

# The WIZARDS Newsletter

January - March, 2001

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## *WIZARD's Upcoming Events*

### Upcoming Club Meetings

Club meetings this quarter will be January 16, February 20 and March 20 all at Deja Brew in Shrewsbury. Please note, meetings are now being held on the **THIRD TUESDAY** of each month. Check our web page, call Strangebrew or call Deja Brew for directions.

### Upcoming Trips & Outings

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• February 24 - McNeill's Trip. Contact <a href="#">Phil</a> for more details</li><li>• TBA - Entry deadline for Wizards Home-brew Competition</li><li>• TBA - Judging for Wizards Home-brew Competition</li><li>• April - Earth Day - Annual Boston Pub Crawl</li><li>• May 5 (to be confirmed) - National Homebrew Day - A day of brewing demonstrations at the Horseshoe Pub in Hudson.</li><li>• October - Club Only Brew Day</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• January Meeting - Educating Your Palate, part 1 - An educational series where we will learn how to recognize the imperfections and flaws that can exist in beer</li><li>• February Meeting - Stout Night and judging for the AHA Club-Only Stout Competition</li><li>• March Meeting - Educating Your Palate, part 2 - An educational series where we will learn how to recognize the imperfections and flaws that can exist in beer</li><li>• April Meeting - Bock Night and judging for the AHA Club-Only Bockanalia Competition</li><li>• June Meeting - Pilsner Night - Brew any AHA category 2 pilsner for our club tasting.</li><li>• July Meeting - Join Bill for a talk on brewing Milds in preparation for the AHA Club Only Mild Competition in November.</li><li>• August Meeting - IPA Night - Brew any AHA category 7 IPA for our club tasting.</li><li>• October Meeting - Annual Club Octoberfest Night</li></ul> |
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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• November Meeting - Mild Night and judging for the AHA Club-Only Mild Competition</li></ul> |
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Upcoming club activities are always posted on the club's website at <http://www.ultranet.com/~wnevits/wizards/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.

## Boston Wort Processors Seventh Annual Homebrew Competition

The Boston Wort Processors have recently announced the Seventh Annual BOSTON HOMEBREW COMPETITION will be held on February 10, 2001 in Boston Mass! This competition is run by the Boston Wort Processors and is a BJCP Registered Event. This competition will again be the northeast region Qualifying Event for the 4th year of the Masters Championship of Amateur Brewing (MCAB) Competition!!

See the Wort website at <http://www.wort.org/bhc.html> for complete details, including qualifying styles and links for MCAB IV.

## *WIZARD's Club Business*

## Welcome Deja Brew!

Starting this past December, the Wizards now have a permanent meeting home at Deja Brew in Shrewsbury. We are extremely grateful Ray has stepped in and allowed us the use of his place for our meetings. The Wizards and Deja Brew have collaborated the past two years for our annual home-brew competition which has always been a very successful event and this new union promises to be even more beneficial to the both of us. To show our gratitude, the Wizards have unanimously voted to make Deja Brew an official club sponsor. You can now visit the Deja Brew web site off the Wizards home page or at <http://www.deja-brew.com>. And finally, be sure to welcome and thank Ray and Donna next time you see them at Deja Brew!

## Dues

Dues are now past due. If you haven't paid your dues for this year, please make plans to fork over twelve big ones at the January meeting. Dues help the club in many ways. 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 Christmas Ales at our holiday party this past December.

## 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*

### Octoberfest

For the second in as many times, Phil's Octoberfest came out at the top. This year beers from Sam Adams and Brooklyn Brewery were pitted against two different variations of Phil's Octoberfest. Phil's Octoberfest number 1, which was identical to number 2 except for an extra 1/4 pound of toasted malt, was the crowd favorite. (editor's note: Regrettably, the remaining details of this tasting appear to be lost).

### No Cold Turkey for Buddy Brewers

By [Brett Schneider](#)

If you're one of the unlucky Worts who missed out on the second annual Thanksgiving Weekend Buddybrew, let me tell you just what it is you could have seen. Fourteen brewers - Brett, Bob E and Greg G from the Wizards, Tim H and Tony M, Rex P and Geoff L, Chris V, Buck and Kay, Pete L, Bob P, and Charlie with his new bride Carolyn - braving a clear and cold late fall day to create NINE spectacular beers. Even with frozen garden hose, water taps, and frost on the pumpkins, these people love beer and homebrewing enough to come out and play regardless of the weather. We even had drive by spectators and a few friends and family stop by to at least help us drink to keep warm.

