

May 2006

The Newsletter of the Knights of the brown Bottle

Volume 12, No 5

The Knightly News



A HISTORY OF
DRINKING SONGS

Get Ready for The Celtic Brewoff

It's May lads, the time when a young girl's heart turns to thoughts of long, idle strolls through the rolling countryside, dressed in her spring finery, gathering flowers as she wanders through the fresh green fields. It's also the time when a young man's heart (when not bent on chasing said strumpets through aforementioned fields) is bent on brewing.

The weather is delectably temperate in the particular environs of the calender in which we currently inhabit. There's no better time (other than perhaps autumn) for brewing a wide variety of beers, as one's house stays within a comfortable range of temperatures to please almost any strain of yeast. Lagering fridges sitting in dusty garages and store rooms don't have to work so hard in this delicate air of May, and should be put to use, bottom-fermenting us up a crisp, tasty pilsner or German lager to keep us refreshed thought out the coming heat of summer.

May is a busy month, so make sure to schedule those brews ASAP. In addition to our meeting, held at the home of yours truly May 10th, and a Knight's Crusade to Scarborough Faire May 21st, we've also got the log in and judging for the 10th Annual Celtic Brew Off. Log In will be at J. Gilligan's in Arlington on Saturday, May 13th, at 10 am. Judging will be the following Saturday, May 20th, at 10 am as well. Lots of entries are expected this year, as the Celtic is now part of the Texas Cup competition, so let's all lend a hand to make it happen. Awards for the Celtic Brew Off will be given at the 20th Annual Texas Scottish Festival and Highland Games on Saturday, June 3rd.

~ Sir Chris Owen, Ed.



FROM THE PREZ

Greeting Knights!
I'm just starting to come around and back into consciousness from that weekend at the Bluebonnet. I know.. that was back in March, but I'm still trying to get caught up on the sleep and get my feet back underneath me!



As we close the door on another year at the Bluebonnet, the another door swings wide open for the upcoming 10th Annual Celtic competition. This year our little competition been adopted into the newly formed Lone Star Circuit, which is replacing the Gulf Coast Circuit, and it looks like this will put us on the map. Rumours have been flying about doubling or even tripling the number of entries we usually receive – we will know by this weekend when the entries are logged – tagged, bagged and put in the cooler.

I'm looking forward the the challenge, and the adventure. We're going to have to call on all Knights to pitch in and help make this year's Celtic a success. Jamie is leading the way, but needs support in all aspects of the competition – especially that judging thing. We've scheduled May 20th as judgement day, and have tentatively “reserved” the following Saturday as well – in case we don't meet our expectations. We usually have a great show of support from our friends in the Cap & Hare, NTHB and even the Red River guys, in helping to judge – and we certainly appreciate the assistance and the expertise.

Last weekend, Big Buck Brewery and Raymond hosted an AHA brew-in. We had a great turnout of brewers and systems, and Raymond cooked up a big pot of mudbugs to keep us feasting throughout the day. There were a lot of people

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Feature Story:

Drinking Songs



What shall we do with the drunken sailor? Or for that matter, what shall we do with those ninety nine bottles of beer on the wall?

As for the former, throw him overboard. As for the latter, take one down, and pass it around. Ninety Eight bottles of beer on the wall.

If you're familiar with either of those ditties, or any other like it, then you have at least a passing familiarity with the fine art of the drinking song. Singing and drinking, now there's two great tastes that taste great together. But these days, most of the singing is done by a band of musicians on a stage, and the drinking is done by thirsty patrons, sitting in the audience. But it wasn't always like this. Time was, the local pub, tavern or inn was the scene of lively rounds of singing by the patrons themselves, often with great amounts of rocking back and forth, sloshing and even imbibing of alcohol. And that drink of choice? Why, beer, of course.

