

^{new} THE WRITTEN WORT

The newsletter of the New York City Homebrewers Guild
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THE WRITTEN WORT RETURNS

By Phil Clarke Jr.

For many members of the New York City Homebrewers Guild, opening this .pdf file will probably result in you saying, "Oh, the guild has a newsletter. Cool!" But for the older members, this is the return of the guild's newsletter.

The Written Wort was originally published in November 1987 under the editorial control of founding member and former guild president Morgan Wright. At a time when e-mail was out of reach for most people, the *Wort* was copied a la xerox and distributed via US Mail. The newsletter lasted for ten years until lack of submissions from guild members forced it to close shop.

There is a lesson to be learned here!

It is our desire to publish this newsletter on a monthly basis. In order for this, we ask that everyone contribute to it. We are looking beer news, photos, recipes. If you've been to an interesting bar, or had a beer worth talking about, we'd like to hear it. Pieces can be any length. Photographs are acceptable in any format, though .jpg or .gif are preferred.



PARK SLOPES COMES TO MANHATTAN

By Rich Medina



Our last meeting found us gathered around Brewsky's listening to Steve Deptula of the Liberty Heights Tap Room, located in the Red Hook section of Brooklyn. Steve, co-founder of the Park Slope Brewing Co., is a veteran of the long gone hey-day of the brewpub and the renaissance of craft brewing in Brooklyn.

Steve brought along 2 kegs of lagers: a Bohemian pilsener and a steam beer (or California Common, for those worried about trademark infringement) from his portfolio. The Bohemian Pilsener is a soft, light-bodied, balanced, chalky beer with a sulphery nose. Hopped with Saaz and 'a touch' of Magnum for bitterness. I couldn't pick up the spiciness of the Saaz aroma and was surprised the bitterness of the Magnum was evident. Maltiness was a tad thin but within style guidelines. The perceived chalkiness made me wonder if this beer had received a dose of any brewing salt.

I asked Steve what water treatment regimen he employed for his lagers. His answer didn't really surprise me at all considering NYC

has some very soft water. Steve basically fills his hot liquor tank (HLT) with water and raises it to a temperature near boiling to begin the brewing process. Naturally, the brewing process begins with the CLEANING OF EQUIPMENT! While he sends a cleaning solution around his tanks the remaining portion of the water in the HLT has expelled the chlorine in tap water. Chlorine as a disinfectant in drinking water at or over 150 deg F held for 15 minutes will denature into a gaseous compound. No other additions were made to the water. As for the chalkiness in the pils, I can only attribute it to Phil who was standing next to me.

The second beer (and my beer of choice for the remainder of that night) was the steam beer, ah, that delicious steam beer. Well done and to style. A light to medium body, flavorful, copperish beer that left me wanting another and another. Nicely hopped with a malty presentation complemented by the yeast strain that was pleasantly sitting in the background. I didn't get a chance to ask (or eavesdrop on) Steve on the particulars of this beer, which is a shame. Looks like we'll have to pay him visit. Yo! one-stop beer garden/pubcrawl anyone?

GUILD SHIRTS AND PINT GLASSES ARE AVAILABLE!

Pick up your very own guild softball shirt at the next meeting. Only \$15!

Guild t-shirts only \$10!

Guild pint glasses, available in pine green or cobalt blue. Only \$10 dollars!

A VISIT TO OMMEGANG

By Deidre Hinds

Every summer, the Brewery Ommegang hosts *Belgium Comes To Cooperstown*, a day celebrating Belgian culture. While there was

plenty of Belgian beer to sample, there was also Belgian food and demonstrations of flag throwing, a popular Belgian tradition performed by a flag troupe from Belgium dressed in old garb reminiscent of the Elizabethan period.

The festival took place in a sunny field behind the brewery. A large canopy housed tables offering samples of the entire Ommegang line of beers (and other imports), Belgium chocolates, cookies and sodas and various community organizations trying to raise money or spark interest in a variety of worthy causes. Tables adjacent to the canopy offered other things typical of Belgium fare; namely sweet Belgium waffles, various types of sausages and fresh frites.