The day started out colder than expected, but not cold enough to dampen the spirits. But without water, there can't be beer so those of us on the early shift scrambled to thaw garden hose and flame heat water taps to start filling mash tuns. And fill we did - all that water we used to brew with and then to chill eventually turned to ice and we had a rousing game of lawn hockey under halogen worklights, while drinking Grapa and other high test inner warmers.

Throughout the day, we all chipped in and worked together lifting hot and heavy liquor tanks and mash tuns just to keep moving and warm. But by the time the last chiller shut off, about 7:30 PM after 11 hours of brewing fun, we had collected nearly 85 gallons of beer: English Best Bitter, Munich Dunkles, American IPA, Belgian Tripel and Dubbel, Scottish Wee Heavy, Olde Ale (not as big as we wanted but well within the limits....), Porter, and even second running American Pale Ale.

Famous yeast strains like Andech lager, Tadcaster, Fullers, Whitbread, Scottish this and that, LaChouffe, and a few surprises are all hard at work fermenting away and finishing the job a few crazy people started.

And speaking of hardware - this is where the show for the neighbors really got a boost. Most of the systems were pretty standard converted keg gravity feeders. We even had a home kitchen brewery get put to the test in the great outdoors. But more interesting that this was the first acid

test for Rex's new RIMS systems, which he quickly learned does not like the cold as much as he does. And then there were those Wizards guests, with their multi tier pump fed garage breweries that got loaded into trucks and shimmed up on the lawn. One of them was brand new, and outside of the frozen pump and hose issues, performed well within expectations. Without having a real headcount on hand, I am underestimating that we had at least 12 burners going at once boiling, making hot water, decoction mashing - you name it you could have seen it.

Then for lunch, after a day of rest from the other white meat, hot turkey chili was served from a crock pot to start thickening up the thinned and chilled blood of the brewers. Chilled by the weather and thinned by the beers that were served - last year's doppelbock, English bitter, Samichlaus, cider and mead, imperial stout, gueze, SNCA, real homebrewed previously frozen Eisbock, and Baltic porter to name just a few.

After a special delivery of pizza for dinner, and with 2 beers yet to chill and fill fermenters with, we had some Grapa and a few other treats of vintage cellar strong beers to be sure people went away warm. I never got any calls from the local law enforcement folks so people were in shape to drive and the neighbors took no offense at the smell of malt and hop wafting through the area.

We're already reviewing the next date for a new host to welcome in the spring with a repeat early year event, and next year we look forward to having a return to the driveway in Framingham. Start enticing your family to travel to see you for the bird next year and make plans to hit the 'burbs for round three in this now epic series of buddybrew. If we overrun my driveway we'll just take over the curbside and invite the passers by in for a beer to calm them down....

## Belgian Dubbel Night

A surprise new winner emerged at the December Belgian Dubbel Night! Top honors went to John, a Deja Brew regular, for his Dubbel brewed right at Deja Brew. Three home-brews and two commercial samples were provided for the tasting. It is noteworthy that in the end, it was an extract beer that took first place in the tasting. A summary of the beers and their tasting notes appears below:

Place	Brewer	Tasting Notes
1st	John	Fruity, bubblegum aroma; clean taste; lacks malt base - maybe over attenuated
2nd (tie)	Omegang	Complex aroma - raisin, esters, clove & bubblegum; alcohol warming aftertaste; medium-thin body
2nd (tie)	Chimay	More of a fruity than spicy aroma; fine creamy head; slightly oxidized - smells like cork?; less body than the Omegang; warming aftertaste
4th	Greg	Little aroma; thin body lacking complexity; darkest in color; can taste the strength
5th	Bill	Fruity sweet aroma; far too sweet in taste - under attenuated; still tastes like a big beer; no aftertaste

As a reminder, the next club tasting is in February, when the feature style will be Stout. If you haven't done so already, now is the time to brew what could be the next wining entry!

