



Next Meeting – Nov 10

It's back to Dirty Nellies for November's meeting and AHA Belgian Strong Ale contest. We'll have to do some serious discussion about the Christmas Party. The January pub crawl and the Club t-shirts and polo's will also be on the agenda. Maybe we'll have one of Eric's educational moments. Four homebrews or \$5 will be your price of admission

Upcoming Club Events

Tuesday, Dec. 8 – Club Wort Christmas Party, 7:00 PM; location to be announced.

Tuesday, Jan 12 – Monthly meeting, Dirty Nellies, 7:30 PM. English Brown Ale AHA Contest

A Little Work

As I write this we don't know where the Christmas party will take place. The way we wound up at El Loco Burrito for those 3 years was that I looked around as I drove, zeroed in on a likely spot that fulfilled the two major requirements – enough room and no liquor license – and walked in to talk to the owner. Since we have our party on a Tuesday, I can't imagine that most small restaurants wouldn't leap at the chance to have \$500 plus spent at their location in return for closing it up one evening. Keep your eyes open and spend 10 minutes to stop and talk. Let's have another good party.

October 2009 Meeting

It's always good when the event lives up to the hype. Such was the case at Barley House in Algonquin. Due to train problems I left my house in Wheeling at 7:00 PM. Thirty-five minutes later I was in Algonquin asking the cute young thing where the beer club meeting was, and she led me to a private room. By the evening's end, there were 16 of us eating popcorn and appetizers, and drinking from their vast beer selection. I don't know what other people drank, but I took advantage of their \$2 pint specials and left with a \$6.47 bill after a Magic Hat No. 9, Robert the Bruce Scotch Ale, and a Surly Furious.

Eric kicked off the meeting at 7:45 by thanking Greg Principato for arranging the trip. Eric asked if members were interested in buying and sharing pitchers, but I was the only affirmative vote.

The absentee Treasurer's report was \$1,701.16 less the bill for the picnic which Mark Procter hadn't submitted yet.

Laura Procter reported that the t-shirts would cost \$10.15 based on an order of 24 and two colors on the design. It was decided that we would get advice on the t-shirt color from the producer. It was pointed out that the design currently had 3 colors, so maybe we could somehow have only two. Jim Thommes also had prices on t-shirts, but nothing on hand. A series of votes set the following:

1. The design was approved.
2. The Club will pay the silkscreen and embroidery design costs rather than the members.
3. We will order 24 t-shirts.

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4. Eric was going to send out a survey to establish sizes, polo interest, and numbers wanted.

The October brew-in was discussed by Randy Drumtra. There were 8 participants and 2 non-participants signed up. The style was going to be an IPA Brown Ale, Janet's Brown. The whiskey barrel would be used for secondary fermenting...

Two contests were announced – the Club November AHA Belgian Strong Ale and Chicago Beer Society's Spooky Brew which covers all styles. Flatlander's next brew-in will be November 14 and will be a Vanilla Porter.

The next big events on the Club Wort calendar were then discussed. The Christmas party cannot be held at Barry's old clubhouse, so we need a place. Suggestions were having it at Nellies, although price might be a problem, a banquet hall that last year's caterer ran, or any restaurant that doesn't serve liquor. Members were asked to help with the search. The Winter Pub Crawl will be held January 30 and will have 4 stops in Chicago.

The last bit of business was another discussion on expanding the meeting to include education. One idea was to have a technical style of the month. It was felt that holiday styles would be perfect for the November meeting, and Barry Filerman volunteered to be the first presenter. It was hoped that we could arrange to borrow Nellie's projector if we would be meeting in the big concert room.

Apple Crushing Time

It was a bright, crisp autumn day as I wound my way up Rand Road, entered McHenry County, and found Rich Sieben's house in Island Lake. In my trunk were two bushel baskets of apples from the trees in my back yard and in my backseat was an empty carboy. Hopefully, at the end of the day the

bushel baskets would be empty and the carboy full of cider.

I was the first one to arrive, and so Rich put me to work helping him knock even more apples off his trees to add to the hundreds of pounds already in his garage. We were joined by Jim and Nancy Thommes who had a cider press in their Yukon, and Eric and Erica Raz who had contributed to the apple pile with apples from a friend's tree. Where was Rich Colberg, who was also bringing a press? It turns out he got lost trying to cross some river between his and Rich's place, but Rich was eventually able to talk him in.

Jim got his press setup, but realized he had left an important part at home, so Jim and Rich got a piece of plywood and a jigsaw and made it. We also had to figure out how to elevate it to fit a bucket underneath. Finally we started the operation.

