

Next Meeting – March 9

Evan Van Dyke will show how to construct a brewery controller. Our Club AHA American Ale contest will be held. Discussions will take place about a variety of subjects. Bring four bottles of homebrew or \$5 to Dirty Nellies for our 7:30 PM meeting start.

Upcoming Club Events

March 6 - Brew-In at Elliot Hamilton's in Arlington Heights.

Tuesday, April 13 – Monthly meeting, Dirty Nellies, 7:30 PM., AHA >50% Extract contest.

Club Elections

Here is my annual editorial about Club Elections which will be held next month. 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, show your willingness to serve by coming to the April meeting. 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 for the good of the Club.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2** February 2010 Tasting Notes
- 3** First Annual Chili Beer Happening
- 3** Disarming Drinkers
- 4** AHA/Area Beer Contests/Tastings & Classifieds
- 4** January Pub Crawl Pictures

February 2010 Meeting

The snow was falling, and it had been falling all day. So, it was understandable that our meeting drew only ½ the attendance we had in January. But, the 12 of us who gathered probably had an easier time than normal to get to Nellies as the roads were almost devoid of other cars.

The only elected officer in attendance, Eric, finally called the meeting to order at 7:45 PM after it was apparent no one else was coming. The first question was the post of Membership Director which was suggested in last month's issue of *Wort's Brewing*. Eric thought it was a great idea which should be adopted. Elliot Hamilton then asked whether this would qualify for the dues exemption which the President, V.P., Treasurer and Newsletter Editor enjoy. Discussion indicated that most members were against the exemption. Evan Van Dyke thought that the beer steward should be exempt due to his hard work during meetings. Laura Procter came up with the idea of assigning this duty to the V.P., as this post currently only waited in case of presidential assassination or resignation, so normally he had no duties. While most of us were ready to agree to it without input from our current V.P. – Barry Filerman – cooler heads prevailed. Bob Breitling volunteered for the post until the April elections, when at that point, the understanding will be that the V.P. is responsible for membership development.

Dave Banks gave the up-to-date Treasurer's report, \$1,217.89, which included \$10 in Pub Crawl refunds that were not claimed. It was voted that the \$10 be included in future meeting beer money.

Dave then talked about his proposed chili get-together. He was still worried about room, but was reassured that there would be dropouts from the 17 that originally said would come. He settled on February 20 since it was to be a winter event.

Elliot announced that the brew-in would be March 6 at his place. While he had proposed a Witbier, there was some agitation for another Positively Porter. He was hoping a clear majority of the 7 signees would vote for one or the other, but could do two beers. He then switched to a multi-media Sieben's Beer presentation, showing us the old label design and the new proposed one. The old one specified real lager beer and because of the Lakefront sourcing, could list the beer as organic. With the change to Grays, there cannot be an organic label. Also, there is the possibility of re-labeling other Grays beers, so the real lager will be dropped and the bottles identified by a neck band. Finally, the new label showed an unidentified skyline, which looked like Istanbul to me. I recommended that they change it to one that looks like Chicago.

Evan announced that the two books received last month were available for lending. He has purchased a new plastic carrying case for the books. He asked whether members would be required to pay late return fees if they didn't make it that night, but since the meeting attendees had made it, no mercy was shown.

Phil Ferrari offered his personal yeast bank to members. He also asked that members contact him so he could collect their yeast. A long yeast discussion followed. We prevailed on him to conduct an April yeast gathering class. He will take detailed pictures for the presentation. Evan was so excited by the yeast info that he almost dropped his daughter off the table during the discussion. As Evan will be doing March's class and writing up an article for the newsletter for those who can't make it, I urged other presenters to do the same.

The educational part of the meeting came next.

Elliot was the first presenter, showing his ProMash program, bought in 2002 but with an updated version expected. Bob Breitling showed off Beersmith. Finally, Bob Wappel put up BeerTools Pro. BeerTools is the most expensive - \$29.95 vs. \$21.95 for the other two - and it also has a yearly \$17 fee if you want to take advantage of some extras. ProMash looks like it hasn't been updated in awhile, while the other 2 work on Vista and Beersmith works on Windows 7. Each has its pros and cons; personally, I thought Beersmith would give me what I wanted out of software. I don't think you can go wrong with any of them.

