



March 10 Road Trip to Fox & Hounds

Gentlemen, start your engines and head out to Fox & Hounds, 1416 N. Roselle in Schaumburg. Be prepared for complimentary appetizers and \$2.00 drafts. As with all road trips, no homebrew should be brought. Save it for the April meeting instead.

Upcoming Club Events

Tuesday, April 14, Monthly meeting, Dirty Nellies, 7:30 PM. Club Elections, Dues Payments, AHA any extract beer contest.

Tuesday, May 12 – Monthly meeting, Dirty Nellies

Club Elections

Here is my annual editorial about Club Elections. I talk about this every year because the importance of this to the Club. We have had excellent officers and the Club has thrived. We have had mediocre officers and the Club limped or even went downhill. If you think you have some new ideas, or just want to do your share to help out the Club, come to March's meeting and indicate your willingness to serve. And I am not only talking about President, V.P., or Treasurer. There are other, volunteer posts like Newsletter Editor, Librarian, and Beer Steward that need new blood both for the good of the Club and to relieve the current member's workload.

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February 2009 Meeting

It was a pleasure to attend my first Club meeting in 4 months as 19 members and a guest gathered in Nellies' upstairs room. Nametags awaited each member.

The meeting started off on a sour note as our beer bitch was missing and we couldn't get our tastings off to a good start. Luckily, John Guilfoil finally made his appearance.

Our guest, Rob Wagus, was introduced by Randy Drumtra. Rob has used Randy's equipment to brew his beer. He was impressed with our Club as he became our newest member at the end of the evening.

Jim Arendt was introduced as the creator of the nametags. He promised to correct any typos like "Even" Van Dyke's. He asked that members leave them behind for re-distribution at future meetings.

Barry Filerman talked about the upcoming pub crawl. As of that night, 40 people had reserved a spot. That was short of the 53 that John was saying was the minimum to pay for the bus, but it was discovered that John has a math problem and break-even was 50. After much discussion and hearing the treasury balance of \$1,357.92, the membership voted to subsidize any difference. As the evening went on, more reservations appeared to make any need of a subsidy a moot point.

The upcoming road trip to Fox and Hounds in Arlington Heights was next on the agenda. No appetizers or any private room was to be expected, although the beer was to be \$2.00. Jim Thommes, who had proposed a Fox and Hounds in Schaumburg road trip previously, said that he had

been promised free appetizers. Based on Jim confirming the freebies, the Club voted to go to Schaumburg.

President Brad distributed a calendar for the year with such items as brew-ins, the Great Taste, and the May 2 Big Brew-in listed. Talk about brew-ins elicited a suggestion that the picnic be combined with a brew-in since the picnic always has attendance problems. There was a lot of divided opinion on that, so the idea was tabled for the future. I then proposed that we fix the Winter Pub Crawl date as the weekend before the Super Bowl. Paul Lange said that his January's are usually pretty full, and since he provides the extra people to make the crawl happen, I then proposed a February weekend. Conflicts with Valentine's Day were voiced, and so that proposal was also tabled.

Evan next proposed that the Club purchase a cider press. Jim T said he has one, and has access to another, so it didn't seem to make sense for the Club to buy one. Jim said that the success of a Club cider group pressing depends on Club members having apple trees to provide the tons of different apples needed.

The latest Sieben's update was given by Elliot Hamilton. No distributor in sight, Elliot still has 15 cases in his garage.

Randy proposed a March 21 brew-in using the whiskey barrel but brewing a smaller gravity beer.

Phil Piotrowski passed around cork coasters with the Club Wort insignia that had been produced by a friend who has a laser cutter. He needed a minimum order of 40 coasters. Pricing ranged from around \$5 to \$8 per coaster depending on the thickness.

I donated a book to the library (see the article in this newsletter). Barry asked all members going to the March 14 Flatlanders brew-in to raise their hand, and 10 members indicated they would be there. Finally, we had the AHA Big Beer contest (see

Barry's tasting notes that follow).

February 2009 Tasting Notes

Written by Barry Filerman

This month brought us not only the any style over 1.080 gravity contest but also many delicious beers. The evening started off with Jim Thommes poured a Belgian dubbel that he brewed using Syrian goldings hops and fermented with Wyeast 1214. Members commented that there was something funky but that it was good funky.

Next, Evan poured what he referred to as a generic Belgian that he used honey in. Members commented that the beer had excellent clarity and was really nice and smooth.

Eric treated us to some mystery ale. He noted that he used pale malt and lots & lots of Amarillo hops. At first sip, I thought that it had a funny aftertaste but after a few sips, I realized that it was only because it was just because it was so heavily hopped. Members commented that it was really good to the nose with hop aroma and that it was reminiscent of a heavily hopped wheat beer.

Next, Jim Holbach poured some of the second runnings from the barley wine brew in. Members commented that it was nice, light and easy drinking and could be renamed summer ale and served again in the summer.

