

MARLBOROUGH ENTERPRISE

Serving the City of Marlborough Since 1888

mpary | www.townonline.com/metrowest

THURSDAY, AUGUST 31, 2009

4 Pages | Vol. 113

Club 'dedicated to no other purpose than drinking beer'

Members of Marlborough-Hudson 'Wizards' like to brew their own beer and ale at home

By Norman Miller
STAFF WRITER

Brian Powers likes beer. Throughout college, the now 28-year-old said he spent a lot of time drinking the intoxicating liquid. After college, his taste changed from the Budweiser and Coors so popular on college campuses to more expensive beers.

"I got out of college and I realized I liked good beers," said Powers, who owns Strange Brew on Main Street in Marlborough. "I like to say I got the curse. Now I had to pay \$8 for a six pack when I used to pay \$8 for a case."

His solution was to start home brewing his own beer. He, along with several other locals, is a member of "WIZARDS" an acronym for Worcester Incorporated Zymurgists Advancing Real Draughts, a home-brew club based in Marlborough and Hudson.

Worcester became part of the name not because of a connection to that city but because the founders wanted the name to be "Wizards" and picked words that spelled out WIZ-

ARDS when put together.

"It's a group dedicated for no other purpose than drinking beer," said Wizards president Bill Nevitts of Hudson. "It's a really good group to help each other out."

According to Nevitts, there are about 20 members of the club, with about 12 active. They gather monthly at the Vinotherapie Warehouse in Marlborough to discuss the latest home brew and microbrew news, share home brewing advice, sample other members' home brew and, if possible, hear from a guest speaker from the brewing industry.

Home-brewing is a good hobby for many different people, home brewers say.

"It's appealing pretty much to all age groups and all backgrounds," said Nevitts. "We do tend to see a lot of engineering and the people into technical gadgets and stuff like that."

"Like any hobby, it takes a certain personality to do it," said Scott Tringali, 28, of Hudson, a computer technician at Fitus Inc. in Framingham. "It's like woodworking. It's a

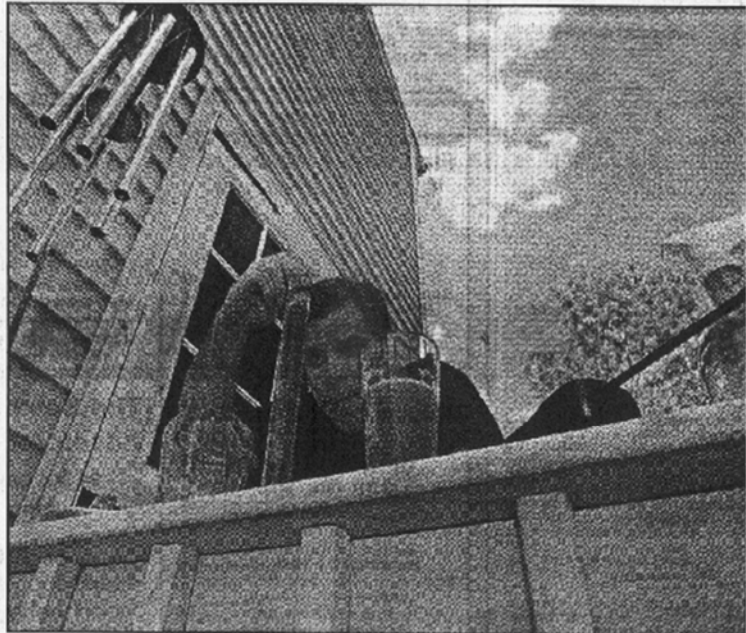


PHOTO BY MILTON AMADOR

HOME BREW, see page 3

Scott Tringali, of Hudson, who belongs to a local home-brew club, checks on how strong his final product will be.

Members of local club like to brew their beer at home

HOME BREW, from page 1

craft. You try to make something as good or better than is on the market. You try to make little important changes."

Brewing beer is not difficult, Powers said. A starter kit costs \$39.95 and includes a 6.7-gallon fermentation bucket with lid and air lock, a 6-gallon bottling bucket with spigot, a stick-on thermometer, siphon hose, racking wine with sediment tip, bottle brush, bottle filler, capper and a basic instruction sheet.

From there, Powers said, there are two basic kinds of brewing: extract brewing and all-grain brewing.

Extract brewing is easier, and ingredient kits can be purchased.

All-grain brewing is a little more difficult. With all-grain brewing, actual grains are added instead of grain extracts to the beer.

One brewing session produces two and a half cases of beer, or 54, 12-ounce bottles.

"It's easy to make good beer, but it's hard to make great brew," said Powers. "You can do it to save money, but more people do it because they want a specific type of beer. If you like chocolate-raspberry porter, it's hard to find (in a store). You and someone out in Colorado could be the only ones in the country

brewing it."

"I would say I make beer 12 to 15 times a year," said Nevitts. "It's basically a whole afternoon venture. The first step takes about five or six hours. Then you wait a few weeks. After that, the only time-consuming part is bottling. The real annoying part is washing the bottles. I and a lot of my friends gave up bottles, and (now) we use kegs."