Laura Procter reported on the T-shirt pricing. Jim Thommes's source had the best, at \$10 for 1 color on the front, 3 on the back, 48 minimum. His embroidered golf shirt cost is \$20. Laura's source had 3 colors both in the front and back, but was \$14.75 for 25 shirts. Based on pricing, Jim will handle the shirt ordering.

The rosters have been dropped off at Perfect Brewing and Brew & Grow, and Bob Wappel already had been carded with it at Brew & Grow.

The new 55-gallon drums were next on the agenda. Approval was given to spend the necessary money to upgrade them even though they will be on loan.

Club Wort will be having a book club discussion of *Catcher in the Rye* at the April meeting followed by *Naked Pint* in June. The official part of the meeting finally ended at 10:00 PM (whew!)

Feb. 2010 Tasting Notes

Written by me

In Barry's absence I took notes at the meeting.

The first beer was an American Amber kit made by Evan Van Dyke. It was felt that it was more Pale Ale than Amber. It had good color, but was under carbonated due to lack of a counter-pressure system.

Bob Wappel served his Coffee Stout, which originally was supposed to be an Imperial, but he

ran out of ingredients and so added coffee and vanilla. A very light taste despite the 8% alcohol.

Dave Banks served his personal Positively Porter brewed following the Club recipe. It was roasty and licorice tasting, but had aged well in the 2 years since brewing.

Elliot served another Positively Porter, this one from the Club 11/08 brew-in and jacked up to 11% alcohol with brewer's corn sugar syrup.

Bob Wappel then served his Flatlanders Vanilla Porter. He used California Lager Yeast and added 8 vanilla beans split in half and soaked in rum. The vanilla really showed through and also a little astringency.

Phil Ferrari passed around an ESB made with some left-over ingredients. Members felt it needed to be bitterer with more caramel taste.

Eric Raz brought an American Stout that had an O.G. of 1082. The high alcohol content was apparent.

Bob Wappel's third beer of the night was an Imperial IPA/Barleywine. There was a hint of diacetyl when I tasted it.

The final beer was Eric's Griffin Spit IPA. He adjusted the water to allow for the effects of water on hops. It had a great hop aroma, but no bitterness on the palate. Brewed on Club equipment, he admitted it wasn't like the usual Griffin Spit.

First Annual Chili-Beer Happening

As always, the first time around you learn a few things. First, Dave Banks's house is not as small as he made it out to be, especially with the beer attracting people into the garage. Secondly, initial enthusiasm doesn't translate into actual attendance. Third, sometimes simple ideas turn out great.

While Dave had 17 members express interest, there were 7 members and six wives who made the trek to Arlington Heights: myself, Bob Breitling, Mark &

Laura Procter, Jim Holbach, Eric Raz, Randy Drumtra (who came stag), and Evan Van Dyke.

The crock pots of chili were arranged in Dave's kitchen, hooked up to various power strips. I brought my favorite Betty Crocker chili with beans and ground beef. I first tasted Jim's chicken and white bean. The other ones followed, including Dave's all beef and someone else's pork and beef (can't remember who brought what) helped by additions from Dave's gargantuan amounts of cheese, chopped onions, crackers and sour cream.

The beer selection was equally good. I brought a growler of Ram's Total Disorder Porter, and there were six-packs of Two Brothers Cane and Ebel and Domain DuPage, Goose Island Winter Beer, and a lot of homebrew including whiskey barrel imperial stout.

There were even potato chips and nuts for munching and a pan of great brownies from Laura. The Olympics were on the TV, and we all had a fun evening. Let's hope Dave does this every year.

Disarming Drinkers

Some Britons will be able to get smashed the pub while their pint glasses won't.

The shatterproof pint glass was proudly unveiled by the government last month. Officials swore the country would save billions in health care costs by coming up with a glass that doesn't double as a lethal weapon.

There are about 87,000 alcohol-related glass attacks each year according to Home Secretary Alan Johnson. "Glassing causes horrific injuries and has a lasting and devastating impact on victims and their families."

Two types will be developed, one coated with a thin bio-resin on the inside and the other with two glass layers sandwiched like a windshield. The plan is to introduce the glasses for use on a voluntary basis if tests show they are durable, cost-effective and safe.

Plastic was not an option because experience shows that drinkers are not happy with them. “Glass feels good on the hand, it feels cold. Plastic is warm,” said the design squad. The glass could have another benefit; it might keep the beer cold longer.

One thing not addressed by the government was reforming binge drinking that is the root of the problem.



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) – American Pale, American Amber & American Brown.

