



## Next Meeting – June 9

I think it is time to pressure Nellies to let us have our meeting outside to enjoy the good weather and relative quiet. Bring your 4 bottles of homebrew or \$5 and come enjoy our 7:30 PM meeting.

## Upcoming Club Events

Tuesday, July 14 – Monthly meeting, Dirty Nellies.

Tuesday, August 11 – Monthly meeting, Dirty Nellies, AHA Amber Hybrid contest.

## T-Shirts

I have been asking about this informally for awhile, but since no one has risen to the occasion, I'll propose it in the newsletter. It's time to create a new T-shirt for Club Wort. The last one used the beer-glass logo. I propose that we go in some new direction to encourage members to buy a new one. I really don't need another shirt that looks the same as another one. I also like to believe we have imaginative members (or members of their families) that would create something very unique. One thing about t-shirts is that it demands an investment upfront from the Treasury. God knows, we've been talking about using the Treasury for a good cause. We should then sell them at cost to the members as we really don't need to make money on this, unless outsiders want to buy one.

## May 2009 Meeting

It was one of those meetings that I started counting the attendees at the beginning, and I revised the number 4 times as we got to 17 members and 5 guests. This meeting was homebrew heaven, as we tasted an extraordinary amount.

The first business addressed was organizing the tables so that everyone could hear and see what was going on. After the musical tables' number was finished, Eric introduced the guests. Father and son Bob and Nathan have brewed for 6 months, and already graduated to all-grain. John & Krista heard about us from Dirty Nellies beer fest. Josh Dewey has been brewing 6 months. Bob Wappel is a 4-month brewer. At the end of the meeting, Josh and Bob W. decided to join the Club.

The treasury function has been officially transferred to new Treasurer Dave Banks. The dues renewal went pretty well, with only a handful of members not renewing.

The brew-in was scheduled for May 23<sup>rd</sup>, but there were only two people besides Elliot who were going to be in attendance. As that was not enough to put on a brew-in, it was suggested that the date be delayed until May 30<sup>th</sup>. However, Elliot wouldn't be available that day. Randy Drumtra offered to host, but had to check his schedule. As we were talking about brew-ins, the next Flatlanders brew-in will be taking place in July.

Eric next brought up the picnic, which was a little surprising given that it normally doesn't happen until September. Mark and Laura Procter volunteered to again host it, but did not have any idea as to a good date. The idea of combining the picnic with a brew-in to boost attendance was once

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again advanced, but the prevailing sentiment was that it wouldn't appeal to too many members.

I brought up the fact that the Club Wort Google Group only had 26 signed up out of 44 members, and I had discovered that a lot of Club business was being conducted on the site that non-googling members were not privy to. I suggested that the moderator send out invitations to all Club members once again, or at least email members using the Club roster email list.

Eric mentioned the upcoming AHA contests, hoping to spur multiple entries. Elliot gave the dismal Sieben's Beer update: 10 cases of beer in his garage, looking for a free warehouse so they can become their own distributor. The Dirty Nellies beer fest was a success. Club Wort pitched in by serving beer at our table.

Members were polled concerning interest in another bad beer tasting class. Basically, additives mimicking beer problems are tasted by members so they can diagnose problems with their beer. Barry Filerman and Evan VanDyke volunteered to host the classes. Previously, the cost was split 50-50 between the Club and members. Eric will bring info for the next meeting.

The burgeoning treasury was next discussed. One idea advanced was granting life membership after a certain number of years. If that resulted in too much of a drain, special assessments could be done.

Finally, I asked about a new t-shirt. Patrick Smith thought his brother-in-law might design one.

## May 2009 Tasting Notes

*Written by Barry Filerman*

This month brought us 15 homebrews to sample including some from two new members. Good job to all who brought beers.

The first beer of the evening was a Hefeweizen provided by Mike Kolbuk. Mike indicated that he made the beer from a Mr. Beer kit that was way past

its prime that he had found lying around. Members commented that it was drinkable and lemony.

Others commented that it had a somewhat pumpkin flavor. Mike indicated that it may be from the aged aspect of the kit.

The second beer was a Red Rye Ale presented by two of our guests, father and son Bob & Nathan. Members commented that it was very tasty and finished dry.

Yours truly presented the third beer of the evening, one of a few Maibocks from the Flatlander's brew in. This one was fermented with Wyeast Northwest Ale 1332. Members commented that it had some spicy undertones.

Next, I poured my second offering of the evening and another version of the Flatlander's Maibock this time fermented with Rogue Pacman Ale yeast. Members commented that it also was spicy but had a nice bitter finish and outshined the previous beer.

The next offering was from Patrick who also treated us to a version of the Flatlander's Maibock. Patrick indicated that he used Wyeast European Ale 1338. Members liked this beer most of all and commented that it had a nice, fruity taste and was cleaner tasting than either of the previous two.

