

THE WRITTEN WORT

The newsletter of the New York City Homebrewers Guild
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BREWERS WHO HATE SPEAKERS & THE SPEAKERS WHO LOVE THEM

By Eileen Tronolone (that wacky redheaded meadmaking dame)

I was asked to write a review of the February meeting, so now you have to put up with my perspective. Tough. Anyway, the meeting was (as usual) quite well attended but (as usual) I managed to score the last chair. This guy from the Gaslight Brewery was supposed to show up, but didn't because he was unwell. Happens to the best of us. But I am still going to allow myself to be amused by the name of the brewery, hence the title of this article. Those of you who don't get the joke, see me after class.

Phil opened the floor to what turned out to be a lively discussion on how to increase membership, retain members, and make the club more fun. The Star Chamber, I mean, uhh, Steering Committee has also been racking, siphoning and most thoroughly sparging it's collective brain to answer these compelling questions (between beers, of course). My pet idea, which I shall now shamelessly plug here, is to hold a camping trip at Croton on the Hudson this summer which lets people camp overnight for an entire weekend of brewing and camaraderie. We like Croton because they are one of the few parks in the Tri-State area that allow alcohol on site. The last time I was there, I went and checked out the cabins and they seem quite adequate for our needs. And finally it would give me a chance to show off my spanking brand new cajun cooker. Yes, we are now a three cajun cooker club. Camping for the weekend will allow the event to be more group/family oriented and allow us to do some brewing together.

I was asked to also follow up with Vacamas Program For Youth. This charity holds a humongous beer-tasting every year around May 1st. This is where I first got to sample Blue Moon Belgian White, and many other microbrews both local and remote are to be found there. I suggested that we contact Vacamas to find out if we could get a table there and pursue a membership drive - for lo, people who like good beer are most likely to be interested in how to make their own, as ALL of us know.

One of the better ideas I heard was that we do some sort of Learning Annex type brewing class. As this requires access to a kitchen, this idea is going to take some researching, but it's a good idea.

The highlight of the meeting remains the raffle. Phil obviously has a great deal of fun playing Monty Hall and does a great job of it. Remember that you can also contribute to the fun by donating the odd prize. If you happen to be wandering about and in your merry travels you find a strange new beer or some beer-related item, grab one for yourself and another for the raffle. The Karma of the Beer Gods will then smile upon you.

There was some discussion of the upcoming Best of Brooklyn contest. Those of you who did not enter, you missed some fun and an opportunity to score some cool prizes. Both Phil and I agree that some of the brews you have shared at the meetings could do rather well there if you'd give yourselves a chance and enter. And of course we also talked about the upcoming 15th Anniversary party. A good time was had by all. Hopefully we'll have a speaker

next month...if not, I guess we'll just have to talk to each other again! ;-7

DUES ARE DUE
Just a reminder that guild dues will be collected. Don't make us chase you for it!

GUILD SCORES WELL AT BEST OF BROOKLYN 2002

By Phil Clarke Jr.



February 23, was just an ordinary...if you were an ordinary person. For homebrewers, however, it was the Best of Brooklyn 2002, the Malted Barley Appreciation Society's successful and popular homebrew competition. The competition went smoothly as 183 entries were tasted and judged. During the course of the day, the judges and stewards made new friends as well as got reacquainted with old ones.

After a day of critiquing the various ales and lagers, the winners were announced and

NYCHG took home eight ribbons. The winning brewers include:

Paul Kervran: 1st place in the English & Scottish Strong Ale category and 1st place in the Porter category (winning Best in Show);

Eileen Tronolone: 1st and 2nd place in the mead category;

Tom Cahalane: 2nd & 3rd place in the cider category.

Phil Clarke Jr.: 1st place Strong Belgian Ale and 1st place in the Experimental category.

Placing the guild medal scores in with the winners in the 2002 Winter Olympics, it is learned that the NYCHG came in tenth place, narrowly beating the Republic of China (see chart below):

<u>country</u>	<u>gold</u>	<u>silver</u>	<u>bronze</u>	<u>total</u>
Germany	12	16	7	35
United States	10	13	11	34
Norway	11	7	6	24
Canada	6	3	8	17
Austria	2	4	10	16
Russian Fed.	6	6	4	16
Italy	4	4	4	12
France	4	5	2	11
Switzerland	3	2	6	11
NYCHG	5	2	1	8
China	2	2	4	8

"We're looking to see where we went wrong on both the luge doubles and doppelbocks," commented guild ambassador, John Naegele. "We'll concentrate on our weaknesses and are confident we'll do better next time around."

NEW MEMBERS!
The NYCHG would like to welcome its newest member: Richard Gehr. Bring some homebrew next time!

LITTLE PUMP, LOTSA HELP

By Rich Medina

Presidents' Day weekend was a backbreaker! If I wasn't moving 55 lb. sacks of grain from car to house to garage, I was hunched over building homebrew kits, or I was carrying 70+ lb. boxes of do-it-yourself Ikea furniture into the kids' bedroom. I was, for all practical purposes, a walking excuse for a Doanes' pill. But amidst all this agony, there was a resplendent moment that offered me a glimpse of things to come. With a flip of a switch, the future looked much brighter!

