

Next Meeting – April 12

We will be emulating Chicago as we elect our new slate of officers. An AHA Wood-Aged beer contest will be held. Our Treasurer will be collecting your \$20 dues. We will be tasting your 4 bottles of homebrew or collecting \$5 from you to order some of Nellies fine beer. All this is happening at 7:30 PM in Durty Nellies in Palatine.

Upcoming Club Events

Tuesday, May 10 – Monthly meeting, Durty Nellies, 7:30 PM.

Tuesday, June 14 – Monthly meeting, Durty Nellies, 7:30 PM.

Too Big?

Maybe things will correct themselves, a conclusion that a member offered last meeting. Maybe people will drop out when their beer can't get sampled, or they can't get a sample of someone else's beer, or they feel they're just an anonymous person in the crowd. Our meeting size tipped overboard in March. Beyond the dropout thought, here's one solution – split the Club, letting a segment meet at Emmett's. Or the executive committee can re-think the way we meet. I'd hate to turnoff people to the Club or home brewing in general, but we may be in danger of both if we don't think about it.

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Reflections

“The biggest change will be a greater emphasis on Club happenings... One nice thing about volunteering to do something, you can do things the way you want.”

I wrote those words almost 14 years ago when I did my first complete newsletter for October 1997. 161 consecutive issues later, this will be my last.

Things have certainly changed during that time. I used to have to print each page, collate and staple them together, then add the cover sheet, fold the newsletter in half, staple twice at the bottom, put the mailing label on, then the stamp, and drop them off at the post office.

Over the 14 years I assumed some other duties - maintaining the roster, producing the Christmas Party invitations, managing the dues renewal process and issuing membership cards.

Just a little perspective on how long ago 1997 was, because I'm sure we have members who were in grammar school back then. The President was Bill Clinton, the big movie was “Titanic,” “Buffy the Vampire Slayer” debuted on TV, a stamp cost 32 cents, boy bands like Hanson and Backstreet Boys had Top Ten hits, and the Packers won the Super Bowl (some things don't change). A book featuring a character called “Harry Potter” was published in England. Of all the famous people who died, Princess Diana topped the list.

The Club changed over the 14 years. We were meeting Mondays at the Old Durty Nellies on 55 N. Bothwell. We first switched the meeting night to Tuesday to avoid Monday Night Football. We moved with Nellies to their new location, then to the first incarnation of Emmett's, then to a

member's condo clubhouse, and finally back to Nellies. The Club owned a few brewing pieces, but the rare brew-ins were equipped by members bringing their own equipment. Contests were judged only by certified judges. We were paid by Dirty Nellies to organize and run their annual beer fest. We had new commercial brewers pitching their products at our meetings on a regular basis. I have congratulated and criticized 12 different Club Wort Presidents and 9 different V.P.'s during that time.

I tried to use my editorial power to improve the Club as I saw the need. I know some disagreed with my opinions, but they always had the option to speak up either in this newsletter, in the meetings, or nowadays in emails. And when the final verdict was rendered by a vote of Club members, as far as I was concerned it was the end of the matter. It never was personal.

I tried to chronicle the happenings of the Club so that those who couldn't make events could share in the experience. I also tried to make sure all those who went above and beyond for the Club were publically acknowledged in these pages.

Thanks to all those who wrote articles for me, who took photographs, and who helped me deal with WORD problems. And thanks for allowing me to toot my own horn.

Mike Kolbuk

March 2011 Meeting Notes

I lost count at 40 members, with another 6 or 7 guests also scattered around Dirty Nellies' upper room. The homebrew was being dumped on the Beer Stewards at a furious pace as John Guilfoil brought the meeting to order.

Guest introductions included Jenna, a student of John's home brewing course who is interested in learning to brew, Adam and Laurie, Steve, and I

believe a Jake.

Dave Banks reported that the Treasury stood at \$1,035.69 with no spending last month.

Randy Drumtra talked about the March 12 brew-in he is hosting. A Vienna Marzen Oktoberfest will be brewed starting at 8:30 AM.

Elliot Hamilton talked about the March 26th brew-in at his place. There were 10 shares spoken for at that time, with one share to be used as an educational tool to show the effects of different yeast, presentation in May. The style will be Irish Red. Elliot thought there might be a chance the new 55-gallon barrels would be used.

Evan Van Dyke announced that the educational segment for April was in need of a presenter.