If you have never made cider, and I was one of those, it is pretty straight forward. You drop the apples into what looks like a chipper, and it shreds up the apples into a basket-like container containing a mesh bag. After it is filled, the bag is closed and a disk (the one Jim forgot) is placed on it, an iron rod presses the disk on the apples and the juice oozes forth through the mesh and collects on a tray that funnels the juice to a bucket.

Unfortunately, as we started squeezing, the juice leaked through the tray that was supposed to do the funneling. We placed some plastic wrap on the tray bottom, but that didn't do the trick either.

Luckily, Colberg had finally arrived with his press. Unfortunately, he hadn't used it in so long that he didn't know how to put it together. Between Eric, Colberg, and me, we figured it out finally. It had 2 advantages over Jim's – the chipper was motor rather than hand-crank driven, and the tray didn't leak. It was decided that we would only use Colberg's for the cider making.

Eric, Erica, Jim and I got into a production rhythm

and the apples started turning into cider. Colberg wasn't intending to take any cider home, so he watched the proceedings mostly, swapping beer stories and drinking beer, wine and mead (all made by Rich S) with Rich S. One thing we found out was that Rich also had nitrous oxide for use with products that didn't need carbonization. One of our group discovered another interesting thing you can do with nitrous.

The cider making ended around 3:15 in the afternoon. Jim said he had been at two-day cider events in the past. I was glad we didn't have that many apples, as I was the guy doing the pressing of the juice (see the pictures) and I was tired.

Nancy had gotten some champagne yeast for those who wanted it, although some were going to use just bread yeast. In all we made about 24 gallons of cider. While a lot of work, I was glad to have used my apples for something rather than just throwing them out.

Oct. 2009 Tasting Notes

Written by Barry Filerman

No tasting notes due to our road trip to the Barley House.

Beer In The Shower

No, I am not talking about cracking open a home brew before you gets under the spray. Half Acre Beer Company (profiled in a previous issue) at 4257 N. Lincoln Ave is selling soap made with beer for \$6 a bar.

The soap is made by Grandma Gee's, owned by Jim Gregory, an Indiana college student. Gregory, a 22 year-old student at Hanover College, claims beer "macronutrients" are good for skin and hair.

But the yeasty beer smell? Not so good. So Gregory added lavender, bergamot and menthol.

Sales at Half Acre have been brisk. They sold through two-thirds of their stock in 10 days.

Yeast of Eden

If you really want to give your body the full metal jacket beer experience, take a bar of soap from the preceding article and travel over to Europe. There you will find beer spas to really pamper yourself.

There you will soak in a tub of beer, enjoying the yeasty aroma of malt and hops, followed by a warm and sticky sensation as the brown liquid envelopes your body. This thought comes to mind – this must be every lad's dream. Whatever comes next will surely have to involve a supermodel, an Aston Martin and a fat cigar.

In the last 15 years, a pack of beer spas have opened in the hills and lowlands of Austria, Germany and the Czech Republic, promising health, wellness and the chance to bathe in your favorite suds.

Since 1997 the Kummerer Hof (Hotel) in Neuzell, Germany has had customers slipping beer baths tapped from the nearby Klosterbrauerei Neuzell brewery. The Chodovar brewery in Chodova Plana, Czech Republic started offering beer spa therapies using the brewery's dark lager. But, it is in Austria that the beer spa seems to reach its alpine pinnacle.

Starkenberg brewery in Tarrenz fills a swimming pool with its own Pilsner. But, just outside Salzburg in Franking, Austria, the Landhotel Moorhof offers what may be the most complete beer treatment, from the spa to the dining table.

In the cellar, four couple-size wooden tubs are filled with a 2 percent-alcohol lager made by the local Schnaitl brewery, fortified with brewer's yeast, malt and two scoops of hops. Bubbles rise from the bottom, stirring the mix and causing a head to form. While you can also get a milk bath, the owner Hedwig Bauer believes that beer has certain advantages. "Beer is very good for the skin, because of the vitamins and the yeast."

During the soak, a few pints of Schnaitl's beer are offered for imbibing, suggesting that the relaxation is chemically rather than therapeutically induced.

Cider Making Pictures

Taken by Rich Colberg

After about 20 minutes, you're wrapped in a starched white sheet and led to a four-poster bed piled with toasty alfalfa hay. The curtains are drawn and you're left to have a mild sweat.

Afterwards, you're invited to take a cool dip in the indoor swimming pool, provided, of course, you rinsed the green hops flakes from your body.

If that wasn't enough, you can also splurge on a brewski facial – a gooey mask made from ground hops, malt, honey and cream cheese.

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.

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



