

The Strange Brew Review

The newsletter of the Green Bay Rackers Homebrew Club

Organized 1982

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<i>Meeting Schedule 2004</i>		
January 6	Club Brew: Bob Franklin	Meetings unless otherwise indicated are held at Tiletown Brewing Company, upstairs area. Club Brews are held at members' homes. Occasionally, business meetings are held at other locations. See the club website at www.rackers.org for the most up-to-date information.
February 7	Meeting: Bock, Doppelbock, Dunkel	
March 2	Club Brew: Fred Matzke	
April 3	Meeting: Belgian and Trappist Ales, Lambic	
May 4	Club Brew: John Allen	
June 5	Club Picnic: Location TBA	
July 6	Club Brew: Matt Arnold & Ryan Landwehr	
August 7	Meeting: Bitter, Pale Ale, "Lawnmower"	
September 7	Club Brew: Mike Conard	
October 2	Meeting: Oktoberfest, Vienna	
November 2	Club Brew: <i>We need a brewer!</i>	
December 4	Meeting: "Christmas", Barleywine, Strong Ale	

New Members!

We welcome the following new members to the club: Matt Berg (Menasha), Allen Dolata (Green Bay), Eric Dunning (Green Bay), Ken Klausen (Kimberly), Dan Pleshek (Greenleaf), and Jason Schwefel (Lena). Welcome to the club!

Unpaid Dues!

Secretary/Treasurer Mike Conard reports these members as delinquent...well, as far as their club dues are concerned anyway: Mike Beno, Chad Brown, John Doherty, Craig Dufek, George Ehrenberger, Jim Enloe, Dave Hinkens, Tom Klatt, Scott Koehler, Shawn O'Harrow, Joe Riha, Jeff Rogers, Bernie Schmidt, Brian Schutlz, Matt Skaletski, Patrick Zeeman, Mark Zelten, Bert Zelten. So open up them wallets, boys!

Meeting Minutes: February 7, 2004

The meeting was called to order at 1:15 PM by President Bob Franklin. There were 22 members in attendance. The minutes of the December 2003 meeting were read and approved. The treasurer's report shows a balance of \$2972.07 as of the end of January.

Old business:

Manitowoc Jaycees Brew Fest on Feb. 21st was discussed. Manitowoc Expo Center, 4:00 PM set up, pouring from 5-9 PM. We have four beers to pour. Several members volunteered to help. We get two free tickets, we would need five more tickets at \$20.00 each for the other members. Motion was made to have the club purchase five additional tickets at a total cost of \$100.00. Motion carried. President Bob is working on getting the jockey box borrowed from Richard Stueven into shape. Bob & Trever LaRene will bring their CO2 tanks, Mike Conard will bring his as a back-up.

The purchase of a club jockey box was discussed. Richard & Paris have offered that their jockey box will be available for club use anytime except when they use it at their annual party. Bob needs at least \$60.00 worth of parts to get it working in addition to the parts he took off of his own refrigerator system. Motion made that the club spend the money to get the box into shape. Motion carried.

Seller's Permit was discussed. Mike says that for \$20 the club can get the permit which will allow us to make purchases from suppliers of brewing supplies at wholesale cost. Motion made to spend the money and get the permit. Motion carried.

Wooden sign for the stairway at Titledown was discussed. Brent at Titledown will allow us to put a "home of the Rackers" sign at the foot of the stairs. Mike found that a carved sign will cost about \$500. Dave Oldenberg

has a friend who does laser engraved wood signs. Dave was directed to check into price of doing such a sign.

Discussion held about combining the club picnic with the HomeBrew Bash in Appleton. Motion made to continue to have the club picnic and encourage attendance at the HB bash. Discussion centered upon whether having two events in one month might reduce attendance at our own picnic. The majority of the club want to continue to have the separate club picnic as it is usually well attended and is in a great venue at Chuck Golueke's home. Motion carried.

Bob would like to know if having a plaque awarded to the BOS winner of the TTO contest would be possible. Mike is directed to check into cost.

Motion made to replace the 1st place ribbons at the Titledown Open with medals. Discussion reflected keeping the 2nd & 3rd place awards as ribbons. Motion carried.

New Business:

Motion made and seconded to waive the newsletter editor's dues for club membership like we do for the officers. Motion carried. Since Richard paid for this year, he has asked that those dues be transferred to his wife's membership and extend it for 2005. That will be done.

Announcements: none

Raffle: Three door prizes donated by Life Tools were raffled off.

Motion made to adjourn at 2:26 PM. Motion carried and meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Conard
Sec/Treasurer

5th Annual Lallemand Scholarship

Lallemand, the makers of Danstar dry yeast and Servomyces yeast nutrient, is once again proud to sponsor the Fifth Annual Lallemand Scholarship. This scholarship is for one lucky American Homebrewers Association member to attend the 2004 World Brewing Academy Concise Course in Brewing Technology (Nov. 1-12, 2004) in Chicago, Illinois. The famous two-week WBA Concise Course in Brewing Technology will provide students with a comprehensive knowledge of the brewing process, the dynamics of brewery operations, and socioeconomic issues affecting the industry. This two-week course (valued at \$2,900) is provided at the Siebel Institute of Technology campus in Chicago, America's oldest and most recognized brewing school. The winner also receives \$1,000 towards any expenses while in Chicago, one of America's most exciting and vibrant cities.

