

# w · i · z · a · r · d · s

*Worcester Incorporated Zymurgists Advancing Real Draughts*



**Homebrew Club  
Worcester, MA**

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## [January Club Meeting, Cancelled Due to Weather](#)

January came in with a bang – at least weather wise – and forced the cancellation of our club meeting. In case you've forgotten by now, this was the third cancellation due to weather this winter. Remember December's Holiday Party and Club meetings? Neither do I.

## [February Club Meeting, 12 members present](#)

Old man winter paid the club a second visit this year with another winter storm. Twelve brave souls still managed to slog it through the snow for the Baltic Porter mini-comp. Jay started the new year off right beating eight out other entries to take home the win and a whopping \$55. Category 16E was then selected for the August mini-comp. It wasn't the longest meeting as most of the crowd left early to battle the snow, get home and start (resume?) shoveling.

## [March Club Meeting, 17 members present](#)

(editor's note: Club meetings now start with the question of the month. The typically thought provoking question, usually dreamed up the president, serves as an amusing start to our meetings. When possible this question and some of the answers will be included here.)

*Questions of the month...*

- *What are you going to brew this summer?*
- *Do you believe in using a secondary fermenter? 3/16 use only a primary fermenter*

## WIZARDS 2014 Year in Review

March brought yet another big snow storm but 17 of us still managed to attend although I'm not all together sure what happened at the meeting. Oh well.

### [March, Last Year's Holiday Party](#)

Still suffering from the snows of December, the club's 2013 Holiday Party was finally held in March. Good time had by all. Thanks to Bill & (mostly) Darja for hosting it.

### [April Club Meeting, 19 members present \(1 new\)](#)

*Question of the month...*

- *Sour Beers, yes or no?*

This month the club hosted Lori Berkley from the Community Advocate. Her mission? To observe and interview the club for a feature article in the Advocate. You can see the complete article at the end of this newsletter.

### [April Pub Crawl](#)

On Saturday, April 26th, the WIZARDS took off on our annual Pub Crawl around the streets of Boston. This year we focused on Harvard and Davis Squares with stops at John Harvard's Brewhouse (beers and lunch), Charlie's Beer Garden (just beers), The Five Horse Tavern (more beers) and Red Bones (beers and dinner).



The WIZARDS are looking for a volunteer to coordinate this annual event in 2015. If interested, please contact Bill or Joey.

National Homebrew Day and Club Brew Day



The WIZARDS celebrated National Home Brew Day at Strange Brew in Marlboro. A number of WIZARDS joined the Strange Brew team and a few of their other customers on the brew kettles for a day of brewing and merriment. The spring weather and flowing brews made for a great day in the sun. Here the crowd joins Brian as he leads our participation in the nationwide toast to home brew.

Thanks to Strange Brew for hosting us again this year. Mark your calendar now to join us for National Home Brew Day 2015.

May Club Meeting, ?? members present (7 new)

Question of the month...

- *Who has a mobile brewing system? 6 said yes. Interesting, why not come to brew day?*

Joey reports a good meeting was held with several new people in attendance. This month we had the Category 5B Maibock/Helles mini-comp and Pat was our victor. Nice Brew. The November mini-comp was drawn and the winner was 22B Other Smoked Beer. It brought out some brewer emotion. It will be interesting to see how this one turns out.



Judging the Maibock/Helles Mini-Comp at Deja Brew

Nominations for club officers were also held this month. Club President Matt announced his intention to step down as he would be moving to the great state of



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Ohio. Many thanks to Matt for all that he did for the club leaving us stronger than ever before.

### [June Club Meeting, Theme: Officer Elections, 19 members present \(1 new\)](#)

Question of the month...

- What would you like to see in club meetings (must be the new prez showing some initiative)? Here were a few of the ideas:
  - Greater mini-comp participation
  - Activities on non-mini-comp nights
  - Round table discussions
  - Joey has the complete list – look for some to start in the coming year!

