

# The WIZARDS Newsletter

April - June, 2003

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## *WIZARD's Upcoming Events*

### Upcoming Club Meetings

Club meetings this quarter will be May 4 and June 17 all at Deja Brew in Shrewsbury. Check our web page, call Strange Brew or call Deja Brew for directions.

### Upcoming Trips & Outings

Activities	Club Meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What's Next? Who wants to coordinate the next event?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• June Meeting - CAP</li><li>• August Meeting - IPA</li><li>• October Meeting - Octoberfest</li><li>• December Meeting - Wee Heavy</li></ul>

Upcoming club activities are always posted on the club's website at <http://www.brewbeer.org/wizupcoming.htm>. Additional details will be published in the newsletter as they become available and provided via email to the club's egroups email list.

### Get Ready For October

The club's annual Octoberfest Tasting will be here before you know it! Now is the time to start getting your 2003 entry ready. Whether you need to learn all about making an Octoberfest or just want to brush up your skills, take a few minutes and read Phil's exceptional article entitled "[Octoberfest Brewing](#)" in the March, 2000 Special Edition Newsletter.

## *WIZARD's Club Business*

### Dues

#### **[New member Mark Higgins is the first to pay 2004 dues - who will be next?](#)**

Dues for 2003/2004 are now due. Dues are still a bargain at \$12/year and cover most, if not all, of our club activities. Dues pay our nominal expenses like buying the pretzels and cups for meetings. The biggest way your dues are spent is at club functions where the club finds some

way to treat everyone in attendance like buying the pizza at our holiday party this past December or buying the appetizers on the annual pub crawl.

## Newsletter

As always, articles and suggestions for the newsletter are both welcomed and encouraged and should be sent directly to [Bill](#).

## *WIZARD's Recent Events*

### 5th Annual Earth Day Pub Crawl

Once again the WIZARDS celebrated Earth Day by traveling the streets of Boston in search of a few good beers. Like pub crawls in the past, this year's crawl was another great time. Although the weather turned out to be a little daunting, we didn't let that get in the way (too much). For the first time in recent memory, they actually had the gall to charge for the T on Earth Day. To make up for this and to counter any false advertising in this newsletter, the president's wife suggested the club should fund the first round of tokens. All agreed to another good use of club funds.

Our first stop of the day was at John Harvard's in Cambridge for lunch. Jeremy started the excitement by getting the table proofed. At least one of us still looks young. Then he arranged for us to have a chat about beers with one of brewers. After some small talk we headed off to Boston Beer Works in the Fenway. It was a good thing we ran into one of their employees on the train since no one knew exactly where we were going! The Beer Works was the second place we put the club's money to good use and bought a beer sampler for each of us. We got to try a lot of different beers but sadly, none were that spectacular. The third stop of the say was at Cambridge Brewing Company. Always a club favorite, today was no exception. Just when the rain came down full steam, it was time to head off to dinner at Redbones. Everyone got a little soaked - especially Greg who had umbrella troubles on the way to dinner. But like most trips to Redbones, we had time to dry off in the bar while waiting for a table. I recall having the Gales Festival Mild on cask and while it wasn't quite like I remembered it from England, it was truly delicious. The next thing we knew dinner was finished and it was time to head home and dry off!



**It wasn't the best day for a pub crawl**



**But the beer was good**



**The weather didn't get much better all day**



**But we had a nice dinner at Redbones**

## **WIZARDS 5th Annual Home-Brew Competition and National Homebrew Day**

The Wizard's celebrated National Home-Brew Day on May 5th by hosting a brew day and awards ceremony for our Annual Home-Brew Competition in the Strange Brew parking lot. Three brewers and upwards of sixty people attended this annual event. By the end of the day, we had brewed a few new beers, had plenty of food and watched Vik Rao and Mike Reilly take home the Best of Show award for this year's competition.

