

# THE WRITTEN WORT

The newsletter of the New York City Homebrewers Guild  
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## HAPPY HOLIDAYS

By Paul Kervan



The December meeting had a more casual atmosphere than most meetings. Then again, this was no meeting, it was the Guild's holiday party. No speakers or formal agenda, just beer, food and friends.

The festivities kicked off with a group toast of Ommegang's Cave Aged Hennepin Ale. As this beer is considered the brewery's Christmas beer, it was a perfect choice for the occasion. It was a tasty beer and I think many of us would have been content to spend the rest of the evening drinking that.

As we awaited the food to warm up, we maintained one tradition that made the party, quasi-meeting like, we held the raffle. This was a special raffle though, not because of the holidays or extraordinary prizes. No, this raffle was special because we had to invoke the often threatened, but never administered "win three times and get your ass kicked" rule. That's right, Marc LaPointe got his ass kicked. After his beating, some of us asked Marc, how is it that he wins so often. It turns out that Marc likes to stack the odds in his favor by buying 99% of the tickets. We're not

quite sure if it's the prizes or the ass kicking he's after. Well, someone has help keep the Guild funded.

As we *continued* to wait for the food to warm up, it was time to pour some homebrew. For a relatively light turnout there sure seemed to be a lot of brew flowing. Phil, not surprisingly, had some tasty mead on hand. John Naegele had a very spruce-y holiday ale. Yours truly poured a flaked maize and polenta infused corn lager. There were a host of other tasty items to sample that elude me in my fog of holiday cheer.

Fortunately Sid had brought an assorted spread of cold food to munch on, because we were *still waiting* for the hot food to warm up. Sensing the hungry crowd was about to get unruly, Phil got creative with the burner arrangement and moved things along. During all of this, an unsuspecting couple wandered into the Brewsky's unaware of the event at hand. Being the cordial folks that homebrewers are, they received endless samples of homebrew and even got some food (when it finally warmed up). Looks like we may have two new Guild members joining the ranks.

Cheers and Happy New year!

**VISIT THE WEBSITE!**

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

## THE ALL-GRAIN CHALLENGE

By Rich Medina

"What on earth is he attempting to insinuate?" was the first thought that leaped into

my mind after reading Alex Scotti's passage concerning the mini-challenge between Phil Clarke, John Naegele, Paul Krevran and myself. Can the phrase, "Paul's mild tasted similar to Rich's, which could be expected when two experienced brewers make the same recipe" be any less sanguine? Looks like more than two people basked in the results of the mini-challenge which pitted extract brewers against all-grainers. So get comfortable as this article will unfold the saga of 4 bickering homebrewers and a point to prove.

One sweltering evening, as we gathered for a meeting this past summer, the concept for this challenge was born from a heated argument between the parties involved. Surely it was started by a typical obnoxious comment emanating from an orifice we'll politely call Phil's mouth. In strong unequivocal terms, Phil stated brewing with malt extract (and the use of specialty grains) was equal to if not better than any all-grain effort made by any mortal. Not to be outdone, John regaled us with a story of a Corsendonk clone winning Best of Show using an extract recipe. Needless to say, both have won their fair share of awards.

### **DUES IS DUE**

Just a reminder that guild dues will be collected in January. It's fifteen dollars for new members and ten for membership renewal. New members receive an etched guild pint glass.

Championing the all-grain cause (and bearing the brunt of the withering sarcasm), Paul and yours truly decided to take on these blowhards to prove the error of their ways. It was decided we would all brew the same beer and have it ready for the November meeting. The beer style agreed upon was a mild - a decided advantage for the extract team. The ale was based on Al Korzonas' recipe and modified for extract use. While the primary ingredients were called out, there was enough room in the recipe for the brewer to add his signature to the beer.

### **All-grain recipe**

Malt

5.25 lbs. pale malt

0.75 lbs. crystal malt

0.25 lbs. caramel 120L malt

0.25 lbs. chocolate malt

Hops

1.25 HBU Goldings 90 min

1.25 HBU Fuggles 45 min

2.50 HBU Goldings 30 min

1.25 HBU Fuggles 15 min

Mash with 1.75 gallons water @ 155-156 deg F for 45 min to convert.

Wyeast 1087 or WP English Ale yeast

### **Extract recipe**

Substitute 2.25 lbs of malt extract for pale malt. Place specialty grains in water and chant three times "I wish I was all-grain! I wish I was all-grain! I wish I was all-grain!"

Follow the recipe as laid out for above.

I'll spare you the details of my brew day except to say my 10 gallon batch was split using two different yeasts.

Wyeast 1272 - American II was in the other fermenter.

