

The WIZARDS Newsletter

April - June, 1999

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WIZARD's Upcoming Events

Summertime is usually a slow time for the club, so when we have a chance most of us usually sit back, have a brew and wait for Phil & Katie's Octoberfest (held in early September) and the club's fall brew day (held in October).

There 's also been some talk of a summer outing to Maine. If this becomes a reality at the next club meeting, we'll update the online newsletter.

WIZARD's Club Business

The Wizards Get Their Act Together

Over the last three months the club has been making great strides with organizing ourselves into a more professional, first rate homebrew club. Club rules have been put in place and a new slate of officers have been elected, both of which can be seen on our [web site](#). With this new found organization comes our commitment to more club activities, structured (but not too structured) club meetings, this quarterly newsletter and renewed commitment to the web page. Watch this newsletter for details of upcoming events as we move into the new millenium! Finally, articles and suggestions for the newsletter are both welcomed and encouraged and should be sent directly to [Bill](#).

Dues are Due

Dues for the upcoming year (June 1999 through May 2000) are now due and payable to the club treasurer at regularly scheduled club meetings. Temporary membership cards, also good for Strangebrew discounts, will be issued when your dues are collected.

Upcoming Meetings

Club meetings this quarter will be July 14, August 11 and September 8, all tentatively scheduled for the Vinotech Warehouse.

WIZARD's Recent Events

Pub Crawl - April 24

The WIZARDS annual pub crawl was held on Earth Day '99 (April 24th)! Six members and their guests met at the Alewife T stop to begin the journey. Our first stop took us to the Cambridge Brewing Company for the first beer of the day. Most of the beers we sampled here got rave reviews - if only the same could be said for the food (didn't we say the something last year?) A short T ride later we were at the Backbay Brewing Company. Much like last year, Bill pushed the Boylston Bitter as his own personal favorite and once again, the club agreed it was hard to find a better cask ale in the area. Even though most of Boston is smoke free, we did manage to find a small corner of the bar to sit back, relax, have a brew and a fine old cigar! Our third stop took us to the Commonwealth Brewing Company (we're guessing Fort Hill has closed?). Our final stop of the day was at Redbones in Davis Square. If you like your meat, this is the place for you! We also had some fine fried okra and hushpuppies, which is where the beer came in real handy. By the way, the WIZARDS bought the beer at dinner - which makes the pub crawl a good way to get back some of your yearly dues. Between that and free T ride for Earth Day, how could you go wrong? We had an excellent time. Other than changing where we go for lunch next year, everyone agreed we made some good choices for the day.

National Homebrew Day with the WIZARDS - May 1 Sponsored by Strangebrew, Dejabrew and the Horseshoe Pub

On National Homebrew Day, Saturday, May 1, the W.I.Z.A.R.D.s hosted a day of brewing demonstrations at the HORSESHOE Pub in Hudson, Ma, featuring all-grain and extract brewing and wine making demonstrations by our club members.

In what was a banner day for the Horseshoe Pub, well over one hundred visitors saw a total of fifty-five gallons of beer brewed in eight different demonstrations.

Brian	Extract	Collaborator Milk Stout	5 gallons
Bob	Extract	Red Brick Ale	5 gallons
Bob	Extract	Mystery Ale	5 gallons
Rich	All-grain	Wheat	5 gallons
Bill & Scott	All-grain	Collaborator Milk Stout	10 gallons
Russ	All-grain	Mackelson's Milk Stout	5 gallons
Chuck	All-grain	Chuck's Usual	5 gallons
Greg	All-grain	Collaborator Milk Stout	10 gallons
Bill & Brian	Extract	Club Red III	5 gallons

One of the highlights of the day had to be the making of [Club Red III](#). After [Club Red](#) and [Club Red II](#), we felt there was still plenty of room for improvement and we were all hoping this time would be it! You can read more about [Club Red III](#) in the WIZARD's [recipe catalog](#). Besides the beer, five different wine making demonstrations were put on by Brian and Brian!

Midway through the brewing demonstrations, the club and their guests participated in the Nationwide Homebrew Toast held as a part of National Homebrew Day. The day also saw the awards ceremony for the Strange Brew/Dejabrew/Horseshoe Pub Homebrew Contest with Brian Church wining the Best of Show for his American Wheat. The WIZARDS were well represented in the competition with Bill Nevits wining GOLD for his Southern Brown Ale and Scott Tringali wining GOLD for his Pale Ale. The third and final Gold went to Tom Dion in the Stout category. As a special bonus, the Best of Show American Wheat was available on tap at the Horseshoe for a very reasonable \$3/pint.

In the end, everyone had a great time and the club agreed participation in the National Homebrew Day activities would become a regular event. And the Horseshoe Pub invited us back for next year to boot!

The Stout Off

The highlight of our June meeting was the tasting of the beers brewed on National Homebrew Day at the Horseshoe Pub. Dubbed the Stout Off, we had a blind tasting of six different stouts. The stouts were the five listed above (ed. note - Bill & Scott fermented their ten gallon batch separately) with a commercial beer - Samuel Smith's Oatmeal Stout - thrown into the mix just to make things interesting. The results of the tasting were interesting to say the least. Only one person was able to pick out the extract; Bill & Scott's beers which started from the same brew were totally different, a few people picked the oatmeal stout as being different, but no one picked it as the oatmeal stout, some were sweeter and some had had more of a roasted taste but they were all good and very drinkable. That was the first thing that impressed us - every one of the stouts brewed on National Homebrew Day was down right good. The second thing that was impressed upon us was how tough it must be to be a judge. Tasting and comparing six very similar beers and actually being able to award one as best of show and one as last place must be an awful daunting task. Our hats off to the judges who make all these contests possible!

Besides the stout off, we also got to try all of the other beers brewed at the Horseshoe (and Brian's white wine) and there wasn't a bad one of them either. Wrapping up the night was the Club Red III tasting and I'm happy to report, its pretty damn good. Not quite as red as I'd like, but pretty damn good.

The Other Stuff - Hints & Ideas

Improving Your Extract Beers

A frequent topic at our club meetings is how to make a truly exceptional beer using malt extracts. So often its easy to pick out an extract beer from the sampling line up. They all seem to have that "tinny" or "twangy" taste. Or do they? At our recent tasting of the Collaborator Milk Stouts from National Homebrew Day, only one member out of eleven was able to pick the extract (even the guy who brewed it couldn't pick it out). Our Club Red III even turned out to be a pretty decent extract beer!

So what made this extract beer so much better than the rest? After much debate, sometimes a bit heated, we've come up with the following guidelines:

- Use fresh hops - not the extracts already in the can,
- Always boil as much of the full volume of beer to brewed as possible (ie, as much of the five gallons as you can),
- Have a good rolling boiling for an hour or more, and
- Always use a properly prepared liquid yeast.

These few simple tips should make a world of difference to your extract beers. Who knows, it could be the next blue ribbon beer.!

Feature Sites

Starting with this issue we'll highlight some interesting beer places we've recently found on the web. Anyone is encouraged to [reccomend](#) a site for future issues.

- <http://web.mit.edu/mbi/www/biere.html> if you want to discover Belgian beers
- http://biz.yahoo.com/prnews/990421/ma_sam_ada_1.html to read about the latest adventure at Sam Adams
- <http://hbd.org/brewery/cm3/recs/index.html> Cats Meow 3 - The Internet Beer Recipe Database



Comments, questions or information on the WIZARD's to [Bill](#)