Laura Procter announced that the Club Book Club would be meeting at her place to discuss "Abraham Lincoln, Vampire Hunter" on the 18th. No need to have read the book if you still wanted to come.

I told everyone that any new articles for the newsletter should be submitted to Phil Ferrari or whoever gets the Newsletter Editor job. I asked who would be taking over the membership cards, and was told that it would be the membership committee.

Larry Steffens talked about the dues renewal process. An information worksheet will be emailed to all members, and he passed around copies for inspection. Members should download it, print it, and bring it to the April meeting with their \$20.

Barry Filerman discussed the upcoming April elections. There has been interest in all the positions except Librarian and Beer Steward. John opined that the Newsletter Editor was a volunteer, not elected position, but Barry felt that if there were two members interested we should conduct an election. The ballots will be written and include a space for write-ins.

Paul Lange talked about the frustrations of being the

Beer Steward, as he can't pay attention to the meeting as he works to put together the tasting order. He reminded everyone to please email him prior to the meeting with what they were bringing to make the task go smoother. He also announced that Great Taste tickets from Jim were almost sold out, and urged anyone who wanted to go contact Jim Thommes. No one could recall getting an email on this from Jim.

Bob Wappel talked about the duties of the Librarian.

Vince Donohue talked about a bottle exchange, and wanted to know who was interested. Someone asked about commercial beer, and he was open to include it.

Randy Drumtra presented the education segment, talking about converting commercial min-kegs for home brew.

John introduced Jim Arendt, former member who lives in Switzerland. Jim expects to be back in September, and brought us a bottle of beer made from hemp to sample.

Eric Raz said that he had cleaned out his supplies and brought a box of stuff people were free to look through and take.

The AHA Bock contest garnered two entries, and by the closest margin ever in a contest, Bob Wappel's Maibock edged out my Traditional Bock 1,115 points to 1,096.

Britta Grand told everyone that a website – www.beerlabelizer.com – allows you to design and print personalized beer labels.

The Microbrew Invasion of India

Written by Barry Filerman

The last thing I expected to find on my business trip to India was a micro brewery, mostly because a

large portion of the population in India does not consume alcoholic beverages but low and behold, I found the only microbrewery in India and it was only minutes from my hotel, completely taking half of the top floor of the Ambience Mall in Gurgaon, India, in the state of Haryana, neighboring New Delhi.

Rockman's Beer Island consists of a full service German influenced bar, a fine dining restaurant and an entertainment center for live music and dancing.

The only area of this mega-bar that I was interested in was of course the bar/brewery. Along with me were 4 of my Indian colleagues none of whom have ever patronized the facility but did enjoy beer. In speaking with them, this brewpub was more of a frequent hangout for expats and locals did not visit it much which I witnessed while we were there. It contained the most Americans that I had seen in my entire visit.

The brewery is in existence thanks to 3 German partners that the company has pulled in, Lowenbrau for their technical know-how, Kaspar Schultz for their brewing equipment and Weyermann for their malt, hops and yeast.

The brewery makes 4 traditional German beers which they advertise as completely natural with no chemicals, brewed under the traditional German brewing law, the Reinheitsgebot: Lager, Dark Lager, Wheat and Strong Lager. Advertisements in the bar indicated that they are planning on releasing limited release beers this upcoming summer but at the time of my visit, they only were tapping these 4 staples. It was a welcome experience as most natives consume Budweiser which is brewed in India under the guidance of the US brewery.

We consumed all 4 varieties and each one was as good as the last. My favorite of course was the strong lager which had the higher ABV that I was used to consuming at home. I was pleased to find that my colleagues thoroughly enjoyed the dark lager, especially since their pallets were accustomed

to Bud.

We also ordered some of the appetizers that the brewery had to offer. Rockman's offers an interesting assortment of traditional German food with an Indian twist of spicy. All in all, Rockman's was a nice touch of the comforts of home on my trip halfway around the world. If you are in the New Delhi area, this is a neat place to seek out and enjoy a beer or two. Hopefully my colleagues experience will spread to their friends and they will be able to share the microbrew passions that we hold so dear.

March 12 Brew-In

It was cloudy, but thankfully not rainy as I headed for Randy Drumtra's house for our Vienna brew-in. After I arrived and off-loaded my carboy, propane tanks, and beer I joined in what proved to be one of the more interesting brewing days at Club Wort.