REQUIREMENTS

AHA members may enter the contest by filling out the online form linked to this page. You will need to know your AHA membership number, which appears on your AHA membership card. If you do not know your membership number or would like to join, e-mail <mailto:info@aob.org>, call 888-822-6273, or visit our membership page, <http://www.beertown.org/homebrewing/membership.html>.

HOW TO ENTER

Online entry forms must be submitted by June 4, 2004. Entries will also be accepted from attendees at the AHA National Homebrewers Conference in Las Vegas, NV, June 17-19, 2004. Only one entry per AHA Member will be accepted, however, an additional entry may be obtained by submitting a ballot for the AHA Board of Advisors election or see the ballot in the March/April Zymurgy for details. All ballots must be submitted by April 1, 2004.

WINNER ANNOUNCED

The drawing for the Lallemand Scholarship will take place at the AHA National Homebrewers Conference in Las Vegas, NV during the Grand Banquet on June 19, 2004. The winner must have a current AHA membership at the time of the drawing to be eligible.

For more information, go to <http://www.beertown.org/homebrewing/scholarship.html>
http://www.siebelinstitute.com/registration/scholar_lallemand.html
<http://consumer.lallemand.com/danstar-lalvin/danstar.html>
or contact Rob Moline at <mailto:lallemand-yeast@mchsi.com>

Cheers!

Rob Moline

"The More I Know About Beer, The More I Realize I Need To Know More About Beer!"

Competition News

April 24, 2004: 10th Annual Titledown Open

Everything you need to know is at <http://rackers.org/open.shtml>. The Titledown Open is the second event in this year's Fox Valley Cup for Keggers, and our turn to have the home field advantage. Enter early and often!

June 5, 2004: ALE Wheat Beer Competition

The third and final event in this year's Fox Valley Cup for Keggers. This competition is open to all beers containing at least 40% wheat, malted or unmalted. Details are posted at http://home.new.rr.com/thealeclub/Documents/ALE_wheat_comp_form.pdf

May 22, 2004: State Fair Homebrew Competition

Here you'll find all the events and contacts information that you'll need to enter and compete at this year's homebrew competition. We're proud to state that the WI State Fair Homebrew Competition continues to have BJCP entry categories, which will help both entrants and judges alike.

Important dates:

Entry registration deadline is

Saturday, May 1st, 2004.

Entry turn-in deadline is Thursday,

May 20th, 2004.

Competition date is Saturday, May 22nd, 2004.

Rules and Entry Forms

<http://www.beerbarons.org/competitions/wsf/index.html>

There are three (3) downloads (in PDF format) available for your use:

1. The Official copy of the WI State Fair Homebrew Competition Rules & Regulations
2. separate entry/recipe form (included in document 1)
3. a separate bottle ID form (included in document 1)

The Rules & Regulations explain everything you'll need to know on how to enter your beers into the WI State Fair HB Competition. If you have any questions, feel free to contact any of the coordinators. To view the PDF files, you'll need Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free of charge at www.adobe.com.

Judges and Stewards

Judges & stewards are needed! If you'd like to volunteer as a judge or steward, please contact Chris Belsky at 414-807-5230 or at belskyc@msoe.edu. This year's event is a qualified BJCP event, and all BJCP members will get their 'BJCP Experience Points' for judging & stewarding.

Anybody can help steward!

The 2004 WI State Fair Homebrew Competition is sponsored by:

- Beer Barons of Milwaukee
- The Purple Foot
- Wisconsin Vintner's Association



Smoke Signals



By
Mike Conard

All about Humidors

Ah, the mistique (or mistake) of the humidor! Some cigar snobs have made the humidor a thing of such mystery and fanaticism that the average person who enjoys a cigar now and then thinks that they stand no chance of keeping a cigar in mint condition without spending a bunch of money. The more money you spend on the accoutrements, the less you get to spend on the product itself, right? Come to think of it, that should apply to our beer drinking as well! The 3 main factors to consider in storing cigars are temperature, humidity, and type of container in that order.

Temperature is critical to good cigar storage. Refrigerators may work fine to storing cartons of cigarettes which will get smoked in a short period of time, but are absolutely the wrong place to keep cigars! Proper cigar storage should be as close to 70 degrees Farenheit as possible. So regardless of what container you use for a humidor, it should be kept in an area of the home where this is best maintained. Don't want to keep your cigars out in the open (wife doesn't want them around the house?) Consider keeping them in the general vicinity of your home furnace. That is usually an out-of-site area and will likely be warm enough, even if it is in a colder basement.