The next pours were the contest beers where we were treated to a barley wine, imperial IPA and a Russian imperial stout. After all was said and done, the Russian Imperial Stout took the trophy home. It escapes me who brewed this beer but whoever you are, thanks for taking the trophy from me. I was getting tired of fixing it. And of course, congratulations!!

Next we had a beer that was collaboration between Randy and company. It was a pale ale brewed with cascade hops. Members commented that the usual

pale bitterness was there and really nice but it was lacking aroma.

Dave Banks had the next pour where he treated us to some Griffin's Spit IPA which is a beloved club recipe. This beer was nothing short of delicious with great bitterness and aroma. This beer went over really well as members all commented how excellent it was.

Last but not least, Eric poured an imperial IPA that he and I brewed together in the middle of a snowstorm in his garage. This IPA was brewed using Belgian candy sugar and Belgian specialty grains. Members commented that it was very tasty and had significant hop aroma.

AHA Beer Contests

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 ellieth@ml1.net

The History of Commercial Brewing in America

At the February meeting the Club Wort library received a new addition, Ambitious Brew – The Story of American Beer by Maureen Ogle. The whole Club membership, in my opinion, should put itself on the waiting list to read it.

I'm sure most of you have this view of American brewing history:

Back in the old days, Americans enjoyed an abundance of fine, local beers from thousands of breweries whose skilled brewers crafted ales using barley, hops, yeast and water. Prohibition stopped that halcyon age, and when it ended, hundreds of breweries, many owned by old brewing families, reopened intending to brew only the finest and purest of beers. Alas, their dreams died thanks to the conniving of a handful of corporate behemoths – Anheuser-Busch, Schlitz, Pabst, and Miller. These big brewers scorned honest beer in favor of watery swill brewed from cheap corn and rice, and used crass commercials to sell their foul brew to working-class people. By the 1970's only a handful of brewers remained and American beer was a thin, yellow concoction with no flavor and less body. Baby Boomers in the 60's and 70's backpacked through Europe and discovered “real” ales and stouts. They returned eager to make beer at home, and graduated to microbreweries and brewpubs by the 80's. These new artisans crafted beer of the purest and most flavorful sort – and so real beer was rescued from the corporate dragons.

After you finish reading this book, you will definitely rethink your view of history. On top of it, you will also find out such interesting facts as:

1. Why isn't Joseph Schlitz buried in Milwaukee?
2. Who originated Budweiser, and what breweries brewed it, sometimes at the same time?
3. Which beer could also be called _____ Blue Ribbon Beer?
4. Who really was responsible for Prohibition?
5. How did breweries survive Prohibition?
6. Why did all those family breweries go out of business after Prohibition?

7. How did Sieben's brewery help start the microbrewery business?
8. Exactly what did Schlitz do to its beer formula in the 70's?
9. Why should Jim Koch be honored by the craft beer industry, and why was he so reviled but successful?
10. Why did Miller succeed where Schlitz, Pabst, and Blatz failed?

2009 Pub Crawl

This narrative starts at Rock Bottom Brewery at State & Grand. I had to work on Saturday, and so met the group after the bus had unloaded. It was practically a full bus (thank you, Paul Lange), so the Club wound up making a couple of bucks after all.

Rock Bottom had two beer lists. There were their 5 regular beers and a subsidiary list of 10 other, special beers. The ten other beers ran towards the bigger, tastier, and expensive range, with 5 of them at least 8% or more in alcohol level. All their beer suffered from being served too cold, but if you warmed them, they had pretty good flavor. They did have the best sampler package (beer per \$) I've seen – you got their 5 regulars and 3 of the specials (24-oz) for \$6.79. Barry Filerman had gotten a ticket for the sausage fest being held in their upstairs room, and thought it was a good time.

With Paul Lange's help, we got hustled out of there and bused over to Piece at North and Damen. As soon as we walked in the door we were met by their door bitch who informed us that all tables were full and we would have to get on a list so we could sit down. John Guilfoil had gotten a different story about being welcome when he had called, but the bitch told him he got the story all wrong. Some members signed up for tables; while others proceeded to the bar which was 3-deep before we got there (I wish I owned that place). Myself, I didn't want pizza, their only entrée, so I walked

outside to Skewers on Damen, where I got 2 skewers of chicken, 1 of filet, and 1 of veggies along with a bowl of rice for \$8.25.

Upon returning, I was gratified to see that most people had gotten seated. I had not been impressed with Piece's beer the last time we visited, so I pounced on a Bell's Porter. I was mistaken about Piece's beers, though, as I had their Double-IPA after everyone raved about it.

The last stop was Beer Bistro on Madison and Morgan. They were most friendly, giving us their rumpus room in the basement, and insuring we had adequate wait-help. I got to try the newest brewery in town, Metropolitan, as their Flywheel was on tap.

Our trip back was conducted in relative silence as you might expect. I got off the bus at the first stop in Northbrook, and got home at the expected time. A big thanks to John, Barry, and Mike Hudak for organizing a surprising good crawl.

Christmas Party Pictures

Taken by Elliot Hamilton



