



Next Meeting – Aug 11

I will finally hand over the Club Wort Trophy to the winner of the AHA Amber Hybrid contest that night. We missed sitting outside last meeting, so let's try to do it this time. We hope to vote on the T-shirt design. A lot of homebrew last meeting, let's keep it up with your 4 bottles or \$5 if you're out.

Upcoming Club Events

Saturday, August 22 – Club Wort picnic, Mark & Laura Procter's, 1:00 PM start.

Tuesday, Sept. 8 – Monthly meeting, Durty Nellies, 7:30 PM.

There's A Summer Place

The Club picnic has always been a most under-appreciated activity for our members. I, myself have never understood why attendance is always a fraction of the Christmas party, given that we are comparing a Saturday in the summer versus a Tuesday night in December, steaks or brisket on a grill versus catered food, and not having to go to work the next day versus going to work. That said, get your reservations into Mark & Laura so they know how much food the Club should buy, and, for god's sake, cancel if you know you can't make it. A dish to pass and some homebrew will complete your duties. See you there.

July 2009 Meeting

Wow, you would have thought that we were giving out \$100 bills to all attendees as 24 members gathered at Nellies for our meeting.

There were no guests, and despite Erik's expectations, members read the newsletter and did not bring any contest beer a month ahead of time.

Bad beer tasting information was next on the agenda. Evan Van Dyke confirmed that the tastings would be on July 21 and 28th. The Siebel kit had been purchased. There would be 10 different problems encountered, and there would be 3 different tastings of each. The Club was going to subsidize the difference between the cost and a charge of \$10 per participant.

The July brew-in had 8 participants already signed up, but there was no recipe picked. It appeared that Griffin Spit IPA would be the likely style. Members in attendance that night filled the remaining open slots.

New Club equipment followed the brew-in as Elliot Hamilton announced the purchase of 2 heat sticks. That left just the water box and the quick release valves from the original proposal. Elliot was going to work on the water box when his busy summer ended.

Laura and Mark gave out the information about the August 22 Club picnic. Reservations were needed.

I reported on the options for traveling to the Great Lakes Beer Fest on September 19 in Racine. Metra was the cheapest option, with a \$5 ticket getting you to Kenosha, but the leaving time got you back into the city near midnight. Amtrak was a \$36 round-trip ticket with a cab ride or bus ride additional. A

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school bus would cost \$640 and a full coach \$1,200. A poll of the members present indicated little interest in a Club trip.

Dave Banks was there in person, and reported the Treasury balance as \$1,983.29. Upcoming expenditures included book cards, bad beer tasting kit, and 2 new books. A third book, *Extreme Brewing*, was donated by John Nolan. Evan noted that the library was missing 2 books loaned out to former members, and was going to contact them.

Mark Dolezal then talked to us, requesting our help to do a presentation at Duke O'Brien's in Crystal Lake to a beer class he conducts every month. Erik, Mark and I volunteered to do it in September.

I had passed around earlier in the meeting a list of the brewers at the Great Lakes Beer Fest, and someone noted that there were two homebrew clubs from Illinois that were going to be serving beer. Members expressed interest in being involved next year.

Nathan Breitling passed around his drawings for our new T-shirts. Members had various suggestions for changes. Nathan said that he would modify the drawings for the next meeting. It was decided that the Club would do both a polo/golf shirt along with a T-shirt.

The last bit of business was a suggestion for a road trip. Establishments in Elk Grove Village and Algonquin/Crystal Lake were suggested. More info was to be brought to the next meeting.

July 2009 Tasting Notes

Written by Mike Kolbuk

As always, it's tough to take notes on the beer and the meeting at the same time, so my notes will be sparse compared to Barry's.

The first beer sampled was Elliot Hamilton's Classic American Pilsner. Tasting suspiciously like Sieben's Beer, it had been brewed 16 months ago and, as Elliot admitted, a little past its prime.