It's all for me grog, me jolly jolly grog
It's all gone for beer and tobacco
Well I spent all me tin on the lassies drinking gin
And across the western ocean I must wander

Okay, so grog, technically, was rum mixed with water, and was the favored drink of British sailors at sea. But the spirit of this verse, from a song technically known as a 'sea shanty,' is much the same as a beer drinking song. Sea shanties were often sung by sailors after a hard days work, or even while performing that work (much like a 'Jody' in today's military) and as the British sailors always had a ration of rum after their work, the result was much the same. Drinking songs occupied that same role in the pubs and taverns of the British Isles from

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wandering through, interested in what we were doing, and many of them were brewers or had previous brewing experience. A big thanks to Raymond and Big Buck's for hosting the party!

Coming up this week at our meeting (Wed, 5/10) we have the annual officer elections. If I'm not mistaken, most positions are unchallenged – but it is still important that everyone get to the meeting if they can. If not for the elections and the organizational meeting for the Celtic, I know Chris has been collecting some rare and oddball beers and is going to share them with us! Unfortunately, I had mistimed a travel event and am leaving that day before the meeting, instead of the following day after the meeting. Although, I'm not sure that traveling with a hangover (or a bad case of beer farts) would have been a good thing.

In addition to the upcoming Celtic competition, the Cap & Hare are hosting the Iron Mash the weekend after the Scottish Festival. The Iron Mash will be held on June 10th at Rahr & Sons Brewing. I trust everyone has registered and are getting their systems shined up? Vince and his brother are returning to defend their title, and the rest of us are coming to take it away!

As usual, its been a busy Spring, which seems to have left little time for brewing. Undoubtedly, we will somehow manage to congregate in the back yard a few times for some brewing over the summer months – we can't let our inventories get low!

This Summer we will also go full throttle with the upcoming Blubonnet 2007. The Knights are hosting the event this coming year, and we have a lot of preparation and planning to do. Sir James Grady is taking the reins and will run us through the systems – but it is up to us as a club to put forth the effort and manpower to make it a great event. Yea, "beer things" can be a lot of work -but it will also be rewarding to see it all come together. I trust we can count on each and every Knight to pitch in! Jimbo can run through the various assignments and tasks that we need to undertake – so everyone can find something that they can do.

In the meantime, I think I need a break. I have the fortunate opportunity to run away and play in Italy

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for 11 days and have decided to do just that. Italy isn't known for their beers, but I know I'll be able to find enough of everything to satisfy my thirsts. I've had preliminary reports from the local markets, and the Italians are not foreigners to a good beer. Oh and all of those flavors just waiting to be tasted...pastas, pizzas, sauces, wines and beers... just roaming the countryside with absolutely no schedule. Now, if I can just figure out how to get past security at the Lamborghini plant... Then off to Ferrari, Aprilia, Ducati, Moto Guzzi... all fast and beautiful. I wonder how I'm going to get any one of them into my luggage on the return trip.

In preparation for the trip, I've been studying language labs for the Italian. I can now count to 10 and hold a short, coherent conversation if I actually were a 23 year old architectural student from Verona. Other than that, I may have to once again rely on my good looks and charm... oh god, I'm doomed!! I guess I will just have to trust my friends to protect me from myself!

Nathan and Casey are also traveling to the other side of the world at the same time – roaming another part of Europe. And did I hear something about Nathan meeting the relatives? Smile, be nice and don't say "Yes" to anything unless you completely understand the question!! Have fun and travel safe – Let's hope that we don't bump into each other if Interpol happens to round us up!

As fun as it will be, the time will fly by and I'll find myself back in Arlington in no time. Home isn't such a bad thing ... the smells of the mash tun and the boil kettle, BBQ ribs, and the Woogie barking at me, begging for a treat! Hmm... then again... if I could smuggle the Woogie and my brewing equipment into their country, and if UPS could deliver supplies on a timely basis... who knows! We'll just have to see what happens! Ciao!