Bill did offer the following explanation for his fifth place performance. This beer never reached the desired final gravity. At the time of the tasting, the beer still had a gravity reading of 29 degrees which could explain the especially sweet taste. I used the Wyeast Belgian Strong Ale yeast, which took off like mad in the primary. After two months in the secondary it fell only another 10 degrees. Fermentation temperatures were as close to ideal as my house could provide so I have no real explanation. At Brett's suggestion, I added some 1056 yeast last week to try and lower the FG. We picked the 1056 because it's one of the cleanest tasting and one which is the least likely to impart strong flavors of its own. As of this writing, the fermentation has slowly restarted. I'll let you know how it turns out a future club meeting.

## 2000 Holiday Party at the Horseshoe Pub

On the 28th of December, the club met at the Horseshoe Pub for our annual holiday party. Even though the day for the party was changed at the last minute to avoid a conflict with our new club meeting date, the turnout was still pretty good. Greg, Phil, Paul and Brian all showed up for the annual event. It was a fairly informal event that consisted mostly of sampling the wide range of brews available at the pub. We didn't have an organized tasting as they were out of a number of the holiday beers that night including Celebration ale (ouch!). Greg was kind enough to summarize the event: "We all had a nice time but there's not much to tell. I'm having trouble remembering exactly what I drank that night never mind the other guys. I did have some of the Deja Brew holiday scotch ale and it was quite nice."

## Club Samplings

Homebrew tastings over the last few months have included Brett's Doublebock, Damase's Porter, Bill and Scott's American Ale (a light ale made from the second runnings of Scott's barley wine and the leftovers in Bills' refrigerator), Greg's Pilsner (containing 22% corn), Greg's Barleywine from the Fall '99 brew day, Chuck's barley wine (yes, he really doesn't have it coming from a tap next to the kitchen sink) and Bill S's Schwarzbier. Commercial tastings included Whitbred Pale Ale (3.5/5) and Frugal Joe's Ordinary Beer (a product of Trader Joes). 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*

### Pump Your Beer

By Bill Nevits

I have a great wife. Why you ask? And what does this have to do with home-brew? Let me start by telling you she's not an avid home-brewer. At best I'd say she has a mild interest and that might be a stretch. In fact, she's not even an avid beer drinker. I'd have to say her biggest joy

about home brewing is telling people her husband makes his own beer! But she does get me the best brewing gadgets.

I've wanted to add an electric pump to my brewery for years. It's one of those things I always talked about but never seemed to get around to doing. This is where the great wife part comes in. With Brian's help at Strangebrew, she got the pump I've been talking about for years. Installing the pump in my brewery was simple and has really enhanced the brewing experience.

Like most home-breweries, my brewery is based on the Victorian tower principle. That is, gravity does most of the work and everything flows down hill (see <http://www.ultranet.com/~wnevits/demo.htm> for a quick overview). In my brewery, the pump serves two main purposes. First, it's used to move the sparge water from the kettle to the sparge vessel located on top of the brewery. This is a place where gravity doesn't do too much good. I believe the Victorians solved this problem with the steam engine. These days the electric pump is a much simpler alternative. The second place it is used is in the cooling process where hot wort from the kettle is pumped through the chiller and into the fermenter.

Preparing for sparging was my greatest nemesis in brewing. The process involved heating the sparge water in the brew kettle and dumping the kettle of hot water into the sparge vessel. This was the easy part. The second step was to lift the sparge vessel to the top of the brewery. For a mild brew this wasn't so bad. I simply propped the vessel on a table, stood on a ladder, picked it up, propped it on top of the ladder and then hoisted it up on top of the brewery. No problem. In fact, this wasn't even difficult until I started brewing big beers. Then there was two or three times as much sparge water and the vessel was considerably heavier. Somehow I managed to survive the ladder thing and still get it in place. I'll never forget the time my dad, an avid home-brewer himself, was visiting and helping with a brew. Seeing the ladder thing he promptly decided to optimize my brewery and suggested we could dispense with ladder if the two of us lifted the sparge vessel to the top. We were brewing a Porter that day and the sparge vessel was fully loaded but I figured it must a good idea. Boy was I wrong. All the two people is better than one theory proved was that it was a whole lot easy to spill the hot water all over yours truly! While I might have spilled a little during the hoisting process, I never managed to spill it on myself. That was the day I realized this was getting ridiculous. I might have also realized I'm getting too old to keep lifting that damn thing. This is the first place where the pump comes in real handy. Now I start by hoisting the empty sparge vessel to the top of the brewery. Already an improvement. Then I simply hook up a few hoses, open the valve on the kettle, turn on the pump and presto, three minutes later all the sparge water is right where it needs to be. Thus the first benefit, a simple and easy way to move the sparge water to the top of the brewery.