Jim Holbach, Phil Ferrari, and Bill Morgan had arrived before me. All the equipment was in Randy's garage as he correctly felt the wind would be a problem outdoors. My first assignment from Randy was to check the temperature of the two kegs of water that we were going to use for the first mash. One was at 120 degrees, the other at 40 degrees as the first "oops" moment occurred that no one had noticed the burner went out (or had even lit it).

Randy asked if we were interested in doing a two-step mash, with a protein rest at 122 degrees followed by a raise up to 154 degrees. Although it would take longer, we agreed on the two-step to improve efficiency, maltiness, and clarity.

I was wearing my field jacket with liner, and had brought a vest along to wear if it became too warm. On the contrary, the 40 mph wind with the 37 degrees prompted me to put the vest under the jacket, and I was glad to have brought gloves.

At this point we had an extra share, and Bill was calling someone to find a taker. Vince Donohue showed up to watch, and eagerly accepted the last

share. No one was timing the mashes, so we did a little estimation and a lot of iodine testing.

There were hoses everywhere as we started pumping and re-circulating. One mash got stuck, and we took turns giving head to the hose to blow it out. Jokes about getting turned on flew like wild.

Lunch was real easy. We took turns walking the 100 yards to the Gyros place and ordering what we wanted. I came back to eat mine, but others ate in the warmth of the Gyros place.

A scum line on the pot we were using for the pre-boil mix was cleaned up – hey, prior users, clean up afterwards. We filled the pot and another keg with the runnings. Randy felt we could pump the liquid between the two vessels to even out the OG, but it was a fruitless quest. Finally, we split the keg into three kegs and pumped out of the pot into each.

At that point we were woefully short of the 41 gallons we needed before the boil. It seems that Randy's estimation of the pot capacity was optimistic. Oh well, start heating some more water to get us up there. We were using Elliot's patented hop bag holders, but some of the hop additions got stuck at the top and it took awhile for us to notice.

While all this fun was happening, Jim Thommes and Elliot Hamilton showed up, no doubt to laugh at us.

We finished the boil without any boil-overs (something at last went right) and distributed the cooled wort to await pitching the yeast that Phil Ferrari had prepared. Half of us got a German, while the other half got a California. I had 3 lbs. of pasteurized peaches in my fermentor for my annual fruit beer. Jim will be bottling his 10 gallons to give to attendees at his daughter's wedding. We finished the clean-up at 4:30, and thanked both Phil and Randy for another Club brew-in.

March 26 Brew-In

Written by Elliot Hamilton

The second brew-in of the March hosted was by me but orchestrated by Evan Van Dyke. Evan secured most of the ingredients and provided the yeast. Let me start the article this way: Thank you, Evan!

The 10 shares sold out fairly quickly. There was sufficient demand that I chose to surrender my share to an eager would-be participant. Several members noticed that one of the participants was "Club Wort." Evan intends this share to be part of our education program. He purchased various yeast strains to make mini batches for us to sample side by side. Does yeast really make a difference? We will find out in May.

One of our newest members, Jack Gordon, was the first to arrive and assisted me in setting up the hardware and getting the mash-in water ready. Jack assisted in the process throughout the whole day. His reward was about 4 gallons of "second runnings" which he planned to invent a never-to-be repeated "session beer." In time, the other participants (Patrick Smith, Jim Holbach, Greg Piotrowski, Phil Piotrowski, Randy Drumtra, Vince Donahue, Barry Fillerman, and Evan) arrived. It should be noted that Barry was the last to arrive; his award for this distinction was cleaning the boilers.

Using both the C-W and my grain mill, the grain was measured and crushed in short order. We had enough mash water ready to take care of the 100+ pounds of grain. Even the mash bed temperature increase went fairly smoothly. Somehow, we did have a stuck mash in one of the mash tuns, but it was tended to and the mashing was complete.

Typical of an Arlington Heights club brew-in, we used the 55G drum to combine the output of the 4 mash tuns. We had to use it and the 22G boiler to hold all the liquid. With a pump connecting the 55G drum to the 22G boiler which was set on a burner, Randy was able to increase the wort temperature we collected the wort.

After dividing the wort among the 5 boilers, they were brought to a boil for the usual 1 hour, and

chilled in pairs with the club's Chillzilla and my Shirron plate chiller. I did notice a mess on the driveway but I am not sure if it was from a boil over or sloppy pumping after the boil.

