest in the party by a constant stream of emails reminding members.

Recent brew-in host Randy Drumtra gave a status report on the barley wine. The gravity started at 1.090 but only fermented to 1.050. A few of the participants helped Randy transfer the contents to the whiskey barrel several days after the brew-in. Regarding the gravity, the consensus was to add more alcohol tolerant yeast to deal with the high reading. Then again, perhaps all the fermentable sugar is gone?

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The winter pub crawl team of John Guilfoil, Barry Filerman, and Mike Hudak suggested a Chicago area event. Several dates surrounding the super bowl were put up for consideration. A few people wanted to select February 14, also known as "St. Valentine's Day." The pros and cons of having the event on that day ensued with an even split between those thinking that a pub crawl would be a perfect Valentine treat to those who thought it would be a personal disaster.

Mark Proctor proudly announced getting his "MBA" from Goose Island Brewing Company. (MBA: Master of Beer Appreciation") It required consuming 35 different Goose Island beers over a course of 10 years. I'm sure Mark had to retake certain portions of the class to insure his training was at the appropriate level.

Since we can't leave the membership arrangements alone, this reporter and Jim Arendt suggested the Club review at a later date the concept of a "maximum level of investment" in C-W. Modeled after other organizations, the level of investment would be set at a fixed amount (in our case, \$100). Once a member has reached that level by paying annual dues, further dues would no longer be assessed, in essence making a life membership. Special assessments would occur if there was a need to infuse more money into the treasury (hear that, Mr. Paulson?). No vote was taken; the intent of mentioning this concept was to get the members thinking about the idea.

Mr. Filerman won the coveted C-W trophy for the winning entry in tonight's IPA contest. See the complete write up in Barry's "tonight's beers" column. Hahaha it was an excellent beer which would have easily won top honors even with competition. Watch out, Eric Raz! Previous trophy winner John Guilfoil reluctantly handed over the prize.

Several members commented that club members should more have small scale brew-ins, that is, a

brew-in outside of the normally scheduled large capacity brew-ins to prepare contest beer. (For some reason, I have heard this before. Perhaps it is just my imagination.)

This reporter took the floor (Nellie's didn't need it anyway) to discuss a few items:

>A small scale -- "only" 40 gallons -- of Positively Porter was concocted over the weekend of November 8th. They were proud to report a stuck mill, a stuck driveway, and the usual stuck mashes. (Stuck mill: the roasted barley hit the rollers first and simply rolled along the opening instead of passing through the opening. Stuck driveway: after rinsing a few mash tuns, the excess grain formed a dam across a portion of the driveway causing a small lake to form.)

>The Sieben's Brewing Company is still reporting its usual tale of woe: no distributor. With special arrangements, the beer will be served at Arlington Height's "Christkindlemarket" which is scheduled for the three days after Thanksgiving.

>Special thanks were given to member Barry Filerman and his wife, Karen Filerman, for their efforts in organizing this year's holiday party.

>The Club elections are getting close. Everyone should be thinking which position they would like to hold in the Club's management.

Erica Raz (the better half of Eric Raz) mentioned in last month's newsletter, the statement "...that we don't want to get too organized with by-laws, that we now have some protection by being disorganized..." was attributed to her. This was a surprise to Erica since she wasn't at the meeting. Karen Filerman claimed responsibility for the statement.

President Brad Griffin told us to expect an invitation to a google-groups email list for Club Wort. The intention of the list is to simplify spamming the members.

Nov. 2008 Tasting Notes

Written by Barry Filerman

This month's meeting brought us the IPA contest. Yours truly was the only member to bring a contest beer which was brewed to be an imperial IPA.

While my beer was enjoyed by all, Eric pointed out that in order to be a true imperial IPA, it was short on hop aroma and bitterness to balance the extreme amount of malt in the beer. As a result of being the only member to enter a beer, I took home the trophy by default. Not 15 minutes out of the box, the trophy broke again but due to my talent with super glue, I repaired it and it is now proudly displayed on my kitchen table.

In addition to the IPA contest, we had a number of other beers provided by our members. Jim Arendt provided the first beer which was the blonde ale from our weeknight brew-in which has colorfully been nicknamed Cottonwood Ale due to the cottonwood seeds that were blowing around the kettles while we were mashing and brewing it. While it was a good solid beer, members commented that it was too sweet and for some reason did not turn out like the other shares that were taken from the brew in.

The next beer was a Cream Ale provided by Eric. Eric commented that he brewed this beer with Sorachi Ace hops and that he wanted to try this strain in a beer. Members commented that the unusual hops added a nice bitterness.

Even was up next with a brown ale that he indicated that he used 4 ounces of hops during the brewing process. Members commented that the ale was true to style and really just a nice beer.

