



Homebrewers of Peoria

MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING:

Editors note: And now to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear worth of minutes I got from last month's meeting!

WHAT'S OLD ON TAP:

Treasurer's Report - \$??? no input for this issue.

New Meeting Location: As you all know, due to insurance and liability problems we are not able to meet at John Rhodell's anymore, if we bring in our own beers. Anyone have any suggestions for a meeting place???

Winter Bus Trip: It's that time of year again to start thinking about the bus trip. We need to reserve the bus in Sept. so we have a way to get there! Speaking of there, start your gears moving and bring your ideas to the Sept. meeting...or pass them on to somebody who is going. Dave S. said he has a list that he will try to get sorted out and bring to maybe get us started.

Membership Address List: Check out the new address list...get any corrections back to Melanie via email so she can print out new ones for Sept. meeting.

WHAT'S NEW ON TAP:

Fall Picnic: It will be the first Sun. in October, as usual. Time and location should be discussed tonight so it can get in the Sept. newsletter.

MISCELLANEOUS STUFF:

Problem Beers???: As usual bring in your problem beers for some positive trouble shooting or comments. We all can learn! See inside article to help you get rid of these potential problems.

Wanna Strut Your Stuff??? Made anything good lately??? Bring some to the meeting and strut your stuff all over the bar tables!!!

BAR HOPPERS: Wed. Aug. 17th, 6:00pm

Your choice of Sulley's, Sullivans, Khouri's, or ???, decision to be made tonight. See HOPs website for "final answer".

BEER EDUCATION: Bruce B. presented Saisons...the word out is "that there were more than several varieties available to sample and all beers were like by many members...but many members didn't like all beers..." hummmm. August is open for education but John M. has signed up for this editor's new favorite...Baltic Porters!

HOPs

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401 E. Main St.
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Hours:
Tues-Fri 12:00-6:00
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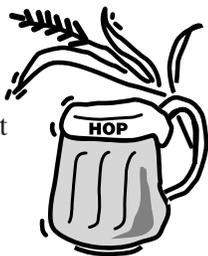
HOPs Club Members Only: (with a 10% HOPs membership discount!) Call Jim up to 4:00pm the day of the HOPs meeting and place your beer supply order and he'll bring your order to the meeting. COD.
Website: somethingsbrewn.com

MONTHLY BEER EDUCATION

(Everyone, who wants to, can participate!!!)

THE PRESENTER: Sign-up for a beer style and a month to present it (*see open months below*). You will be the presenter of that beer by hopefully bringing your home brew of that style plus other store-bought examples. And remember, you have a budget of \$20 on the purchase of similar commercial beers that reflect your beer style that the club will reimburse you for. Give John W. your receipts.

THE REST OF US: We have the option to participate by also brewing a batch of the beer style being presented and bring it along for comparison...or sit back and free-load off of other people's efforts!!!



So, get those kettles brewing!!! Here is the brew schedule. Choose a month not already taken, select your beer style...*(oh and be sure to let the editor know so it makes the schedule!)*

2005

September ..	Baltic Porters	John M.
October	Russian Imp. Stout	John M.
November ..	(open)	???
December ...	Winter Warmers	Kodie

2006

January	(open)	???
February	(open)	???
March	(open)	???
April	(open)	???
May	(open)	???
June	(open)	???
July	(open)	???
August	(open)	???

(Don't forget to sign-up for any of the open months with your editor...wanna change? Let her know that too!)

Potential for Mind Exercise...

How Not to Brew

by Randy Mosher

I was talking to one of our newer brew club members a few weeks ago. He and his pals have been brewing like crazy fools (in the good sense), and they've really been trying to upgrade their beers in terms of recipes and techniques. For the most part, they're making headway. But a taste of their newest brew revealed an unwelcome acidity, and the conversation turned to cleaning techniques. The next batch will reveal whether we've solved their problem.

It's the weakest link theory. Do one thing wrong and it doesn't matter that you got the other 99 right. A near-invisible film on the carboys, and you get pickle juice where that beautiful pale ale should be, no matter how much thriving, pedigreed yeast you pitched. It can be frustrating until that last piece of the puzzle snaps into place, and then all of a sudden, your beers become much better.