This month we finished the mash tun build. Thanks to Greg for the few extra parts that pushed it over the finish line.



Here's the complete parts list for the mash tun if you're interested in replicating the club design at home:

Picnic cooler - one

92897- Stainless Steel clamps - one 2-pack

LFA-837 Brass pipe-lead free nipple 1/2 in MIPx2 in

LFA-828 Brass pipe-lead free bushing 1/2 in MIPx2in

LFA- 808 Brass pipe-lead free tee connector 1/2 in

H#882648 Hillman Rubber washers 3/4x1/8 – 2 Packs

LFA- 294 Brass Hose Barb lead free Adaptor 3/8x3/8 MIPx2

LFA- 385 Brass Hose Barb lead free Adaptor 1/2inx1/2in x2

75746 Stainless Steel faucet connector 3/8 in x 20 inches

49101 Conduit locknut steel 1 1/2in

June also brought our annual club elections. Joey was elected president, Eli was elected vice-president and Bill was re-elected secretary/treasurer. Thanks to all of our officers for all they do to make our club a success.

*Did you know?*

Maybe you want to try giving all grain a shot? Or maybe you want to make a monster brew. The mash tun is available for use. Simply contact Joey or Jon M. to arrange it.

*July Club Meeting, Theme: Summer Swill-Off*



Our annual tradition – the summer swill-off – was the highlight of this month’s meeting. Take a minute, sit back and read this informative and humorous tale of the night – as only Pat can bring it to us.

Hello my fellow Wizards,

Well it’s summer again, that special time of year. Time for vacations, cook outs, swill offs, the beach, the... wait wah? What was that third thing? Swill offs? Really? Why? Are we prepping ourselves to go back into the dorms? Are we that fed up with the persnicketyness of being craft beer enthusiasts that we are willing to prostrate ourselves to the giant corporate machine? What could possibly be our reasoning for setting aside our beloved craft of home brewing this time every year to try mass produced swill?

That is the real question; why? There must be some deeper reason behind this right? We know there are better beers out there but we still do this every year. Could we be doing this to reinforce our self-righteousness, or to better relate to and understand our fellow man; like when rich people work in food kitchens on Thanksgiving? Could it be to prove our strength among craft brewers to show what feats of strength (swill) we can handle? I guess we’ll have to wait until the end of this write up to figure this out.

Now for the usual swill off ground rules. This year’s swill off had a theme of “Faux craft beer”. Basically any large-scale brewer trying to package their wares as a micro brewer; which I find simultaneously adorable and condescending. Scoring was done by the Wizard’s never-fail finger system (1 finger=horrible 5 fingers =sublime). I’m going to list these in the order we tried them not by score. Also take note of the amount of twist offs-to actual bottle caps throughout. What does it mean? I have no idea. So now the moment you’ve all been waiting for! The results (with commentary) of the Wizard’s 2014 swill off

1. Ballantine Ale, (Pabst brewing company by way of Miller brewing company) (twist off) – Having personally found pre-pro recipes for this beer, and enjoyed them, I was expecting more out of this. Quotes included “green-bottle beer, green bottle flavor” “Good stuff! (sarcasm)” “tastes like it should be in a 40”. This beer didn’t really impress getting an average score of 1.8.

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2. Batch 19, 10th street brewing, (Coors archive brewing (according to the bottle) Golden CO) (twist off)- This beer actually had a respectable showing with quotes including: “earthy”, “has a craft look”, “Newcastle Englishy” and “Better than regular Coors”. This beer had an average score of 2.5.

3. Third Shift Amber Ale, (Band of Brewers, Coors Golden CO) (twist off)- Ok here’s where the evening took an interesting turn. It was now when a certain level of frustration set in (Bill) and started an undercurrent that would persist for the next forty minutes or so. It was now when some people (Bill) realized corporate America’s plan to try and pass off their products as All-American craft Brewers. Although the beer scored well at 2.8 the anger started to permeate the room (Bill). Quotes included “Like Killian’s only with a lot more sugar” “Not very amber” and “Not Rocky mountain water, not Rocky mountain ale” which was the straw that broke Bill’s the camel’s back.

