

The WIZARDS Newsletter

January - March, 2003

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WIZARD's Upcoming Events

Upcoming Club Meetings

Club meetings this quarter will be January 21, February 18 and March 18 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">• April 1 - Wizard's Homebrew Competition Entry Deadline• TBD - Competition Judging• Earth Day April 26 - Annual Pub Crawl• May 3 - Wizard's Homebrew Competition Awards Ceremony and Brew Day at Strange Brew	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• February Meeting - Pale ale• April Meeting - Alt• June Meeting - CAP• August Meeting - IPA• October Meeting - Oktoberfest• December Meeting - Wee Heavy

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.

2003 Styles of the Month

By popular vote, the following beer styles have been announced for 2003. The style will be featured at the specified club meeting where both homebrewed and commercial examples of the style may be sampled. All club members are encouraged to get on the club brew schedule and bring along the version of the specified style each month!

- February - Pale ale
- April - Alt
- June - CAP
- August - IPA
- October - Oktoberfest
- December - Wee Heavy

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

The Wizard's are pleased to announce their 5th annual Homebrew Competition!

Once again the competition is being sponsored by Strange Brew and Deja Brew. The format will be the same as in year's past. You can enter a beer in any AHA category. Categories will be collapsed based on the number of entries and a winner will be declared in each collapsed category.

All category winners will proceed to a best of show round. A Best of Show beer and a brewer's choice will be chosen. The Best of Show beer takes all honors and the brewer's choice will be brewed at Deja Brew and put on tap at the Horseshoe Pub. In the past three years, the Best of Show beer has also been the brewer's choice!

Awards will be presented on National Homebrew Day (May 3rd) at Strange Brew in Marlboro. In addition to the awards ceremony, the WIZARDS will be hosting a brewing demonstration in the parking lot behind the store. This will feature all-grain and extract brewing demonstrations put on by our club members. The event should get underway at 10 AM and should be completed by 6 PM. All club brewers are invited to participate for this day of brewing at the pub. Planned to coincide with National Homebrew Day, the day will also feature a nationwide home-brew toast at 2 PM. All WIZARDS are encouraged to attend and especially encouraged to invite their family and friends to stop by! For those members wishing to put on their own brewing demonstration, please coordinate with Bill.

It is our hope that each and every WIZARD will find at least one beer to enter in this year's competition. Now is the time to get brewing. Last year's winner, Dave Devries, has gotten considerable mileage out of telling everyone what a great beer his Pickup Porter is and we don't want to have to listen to this for another year! All kidding aside, Dave's Pickup Porter is the best selling competition winner of all time. If you still want to sample it, head to the Horseshoe Pub before it's sold out for good.

As a special note to all of our new members, this is an excellent opportunity to get some honest feedback on your brewing.

When the time for judging gets close (we haven't picked an exact date yet but it will be at the end of March), we'll also need judges and stewards. Both are a great way to get involved with the club and learn something about the judging process. I can tell you from past experience, judgment day is definitely something to be a part of! By the way, what do you think happens to all the leftovers?

Complete details of the competition are available on the club's web site at <http://www.brewbeer.org/competition.htm>.

5th Annual Earth Day Pub Crawl

Join the WIZARDS for our pub crawl through the breweries of Boston. This annual event is always held on Earth Day. Why Earth Day? Maybe its because we're all good friends of the earth. Maybe its because beer comes from the earth? Or just maybe its because the T is free all

day long. Whatever the reason, join us April 26, 2003 for an afternoon pub crawl. This year's agenda hasn't been set yet but it will surely include at least a couple of the local brew-pubs. Somehow we always seem to end up at Redbones for dinner. Maybe it's the food, maybe it's the beer. Look for details in our next newsletter.

