

The Strange Brew Review

NE Wisconsin's
Largest Brewclub!
Established 1982

www.rackers.org



Meetings:
1:00 PM
Titledown Brewing
Company

1st Saturday of Feb, April, June,
August, October, and December

If you want it done right, you have to brew it yourself!

Date: September 2004

Next Meeting

Business Meeting
at
Titledown Brewing Company
(see the website for map)
Date: 10/2/04 at 1:00 PM

Minutes of the last meeting

8/7/04

The Secretary called the meeting to order in the absence of the president at 1:10 PM. Minutes of the April 3rd, 2003 meeting were read and approved. The treasurer reported a current balance of \$4041.23 in the checking account with all bills paid.

Old Business:

1. Wooden Sign for Titledown Brewing Stairway (Dave Oldenberg)- no progress at this point; remains on his To Do list. He hopes to have something at the next meeting.
2. Great Taste of the Midwest – will be next weekend in Madison. Fred Matzke & Jeremy LeMere as well as others have received the information via Bob Franklin regarding their assignments and times.

3. Bulk Grain Order (Jeremy LeMere) – having difficulty coordinating through Slab City Brewing Company; with the pending opening of House of Homebrew, he would like to try to hold off and coordinate through them once they are open for business. **Motion** made to allow Jeremy flexibility in discussing price with the House of Homebrew so that they can make some profit on this deal as well. Motion carried.

New Business:

1. Bob Franklin called from Kentucky to say hello. He will handle getting the Rackers registered for the Humane Society event (see note below.)
2. House of Homebrew – tentative opening date is Monday, August 23rd, 2004. **Motion** made that the club buy some sort of gift for them for their opening. A suggestion of a crystal beer mug with the Rackers logo etched into it and a message of congratulations from the Rackers met with enthusiastic agreement. Motion carried. Mike Conard will be in charge of this.
3. Beergeek.biz was a website brought to the attention of the club as a good mail order source

- of hard-to-find beers, especially Belgian beers. Matt will add it as a link to the website.
4. Humane Society Beer & Wine Festival will be in October, dates not yet known. **Motion/2nd** that the club purchase the ingredients for 4 members to brew for that event, ten gallons each. Motion carried. Members volunteering to brew are:
 - Trevor LaRene – Porter
 - Dave Oldenberg – American style Pale Ale
 - Jeremy LeMere – Lager
 - Bob Franklin (per Fred Matzke) – Weiss bier
 5. Fox Valley Homebrew Club Cup competition is coming up at the end of the month. Several members brought beers that could be entered for the club to try today and make a decision. The following beers were selected:
 - Trevor LaRene – Oatmeal Stout & Eisbock
 - Dave Oldenberg – Vienna style lager
 - Matt Arnold (club brew) – Pale Ale
 6. The club was invited to come over to the House of Homebrew for a pre-opening tour following the meeting. Several club members will go over there following the meeting.
 7. Mike brought a bottle of Jenlain Biere de Garde for the club members to sample. Multiple homebrews were also sampled.

Motion made/2nd to adjourn was carried.
Meeting adjourned at 1:50 PM to the House of Homebrew.

Other Business

Rackers Win the Interclub Contest

In what the chief judge Dave Siegel called an incredibly difficult taste-off, a Rackers beer was chosen as the best beer. The barley wine submitted by Jeff Bushner was chosen as the best beer; with the Eisbock submitted by Trevor LaRene was the second-best beer. A pilsner entered by the ALEs was third.

Dave said that all of the beers were so good they had a difficult time making a decision. He also said that they three judges tried to guess who had brewed which beer after the contest was over. They were completely wrong when Dave opened the sealed envelopes indicating the club and brewer of each of the beers.

We extend a special thanks to Paris Cunningham, Dave Siegel, and Richard Stueven who judged the tiebreaker.

No More Kegs!

The club's supply of Cornelius kegs has been exhausted. We are currently working to try and obtain a new source, but I cannot guarantee that we will have any kegs any time soon.

Humane Society Beer Tasting

The club will be having four beers on tap at the Humane Society tasting which will take place on Friday, October 29th, from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. (see the meeting minutes.) It will be held at the KI Convention Center / Regency Suites Hotel. Tickets are \$30.00 prior to the event; \$35 at the door (includes drawing for door prizes) Call Bill at (920) 469-3110, ext. 15 to order by phone.



New Members!

Welcome to Steve Sellin, Bob Teasley, Mike Teed, San Tews, and Bill Widmer who have joined since the last newsletter. Our current ACTIVE membership is now 67 members.



Contest Information

It is not too early to start thinking about the next round of contests for the inter-club competition! The first contest is held in December by the SOBs and is usually a big beer contest including meads and hard ciders.

Remember, WE NEED ALL OF THE ENTRIES WE CAN GET! The points formula is weighted toward the club that has the highest percentage of its membership entering each contest. That does put the Rackers at a slight disadvantage, but every entry helps!

Maybe you have a high-gravity beer or mead that you can enter. I don't have the date of the contest yet, but will get that information out as soon as I can.

Other Business

To Give Away:

I have a 220V, very small (cabin sized) electric stove I would like to get rid of. The range top (3 burner) works just fine – the oven portion does not and the heating element has been removed. I had been using it prior to my installing my oven vent hood and now that I am using a propane cooker, I have no use for the range. I NEED THE ROOM! Anyone interested in it, it is yours for the asking. Contact Mike at mconard@itol.com or (920) 388-2728. Only takes two guys to haul it.

House of Homebrew Opens!

As most of you already know, the House Of Homebrew, owned by our own Bob Franklin and Bill Widmer opened for business on August 23rd at their Dousman street location, just two blocks west of Titledown Brewing Company. Be sure to patronize our brother members! Congrats to Bill & Bob and good luck!



Mike's Cigar Column

Getting that wonderful stogy lit is an all-important part of enjoying it. Well, DUH! But without jest, many first time smokers (and very episodic smokers) seem to have a difficult time getting it lit evenly which is a key factor in getting not only a satisfactory smoke, but also a visually appealing and long holding ash.

The Cut. I always moisten the cutting end of the cigar first. It helps to prevent unraveling of the wrapper if the cigar is out-of-condition (dry) or if the cutter is a bit dull. Always use a SHARP cutting instrument, usually a cigar cutter or cigar punch. I always purchase inexpensive cutters (three or four at a time) because even expensive ones eventually get dull enough that they crush the cigar instead of cutting it and you end up throwing it away. I like punches for blunt end cigars (although they are more expensive and can't be sharpened very well either.) Cutters work better for torpedo ends. If your cutter does not give a nice, clean cut - it is time to get a new one.

The Draw. Take a draw before you light up. Even the best cigars occasionally have one that is rolled too tight and won't draw well. I don't bother lighting it - I throw it way or ask for a new one. They do make a device that basically punches a hole through the entire length of the cigar, but then you get an uneven burn (not desirable.)

The Light. Use a good wood match or lighter if you can. Paper matches will work but you usually end up going through 4 or 5 to get a good light. First, pre-burn the lighting end of the cigar without drawing on it. Circle the entire end of the cigar through the flame until the end is uniformly blackened. This dries out the tobacco and will make for an easier light. Next, light the cigar while gently drawing through it- all the time rotating the cigar to get it evenly lit. Stop and look at the end. If it is not evenly glowing, repeat the process until the entire outer edge and all the inner tobacco are glowing.

The Smoke. I assume you know what to do now that the cigar is properly lit. Enjoy it with your favorite beverage.

Next issue: Smoking etiquette and health issues.