This beer sits in a secondary and will do so for another month. Also had to familiarize myself with using HBUs as I have only used IBUs.



Lessons Learned:

**1)** White Labs 002 - British Ale Yeast SUCKS! The only redeeming quality this yeast has is that it drops out like a 1st round TKO, literally! This

## RAFFLE!

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

yeast appeared to do all its work in 48 hours and began to floc immediately thereafter. I had to swirl the carboy to put the yeast back into suspension. If it clumps like a ball of shit, leaves a shitty mineral taste in the beer, it must be shit. As all of you have noticed English Ale and British Ale yeast are two different strains. Alas, I have no idea how we wound up so off target.

2) I added gypsum to acidify my mash. Wrong Answer! This emphasized the toned-down hops this style so delicately balances. Use acid to acidify the mash and sparge.

3) It's hard to compare apples to apples when someone tosses in a dry yeast. Sorry John but rules are rules!

Ok, #3 may not be a lesson learned for this particular batch of beer but it does have merit when evaluating an individual's brewing techniques and methods.

So I throw out a challenge to the entire Guild now that we have weather in our favor. Let's brew a beer from identical ingredients where possible. We'll have the Guild coordinate the purchase of the malt, malt extract, specialty grains, hops and yeast. Paul and I will take on the entire Guild: Our all-grain vs. your extract.

What say you?"



## MAN EXITS BUNKER WHEN BEER THIRST OVERTAKES XMAS DREAD

LONDON (Reuters) –

A British man who went underground behind blast-proof doors and thick concrete to avoid a family Christmas has emerged early because he was "dying for a pint" of beer. Colin Wood, a 30-year-old financial services worker, entered the decommissioned nuclear bunker in Essex, east of London, on Thursday and planned to stay for another week.

"It was great but I was dying for a pint and the idea of a spending another week was too much," he told Reuters Monday. Wood paid \$430 at an Internet auction for a two-week stay in the bunker. He said he took such extreme action because he abhorred Christmas and all its trimmings.

"It's OK in theory but the running around, the buying of presents for people you don't like, the family bickering, the endless turkey and terrible films on TV are just too much," he said.

## FROM THE PRIMARY

By Phil Clarke Jr.

Brewers start you (beer) engines!!!

This is an important and optimal time for homebrewing, with various events coming up, everyone should feel guilty for not brewing (anyone who doesn't feel guilty, please contact me so arrangements can be made for guilt).

Wintertime is always good for homebrewers. Cold weather prevents us from going to the beach, leaving us with more time to work on ESBs and stouts, and it allows us a little more control with fermenting temperatures. If you want to brew at 60 degrees and your apartment is 85, put your carboy by the window and open it a little. When you want to chill your hot wort

(or crash chill it later), leave it on the fire escape a couple of hours.

Winter is also the time when you stockpile your beers. Very few people brew in the summer (wasting their time at the beach), so brew a barleywine or an imperial stout now so you'll have something to drink in July.

In addition to the good brewing weather, there are a couple of events worth brewing for: the first is the Best of Brooklyn homebrew competition in February, hosted by the Malted Barley Appreciation Society. It's well-worth entering (and participating in if you can).

Shortly after this is the American Homebrewers Association's Club-Only Competition, in March. The NYCHG will be organizing this one and the style for this competition is porter. Porters are great beers to make and even better to drink.

The most important event to brew for is the guild's 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary, coming up in April. We're hoping to bring in a big crowd for this event and want to be sure that there is plenty of beer to go around.

The guild still has some light DME available for an incredibly lower price of two dollars a pound and supplies are limited. There's no reason not to brew now, unless you got a Playstation 2 for Christmas. In this case, we've lost you forever.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**January 26** – Meadlennium V. Mead-only competition in Orlando, FL. Visit <http://CFHB.org> for details.

**January 14** – Stoudt's tasting at DBA's with special guest, Carol Stoudt.

**January 15** – NYCHG meeting. Neil Acer, of the Ramapo Valley Brew Pub will be our guest speaker. Elections for guild officers will be held and your vote counts.

**January 19** – Southern New England Regional Homebrew Competition (SNERC) in Danbury, CT, Contact: Von Bair, 203-393-7257, [ereetc@aol.com](mailto:ereetc@aol.com) for details.

**January 26** – Pubcrawl. Stops to be announced.

**February 23** – Best of Brooklyn 2002, hosting by the Malted Barley Appreciation Society.

## GUILD OFFICERS

*President:* Phil Clarke Jr.  
*Vice President:* Marc LaPointe  
*Treasurer:* Rich Medina  
*Webmistress:* Janet Clarke  
*Photographer:* Sid Washer  
*Ambassador:* John Naegele