Besides the propane burners, we also used the mostly-converted natural gas burners on long term loan from Rick Rodriquez. More work is necessary in the conversion: the propane burners brought the 12 gallons of wort to a boil much faster than the two large natural gas burner elements. I suspect the problem is too small of a gas delivery port to the elements. One of these days, I will experiment with the ports and see if I can get a more violent flame.

This event was run primarily by Evan with the tutelage of Randy and me. In fact, I spent very little time participating in the brew-in tending to other chores as the others did the work. I like that plan.

Besides the 9 participants and Jack Gordon, Mark Proctor, Laura Proctor, Mike Kolbuk, Roger Santagato, and Bob Wappel stopped by to visit us. In the end, I think everybody had a pleasant time.

AHA Beer Contests

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

July 2011 – Mead – Traditional (24), Melomel (25), Other (26)

September 2011 – Specialty Beer (23)

November 2011 – Hefeweizen (15)

January 2012 – Dark Lagers (4)

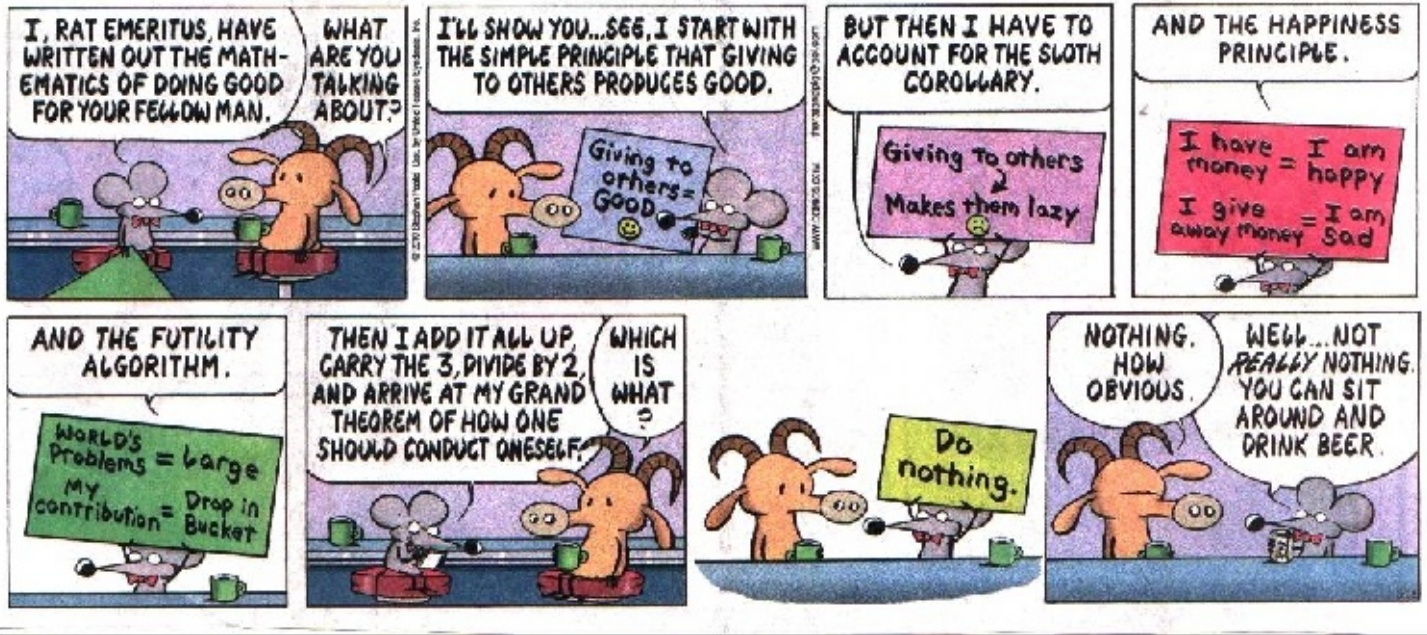
March 2012 – Stout (13)

Classified Section

Club Wort T-Shirts; Price to be determined sometime in the future.

Three-pound (1 Quart) containers of honey; Cost is \$8.00; Contact Elliot Hamilton at elliioth@m11.net

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE/ by Stephan Pastis



March Meeting, March 12 & March 26 Brew-In Pictures

Taken by Elliot Hamilton



