



Next Meeting – Jan. 12

We'll be back to our normal, dull meeting format in January. You know, drinking homebrew and arguing with each other. We will be having the AHA English Brown Ale contest to determine our representative to the national contest, and I know there will be at least one entry. Bring four bottles of homebrew or \$5 to Durty Nellies at 7:30 PM.

Upcoming Club Events

Saturday, Jan. 30 – Winter Pub Crawl, 10:30 AM – 9:30 PM, Durty Nellies pickup, \$30 for your seat.

Tuesday, Feb. 9 – Monthly meeting, Durty Nellies, 7:30 PM.

It's Good News Day

I'm going to celebrate the good things that have been happening in the Club for a change. First, we had a dynamite Christmas party, with the most attendance in many years despite the snow falling. Next, the Pub Crawl sold out with a large number of members expected to attend, prompting some outsiders who normally attend to be shut out. Our brew-ins max out, thus justifying the investments in equipment we continue to make. Finally, we have a large number of what I call new people that are assuming leadership roles and making a difference in the Club. The Club is on a roll. Hats off to us!

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Christmas 2009 Party

I must admit I was worried. A forecast, then the actuality of snow falling seemed to give a great excuse for people not showing up. But, my fears were unfounded as 45 members and their guests showed up (and only 3 no-shows) for an evening of good beer, good food, and good cheer.

Two pleasant surprises were the appearances of long-time member Rich Colberg and somewhat long-time member Scott Etienne. Both had been absent from the regular meetings for awhile. Scott arrived with a great stout in a corny keg. While there was a lot of homebrew to drink, members took advantage of the bar both upstairs and downstairs to sample some of the seasonal beers Nellies had on tap.

There was food in abundance so that no one could complain they left hungry, and the food was available the entire evening. The barbecue option we chose got us BBQ chicken, pulled pork, corn on the cob, potato salad, pork and beans, and a lettuce/pickle combination plate (I admit I couldn't figure that one out with the sour cream and dipping sauce in the middle of the lettuce).

The only business, other than Eric Raz welcoming everyone, was my report on the lack of sign-up for the pub crawl. As you know, the crawl became over-subscribed afterwards, so I must have been pretty persuasive.

Dec. 2009 Tasting Notes

Written by Barry Filerman

No notes due to the Christmas Party.

Beer Makes You Smart

Forwarded by Roger Santagato



'Well you see, Norm, it's like this . . . A herd of buffalo can only move as fast as the slowest buffalo. And when the herd is hunted, it is the slowest and weakest ones at the back that are killed first. This natural selection is good for the herd as a whole, because the general speed and health of the whole group keeps improving by the regular killing of the weakest members. In much the same way, the human brain can only operate as fast as the slowest brain cells. Now, as we know, excessive intake of alcohol kills brain cells. But naturally, it attacks the slowest and weakest brain cells first. In this way, regular consumption of beer eliminates the weaker brain cells, making the brain a faster and more efficient machine. And that, Norm, is why you always feel smarter after a few beers.'

Buy A Beer Company

After you finish reading the newsletter, check out buybeercompany.com. It is a campaign to enlist America to help buy the Pabst Brewing Company. The website wants to raise \$300 million, and as of Dec.17, was up to \$243.7 million. Of course, that is pledges, not actual cash, so the chance of all the pledges turning into a bid is very small. But, it brought an interesting company into the spotlight.

Although the name Pabst immediately makes you think Milwaukee, it has been headquartered in Woodridge, IL since 2006. It has been going gangbusters lately, relaunching Schlitz in 2008,

making PBR hip, and re-formulating Old Style so that it again is "fully krauzened." So, why would such a hot company be up for sale?

You may think Pabst is owned by some private-equity group looking to cash out their investment. Or, by the actual Pabst family itself. Wrongo! Pabst is owned by a charitable foundation, the Kalmanovitz Charitable Foundation, which specializes in giving money to hospitals and colleges, notably St. Mary's College of California and the University of San Francisco (coincidentally, one foundation trustee is a regent emeritus of St. Mary's, and the chairman of the foundation is Chancellor of the U of S.F.).