Drinking Songs, Continued from Page 3

the middle ages to the late 19th century. They were a way for hard working men to enhance the pub experience of blowing off steam after a hard days work, and certainly the publicans didn't mind that all this merriment worked up an even greater thirst in their patrons, and possibly kept them lingering at the watering hole deep into the wee hours of the night.

Roll out the barrel, we'll have a barrel of fun
Roll out the barrel, we've got the blues on the run
Zing boom tararrel, ring out a song of good cheer
Now's the time to roll the barrel, for the gang's all here

Roll out the barrel, indeed. This traditional Bavarian polka fits squarely into the category of drinking song, and highlights the fact that the main topic of a drinking song often is, er, eh, drinking! Yes, drinking songs are not so called simply because they are to be sung during drinking (although they are), but also because their main topic is often about drinking. These songs revel in the art and guttural wonder of drink, and ancillary topics of the songs often include such drinking related activities as fighting, and even fornication. They're light hearted, these songs, and their topics rarely delve too deep into the mysteries of the universe.

There is an inn, a merry old inn
beneath an old grey hill,
And there they brew a beer so brown
That the Man in the Moon himself came down
One night to drink his fill.

So goes the first Stanza to a drinking song so old it was sung by hobbits at the Inn of the Prancing Pony in Bree, in the Shire, in Middle Earth. The tune, written by J.R.R. Tolkien, demonstrates his familiarity with this sort of tavern borne song. It is quite innocent, and thus, represents but one school of thought for such ditties. For often, drinking songs can



be quite vulgar and ribald, and often are heralded by an audience in a tavern for being just that. Take this example from the popular repetitive song, 'Roll your leg over'

If all the young ladies were sweet fruits and berries
I'd handle their melons and nibble their cherries...

While most drinking songs were of a similar simplistic ilk, during the latter half of the 18th century, they began to take on a complexity heretofore unseen. Social clubs, gentlemen's organizations and even secret societies began to craft elaborate drinking songs to be sung as a sort of anthem at their regular meetings. It was one of these hymns, "To Anacreon in Heaven," which was the anthem of the Anacreontic Society, a group of well to do English gentlemen, which actually became the tune of the Star Spangled Banner, our own national Anthem. Francis Scott Key, the author of the Star Spangled Banner, would have certainly been familiar with the tune, as it was quite popular at the time, and it was common practice at the time in the Americas to borrow tunes from the British motherland. Thus, the national anthem of our nation has its origins as a drinking song. Somehow, that seems appropriate.

~ Sir Chris Owen



At Last, the Original Words to the
Song that Inspired out National Anthem....

To Ancreon in Heaven

To Anacreon in Heaven, where he fat in full glee,
A few fons of Harmony fent a petition,
That He their Infpirer and Patron would be;
When this anfwer arrived from the Jolly Old Grecian
"Voice, Fiddle, and Flute,
"no longer be mute,
"I'll lend you my Name and infpire you to boot,
"And, besides, I'll infruct you like me to entwine
"The Myrtle of Venus with Bacchus's Vine.
Play the melody.

II

The news through OLYMPUS immediately flew;
When OLD THUNDER pretended to give himfelf Airs
"If thefe mortals are fuffer'd their Scheme to perfue,
"The Devil a Goddefs will ftay above the Stairs.
"Hark, already they cry,
"In tranfports of Joy,
"Away to the Sons of ANACREON we'll fly,
"And there, with good Fellows, we'll learn to entwine
"The Myrtle of VENUS with BUCCUS'S Vine.
Play the melody.

III

"The YELLOW-HAIRED GOD and his nine fuffy Maids
"From Helicon's Banks will incontinent flee,
"IDALIA will boaft but of tenantlefs Shades,
"And the bi-forked Hill a mere Defart will be
"My Thunder, no fear on't,
"Shall foon do it's Errand,
"and, dam'me! I'll fwinge the Ringleaders, I warrant,
"I'll trim the young Dogs, for thus daring to twine
"The Myrtle of VENUS with BACCUS'S Vine.
Play the melody.

