

# The WIZARDS Newsletter

January - March, 2007

## *WIZARD's Club News*

### Upcoming Club Meetings

Club meetings this quarter will be April 21, May 15, and June 19 all at Deja Brew in Shrewsbury. Check our web page, call Strange Brew or call Deja Brew for directions.

### Club Meeting Minutes and Upcoming Events

The following are the combined minutes for the January through March 2007 club meetings:

New Brewer's Night was a big success this year. Club memberships is on the upswing with at least six new members this year. The club recognized the value of the New Brewer's Night and recommend it be held again next year. Advertising has been the key to success with brochures at Strange Brew one of the more successful tactics.

The official meeting start time was moved to 7:30 PM to allow more members to be available at the start of the meeting. The necessary updates to the web site have been made. So far, the change appears to be working well.

The official deadline for the 2007 Homebrew competition has now passed. Entries will be picked up at Strange Brew and Deja Brew on 11 April so there is still time for a final drop off if you want. First round judging will be held at the April club meeting. This is one meeting each year where we really need all club members to attend and to be prompt. We need your help to make the judging a success! Don't be intimidated by a lack of judging experience - there is plenty of room for everyone to be involved.

Results of the WIZARDS annual home brew competition will be announced at the club's spring brew day to be held on National Homebrew Day - May 5th. The brew day will be held in the Strange Brew parking lot starting at 10:00 AM. We hope all club members can attend this event. Brewing is set to get underway at 10:00AM and expected to wrap-up in the mid-to-late afternoon. Join the WIZARDS for a day of brewing, socializing, a nationwide homebrew toast at 1PM and our competition awards ceremony at 2PM.

National Homebrew Day is a great chance to sign up new club members as there are always plenty of avid homebrewers in the crowd. We ask that all club members attend this event, talk up the club and encourage people to attend our May meeting. With any luck, National Homebrew Day will find us new prospective members which is exactly why we need to put on a good show for the May meeting. The style for the May meeting is Brown Ale. All club members are encouraged to brew and bring a Brown Ale whether it be an American, Southern, English or whatever kind of brown ale you crave. The May meeting will also give us a chance to have an

ad hoc discussion about brewing wheat beers - just in time to get them ready for our August meeting.

**The Annual Pub Crawl** will be April 21st, 2007. All club members and their guests are invited to attend. We'll meet at the Alewife 'T' station, outside the turnstiles @ 12 noon. We will set the itinerary (only dinner at Redbones is decided) at the April meeting - please bring your suggestions. We'll try to keep to a set itinerary (to be posted later) and give you a phone number so you can join us along the way if you want. Spouses and guests are more than welcome. Take a look at highlights from last year's pub crawl in the [April Newsletter](#) to get an idea of what our the crawl is all about.

*Directions to Alewife - From I28 (or anywhere else), take Route 2 into Boston/Cambridge. Not too far after the road narrows down to two lanes, you'll see an exit for Alewife Station on your right. Take and enter the parking garage. After parking, follow signs to "TRAINS." After going downstairs, open your eyes! We'll meet right in front of the turnstiles.*

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.

### Topics for the Club's Next Business Meeting

1. Set Pub Crawl Itinerary
2. The Jack Daniel's Barrel Project
3. Club brewing events (including Jeremy's idea of brewing the same thing twice)
4. Greg's ingredient poll (see below)
5. July Meeting - Whitelabs?
6. Club Sponsorship
7. Treasurer's Report
8. Beer Crawls

**Club Brewing Events** - Here is a great email from Greg on what club brewing events are all about. We would need to spread some of these styles around to different members. It just won't work unless someone is behind the scenes doing the homework and brewing the beer. I've made the suggestion many times in the past but I'll make it here again, if there is a style of beer that you really like take some time and do some research, find some commercial examples brew it until you get it where you like it and bring what you learn back to the club. Whether it's a style we have talked about in the past or not it makes no difference. If we can get one or two brewers taking point on each style we cover more ground and all learn a bunch of good stuff. Take a look at the archive page there's a lot of good examples Phil on [Oktoberfest](#), Bill on [Mild ale](#), Jeremy on Porter and so on. It'll take some work but the more we put in, the more everyone gets out of it. If you are worried about the deadline of just a few months take as much time as you need. We can have a few styles on the back burner until it's ready to roll.

**The Ingredient Poll Event** - We are thinking of putting together a club "brewing event" and looking for your input. The idea is anyone who would like to participate would receive one

ingredient to use and some guide lines to follow and we bring all the beers together for a club tasting. the choices for this poll are Malt, Hops, Yeast, Sugar, spice or Other. To vote, please visit the following web page: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wizardshbc/surveys?id=2466116>.