Most of the homebrew I get to taste is pretty wonderful, but among the ones that are not, certain problems are fairly common. I present a few of them here. Of course, at whatever level you brew, there are always improvements you can make. Double check these before you move on.

YOU CAN'T SANITIZE DIRTY STUFF.

Even professional brewers wrestle with this, but you absolutely have to get a handle on it. If not, the rest of your efforts can be a big waste of time, and no great recipe, hand-cultured yeast, or cool label can make your beer drinkable.

Vessels and tools on the "hot side" of brewing, that is, before the wort is chilled and inoculated, need to be as clean as your food cooking equipment.

But in your fermenter, every batch of beer deposits a fresh coating onto the sides and bottom regardless of what material it's made of. This protein film can be nearly invisible but it can harbor bacteria, which may turn your beer unpleasantly sour. Eventually, the film will build up enough to be noticed, but by this point you're in deep trouble.

Scouring with a carboy brush will not remove this film and neither will bleach. Breweries use specialized cleaning chemicals, and you should, too. Caustic soda (lye) was long the cleaner of choice for breweries. Cheap and powerful, it does have drawbacks. It is extremely corrosive to copper, brass and aluminum, as well as organic materials like skin and eyes. For obvious reasons, protective gloves and eyewear are mandatory. It also must be used with very hot water. The other downside to caustic-and this is why I stopped using it-is that with hard water, it throws a chalky deposit that requires an acid to rinse away. It's also getting harder to find. I don't recommend it.

Oxygenated cleaners like Five Star PBW(r) (Powdered Brewery Wash) work extremely well even in cold water, are safe, and are available through homebrew supply channels. Just mix according to directions and watch the gunk come off. I swear that the first time I deep-cleaned my carboys, it looked like there were little bats flying around in there. Don't forget your racking hoses, bottling wand, and any-

cuz we ol' dogs wanna know more!!!

thing else than comes in contact with your beer. Once it's clean, then you can sanitize it.

AVOID STALE LIQUID EXTRACT.

The ratio of water to solids in liquid extracts is perfect for a set of chemical reactions called "Maillard" or "non-enzymatic" browning. Proteins or their subcomponents combine with various sugars to create caramel and other flavors. It sounds good, and it's the same type of reactions that occur in malt kilning and wort boiling, but the transformation in malt extract doesn't add anything good. It tends to morph into something stale, harsh and cardboardy.

The watchword here is to buy a brand of liquid extract that sells well, or use dry extract, which is more shelf stable.

EXTRACT ALONE MAY NOT GIVE YOU THE FLAVOR YOU SEEK.

Cooked sugar syrups, rather than colored malts, are sometimes used to add color to extract. While there is nothing harmful in this, some extracts lack depth of flavor. Also, the evaporation process that condenses the syrup can strip aroma.

Shop around and see which brands taste good to you and ask other brewers what they like. You can also add a pound or two of specialty malt to your brew for some fresh malty aroma and flavor. Crystal malt is perfect for this. Crush it and load it into a cloth bag, then place in the brew kettle. When the wort comes to a boil, remove the bag, then drain and squeeze it to wring out all the good stuff.

BEWARE OF HIGH-ALPHA HOPS.

For centuries, brewing hops were of the low-alpha type, with alpha acid (the bitter part) content ranging from 2 to 7 percent. Once it became possible to extract this bitter material and concentrate it into a cheap commodity, the race was on to find hops that would yield ever more alpha acids, as high as 16 percent in some varieties. In this race to the bottom, not much attention was paid to the subtler aspects of aroma and flavor.

There are really two different types of hop crop now: those destined for extract, and those that are valued for their high-quality flavor and aroma. Some of the high-alpha varieties-Chinook, for example-do have useful, if pungent aromas, and have even developed a cult following for their grapefruity, resinous tang, especially in American IPAs.

But in general, high-alpha hops are very assertive and not always in nice ways. Bitter as they are, they're not always equally aromatic. It's just not what they've been bred for. Using a larger amount of a low-alpha hop to get to any given bitterness level will usually contribute a lot more aroma than a smaller amount of high-alpha, and it's usually better aroma as well.

KIT YEAST IS SUSPECT.