Chilling the hot wort was never a real big issue. My counterflow chiller worked pretty well. But the real problem was it took forever. I hooked the chiller up to the kettle, let gravity move the hot wort through the chiller into the fermenter and a short forty-five minutes to an hour later I was done. Other than the hour wait, this wasn't a real big deal. This is the second place where the pump comes in real handy. I simply inserted the pump inline between the kettle and the chiller. Now the wort chills in five minutes instead of sixty! Using my home tap water in the counterflow, the chilled brew comes out at perfect 70-75 degrees which is perfect for pitching the yeast. Although it's not necessary too often, I can regulate temperature by increasing the

water flow through the chiller when needed. Faster chilling is good for the finished product. Less time is even better. Thus the second benefit, faster chilling and less time.

Figure 1 shows the pump installation in my tower brewery. You'll see the hose coming from the kettle, through the pump (which is mostly obscured) and then up through the copper pipe to the sparge vessel at the top. At the bottom of the copper pipe you'll see a red handled valve for draining the pipe. Figure 2 shows the pump as it's used in the chilling process. Here the pump is between the kettle and the counterflow chiller. In this picture you can also be seen the mash tun which is used for cleaning and sanitizing the pump and chiller.

**Figure 1 - Filling the Sparge Vessel**



**Figure 2 - Chilling the Wort**



I've learned three things about using the pump along the way which would benefit anyone interested. First, cleaning the pump is simple. When pumping the sparge water up top no real cleaning is necessary. Heck the pump was clean after I used it last and besides, the sparge water is hot enough to kill almost anything. Sanitizing the chiller is also pretty easy. The use of quick connect fittings makes it easy for the mash tun to double as a cleaning vessel. I hook the empty (and clean) mash tun to the inlet side of the pump and use it as a reservoir for sanitizing fluids. I triple sanitize: hot water followed by a sanitizer followed by hot water. I also let the first 1/2 cup

of wort go through the chiller as a final sanitize and rinse. While this is probably over sanitizing, it's the way I've always done it and haven't seen a reason to change. Besides, since the sanitizing is done during the last fifteen minutes of the boil it doesn't add any extra time to the overall process. After chilling, I hook the chiller back up to the mash tun for a final hot water rinse and I'm done. Second, you might think the pump would suck more trub out of the kettle and into the fermenter than the gravity method. This doesn't happen either. I have a screen in the kettle (similar to Phil's easymasher) which keeps most of the trub in the kettle where it belongs. This worked fine before the pump and works fine now. The third lesson is the most important. When pumping up into the sparge tank, you have to remember that there will be some very hot water left in the pipe when the kettle runs dry. This can make it very hard to disconnect the pump without that hot water gushing out all over your hands. To solve this problem, I installed a drain valve at the bottom near the pump. After pumping and before disconnecting the hoses, the valve can be opened to drain the excess hot water into a waiting bucket.

Adding the pump to the brewery was a great idea. It's made the brewing process easier and faster and hasn't affected quality in the least bit. If anything, the faster chill is better for the beer. And that's why I have great wife!

## To Rest or Not To Rest: One Club's Opinion

By Bill Nevits, with help from the Wizards

There is much debate about whether or not a protein rest is a worthwhile prelude to the mashing process. Most literature says with the highly modified malts available today, a protein rest isn't necessary. That being said, it's still not that clear when a rest should be used and when it shouldn't. Unfortunately, much of the aforementioned literature isn't much help either. Personally, I know I do one for certain beers and not for others, but there doesn't appear to be any rhyme or reason as to why I do this. A survey of the Wizards home-brew club was conducted and this article summarizes the results of that survey. Hopefully it will be able to answer the question "what is the "real" value of the protein rest and when is it worthwhile?"