4. Leinenkugels Hopping Helles (Miller) (cap)- This beer did really Meh as far as judging went, but the anger continued as some took this beer to be an indictment on all hops in our great country. “What the hell is the matter with American hops?” “Could be worse” Orange-citrus flavor”, “strange and uncomfortable” were the best quotes I could glean. Hopping Helles had a score of 2.21

5. Miller Fortune (MillerCoors) (cap)- Again our emotional decent continued with Miller Fortune. The conversation was less about the subpar beer and more about other seedier topics. The higher alcohol content (6.9) left many discussing the philosophical reasoning behind it. “Their doing this to attract boys!”, “Just buy Private stock if you want to get drunk” were topics debated with this beer. As far as the overall quality quotes included “Nice color”, “No nose” and “not a lot going on”. Miller Fortune had a score of 1.4.

6. Fire Rock Pale Ale (Kona Brewing co, Craft Brewing Alliance)(cap)- This beer from the Aloha state did nicely despite getting quotes like: “ a little sweet”, “funky after taste”, “cloying”. Also the group’s anger and depravity went interstate and hard alcohol. “People from Vermont are as thick-headed as you can get” (I don’t know if this is true or has anything to do with the beer, or Hawaii I just report what I hear). And “Mix this with coconut rum!” Despite the further loss of humanity Fire Rock pale ale scored in at 2.9.

7. Audible Ale (Red Hook Brewing, Craft Brewing Alliance)(cap)- More anger at the big brewers for trying to trick us, but we did learn something about nature! “How are they going to corner the market with this crap?” “They must be dumbing this down for the masses!” “it’s insulting” “There’s a lot of crap on this table!” rang loud during the tasting. Also some fun learning. “This beer is skunky”, “Fresh Kill almost”, “The skunking must be an off flavor thing”(no that’s what they were shooting for, skunk spray in a bottle.) “Skunks hibernate!” and finally “not in the summer”. This beer did remarkably poorly at an average of 1.0.

8. Goose Island Honker’s Ale (InBev) (twist)- I don’t remember all the quotes regarding this beer, just the important ones. One member said “I taste vinyl”

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which prompted “how would you know what it tastes like?” This started a whole other discussion on how one would taste vinyl. For the record what you do on your own time is your business, we are not here to judge you. If people want to lick records for a hobby let’s just let them do it and not try and pry into their psychosis. Score of 1.9.

9. Blue Moon Summer Honey Wheat (Coors) (Twist)- This beer had some mixed results. “Bready”, “Some Sweet” “Slight honey” were some of the more positive comments. “Whole lot of nothing”, “Artificial honey flavor” and “I wouldn’t want to drink a whole one of these” were on the negative side. Also there was a fun fact mentioned “Heady Topper is a double IPA”. I’m not sure where that fits in but you do get points for being correct. Score of 1.9.

10. Shock top Raspberry wheat (Anheuser-Busch)(twist off)- This beer had some bad with good. “like swallowing Tylenol”, “Massive Raspberry”, “Aspartame”. “Makes me uncomfortable” and “holy gag reflex” were some of the most prevalent quotes. But this beer holds a special place in my heart. It was at this point the group (Bill) started to shed its negativity for optimism. Quotes like “This was a good idea!(Swill off)(Bill)” Started to resonate, and others joined in with statement’s like “Now I know what not to buy” Thank you Raspberry wheat, Thank you. Score of 1.3.

11. Shock Top Honeycrisp Apple wheat (ditto)(ditto)- This beer seemed worse in quotes but did better in the judging. “Gag! (literally, not just said)” “holy jolly ranchers”. And more of our optimism started to shine through. “You can mix this with vodka!” Score of 1.5.