The club is STILL considering some beer crawls. We are currently looking for interest and organizers. Some possible suggestions include:

- Portland, ME
- Portsmouth, NH
- Wachusett Brewery

## Dues

Dues for 2006/2007 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*

### Club Meeting Recap

#### January - Open House/New Brewers Night

Sixteen people joined the WIZARDS for the Open House/New Brewers Night, five of whom were new to the club or attending their first meeting. New club members were given a brief overview of the club, how it works and what we do (if you missed it, just scan the web site). Showing that the WIZARDS are not just a group that's all talk, twelve different home-brews and a cider were available for sampling:

- Bill's Blonde Ale
- Tom's Pale Ale
- Dave's Kolsch and Vanilla Bean Porter
- Don's Blonde Ale
- Higgy's Mid-life Crisis Amber Ale
- Greg's Vanilla Bourbon Stout
- Jeremy's Ordinary Bitter
- Mike's Imperial Stout
- Mike & Vic's APA, Colonial Ale and Brown Ale
- Brian's Raspberry Zinfandel Cider

## February - Scottish Ale Night and Intro to Judging

The highlight of the February meeting had to be the Scottish Ales with five different Scottish Ales for sampling. Thanks to Greg, Bill, Dave and Duca for providing them. We also had an intro to judging seminar at the meeting in anticipation of the WIZARDS annual home brew competition judging to be held at the April meeting. We reviewed the BJCP scorecard (available off the web site competition page) and practiced evaluating two Belhaven Scottish Ales (too bad one was no good). Just to refresh your memory on the process, our scoresheets for the two beers are attached [right here](#).

## March - Judging Seminar

Our annual judging seminar was held at the March meeting. We reviewed the BJCP scorecard (available off the web site competition page) and did some sample judging on a few beers of the night. Now its time to put our all practice to use at the April meeting when we hold first round judging for our annual home brew competition!

## Keg Cutting Party

by Mike Reilly

Well, it was a particularly productive day, today. We had seven (7) WIZARDS attend, and seven (7) kegs cut open and drilled to accept a valve. A great THANK YOU to all who attended today:

- Cagel (Jeremy could only stay for a short time, and had no keg to convert, but had lots of EXCELLENT advice and left behind a container of the cutting oil he mentioned in his posts),
- Devries (Dave provided much-appreciated expert advice and several items of specialty equipment, without which we could not have finished converting the kegs),
- Duca (he brought three kegs for conversion. Plus, he hooked-up with Greg G. this morning to grab the extra keg slated for us, so Vik and I owed him a beer. We settled-up later at down at Morey's Tavern),
- Hart (Carl brought the sawzall - an excellent tool for this task {see below}, and he brought some Otter Creek Pale Ale to share! Stayed right to the end, but had to leave as we were headed off to the tavern),
- Hetzel (Mike was a tireless worker, the only downside is that he, too, had to leave before we headed off to the tavern),
- Rao, and Reilly (Vik and I just kind of flailed around, seeing as we hadn't a clue about what we were doing, and hadn't really worked with metal since shop class in high school - wayyy too long ago to mention).



Sawzalls make a nice clean cut.	Tough to get the right angle with a grinder, but dang! - Mike H. was relentless!	Ooh! More power!	Hard at work - on keg conversions	Hard at work - on lunch!	Post-"conversion party" party (AKA: hard at work - on pints!)
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Some findings from this session:

1. A sawzall blade makes a MUCH smoother cut through the top of a keg than an angle grinder wheel could ever HOPE to achieve. However, blades break quickly if one doesn't take great care, and one needs a grinder for the finishing touches (its too easy to cut beyond the line using a sawzall - the grinder allows for a MUCH greater level of control for the final 1/4-inch or so).
2. An angle grinder is JUST THE THING, when trying to remove the metals flashing and deburr a sawzall cut.
3. Simple, ancient, muscle-powered tools like a file and emery cloth can fix all the mistakes the modern machines mentioned above produce.
4. But, even a simple muscle-powered tool like a file creates deafening noise in this circumstance. Hearing and eye protection is VITAL.
5. Working with power tools, bent over the top of a 2.5-foot tall keg for 30 minutes or so to cut and clean is REALLY HARD on the back, shoulders and upper arms. As can be seen in Duca's photos (pictures 1870 and 1872) there is a weird little dance each worker did around their keg, to cut, grind, file and polish. Very wearing.
6. After 2 hours in windy, sub-30-degree weather, warm pizza, cold beer and hot coffee can make one feel almost human again. There is a great deal of personal satisfaction in doing your own cutting and cleaning - creating your own brewing equipment!
7. Pizza was had for lunch, along with coffee and beer (but certainly not enough to compromise safety!). The break was welcomed, but then it was back out into the cold to finish off the keg tops and cut holes for the valves - we were racing daylight at that point.

Folks started arriving just before noon, and all seven kegs were completed, and the area cleaned up by 4:10 pm: not a bad rate of production. After cleanup, a few stalwart (foolish?) souls: Devries, Duca, Rao and Reilly visited Morey's Tavern in scenic downtown Maynard, for a few beers and great conversation.

I took more than 60 pictures of the various steps in converting a keg (which may explain why I wasn't doing much actual WORK), and Duca has even more. You can see all of Duca's pictures at <http://www.ducasir.com/PhotoBook/list.php?dir=%2FBrewery%2FKeg+Cutting>.



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