



Next Meeting – Jan 13

We'll be back at Durty Nellies celebrating the new year with discussions about the pub crawl, new brew-ins, and other exciting stuff. Bring your 4 bottles of homebrew or contribute to the kitty. AHA Belgian and French ale contest will be held.

Upcoming Club Events

Tuesday, Feb. 10 – Monthly meeting, Durty Nellies, 7:30 PM.

Saturday, Feb 21 – Club Wort Pub Crawl, time and locations TBA.

More Thanks

Since I haven't made the last two meetings (the first time I ever missed two meetings in a row) I don't have any burning issues to write about. Although I thanked a bunch of people last issue for their efforts this last year, I would like to single out Barry Filerman and Randy Drumtra for this issue's kudos. Both of them have been on a roll for the Club lately. Barry was the guiding force behind our Christmas party. You can read the third installment of his Tasting Notes column farther in the issue. He apparently also is involved in the pub crawl. Randy did a hell of a lot of work for the bourbon-barrel barley wine brew-in, and is updating the web-site. We need more members like those two.

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Christmas Party 2008

Written by Roger Santagato

As is our custom the December meeting was our annual Christmas or Holiday party, depending on your preferences. I have always had a fondness for Boxing Day, cool name.

On a very bad snowy night we met at Barry's condo party room. I personally had a lot of trouble (traffic and being map challenged) finding the place. But now I know where it is I would gladly vote for the same spot next year. Their party room was very cozy. The room's Christmas decorations and snowy landscape were a plus.

I tried counting everyone and I got to about 32 members and guests. I hope everyone who committed to be there showed up. I had a great time. The food was catered, forgot who. Members and guests had a choice of Italian beef, Italian sausage, chicken vesuvio, roasted potatoes, baked mostaccioli, lasagna, and Caesar salad.

Oh, during the party there was an ugly rumor going around that we also got a tray of cannoli's. Supposedly Barry hid them in his condo and was going to trade them to our Governor to be Illinois' Grand Beer Poobah. All I can say is: untrue.

The food hit of the party seemed to be the Lasagna. I really liked it and I received a lot of favorable comments on it. I also liked the sausage and potatoes. I and (name redacted) or should I just say Member A thought the beef was tasty, but tough. Member B liked all the food, but didn't care too much for the weather. They suggested, in the future, we only hold the party on good weather days. ;-)

The other big hit was Phil's krupnik. Member A thought it was even better than last year's. He attributed it to more cinnamon. I don't know if I agree. But if Phil gives me a bottle of each I will review them and make some comments in a future newsletter.

I was unable to drink, but I received favorable comments on Barry's coconut porter and the second-runnings from our barley wine brew-in. For more info on the beers see Barry's tasting notes.

We had a quick meeting where everyone decided not to have a meeting. I think there were 2 contest beers, which was postponed to our January meeting. There was some informal talk about the pub crawl, but more discussion will be held at our January meeting.

I am sure all the attendees would agree with me: big KUDOS to Barry and his wife. I hoped he got some help with the cleanup. Congratulations and Happy New Year to all, another successful club event.

Christmas 2008 Tasting Notes

Written by Barry Filerman

This month's meeting was in the form of the club's annual holiday party hosted by yours truly. The beers were plentiful. Due to my responsibilities as host and food coordinator, I did not take my usual notes about the beers that were consumed (and, man did I consume) but I am going to do my best at recounting the assorted beverages. If I miss any names, I want to apologize in advance.

There were a few varietals of the last brew in beer, a barrel fermented barley wine. Eric provided some of the first runnings of which members commented that it was too young but it was enjoyed nonetheless.

We also had a couple of members provide some of the second runnings. Randy provided his version which he kicked up with spices and honey. I heard multiple positive comments from members and wives that they really enjoyed this beer and that the additions Randy made really added some nice character to the beer.

Jim Thommes provided another in his series of fine Belgian beers. I really enjoyed this beer and had a few glasses of it but did not hear any other comments about it.

Elliot strolled in with a high gravity brew which I believe he said was brown ale. This again, I really enjoyed but it for sure was a high gravity beer since after I drank it, I seemed to lose count of how many beers I had consumed.

I provided spiced Christmas ale that I brewed back in April and have been aging ever since. Some really liked the beer but some said that it had too much spice (which I agreed with).