12. Long Hammer IPA (Red Hook Brewing, Craft Brewing Alliance)(cap)- This beer did really well. At this point I’m not sure if it was the quality of the beer or the upswing in the group’s attitude, but this beer was well received despite the mixed quotes. “I still can’t get rid of the apple taste! (Horror)”, “The hops taste like cat piss”, “Well I like cat piss (see entry 8, sentence 4)” “Compared to the last two it’s an 8!” Also by this time Bill was so happy he started telling stories about breweries that would just give away hops to anyone that would ask. I’m not sure how truthful this is but it was nice to see him enjoying himself again. Score of 3.43.

13. Upheaval IPA (Widmer Brother’s c/o craft brew alliance) I personally thought that this was a much smaller brewing outfit, but their association with the craft brew alliance will qualify them for this experiment. I won’t beat around the bush, this beer crushed the competition. Quotes like “taste the higher abv” Tastes more west coast” “More hop flavor” “like a mini barley wine” were all part of the comments I heard. This beer finished with a score of 3.9 and deserved the overall sentiment of “pretty good”.

So after all of this what have we learned? Why do we do this to ourselves when we know we’re largely going to be disappointed? I think we found the answer during the course of our journey; from the emotional downturn to the triumphant

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upswing once again of prevailing optimism. We may not like to do this, we may get discouraged, even angry. But in the end it's for the best. We get to learn about what others out there consider "quality" and "craft". It is through this catharsis of crappy swill that we can realize what we know about true craft beer, and that this knowledge is good. It reminds us that there are many still out there that don't possess this knowledge and that they probably never will. So we should be a thankful of what we know, and hope that others can continue down this path. We are the keepers of truth, and that realization was well worth the journey.

It's also good because most of the extras from the meeting weren't drunk by anybody and I get to take these extras home and feed them to my in-laws. This is great because I can give them some spiel about how special these beers are and they'll just give snaps of their naïve approval. Ha Ha. Lousy hipsters.

Well I'm tired and that about sums it up for this meeting. Thanks to all those that came out and we hope to see the rest of you next time. Remember appreciate the beer you have, and feed the crappy stuff to those that don't know any better!

Pat

Want to read some more about faux beers? Check out these links, some of it may surprise you!

[http://demetergroup.net/sites/default/files/news/attachment/Protecting%20Craft%20Against%20Pseudos\\_0.pdf](http://demetergroup.net/sites/default/files/news/attachment/Protecting%20Craft%20Against%20Pseudos_0.pdf)

<http://blog.seattlepi.com/thepourfool/2013/09/12/craft-beer-vs-faux-craft-budmillercoors-go-stealth-mode/>

### **August Club Meeting**

The Belgian Specialty mini-comp went well. The BOS was much debated but in the end Jon M. won with his Belgian IPA. Perhaps he'll share the recipe?

Category 8C ESB was selected for the February mini-comp. There still plenty of time to participate!

### **August / September Newsflash**

We've had many members pass through the club into the ranks of professional brewing. I can count at least eleven. This month not one, but two, former WIZARDS made the front page of the August / September edition of the Yankee Brew News:



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In case you're wondering who the eleven pros are, here's the list I came up with. Can you add any more?

Ron G (Veterans United), Brian M (whereabouts unknown), Jamie S (Harpoon), Joe S (unknown), Dave T (Deja Brew), Ben R (Wormtown), Damase (Foolproof), Brian F (Beerworks), Dave H (3cross), Keith A (Medusa – coming soon), Brian P (Strange Brew – coming soon).

### [New England Homebrew Jamboree, Tamworth Camping Area, Tamworth, NH](#)

Once again the club made a strong showing at the 2014 New England Homebrew Jamboree. Greg and Amy, Brian and Trisha and Bill and Darja joined up with Thia and Luke from FOAM manning the beer tent.

There were somewhere around a dozen clubs serving in the beer tents with maybe 200 beers on tap. Two clubs, the North Shore and South Shore clubs accounted for a good 125 of the taps between them while the rest of the clubs had a more modest showing. We had four from the WIZARDS and three from FOAM in our tent. We like to think its quality over quantity when you visit us. And we even had spent grain biscuits Tricia made for our four legged guests.