WIZARD's Club Business

Dues

Dues for 2002/2003 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

The WIZARDS 2002 Invitational Chuck Off"

Long time club member Chuck Stevens has recently and graciously provided the club with some free hops that he received from Hop Union. This fall the WIZARDS set out to put all these free hops to good use. Chuck had promised Ralph at Hop Union that the club would provide some feedback on what the club thought about the hops so we designed a club brewing program that would focus almost entirely on the hops. Each brewer was given the task to brew any beer they wanted but only the Mt. Hood and Magnum hops supplied by Chuck could be used. There were no style, gravity, adjunct or color restrictions and the beers were not judged against the BJCP style guide.

The hop varieties used and their alpha acid ratings were as follows:

- Magnum 16.5% AA
- Mt. Hood 6.9% AA

We are not sure how many brewers took advantage of the free hops but it was at least ten. Four brews were available at our November club meeting for tasting and it is our analysis of these beers that led to the opinions expressed in this article. The following table summarizes the various beers brewed by the club. Brews that were not at the club meeting are also shown in the summary table but should not be considered a direct contributor to our findings.

	Bill's Beer	Brett's Beer	Greg's Beer	Dan's Beer
Style	Amber Ale	Excess Grain Amber <nee IPA>	Blonde Ale	Robust Porter, 5 gallons
OG	1050	1048 (wanted 1065)	1.056	1.069
FG	1008	1010	1.010	1.013
Hop Additions	1/2 oz. Magnum 60 minutes 1/2 oz. Mt. Hood 30 minutes 1/2 oz. Mt. Hood 10 minutes	1 oz magnum 60 mins 1 oz mt hood 30 mins 1 oz mt hood 10 mins	1/2 oz. Mt. Hood FWH 1/2 oz. Magnum 60 minutes 1/2 oz. Mt. Hood 30 minutes	1/2 oz. Magnum 90 minutes 1/4 oz. Mt. Hood 15 minutes 1/4 oz. Mt. Hood 5 minutes
Calculated Bitterness	45 IBU	40 ibu	27 IBU (10 Gallons)	40 IBU
Brewer's Comments (ie. what were your intentions with this beer?)	I was shooting for a big red ale able to stand up to a good dose of these bolds hops.	Was looking to make a strong ale in the light of IPA, mixed pale and suspect pils base malts, low conversion on 'pils' thus lower OG and more residual sweetness	I was wanted to create a very pale clear beer with 20% corn and a pleasant hop presence.	A big porter, similar to previous brew I made with Nugget and Goldings hops.
Brewer's Tasting Notes	Malt/hop balance was ok but I didn't get the hop taste I was hoping for.	Basically balanced beer, but the bittering hops were still too strong, and the mid and late addition hops were too weak, indicating mt hood is not as noble as its euro counterpart	Bitter in the extreme. Very little flavor from the Mt. Hood.	Low hop aroma and flavor as expected, I did like this version better than my previous brew
Any other Comments	I doubt I'd make this one again.	Magnum probably Ok for bittering in big OG beers where the malt more than offsets the alpha, but Mt Hood did not behave like a noble hop		Definitely brew again, perhaps will be one of my regular cold weather beers.

In general, we found the Magnum/Mt. Hood combination to not be the best combination for home-brewing. Several of the beers made were enjoyable but none were truly exceptional. We found the overwhelming sensation to be hop bitterness with almost no hop aroma and taste. Even with the wide variety of styles brewed, many of our beers tasted similar and none achieved that ideal malt/hop balance. Brian summed it all up for the club when he described our beers as "very bitter up-front yet dries up very quick."

The Magnum hops certainly gave the high dose of bitterness expected but we also felt it left a lingering harshness on the palate. It was our theory that the high alpha acid rating contributed to this lingering harshness. Brett suggested cutting the boil time for this hop to 45 minutes in an attempt to reduce the harshness. Brian suggesting using a much bigger finishing hop, such as Cascade, to cover up the harshness. In the end we all felt a pretty big beer would be needed to stand-up to the high alpha acid rating of the Magnum hops.