Next, Eric broke out his next beer, a pale ale. As usual, Eric provided members with an exquisite pale with really nice hoppy flavor.

Following Eric was Patrick with an English bitter that was brewed at Flatlander's in Lincolnshire as a part of a public brew-in where 17 barrels of beer

was brewed. Everyone agreed that the bitter was delicious and showed interest in the next Flatlander's brew-in. The event will be in March and will be announced to club members when sign up becomes available.

Eric surprised club members with yet another of his fabulous brewing creations, a beer that he indicated was a sweet stout/old ale in which he used bourbon soaked wood chips that he had lying around. Everyone really enjoyed this beer and commented that it was really quite unique.

Following Eric's final beer of the evening was Jim "The Belgian Beer Master" (sorry, too many Jims and I forgot to write down your last name) with a Belgian dubbel. Jim provided members with a really solid and delicious beer. Members commented that it was really tasty and a nice beer. I believe I took seconds which is probably why I did not write down your last name.

Up next was Randy with a Schwartz beer. While Randy indicated that the beer is better on tap, members commented that it was really a good beer and it was enjoyed by all.

The final beer of the night was a Porter that was provided by Dave. This was a porter that was brewed using the Positively Porter recipe. Members commented that this beer had a really nice, strong coffee flavor and was true to style. Members and Dave agreed that the beer was perfect based on 6 brew-ins where it was made.

Next month brings the annual Club Wort Holiday Party hosted by yours truly. The party will get under way at 6:00 pm with good beers and good conversation and the Italian buffet will open at approximately 6:45. Hope to see you all there!

AHA Beer Contests

March 2009 – Any beer with a style specifying an original gravity over 1.080.

April 2009 – Any extract beer.

August 2009 – Amber hybrid (7)

September 2009 – European Amber Lager (3)

November 2009 – Belgian Strong Ale (18)

January 2010 – English Brown Ale (11)

Note the style guideline numbers and letters after each beer. You can check at

www.beertown.org to get the style info.

Classified Section

Club Wort T-Shirts in the following sizes:

Medium (2); Large (7), X-large (7). Cost is \$10.

Contact Paul Lange at pdlange@rockwoodco.com.

Three-pound (1 Quart) containers of honey; Cost is \$7.50; Contact Elliot Hamilton at elliott@ml1.net

The New Guys in Town

As Sieben's beer flounders, here's another local trying to become the next Bud. Meet Doug and Tracy Hurst of Metropolitan Brewing LLC.

Technically, this craft brewery doesn't exist yet. At last summer's Alefest Chicago and the Great Taste, they were drawing the pours out of a double-decker Craftsman toolbox retrofitted with a tap. But, Doug and Tracy Hurst are busy putting together their brewery at 5121 N. Ravenswood and are looking to open sometime soon. Their equipment came from a defunct Chinese brewery, and since October has been in place in their location along with 128 ½ barrels, a fork-lift, and a glycol chiller.

The business has been in the works for years, since Doug graduated from Siebel Institute in 2004. A former audiovisual engineer who's been brewing at home for nearly 20 years, he makes Metropolitan's current offerings using a six-gallon system. They have decided to concentrate on lagers, even though, according to Tracy, they take twice as long and are more expensive to produce than the normal ale selection of most craft brewers. "Starting a brewery is risky enough anyway," she says. "Why not just go for the gold and do what we really want to do?"

They have developed a number of beers so far. Their two main beers are a copper and a bright lager. Seasonal beers they have produced so far include an Oktoberfest, Doppelbock, and a Kolsch.

They both have quit their day jobs to devote full-time to the start-up. And the potential competition with the entrenched brewers doesn't faze them. As they see it, craft beers don't compete with each other so much as the industry as a whole competes with mega corporations like MillerCoors and InbevAnheuser-Busch. As a matter of fact, Doug sees an upside for small producers in the internationalization of the big guys. "People are concerned about where American beer is going – it's not going anywhere, it's staying right here," he says. "The more craft beer makers there are, the more people drink craft beer."

Tracy and Doug seem to be really into their dream. Their website, metrobrewing.com, features not only a description of their beers, background on the company, and info on past and upcoming events (not up-to-date, though), but also a blog about their daily progress, documenting events like having 300 pounds of hops delivered to their apartment.

A final quote from Tracy: "We like to say that craft beer is our boss – we bow in deference to it. We don't run the brewery, the brewery runs us."

Corrections to Roster

I will finally get this right this month:

Rick Rodriguez's email should be rick_rodriguez@hotmail.com.

Adam's Ribs Road Trip

Pictures by Elliot Hamilton