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I would encourage everyone to give attending the jamboree some thought - you will have a good time. It is always held the weekend after Labor Day. The jamboree is Saturday but you can easily make it a whole weekend event. It is held at the Tamworth Campground in Tamworth, NH, Sure it's a bit of a drive but what are weekends for? Make it a day trip (bring a DD) or stay for the weekend. If you're a camper, you can camp with the jamboree or reserve a site at the campground. The campground also has rental campers that may be available. The event is definitely kid friendly and dog friendly too! There's a homebrew competition you can enter or judge. We'll have a spot in the beer tent with FOAM. We could even serve your beer! Failing that there will be plenty of it around. For more information on the Jamboree, you can read about it on the website at <http://home.comcast.net/~wnevits/wizards/nehj2009.pdf> or see the jamboree's web site at <http://www.homebrewersjamboree.com/index.html>.



**September Club Meeting, Theme: Oktoberfest Tasting, 16 members present**

Question of the month...

- Do you reuse yeast? 2 Yes (wash), 6 sometimes, 6 No



September brought the club's annual Oktoberfest tasting. As is often the case, a German stole the show. Ofests that made it to this year's tasting are listed below, hown in the order of preference by the club.

- ❖ Hacker-Pschorr
- ❖ Sierra Nevada
- ❖ Berkshire
- ❖ Jack's Abbey
- ❖ Harpoon
- ❖ Wachusett Ale
- ❖ Warsteiner Oktoberfest
- ❖ Shiner Oktoberfest

Don't you miss Pat's usual take on these events?

**October Club Meeting, 17 members present (1 new)**

This month the club had an "intro to smoked beer night" in preparation for next's month's mini-comp. The response was fantastic. Brian W gave a short talk on the style while we shared ten different smoked beers which everyone enjoyed sampling while Brian walked us through the style and substyles.



Not only did he give us a history of the beer and making of the grain, he gave a detailed breakdown of how the smoked beer style is changing from the current BJCP guidelines to the new.

Thanks for to Brian putting it all together.

**Did you know?**

A new BJCP style guideline is coming out soon. Look for a G. Strong presentation at 2014 NHC to learn all about it. Hint, you can find it out Youtube by searching to "Chop & Brew – Episode 26."

**November Club Meeting, Theme: Smoked Beer Mini-Comp, 13 members present**

Mini-comp – smoked beer – Pat wins again; 5 entries. (editor’s note: this is Pat’s second mini-comp win of the year. His head must be getting bigger, so try to give some extra room if walks by you).



Thanks to Rob, the May 2015 mini-comp will be a Chopped style brew. The mystery ingredients are Rye malt, Amarillo hops, and Peeps. Yes, Peeps, that Easter classic. Judging will be based on the best use and presentation of the three ingredients. Watch the Chopped on FoodTV to get a feel for it if you haven’t seen it already!

**Holiday Party 2014**

This year the holiday party was actually held in December. After last year’s debacle there was a hint of fear in the year when talk of the holiday party came up, but this year it was actually held as scheduled in December. Twenty three members and their guests joined Bill & Darja for this annual event. By the end of the evening there were empty bottles and empty glasses all over the place. Darja broke out one of her Big Foot flights ranging in age from 2000 to 2014. Pretty much everyone agreed the 2000 was close to past its prime while the 2013 and 2104 had some time to go. Rob voted 2004 the best right around the same time he told everyone this was a much better deal than his office party being held the same night. As usual the group out did themselves with the pot luck food table with my personal favorite being the chicken wings. Hopefully the weather will hold for 2015 as well and even more people will make it then.



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### *December Club Meeting, Dive Bar, ~12 members present*

The Wizards took over the Dive Bar for December's meeting. Other than hearing it was new experience for some, no other stories have been shared, so it must have been good.