We also felt that Mt. Hood used as a finishing hop wasn't able to stand up to the Magnum as much as we might have liked. We didn't see that noble hop aroma as expected (remember, Mt. Hood is an American derivative of the German noble hops). With all of the late hop additions used by our brewers, we would have expected more hop aroma and taste in the finished product.

Past experience with either of these two hops by the club was pretty low. Chuck is our only brewer who has used the Magnum hops before and he still thinks they're great. But he remains opposed to the Mt. Hood as the finishing hop (I wish had gotten what he preferred as the finishing hop but since he is in Florida, it will have to wait). Greg once brewed an all Mt. Hood blond ale but reports the results weren't quite what he was hoping for either.

Our December club meeting brought out two more Chuck-Off beers. The first was a Pale Ale and it exhibited much the same character as all the others we tried: a drinkable beer with slight hop aroma and a predominant hop bitterness in the taste. The second entry was Robust Porter. The aroma was dominated by the roasted malts and there was no hop aroma present. There was also very little hop taste through the roasted malt. The combination of a high gravity, roasted malts and the Chuck-Off hops produced a well balanced beer.

In conclusion, the WIZARDS found the Magnum/Mt. Hood combination to not be ideal for homebrewing. We saw too much bitterness and not enough aroma and taste. The one case where we saw the hop combination work was the Robust Porter, where the higher gravity and roasted malt seemed to be just right combination to offset the bitterness of the hops. Perhaps the high alpha acid rating of the Magnum might be better suited to a brewpub or microbrewery where this big hop could be better utilized. In any case, the WIZARDS are grateful to Chuck Stevens for acquiring the hops and especially to Ralph at Hop Union for providing them.

December Meeting - Barleywine

December was barleywine month and what a night it was. Fourteen barleywines were available for tasting. Sadly only thirteen were sampled. Phil even made a rare appearance for the event which was, in this reporter's eyes, the highlight of the evening. Rather than talking about the event, let the beers speak for themselves:

- Phil's 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000 Barleywines (note, there were two 2000s)
- Tony's Bad Ass Barleywine
- Cambridge Brewing 2002
- Bigfoot 2000 and 2002
- Castle Springs Ye Olde Chucklehead
- Victory Old Horizontal

- Cisco something (it was getting late)
- Rogue Old Crustacean

WIZARDS Holiday Party

The WIZARDS annual party was held at Bill's house in Hudson this year. Attendance was great and everyone had a great time. Brett brought his Special Holiday Ale - a raspberry IPA and Jeremy brought one of his many scotch ales. Even Bill was kind enough to kick in some of his Chuck-Off Amber Ale which, although not really red, was better with age!



Club Samplings



Homebrew tastings over the last few months have included Franz's Irish Stout (A first ever homebrew), Jeremy's Porter, Greg's Dopplebock and Scotch Ale, Bill's Dark Mild and Wheat beers and Strange Brew Brown Ale. Commercial tastings included Smuttynose's Weizenheimer (2/5), Shoals IPA, Old Brown Dog and Barleywine Style Ale, Diebel's Altbier (2.5/5), Wachusett Winter Ale, Ipswich IPA, EKV Pilsner (3/5), Geary's Hampshire Special Ale, Dogfish Head Raison D'Extra, Gilla Monster Amber Lager (2.5/5), Stockyard Oatmeal Stout (3/5) and Abbey Affligam Noel Christmas Ale (3.5/5). 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."

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Nur Zum Bier Warmen



With all the talk about beers being served too cold at club functions, I thought you all would be interested in seeing this. I stumbled into the beer warmer at a beer cellar in Salzburg, Austria a few years back. Although fairly simple to operate, I doubt I would have known what it was without the help on the kind gentleman (I never did get his name, but then again he didn't speak much English) in the picture. The concept is fairly simple too - the copper box is actually a hot water bath that you dunk your filled beer mug into until the ideal beer temperature is reached.

Feature Sites

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

- <http://www.hotv.org/tools/zstacks.html> A useful index to that stack of Zymurgy magazines. Too bad it only goes to 1998.



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