I was also privy to taste a Belgian dubbel that Brad brewed to enter into the Belgian/French ale contest that did not happen. Brad's dubbel was astounding and was perfect to style. This was a beer that I could sit back and drink a lot of.

I went head to head with my Belgian wit that I brewed a while back with orange and coriander. While I thought that the beer had too much orange in it, Eric commented that it was good because he really likes citrus. As I mentioned, the Belgian/French ale contest did not happen because Rick could not make it to the party due to illness so the contest was postponed. We hope that Rick will be feeling better in January and will be able to make it to our usual meeting spot.

We were also treated to many micro brews and the one that comes to mind is the St. Bernardis Christmas Abbey Ale. I was really delighted with this Belgian Abbey. Everyone else seemed to enjoy it as well. I liked it so much, the following day, I

went to Binny's and bought a bottle for Christmas Eve. Word to the wise, if you want some, go get it. There were only a few bottles left. Binny's also had a rather impressive selection of winter seasonals from many, many breweries. I spent way too much money there but it is worth it!

Last but not least, Phil delighted everyone with his annual holiday servings of Krupnik. This was my first experience with Phil's nectar of the gods and I have to say that I don't think I have ever tasted anything so delicious in my life. Members agreed and everyone seemed to enjoy this delicious concoction of grain alcohol, brandy and honey. For anyone interested in making up a batch of this delicious drink, the recipe is posted on the club Web site, www.clubwort.net.

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 elliioth@ml1.net

Hold That Bud

A decade ago, Anheuser-Busch began dangling financial incentives to get beer distributors to jettison rival brands. The campaign, known as “100% Share of Mind,” was a big hit, helping the King of Beers tighten its grip on the U.S. market.

But now, some distributors are finding that selling only Anheuser products might not be smart in the fast-changing alcohol-beverage industry.

Distributors in Texas, Tennessee and elsewhere have decided to eschew incentives and begin selling rival beers such as Yuengling Lager, as well as wine and spirits.

The shift might help competing alcohol brands gain market share as distributors divert some of their attention from Anheuser, which accounts for 48% of U.S. beer sales. For consumers, it means greater choice at their local bars and liquor stores. For craft beers, it means an opening into the mass market.

In recent years, some of A-B's 560 independent distributors became frustrated as craft brands such as New Belgium Brewing's Fat Tire surged in popularity and rival distributors snatched them up. These same distributors peddled Miller and Coors.

A-B wholesalers are realizing that they made the competition stronger by forfeiting brands to them. In many states, only one distributor can carry a brand (as you should know if you have been following the saga of Sieben's Beer in the newsletter). Some have decided that the potential profits from more brands is better than the cash payments, access to credit, and truck painting allowance given to the exclusive distributors.

In Tennessee, 11 distributors took on Yuengling when the Pennsylvania stalwart decided to enter the state. After a few months, it had a 3% market share as 3 out of 4 main A-B brands declined in sales. In addition, A-B wasn't happy in that the distributors informed them somewhat after the fact about dropping the exclusivity.

Random Pictures

Pictures by Elliot Hamilton

The purchase of Anheuser by InBev won't help the situation any, since A-B already had an agreement to distribute those brands before, and their distributors were running afoul of the exclusivity rules so they couldn't carry them. Unless A-B gets more market share out of the existing Bud brands, look for more defections. In a flat market, distributor's financial health depends on a deep roster of products.

Cooking With Beer

Cheddar-Ale Soup:

1 tblspn cooking oil

1 large onion, chopped

12-oz brown ale

36-oz pre-cooked, diced, peeled potatoes

1 cup water

28-oz chicken broth

2 ½ cups milk

1 tblspn flour

2 cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese

1 small chopped red bell pepper

Heat oil over medium heat. Add onion and cook until softened. Add beer and heat to boil, cooking 5 minutes. Add potatoes, broth, and water. Cover, heat to boil, then simmer until potatoes are tender (approximately 10 minutes). Remove from heat and mash potatoes with a potato masher.

Whisk milk and flour together and add to soup. Heat to a simmer and whisk occasionally for 3 minutes until thickened. Remove from heat: stir in 1 ½ cups of the cheddar until melted. Ladle the soup into bowls and garnish with the remaining cheese and bell peppers. Makes 8 servings.