Paul Kalmanovitz built a fortune in the real estate and beer business, being in the forefront of the beer consolidation boom. His crowning acquisition was scooping up Pabst in 1985. He was known for being a ruthless cost-cutter, and a flake, once giving \$500,000 to West Point after seeing the movie "Patton." He died in 1987, childless and with no siblings, and it took until 2000 for a foundation to be set-up as there were years of wrangling over his estate.

Meanwhile, Pabst dwindled to a shadow of itself, closing the historic Milwaukee brewery in 1996, watching sales slide from 13.5 million barrels in 1998 to 6.1 million barrels by 2007. The foundation had no money to give out until 2005, and Pabst's finances were so weak that lenders forgave a significant amount of debt in 2002.

Federal law forbids foundations from owning more than a 20% stake in an operating company. It normally gives a foundation based solely on a company 5 years to sell-off. However, it also allows for extensions to prevent fire-sales of assets. The problem-filled Pabst company had no value during the first 5 years, so another 5-year extension was granted. The deadline is now 2010. But, there still is a problem. Who wants a company with 35 brands which, except for Pabst and Schlitz, are still

losing market share and don't compete in the import or craft brew segments? A company with no brewing facilities, so there are no hard assets being offered? Not existing brewers, that's for sure. And private-equity has been burned before, such as the 1994 takeover of G. Heileman, maker of Old Style, which went bust 2 years later (and was bought by Pabst).

Experts feel that the IRS will lose patience if a sale doesn't occur, so there may be a fire-sale after all. I hope someone does buy it and keeps it intact. I checked out the Pabst website, and I was brought back to the 50's and 60's seeing Stroh's, Carling Black Label, Champale, Olympia, Rainier, Pearl and Lone Star to name a few of their brands. Since I am a founding investor in Sam Adams, I'm not too sure I want to invest more money in the beer business, but it would sure be fun.

Beer Can Save/Kill You

New research suggests that guys with a little to more to love in the middle (a beer gut) are more likely to survive a serious car crash than those who maintain a slender body.

A 23-year old Serb was found dead and half-eaten in the bear cage of Belgrade Zoo during the annual beer festival. The man was found naked, with his clothes lying intact inside the cage. Two adult bears, Masha and Misha, had dragged the body to their feeding corner and reacted angrily when keepers tried to recover it. "There was a good chance he was drunk or drugged. Only an idiot would jump into the bear cage," zoo director Vuk Bojovic told Reuters.

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.

March 2010 – American Ale (10)

April 2010 – Any beer 50% made from extract

July 2010 – Mead (24,25,26)

September 2010 – Sour Ales (17)

November 2010 – Strong Ales (19)

January 2011 – English Pale Ales (8)

Classified Section

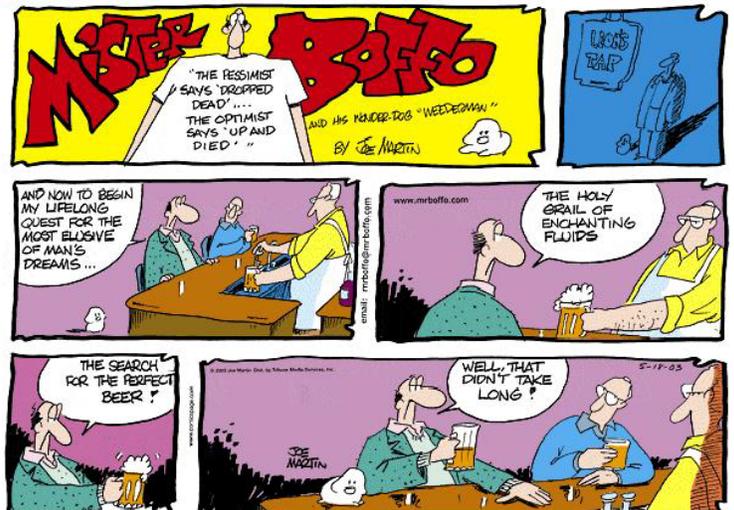
Club Wort T-Shirts in the following sizes:

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

Mister Boffo by Joe Martin



2009 Christmas Party Pictures

Taken by Elliot Hamilton