Humidity is also a critical element and the most difficult part of keeping cigars. Cigars need to be kept at a constant humidity of 70-72% relative humidity to maintain their freshness and keep the wrapper from drying out and falling apart when you start smoking it. This is controlled by a device called a humidistat. If you are building or making your own humidor, you can purchase one from many cigar stores or catalogs. If you purchase a desktop humidor, they usually have one in them. They even make disposable humidistats that last about 30 days. The least expensive rechargeable ones have nothing more than florist clay in them. You've seen that stuff - the really spongy green things they put in the bottom of floral arrangements that are moist and keep flowers fresh for a few days. The more expensive ones have much fancier chemical pellets that slowly release moisture. You should also have a hygrometer in it to tell you what the humidity is. These can also be purchased as mentioned above if you are making your own humidor.

The problem with maintaining good humidity is that every time you open your humidor, you release the humidity and the entire humidor needs to calibrate again after it is closed. This makes a humidistat dry out much more quickly. I solved that problem by making a second

humidstat to put in my humidor. A small screw-top jar (baby food jar) with holes drilled in the top and filled with florist clay (cost me \$1.00 for a brick from the local florist) keeps my humidity constant for much longer than the small humidor included with most desktop humidors. I think that one has worked better than the original humiditat that came with it, although takes up a bit of room from cigars. In fact, as I am writing this article, I just checked my stock humidor for the first time in over a month and the humidity is 74%. The small "stock" humidistat is dry as a bone, but the one I made is still moist!

So, lets talk about the humidor itself. Cigar Aficionado magazine did an article a few years ago comparing various humidors as to how good a condition they kept the cigars. You know what the consensus was? A plastic Tupperware contained won! Makes sense, I guess - after all it would be airtight and not as likely to leak humidity. Bottom line- the box is the least

important aspect. I have a friend who likes cigars but does not buy a box at a time, only a few or usually gets a couple from his friends. He uses a Rubbermaid container and whenever I have had a cigar out of it, it is in great shape. He has a small piece of old terry cloth towel that he soaks in water for his humidistat - no hygrometer. So, go figure! It ain't rocket science- keep them moist, keep them warm and it really doesn't matter what type of container you use. Hell, I bet you could do the same thing with a Zip-Lock plastic bag! But if you are going to buy a nice wooden humidor (I've seen them as cheap as \$30 on clearance in some catalogs), be sure it will hold at least 50 cigars. You may not buy that many at a time, but it gives you additional room to put an additional humidistat such as I described above.

One last word on humidors: If you travel, get a nice travel humidor. Cigars get crushed easily in luggage!

Next issue: Lighting up!

Technical Note: Filling Bottles From Kegs, or Relax, Don't Worry, Bottle Under Pressure

The third most-common problem I've found at homebrew competitions is oxidized beer in the bottles. Beers that are bottle-conditioned can suffer from this malady, but to a lesser extent, because the kräusen yeast scavenges much of the oxygen before it can cause damage. But finished beer that is transferred from a keg to a bottle is at great risk. One sure way to wreck a fine beer is to fill a bottle straight from a tap. There is definitely a Better Way.

Professional bottle fillers use a two-step process: 1) evacuation of the air in the bottle, and 2) filling the bottle under pressure. Fortunately, you don't have to be a professional bottle filler to take advantage of these procedures. A reasonably simple device called a "counterpressure filler" does the trick, and you can build it yourself for under thirty bucks. I used the plans and instructions for *Marty's Counter-Pressure Bottle Filler*, found at <http://www.hbd.org/mtippin/cpfiller.html>, and it works like a champ. The plumbingly-challenged may elect to spend at least twice that much for a pre-assembled unit, like this one from *Beer, Beer & More Beer*: <http://morebeer.com/detail.php3?pid=KEG801>. Either way, they're all pretty much the same design, and they all work in almost exactly the same way.

Marty's page mentioned above does an excellent job of explaining the steps required to build these things and make them go, and there's a great diagram of all the tubes and valves. Rather than repeat it all here, I'll just give a quick overview, and you can go there for the details. And if there's interest, I'll bring mine to a meeting and demonstrate its utility.

The Basics

You've got two valves on top: one to let CO₂ into the bottle, and one to let beer into the bottle. And there's a "vent" valve on the side to let CO₂ and beer out. There are hoses connected between the filler, the keg, and the CO₂ tank so that the beer can get from the keg to the bottle, and so that the CO₂ pressure can be equalized between the bottle and the keg.

To fill a bottle, you first evacuate the air by replacing it with CO₂. You open the CO₂ valve, then open the vent valve for a few seconds to push out all the air. When you close the vent valve, the bottle will be pressurized to the same level as the keg. Now close the CO₂ valve and open the beer valve. The beer won't flow, because there's no pressure difference, so crack the vent valve open a bit. As long as the CO₂ doesn't leave the bottle too quickly, there won't be much of a pressure differential, and the beer won't foam in the bottle. Once beer starts coming out of the vent, close that valve, then close the beer valve. Then take the filler out of the bottle, and cap as usual. (If you forgot to close the beer valve, you'll get a Beer Bath. You'll probably only make that mistake once.)

There's really nothing to it; my description sounds a lot more complicated than it is. Counterpressure bottle filling is an easy way to enhance the stability of your bottled beer, and well worth the price of the gadget. I recently enjoyed a bottle of my 1998 Cow Palace Scotch Ale, bottled from a keg at Egan's via my own home-built filler, and it's still getting better every year.

- Richard Stueven, rstueven@beerme.com