April 2010 – Any beer 50% made from extract

July 2010 – Mead (24,25,26)

September 2010 – Sour Ales (17) – Berliner Weisse, Flanders Red & Brown Ale, Straight & Fruit Lambic, & Gueuze.

November 2010 – Strong Ales (19) – Old Ale, English & American Barleywine.

January 2011 – English Pale Ales (8) – Standard, Special & Extra Special/Strong Bitter.

Classified Section

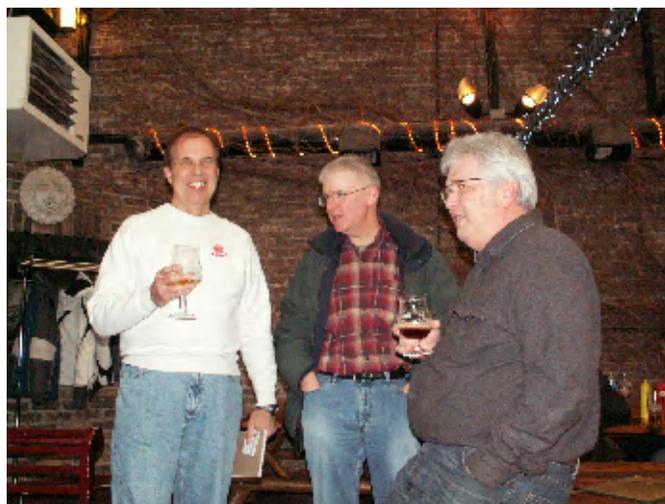
Club Wort T-Shirts in the following sizes: Medium (2); Large (7), X-large (7). Cost is \$10. Contact Paul Lange at pdlange@rockwoodco.com.

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

Used Homemade Counter-Flow Chiller; ¼” copper pipe inside garden hose; 5-gal chilled in 10 min. \$40; Contact Randy D at ddwbrew01@comcast.net