Unless you know for sure it's fresh, the little foil pack of yeast stuck to the top of the can of extract should be pitched directly into the trash. Dried yeast is a living thing, and sitting in a warehouse for months on end doesn't do it any favors. If you wish to use dry yeast, buy a pack of known provenance from your retailer. Most are stamped with freshness dates. Pay attention to them.

Dry yeast should be activated properly in hot water before pitching. Heat up a half a cup or so of sterile (boiled) water, and pitch the yeast in at around 100 to 110 degrees F. Don't add sugar or malt extract to this; the yeast has enough stored nutrients to get itself going. After it's cooled to room temperature and is bubbling, it's ready to pitch.

The next step up is liquid yeast. Without a doubt, this has revolutionized homebrewing, giving us access to the exact same strains that the commercial brewers of the world use. This allows you to match the strain of yeast to the beer you're brewing, a powerful tool for controlling the flavor of your beer. Overall, the quality of liquid yeast is very high, and there are plenty of choices. Some brands require a little advance preparation, so you need to think a step ahead, but most brewers find them worth both the trouble and the expense.

GIVE IT ENOUGH TIME.

It's natural to be excited about your first brews (especially if they tasted better than my early attempts), but try not to drink them up too fast. I have heard many homebrewers say, "Man, this is really getting good. Too bad it's the last bottle!"

Failing self-control (which I know is hard), the only solution is just to keep 'em coming. Brew enough batches so you build up a stock, then the pressure's off.

How long is long enough? I like to give a simple beer about six weeks, including a couple in the bottle. As gravity goes up, so should the aging time. Maybe three months for an IPA, five or six for an old ale. A year is about right for a barley wine, although I've had 10-year-old ones that were superb. Lagers take half again as long if you're fermenting and lagering them at appropriately cool temperatures: two months for a pilsner or similar, four months for a bock, perhaps six to eight for a doppelbock.

This short list is all my allotment of space will allow. Perhaps in the future we can move on to intermediate techniques such as wort chilling, color calculation, and the decoction mash.

Randy Mosher is a freelance art and creative director, lecturer, and author of numerous books and articles on beer and brewing.

The Inflatable Pub

A 40-foot long, 19-foot wide, 22-foot high inflatable pub is available from Airquee, a British company that also sells a blow-up church. The pub can be customized to become fully functional with room for a bar and 30 customers. It can be erected in 10 minutes with two small blowers. An internal aluminum frame can be used to support additional lighting and sound systems and also doubles as a safety barrier. Airquee claims it's okay to play darts in their inflatable pub.

Join "HOPs" Beer Club

Interested in joining a club of beer-making fools? Find yourself obsessing about beer and don't have anybody to talk to? Want to learn how to make beer in your own but don't know how to start? Or do you just want to get together once a month to drink and talk beer?

Join HOPs (Homebrewers of Peoria)

Dues are an obsessively cheap \$12 a year...pro-rated when you join up. Dues include this newsletter, a monthly place where you can do one or all of the above mentioned desires PLUS various parties, picnics, socials and a beer tasting field trip thrown in.

Fill-out this form and bring to any of our meetings, every 3rd Wednesday of the month. First timers are welcome to visit and check us out.

Yes! I want to join HOPs!

Name: _____

Street/Apt: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Home Phone #: _____

Email: _____



HOPs

c/o Melanie Martin
315 E Santa Fe Road
Chillicothe, IL 61523-9383

Up-Coming Events & Meetings

This is your newsletter...want to contribute???, please email me anytime at: melaniehg@yahoo.com, fax: 309 249-4109 or call: 309 249-4409

HOPs Beer Club meeting dates:

3rd Wed. of each month • 6:30-8:00pm

(new meeting location TBD)

<http://hop.bradley.edu/>

BEER HOPs - Monthly Dinner & Beer Social:

4th Wed. of each month • 6:00pm •

See HOPs email for location • Bring your friends/spouses

Other local Homebrew Club meetings:

ABNORMAL HOME BREWERS

2nd Mon. of each month • 7:30-9:30pm

Fat Jacks • 511 N. Main • Bloomington

(309) 829-2805

GALESBURG HOMEBREWERS ASSOCIATION

2nd Sat. of each month • 3:00-5:00pm

Somthin's Brewin' • 401 E. Main St. • Galesburg

(309) 241-4118



This would be the sign that this is all she wrote!