An Amber Ale from Josh Dewey received good comments as to the drinkability and taste.

Eric Raz surprised the meeting with a Porter containing coconut. A lovely bunch indeed contributed to an interesting taste.

Patrick Smith's English Bitter from October 2008 came in a little flat.

Following in Erik's footsteps, Bill Morgan brought a Green Tea Beer in which he used 50 tea bags. Certainly unique, but an aftertaste problem.

Jim Thommes's Pale Ale seemed to have gone a little awry.

Jim Holbach came in with the first Flatlander's Maibock of the evening, this one fermented with American Ale yeast.

I followed with my version of the Maibock, this one fermented with Bohemian Pilsner yeast and flavored with blackberry syrup. Members felt the flavoring came through with my expected subtlety.

Brad Griffin served an excellent Griffin Spit IPA.

Dave Banks dished out a Northern Brewer Kit Ale.

Mark Procter distributed a Barleywine.

The last two beers I have notes on were both Whiskey Oatmeal Stouts from a prior Club brew-in, but I only have Phil Piotrowski and not the other Club member's name.

A Stout Dream

We're in the midst of a recession (or depression). You're a home brewer and just lost your job. What springs into your mind? For me, it's find another job. But for a number of people across this great land, it's start a microbrewery or brewpub.

Schools that teach brewing are being showered with applications from people in getting into the business. Web sites such as BeerAdvocate.com say traffic has reached one million unique visitors a

month, and is rising as much as 12% each month. In 2008, even as a recession gripped the country, 114 microbreweries and brewpubs opened in the U.S., according to the Brewers Association. That is the highest number since 1999, and the association estimates that 200 already are on the drawing board for the next few years. All avid readers of *Wort's Brewing* know that I have profiled 3 such ventures in Chicago in the last 6 months.

For some of the new entrepreneurs, the desire to make beer predated the recession. "I got into it because my wife said I could (Editor's note – where can I find such a creature?), and it just seemed it would be a heck of a lot of fun," says Steve Klotz, a 46-year-old former Dow Chemical engineer who took a voluntary buyout in 2006 and plans this summer to open a microbrewery, Artful Dodger Brewing, in Midland, MI.

Beer entrepreneurs have also been emboldened by a long list of recent success stories in the beer arena as well as statistics showing that Americans are consuming craft beer in increasing numbers. Also, beer has long proved more resilient in recessions than other industries. Last year, while total beer sales increased 0.5% by volume, craft beer rose 6%. Beer is taking market share away from distilled spirits. People who used to drink \$15 martinis think a \$5 pint of decent craft beer is pretty reasonable. And there is a growing demand and willingness to pay a few extra dollars for a beer made close to home.

Starting a craft beer career is by no means without risk. It costs roughly \$450,000 to \$800,00 to start a small brewer, and finding distributors willing to take on unproven brands can be onerous (see Sieben's beer). Brewpubs can cost a few million dollars, depending on size. Last year, 42 brewpubs closed, the most since 2005. However, only 9 microbreweries shuttered, the lowest number since 1995.

Financing will always be the biggest hurdle. Mr. Klotz had to get private investors for his microbrewery after banks spooked by Michigan's problems and restaurant failures, wouldn't provide any money. Metropolitan Brewing in Chicago was started with \$600,000 in private investor and small business loans. Joey Redner, who started Cigar City Brewing in Tampa, borrowed from his father who put up his business as collateral with the banks. Joey minimizes his costs by relying on dozens of volunteers to help move beer, wash kegs and haul boxes. Free beer is their tangible reward.

AHA Beer Contests

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

September 2009 – European Amber Lager (3)

November 2009 – Belgian Strong Ale (18)

January 2010 – English Brown Ale (11)

March 2010 – American Ale (10)

April 2010 – Any beer 50% made from extract

July 2010 – Mead (24,25,26)

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

BABY BLUES



More Meeting Pictures

Taken by Elliot Hamilton