Tringali began brewing about five years ago when he met Nevitts while working at Raytheon. Nevitts hosted a company party, and Tringali was exposed to home-brewed beer for the first time.

"I realized that home brew can be as good or better than commercial beer," said Tringali. "It sounded like fun so I tried it. The beer was OK, but never as good as Bill's. I was always asking him for advice, so I figured I might as well join the home-brew club."

After talking to Nevitts, Tringali made the switch from extract brewing to all-grain brewing.

"A couple of months later I made my best beer and I was hooked," Tringali said.

One of the club highlights, Nevitts said, is the Wizards/Strangebrew/Deja-Brew/Horseshoe Pub Contest. Each

year, a competition is held, and the winner of the best home brew will have his (or her) beer on tap at the Horseshoe Pub in Hudson for a year.

This year Nevitts won, and his Hillside Pale Ale, which he describes as similar to Sierra Nevada Pale Ale, is on tap.

"I can make a great beer, but I could never do it as a living," said Nevitts. "The best part of brewing is it's nice to be able to go down to the basement and get a draft beer. I can't remember the last time I bought a commercial beer at home."

Interested in home brewing? Tap into the Wizards' web page at www.home-brew.com/wizards.

Basic Ale

The Wizards club offers this basic ale recipe for those trying home brewing for the first time: The recipe is for a 5-gallon batch.

Using a 4- to 5-gallon stainless steel or enamel pot, bring 1 gallon of water to a boil.

Soak can(s) of malt in hot water to soften contents.

When water boils, add hopped kit and other malts and stir well. Boil for 20 minutes.

Add finished hops in a muslin bag and boil for 5 to 10 minutes more.

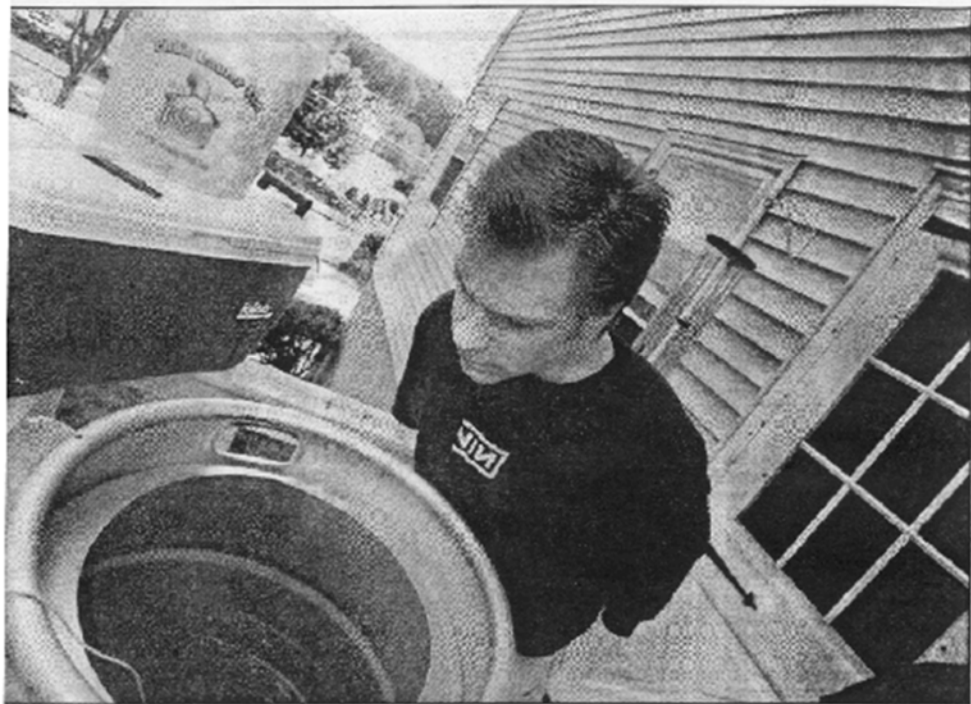


PHOTO BY MILTON AMADOR

Scott Tringali, of Hudson makes sure all is as it should be in his home-brewing operation.

Sterilize fermenting bucket, lid and air lock.

Pour 3 gallons cold water into fermenter (do not use chlorinated water).

When boil is finished, discard hops, pour liquid into bucket and top off to 5 gallon mark.

Affix lid to air lock. Take hydrometer reading and record specific gravity.

Do not add yeast until temperature

is at 75 degrees.

Put bucket in sink of ice water to speed cooling. When temperature is 75 degrees, add yeast. Ferment at 65 to 75 degrees for ale.

Air lock should be active within 24 hours. Beer will ferment and clear normally within 10-12 days.

If you have a carboy, siphon into it after the air lock has almost stopped "glugging."

Boil $\frac{1}{4}$ -cup priming sugar in two

cups water for 2 minutes. Pour into sanitized bottling bucket, then siphon beer into bucket using racking cane.

Fill hydrometer tube while siphoning, and take hydrometer final gravity reading.

Fill bottles to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the top of the bottle neck. Then cap. Use only brown, non twist-off cap bottles.

Age beer at 65-75 degrees for 14 days. Then drink.