### *Did you know?*



Last year, Rob built the club a 4 tap jockey box that anyone can borrow. Reserve it on the Google Calendar or see Joey or Rob.

**The End**



# Local zymurgists 'hoppy' to convene monthly

By Lori Berkey  
Contributing Writer

**Shrewsbury** - Joey Flournoy zealously talks about yeast and hops for hours on end. Finding someone equally zealous to listen to the discourse used to be difficult. That was until Flournoy joined the Worcester Incorporated Zymurgists Advancing Real Draughts (Wizards) homebrew club that meets monthly at Deja Brew in Shrewsbury. Now he basks in the joy of having like-minded home-brewers to swap ideas with and help each other make better beer. (Zymurgy is the branch of chemistry that deals with fermentation processes, such as those used in the brewing process.)

"We're brewers helping brewers," said Bill Nevits, who co-founded the Wizards in the late 1990s and who currently travels to the meetings from Hudson to serve as the club's secretary/treasurer.

According to Flournoy, the club meetings typically start with a toast of beer made by one of the members. The brewer tells how he or she made it, what techniques were used, and with what ingredients. Members give feedback about what they like or don't like about it. Feedback ranges from unsophisticated taste preferences to certified beer judges' tips for how to correct the beer's mouth feel.

The Wizards are made up of a wide range of brewers. Some participate because they like to make beer and taste beer. Others are into the math and science of it. Some like the technical side, the measuring. Some are extract brewers and some are all grain brewers.

"It's a mix," Flournoy said. "Some people never enter a competition; they have no interest in that. Others like to enter because they want to find out, 'how close did I hit that particular style?'"

If you made an IPA, is it the right style? Others will just make it and say, 'hey I like it,' and they'll drink it."

Flournoy likes the precision. He learned how to rate beer according to aroma, mouth feel, taste, body, and the overall rating, and he earned certification as a beer judge. In his role as the club's vice president, he enjoys the technical talk and what he learns from more experienced



Members of the Wizards homebrew club hoist a glass before a recent meeting at Deja Brew in Shrewsbury. Pictured (l to r) are Brian Girard, Greg Guyton, Pat Galvin, Bill Nevits, Dave Deroches, Joey Flournoy, Rob Cohane, Matt Juhascik, Miriam Morrison, Scott Morrison and Steve Jaskinski.

“As you do each batch you learn something new, and each problem you come across you learn from that and make the next beer better, so it's definitely a learning process.”

Brian Gerard

brewers. He also values the chance to mentor beginners and mingle with those who simply enjoy the pastime.

Brian Gerard, a member from Marlborough, joined as an extract brewer and advanced to all-grain brewing.

"As you do each batch you learn something new, and each problem you come across you learn from that and make the next beer better, so it's definitely a learning process," Gerard said, adding that he

likes the camaraderie of the club and the views offered.

During meetings, members also discuss upcoming local events, and plan club-based mini competitions. There's a question and answer period, where people can ask about dry hopping or boiling or anything else brew-related. Outside of meetings, members have fun touring local microbreweries together, attending brewers' festivals and exploring New England's

brewpubs.

Flournoy likens the craft to cooking.

"We like to make stuff, and I like this more than cake," he said.

Just as cooks add different ingredients for different

flavors, Flournoy has tried different combinations. Once he added lime, trying to make a Corona-style beer with the lime taste already in it. Another time he bought an old rum barrel and aged his beer in it.

The group has done different experiments where they all brewed with the same recipe, but everyone used a different kind of yeast and then tasted it to see what the different yeasts offered in terms of flavor. They've done the same using different hops.

Having stayed on since he co-founded the Wizards, Nevits is pleased with the club's diversity. Over the years, he said, he's met people from such varied professions that he wouldn't otherwise have had the chance to know.

The Wizards welcome aspiring brewers to experts alike. Anyone interested in joining is invited to show up the third Tuesday of the month at Deja Brew, 510B Boston Turnpike Road in Shrewsbury. For more information, visit [www.brewbeer.org](http://www.brewbeer.org).

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