January 2010 Pub Crawl Pictures

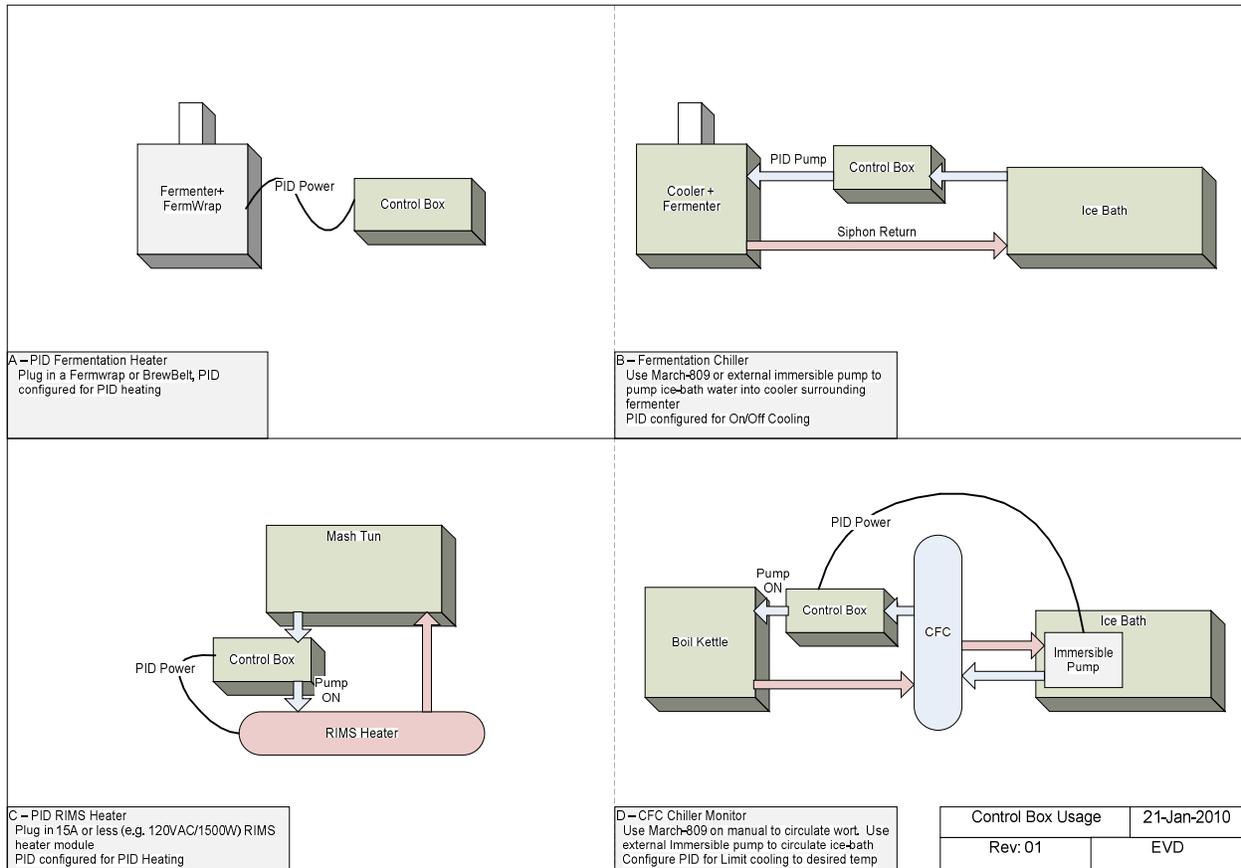
Taken by Elliot Hamilton





Brewery Controller

There are three main tasks that I need to get better control of in my brewery: fermentation temperature control, mash temperature control, and faster post-boil chilling. After some research and planning, I realized that they can all be tackled by the combination of a temperature controller and a pump (Figure 1). For those with an immersion chiller, the post-boil chilling still follows the same idea in the figure, except the main pump feeds the whirlpool in the kettle, and the secondary pump drives ice-water through the IC.