Before we can really discuss this topic, it's important to understand what is highly modified malt and which malts these are. In laymen's terms, a highly modified malt is one where the starches and proteins in the malt have been broken down during the malting process. Most malts available today are labeled as well modified. In fact, finding malt which is under modified may prove difficult. In his book, The Complete Handbook of Homebrewing, Dave Miller offers an interesting way to check if your malt is highly modified by biting and chewing the grain. "If the grain is easy to chew, it is termed mealy, and what brewers want is a mealy, fully modified malt. Modification proceeds from the bottom (rounded end) of the grain up towards the pointed tip. Steely tips are the sign of a malt that is not fully modified."

But it's hard to find an under modified malt these days. A call to my local homebrew store failed to yield any such grains. Or at least he had no way of knowing that he had any of these grains. He did, however, point to an advertisement for St. Patrick's of Texas, America's Largest Homebrew Supply in Brew Your Own. They offer Budweiser Budvar Undermodified Malt claiming it is the "only undermodified available to small brewers in at least the last 10 years. It is the only malt that *requires* a multiple temperature mash...this malt is used to produce the



"original Budweiser" in the Czech Rep." Budvar aside, it sounds safe to assume that almost any malt you would normally buy should be considered suitable for use without a protein rest.

It also wouldn't hurt to understand the traditional rationale for the protein rest. Historically the rest was done to account for poorly modified malt. Again in laymen's terms, the protein rest breaks down the starches and proteins in the malt (since this wasn't done in the malting process). The only other practical reason I have found for the protein rest is to make the beer less prone to haze and this is really only relevant when using lager malts.

It would therefore seem the need for a protein rest might depend on your choice of ingredients. Under modified malts would warrant a protein rest, but since we can't find these malts this shouldn't be an argument for the protein rest. Since lager and 6-row malts have a higher percentage of protein, they may benefit from a short protein rest. But since we can't find under modified malts, this still sounds unnecessary. A large percentage of unmalted adjuncts such as wheat, oats, corn etc. might warrant a protein rest. But we don't have any real personal experience in the club indicating this is the case.

A concern with the use of a protein rest is that that it might actually be a detriment instead of a benefit. Potential problems associated with the protein rest could include haze (which sometimes occurs from low temperatures) and poor head retention (which could occur from over resting). Another concern is the difficulty associated with step-mashing. Without precise temperature control, which is quite common for typical single-infusion mash setups used by many home-brewers, it can be quite difficult to get the right rest time and temperature! As one club member put it "I could just never get the hang of step-mashes. All the calculations always come out completely wrong, it takes too long, and I wind up having a 60-minute protein rest instead of a nice short one."

One way to assess the protein rest for certain would be to brew a beer twice, once with a rest and once without. Obviously this could become fairly time consuming and involve considerable effort considering the wide range of ingredients and styles available. One club member went on to say "I've made wheat brews with step-ups and without and haven't been able to tell the difference. Not a single a problem converting or with head retention." A second observation is that in general our club members tend to avoid the rest, yet we have produced many fine beers (at least in our opinion).

In conclusion, the general feeling of the Wizards, as well as the author, is that when brewing beers requiring a single infusion mash, there isn't any added value in performing a protein rest. The added time, effort, potential difficulties and resulting problems would further support this conclusion. Remember, this article is only about "when is a protein rest appropriate?" While our conclusion is almost never, this is not meant to imply all beers can be adequately brewed using a single infusion mash. Many traditional beer styles, such as pilsners and bocks, should be decoction mashed and this will be a topic in our next newsletter. For now, if you're planning to brew a infusion-style mash, take it from our experiences and skip the protein rest!

Have an opinion? Think the author is full of it? Think he should stick to his day job? [Click here](#) to send him your feedback. If there is enough response, he'll update this article again for the next issue of the Wizards newsletter.

## *Feature Sites*

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

- <http://www.deja-brew.com/> - Home of Deja Brew - Brew on Premise and new sponsor of the Wizards
- <http://www.enteract.com/~uchima/brew/yeaststart/yeaststart.html> - A great tutorial on making yeast starters
- <http://www.enteract.com/~uchima/brew/brewpage.html> - Mike's Brew Page or the rest of what the guy who wrote the above page on yeast starters has to say about brewing beer.



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