Following Patrick's shining Maibock, we were treated to another guest offering, this time from John who treated us to an English Bitter. John warned us that it turned out to be more of a Pale than a Bitter and he was right. Even though it was not true to style, members commented that they like the resinous, grapefruit flavors as well as the nice bittering.

Up next was another English Bitter from Brad. Brad's beer was commented as true to style and an excellent brew.

Following Brad, Randy poured a Martzen or more commonly known as an Oktoberfest. Members commented that the beer had a funny metallic taste.

Randy was puzzled because he did not do anything differently than he normally does.

Next, new member Josh Dewey treated us to a California Common or a Steam Beer. Members commented that while the beer was enjoyable, it had an off taste of coffee at the finish and was bitterer than the style.

Bob Wappel, another new member, poured an IPA that he made from a kit. Members commented that the beer was very good and had a nice oak flavor but that it had a diacetal aftertaste.

The next beer of the evening was provided courtesy of Elliot, a Barley Wine. Members thoroughly enjoyed this beer and commented that it had a whisky barrel feel and nice buttery flavors.

Up next was another intense brew from Eric. This month's offering was an Imperial IPA that of course contained an insane amount of hops and malt. Eric also indicated that he used the limited edition High Gravity Wyeast which was only available for a few months. Members commented that it was very tasty and smooth for the intense ABV.

## A Growth Business

In 2007, South Dakota businessman Steve Polley was scouting for ways to make some extra income when he saw a news headline: The price of hops was surging because of a global shortage.

At the time, Mr. Polley knew little about hops. Now, helped by a state agricultural grant, the 67-year-old harvested his first hops harvest on a small plot on his neighbor's land in Spearfish, S.D.

Mr. Polley is among a small but rising number of newcomers to attempt to grow hops on a commercial scale outside the Pacific Northwest. One of the most obscure crops in a long line of agriculture commodities to enjoy a recent price boom, hops are sprouting in numerous other locales, from Colorado to Wisconsin to New York. The growers aim to capitalize on hop prices much higher than a few years ago, as well as the nation's boom

in craft brewers like Colorado's New Belgium brewing co. and Odell Brewing Co., which are thirsty for locally grown hops.

"I'm convinced we have a chance to do something to help out the craft brewers" and make some money, says Mr. Polley, who also runs a legal-research firm.

For years, a world-wide glut of hops resulted in prices that were too low for U.S. growers to turn a profit. Many went bankrupt and sold their farms, says Ann George, administrator of Hop Growers of America, a trade group in Moxee, WA. "Frankly, for the last 20 years, people have been trying to figure out how not to be hop growers," she says. Ms. George has been inundated with phone calls from fledgling hops farmers seeking advice.

The U.S. is the second-largest producer of hops after Germany. In 2007, the harvest by the nation's roughly 70 commercial growers was valued at \$169 million, up from \$118 million in 2006. The last time it was that high was in 1995 when it reached \$135 million.

Until the 1920s, New York was the nation's hotbed for hops. However, two diseases – downy mildew and powdery mildew – crippled production, and the industry began moving to drier Western climates less susceptible to mildew. Today, nearly all of the nation's hops are grown in Washington, Oregon and Idaho.

The nascent hops farmers will be able to grow the plants, says Ms. George, but will likely struggle to turn a profit. Growers need specialized equipment and labor to take hop cones off their vines, dry them and pack them, and that gear will be expensive for anyone trying to process hops on a large scale. Prices have also been falling recently, as commercial farmers added acreage.

Many new hop farmers are focused on selling to brewers in their region. Rick Pedersen, a farmer in Seneca Castle, N.Y., began growing hops in 1999

but wasn't able to start selling them until just a few years ago, when the Ithaca Beer Co. in Ithaca, N.Y., became a customer. "It's not an easy thing to just start up from scratch," Mr. Pedersen says, adding he's still "not even close" to recouping his investment.

Colorado lacked the hop heritage of the Northeast. Colorado State University horticulturists got calls from hay farmers who didn't know that hops are perennials. "The level of ignorance is all over the board," says Ali Hamm from Colorado State.

Small brewers like Odell Brewing in Fort Collins, Co are interested in supporting area farmers as their use of "locally grown" ingredients helps them to woo regional customers, who are the primary audiences of craft beers. Craft beers also use more hops than mass-market recipes, so a greater crop supply also promises to hold down costs. Odell offers every year its Hand Picked Pale Ale – featuring organic hops grown at Colorado State University.

Some hops experts are skeptical about the prospects of the new growers. Ralph Olson, owner of a hop brokerage, predicts many growers won't be in business in a few years. Prices will come down, and insects can wreak havoc, he warns.

## 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](http://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](mailto:pdlange@rockwoodco.com).

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

Large Quantity of 12-oz Bottles; "Normal" and "Squatty" sizes with brewery labels; FREE! Contact Elliot Hamilton at [elliioth@ml1.net](mailto:elliioth@ml1.net)

## Brewing at Flatlanders

*Taken by "I Can't Remember Who It Was (Editor)"*