My wife, who just doesn't understand this obsession called homebrewing but accepts my quirk nonetheless, bought me a food-grade hi-temp pump for X-mas. Like giving candy to a baby on a sugar high, I had the homebrew equivalent of sugar plums frenetically bouncing around within the confines of my head. She must really LIKE me because the pump came with a few extra goodies to make it work right out of the box.... sort of. It was outfitted with 20 ft of high-temp braided hose, stainless steel (ss) fittings and a ss ball valve mounted on the discharge. The one thing missing: a wiring connection. So, over the course of a several weeks, I laid out changes to my brewing equipment to accommodate the pump. I went to Home Depot to buy a water-resistant outdoor electrical box with switch, some spade terminals, and a GFCI outlet (to replace the outlet I have in the porch where I brew). McMaster Carr provided the liquid-tight strain reliefs and I took a 6 ft 3-conductor power chord from work. My connections were meant to withstand the occasional mistake. We all know how messy a session can get and the inevitable spill is, well, inevitable. If you try this, always be safe and use extra caution with electrical appliances.

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.

Instructions are meant to be read so I took the time to find out the do's and don't's of my pump. Even though I am familiar with centrifugal pumps and their operation, there was one warning in particular that caught my eye: 'do not run this pump dry'. Naturally, I just couldn't resist the temptation of turning it on. I reasoned, "it'll only be for a quick second, I couldn't possibly damage it". The piercing screech resonating from the pump confirmed that I did indeed make sound wiring connections and, while the pump is bullet-proof in function, it is not idiot-proof in scope.

Sunday the 17th of February rolled around and I was eager to try my new, albeit partially abused pump. First, I brought 10 gallons of water up to 175 deg F in my boil kettle and pumped it into my hot liquor tank (HLT) which is about a good 7 feet up from the ground. My HLT is a 10 gallon Igloo container which does a great job at keeping the sparge water at proper temperature. The trick is to get that hot sparge water into the Igloo 7 ft up in the air on a makeshift stand. This used to be a dangerous event during my brewing day. One that drew much cursing and swearing. Within 10 minutes, I had the Igloo approaching full mark. It was at this moment I knew my pump and I would be good friends for a long time to come.



Next, I pumped 4.5 gallons of mash water to my mash/lauter tun (MLT) and mixed in the grain. A quick swap of connections and my pump began recirculating the mash without a drop so much as touching the ground. It was heavenly. Gone was the endless lifting of quartfuls of wort to set the grainbed. Gone was the worry of uneven temperatures in the mash tun. Gone was all the splashing and with it the possibility of hot side aeration (HSA). Gone were the demonstrative hand gestures that were clearly not in the spirit of 'relax, don't worry, have a homebrew.' As I approached my first mash rest, the wort began to clear and my eyes started to cloud with tears of satisfaction.

Before you all begin to call me pansy for having these emotions, please note I had to modify my MLT and build a return manifold in order to reach this point. On paper all of these mods should have worked because they were taken from respected homebrewers who had already tried them. Yet it was quite a rush to see them work; the first time around. To add to the complexity, I also added a second thermometer to the MLT at the heart of the grainbed which in itself revealed very pertinent data. I now had more control over the mashing process than I've ever had before.

I'll explain my observations, my quest to build a heat exchanger and other arguably useful devices in other articles to come.

FROM THE PRIMARY

By Phil Clarke Jr.

Normally, this space has always been reserved for the guild president to rattle on about this, that or the other thing. In theory, after reading it, everyone's supposed to be inspired enough to fire up the brew pot and brew something. Due to space and time restraints, I figure it would be better to simply mention the guild's upcoming 15th anniversary party. If you have not received your invitation in the mail by

now, please see someone at the next meeting so we can update our records.

The anniversary party will take place on Sunday, April 7th from 1:00pm to 5:00pm. In a recent conversation with Jerry, the owner of Brewsky's, I mentioned how things were going to be tight with the number of people expected. He told me that the downstairs area (after years of construction) will be ready in April and that we can use this space for the party.



Food will be catered for this event from the Waterfront Ale House, so you know there'll be plenty of good food. Rich Medina, Paul Kervran, John Naegele and myself will each be bringing a corney keg of beer, brewed just for the occasion. Add to this a souvenir bottle of old ale brewed guild members last summer.

Several founding members have already agreed to be there, including Garrett Oliver and Morgan Wright (the guild's first president) both of whom will have great stories of the guild's past. (and possibly of John Naegele as a neophyte brewer).

So please let me know if you can make this event. Food must be ordered for this historic event. It'll certainly be one for the books.

By the way, the first person to e-mail me with the header, "I want the Sami!" wins a bottle of 1994 Samichlaus Bier. E-mail must be received no later than noon on March 9th.

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 6th – Old World Brewing Company tasting at David Copperfields (74th & York Street). Call 212-734-6152 for details.

March 9th – Split Thy Brooklyn Skull barleywine festival at Mug's Ale, 125 Bedford Street, Brooklyn. 2:00 – 6:00pm.

March 11th – Beer dinner at the Heartland Brewery Chophouse, presented by the Ale Street News. Call (646) 366-0235 for information and details.

March 17th – Saint Patrick's Day. You have your orders....

March 19th – New York City Homebrewers Guild meeting. Guest speaker: DJ Soboti of the Gaslight Brewery & Restaurant

March 23rd – Hudson Valley Homebrewers 12th Annual Homebrew Competition at the Hyde Park Brewing Company. <http://www.hbd.org/hvhb>

April 6th – Knickerbocker Battle of the Brews 2002 at the C.H. Evans Brewing Company. <http://www.moonbrew.com/kbotb/>

April 7th – New York City Homebrewers Guild 15th Anniversary Celebration. Contact Phil for details for reservations.

April 19th – 28th – AHA National Homebrew Competition. <http://www.beertown.org>

April 27 & 28th – Tap New York at Hunter Mountain. Sample the best beers that New York State has to offer!

GUILD OFFICERS

President: Phil Clarke Jr.
Vice President: Paul Kervran
Treasurer: Rich Medina
Webmistress: Janet Clarke
Photographer: Sid Washer
Ambassador: John Naegele

VISIT THE WEBSITE!

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