What started out a hazy day turned out to be a beautiful spring afternoon. First on the agenda was getting the brew kettles fired up. Then our attention turned to completing the final round of judging for the competition and picking the best of show. Once again chef John fed the crowd. This time it was B-B-Q ribs and deep fried turkey. Beverages were in no short supply either. Award winning beers from the competition included Bill's Hillside Dark Mild (served on the had

pump of course) and Brian's Maple Wheat. Dave supplied a keg of last year's winning Pickup Porter and a bitter as well. New club member Higgy also brought a couple kegs. The first was his "no-boil" American style beer and sadly, I can't recall the second as I never got to try it. Numerous other samples were also being passed around. But the food and beer were only part of the day's excitement. Ribbons were handed out to all those who placed in the competition. The look of surprise of Vik and Mike's faces when they won the Porters & Stouts Flight was only topped by their look of astonishment when they won Best of Show. Look for their award winning dry stout to be on tap at the Horseshoe Pub in Hudson sometime soon!

This year's competition was our biggest yet with over 60 entries from twenty-two brewers. The entries covered seventeen categories and were grouped into eight flights. The most entries award was a tie between Jeremy Cagle and Mark Grenier/Jon Costner who had nine entries each! Jeremy led all brewers taking six ribbons (two 1st, three 2nd and one 3rd). New club member Franz Weller had just one entry and won a first place for his American Amber Ale. And proving they really do know something about beer, the Strange Brewers - Brian Powers and Mark Higgins - took home a total of four ribbons. All in all a very good year.

For a complete list of winners, see the club's site at [results\\_03.htm](#). Score sheets and the remaining ribbons will be available at the May and June club meetings. After that time, they may be picked up at Strange Brew in Marlboro.



**The crowd preparing for the awards ceremony**



**And the Best of Show goes to Vik & Mike**



**Higgy takes his prize**



**And the crowd wants more**



**Judging is tough work**



**Really.**

### Club Samplings



Homebrew tastings over the last few months have included Dave's Brown Ale, Jeremy's Pale Ale, Scotch Ale, Dunkelweiss, Barleywine and small beer, Bill's Porter and IPA, Guy's Amber Ale, Greg's Dubbel and Imperial Stout and Tony's Bohemian Pilsner. Commercial tastings included OK Beer (2/5), EKU 28 (3/5), Orval Trappist Ale (1/5), Dogfish Head 90 Minute IPA (3/5), Rapsallion Premiere (3.5/5), Bigfoot 2003 (3/5), Long Trail Hit the Ale (2.5/5), Spaten Optimator and Polygamy Porter. Note,

numbers in parenthesis, where available, show our rating on the five point scale with one being "it stinks" and five being "give me more."

## *The Other Stuff - Hints & Ideas*

### Book Report - How To Brew by John Palmer By Bill Nevits

How To Brew, by John Palmer, is a book I started to read. I haven't read though the whole thing yet and probably never will but that won't stop me from telling you about it. How To Brew is one of the internet teases. The first edition of the book is available for free at <http://www.howtobrew.com> if you want to read it online. I've always been a big fan of the "if you put on the internet for free it ought to be at least useful to someone" school otherwise you're just taking up space. In this regard, How To Brew doesn't deliver. It's a bit hard to read and completely inconvenient to print out as a reference guide. Of course this is the catch John wants - you're much better off buying the book. And you can get an upgrade - the second edition is now available in homebrew stores. The web site even gives you a locator guide so you can find which home brew stores carry it!

Some home brew books are so technical and complex that only a PhD could understand them. Others are written to give nothing more than a glossy overview that's of little practical value. That's one of the things I liked about How To Brew. On my first reading, I wasn't overly impressed. But the second time I picked it up, I saw the book in a different light and was totally impressed by the simplicity and usefulness of the book. In the Designing Recipes suggestions, John gives us simple and straight forward advice on how to add body or how to make a sweeter beer. And then there is the appendix on Designing Mash Tuns. This is probably the most thorough section of the book and presents in-depth guidelines for building your own mash tun. It is a must read for anyone about to build or re-build their own mash tun.

Overall I liked some parts of this book and other parts I could live with out. I'm still not sure how I feel about internet books but I can say I got some very useful information out of How to Brew! New brewers will the find the whole book as good as any other introductory text while experienced brewers might want to jump straight to the last few sections.

## *Feature Sites*

Here are this issue's feature web sites! Everyone is encouraged to [recommend](#) a site for future issues.

- <http://www.howtobrew.com> John Palmer's How To Brew book and absolutely the most through treatise on mash tuns I have ever seen.



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