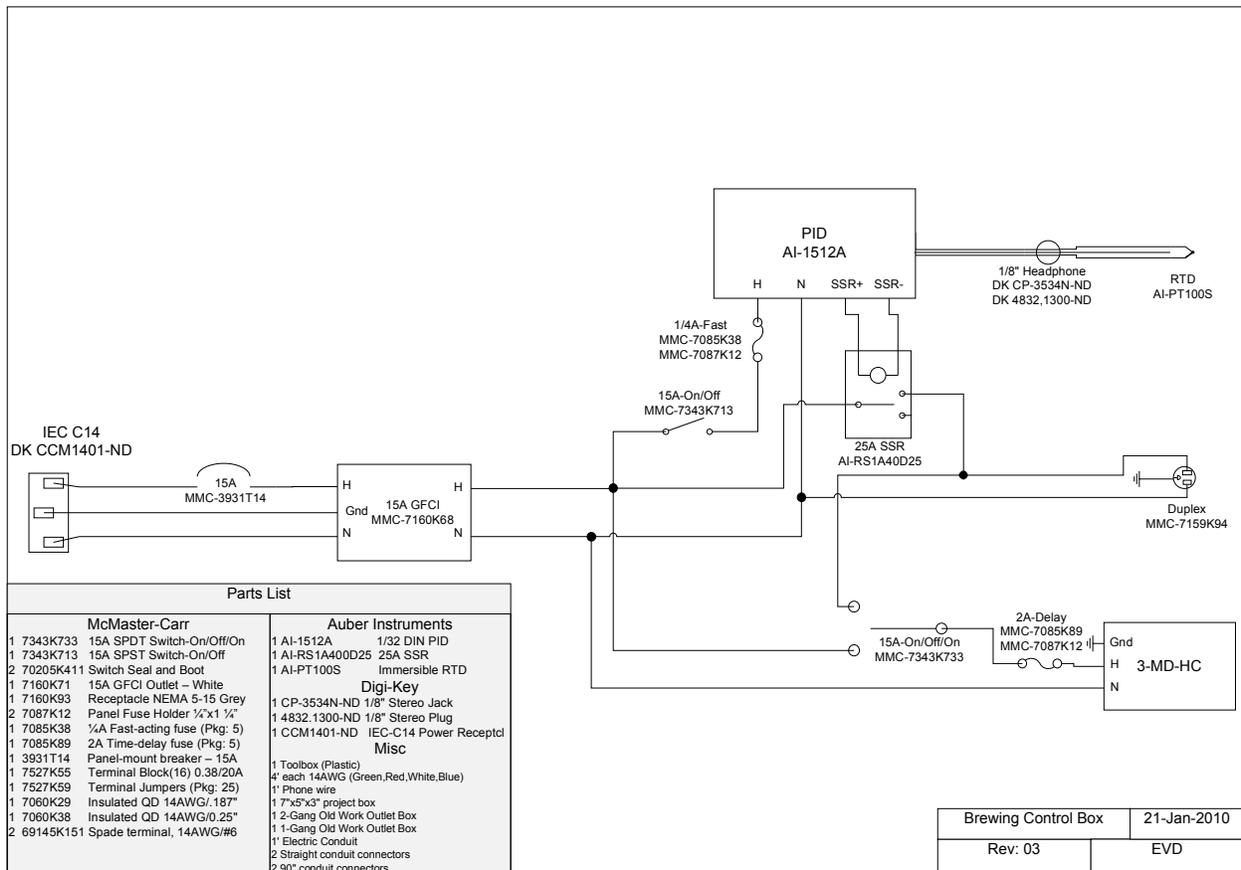


As with any project, I started my planning by identifying the main components that I would need. I already had a counterflow chiller, and my mash-tun and HLT coolers will easily serve double-duty in the fermentation chilling scenario, keeping the amount of equipment to store and manage to a minimum. The only elements that I did not have were the pump, controller electronics, and RIMS heater. Due to financial constraints, my construction of the heater element will be delayed until later this year, but I can make immediate use of the pump and controller box, so that is the focus of this article.

If you have space to build a permanent brew-stand, finding the space to house such a controller is easy. However, many of us do not have the luxury of a permanent brew stand, and need something that is portable, easy to store, and easy to use. For that reason, I have housed my brewery controller in a toolbox. All of the electronics fit neatly inside; protected from spills, splashes, or other dangers, they

are easily accessible and ready to use come brew-day. By mounting the pump-head outside the toolbox, and keeping the motor inside, I am able to protect its electronics from splashes as well, and have one less item to manage. The two major components of the control box are the temperature controller, and the pump. Most brewers use the March 809 pump, but there are also many complaints about its poor ability to handle height differentials, or have a good flow-rate to get a whirlpool going. After a little research, and luck on eBay, I settled on the Little Giant 3-MD-HC pump, which is also a magnetically-driven food-safe pump, but has almost twice the power of the March pump. For the temperature controller, I wanted something compact enough to easily mount inside the toolbox, but still have the ability to run as a PID controller, which is especially helpful when running a RIMS heater. It also must have a simple hysteresis-bounded on/off mode for controlling a pump, which does not hold up under pulsed power like a heating element. I settled on Auber-Instruments' smallest controller, the 1512A, with an immersible temperature probe, and solid-state relay.

The next step was to design the schematic for the control box. Since most RIMS heaters typically pull about 12.5A of current, I settled on designing for 15A, which means that my main power lines must all be at least 14-AWG. Since this wire is easy to work with, I used it for all the wiring, except the connector for the RTD temperature probe, which used about 6" of old phone cord. I added a SPDT switch for the pump, to allow me to select whether to have it be on, off, or controlled by the PID output, and an external receptacle for use when using a RIMS heater or other external device. For full details, see the schematic in Figure 2. For those of you who can add, you'll notice that if I'm running a 12.5A RIMS element and the 2A pump simultaneously, I'll be close to the 15A limit of the wiring. If This becomes an issue, I will upgrade the main power line and SSR-controlled lines to 12AWG, which will allow a 20A circuit: plenty of head-room. In the mean time, the 15A breaker is easy to reset if necessary.



For construction, I found that “Old Work” gang boxes were easily mounted inside the toolbox by making a cutout, and bolting them to the box, instead of screwing them into drywall, and a standard project enclosure box from Radio Shack houses the rest of the electronics. The main power plug and 15A breaker are mounted on the left end of the toolbox via the 1-gang electric box, and the GFCI and switched NEMA 5-15 outlets are mounted in a 2-gang box on the toolbox’s front. After mounting the terminal strip inside the project box, I bolted it to the toolbox’s floor so that it just touched the front and back of the toolbox, giving me a place to mount the switches, fuses, and PID. To mount the pump, I first disassembled the pump head, and then mounted the pump out the right-hand end of the toolbox by running the magnetic drive ring outside the toolbox, and then reassembling the head to sandwich the toolbox’s wall between the two halves of the pump head. Making the cutouts was the trickiest part, since most parts were not big enough to mount through both the toolbox and project-box, so I had to make recessed cutouts for them. If you do not have the luxury of a drill-press, you really want to use forsnor bits for this, as the plastic is soft enough that the spiral bits get a good bite and cut straight through in an instant. After that, the rest was simply wiring everything up, per the schematic.

To see the final result, just come to the March meeting, where it will be on display!