IV

APOLLO rose up; and faid, "Pr'ythee ne'er quarrel,
"Good King of the Gods, with my Vot'ries below:
"Your Thunder is ufelefs." - then, fhewing his Laurel,
Cry'd, "Sic evitabile fulmen, you know!
"then over each Head
"My Laurels I'll fpread;
"So my Sons from your Crackers no Mifchief fhall dread,
"Whilst fnug in their Club-Room, they jovially twine
"The Myrtle of VENUS with BACCUS'S Vine.
Play the melody.

V

Next MOMUS got up, with his rifible Phiz,
And fwore with APOLLO he'd cheerfully join

To Anacreon in Heaven, continued from page 5

“The full Tide of Harmony ffill shall be his,
 “But the Song, and the Catch, & the Laugh fhall be mine
 “Then, JOVE, be not jealous
 Of thefe honeft Fellows.
 Cry’d JOVE, “We relent, fince the Truth you now tell us;
 “And fwear, by OLD STYX, that they long fhall entwine
 “The Myrtle of VENUS with BACCUS’S Vine.
 Play the melody.

VI

Ye fons of ANACREON, then, join Hand in Hand;
 Preferve Unanimity, Friendfhip, and Love!
 ‘Tis your’s to fupport what’s fo happily plann’d;
 You’ve the Sanction of Gods, and the FIAT of Jove.
 While thus we agree
 Our Toaft let it be.
 May our club flourish happy, united and free!
 And long may the Sons of ANACREON intertwine
 The Myrtle of VENUS with BACCUS’S Vine.



Beer Humor

An Irishman named O’Malley went to his doctor after a long illness. The doctor, after a lengthy examination, sighed and looked O’Malley in the eye, and said, “I’ve some bad news for you. You have cancer, and it can’t be cured. I’d give you two weeks to a month to live.”

O’Malley was shocked and saddened by the news, but of solid character. He managed to compose himself and walk from the doctor’s office into the waiting room. There, he saw his son who had been waiting. O’Malley said, “Well son, we Irish celebrate when things are good, and we celebrate when things don’t go so well. In this case, things aren’t so well. I have cancer, and I’ve been given a short time to live. Let’s head for the pub and have a few pints.”

After three or four pints, the two were feeling a little less somber. There were some laughs and more beers. They were eventually approached by some of O’Malley’s old friends who asked what the two were celebrating. O’Malley told them that the Irish celebrate the good and the bad. He went on to tell them that they were drinking to his impending end. He told his friends, “I’ve only got a few weeks to live as I have been diagnosed with AIDS.”

The friends gave O’Malley their condolences, and they had a couple more beers. After his friends left, O’Malley’s son leaned over and whispered his confusion. “Dad. I thought you said that you were dying from cancer??? You just told your friends that you were dying from AIDS!” O’Malley said, “I am dying of cancer, son. I just don’t want any of them sleeping with your mother after I’m gone.”

~ Collected from the Internet

Mission Statement

The mission of the Knights of the Brown Bottle and this newsletter is to serve as a forum to promote public awareness and appreciation of the quality and variety of homebrewed beer through the collection and dissemination of information regarding the art and science of homebrewing, and to promote the responsible use of beer as an alcohol - containing beverage. The club newsletter is published monthly and highlights the events and meetings of the club, local beer events and technical information that will help everyone brew better beer. Items for publication are welcomed and encouraged. The deadline is the last Friday of the month, for the following months newsletter. Items should be directed to Chris Owen
 E-Mail : ludichris@comcast.net

KNIGHTS OF THE BROWN BOTTLE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FOR 2005

NAME-----
 EMAIL-----
 PHONE-----
 ADDRESS-----
 AMOUNT PAID \$ -----
 DATE-----

Please forward information to Richard Turner, Secretary,
 KOBB. (don’t forget to let us know if it changes)