One beer of note was a Belgium-style white beer that hasn't been released yet. This White beer had a distinctive horse-blanket nose, while the palette was fruity with banana

and grapefruit making an appearance. The overall body was light with a hop finish that while present, was not overbearing.

The only downside to the day was the four-hour drive. Fortunately, the sunshine and gentle temperatures made the trip that much more pleasant. Finding the brewery once in Cooperstown was also a challenge as there were very little signage to lead you.

Overall, it's a good to great festival if you live in the vicinity, otherwise it is a pretty long ride to take for what you get. To make it fully worthwhile one should probably plan to make a weekend of it and stay overnight after the festival at one of Cooperstown's many bed and breakfasts.

NEW MEMBERS!

The NYCHG would like to welcome its newest members to the guild, Greg Phillips and Edgar Mark. Bring some homebrew next time!

FROM THE PRIMARY

By Phil Clarke Jr.

There's been a lot of changes going on with the guild in the past couple of years. The biggest change, obviously, is the number of new faces at the meetings. During the early-nineties, during the height of the homebrewing craze, forty members regularly attended guild meetings, with just as many homebrews being passed around. Over time, though, things changed. The craze started dying out; the influx of brewpubs and microbreweries was one reason for this. Members leaving and forming other homebrewing clubs was another.

By the late-nineties, twelve to fifteen people attending the meeting was about average. On more than a few occasions, no one brought any homebrew. It wasn't for lack of trying by the guild officers. It was just, well, you know.... Stuff came up. People had things to do.

It was a shame.

Things started changing in the past three years. Several guild members, not wanting the guild to fade away decided to take an aggressive approach in solving the problem. Signs went up in local homebrew shops about the guild. Little electronic post-its were placed all over the world wide web. Free advertising was used wherever it was available. Before too long, a new face showed up to the meeting. And then another. And then a couple more. Last year, the guild received eighteen new members! Sure, they were new, having only one or two batches under their belts, but they were still members and they were interested in brewing beer. Most clubs I know didn't receive any new members during this time. I almost feel guilty about this.... Almost.

A website was designed. Trips and picnics were planned, and people started going to them. The numbers weren't tremendous, but it was a start. This year's picnic had five more adults than last year's picnic (and eight more children and two more dogs). Hopefully, our next picnic will have even more people than that.

The point is, we now have a glowing ember of interest in what was once a small pile of ash. We must keep fanning this interest in the guild and get that flame to where it once was ten years ago.

I'll stop with the fire metaphors for now.

It would be great if we could not only keep the momentum going, but to increase it. Other things are planned for the guild in upcoming months and everyone is invited to attend and contribute. We're looking for artists and writers for future newsletters, more recipes for the website and people willing to organize a trip or two.

Possibly the best way to help is to simply bring some homebrew to a meeting.



RAFFLE!

Donations for the new monthly guild raffle are being accepted! Anyone wishing to donate any beer-related paraphernalia (glassware, clothing, beer, etc) will receive free tickets for the raffle.

UPCOMING EVENTS

August 15 - 'Belgian Bonanza,' organized by Ale Street News and Tavern on the Green. Sample thirty of Belgium's best beers with or without dinner prepared by Chef Coyle. Call 212-873-3200, ext. 282, for details.

August 21 – August meeting of NYCHG. Guest speaker will be former guild member Sal Penacchio of the Old World Brewing Company.

August 24 – Arlo Guthrie's *Alice's Restaurant* premiers on this date in 1969.

August 25 – Oktoberfest and game at Staten Island Yankee Stadium. Game starts at 7:35pm

September 8-9 - 'Tavern Day Celebration' in Croton-on-Hudson, NY. Beer festival featuring many beers from the Hudson Valley area. Beer, dancing, song and fun! (914) 271-8981.

September 19 – First Annual Smoke-Out at the Blind Tiger Ale House. Smoked foods paired with numerous smoked beers.

September 27-29 - 20th annual Great American Beer Festival.

September 30 – Guild end-of-the-summer picnic!

October ?? – Cider press at Party Creations, in Red Hook, NY.

October 13 – Eastern Invitational Microbrew Festival at Stoudts Brewing Company, Adamstown, PA.

VISIT THE WEBSITE!

<http://www.pipeline.com/~doglebe/nychg.html>

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