

January 10
NFBL Meeting

Saccharomyces Journal
January 2008

Saccharomyces Journal

President's Message

Matt Ruddell



For those of you who are members of the AHA, you may have seen an interesting discussion on "Children at Beer festivals." Being a homebrewer, former pro brewer, and father I took a keen interest in this subject.

The issue in a nutshell, a member wrote in to question a response he got from the editor of *All About Beer* magazine editor Julie regarding their admittance of children to their "World of Beer" festival in North Carolina. This particular member wrote to the forum lamenting her response

which said: "...regarding our policy of allowing children at the festival. I sense that you, like me, have been at events that have been spoiled by the presence of kids: dinner at a fancy restaurant, a film or a concert. In those cases, I grit my teeth and wish the parents had left the kids at home. I don't agree with you, however, when it comes to an informal event like an outdoor beer festival, and I'd urge you to visit one of our festivals and see. Sure, there are kids there, but I've never found them an irritation. And I'm a big believer in parents demonstrating to their children that beer is a normal, sociable thing that adults enjoy, not something that has to be hidden away. I guess I take my example from European venues, where the whole family might gather at a beer garden... usually in the afternoon... to enjoy a social occasion that happens to include beer for adults."

The poster asked the forum participants to respond, which I did:

Speaking as a father and as a homebrewer I find Editor Julie's response very refreshing. Beer, and especially beer festivals I believe, should be more about the community coming together and enjoying the locally produced products and less about a drunkfest. I don't know about anyone else's community, but I like for mine to have families in it. I have in the past decided specifically not to attend a festival that did not allow children (and did so in a rather snobby way I might add). I can certainly understand the legal issues associated with having young people attend a beer festival, with a little extra effort on the organizers' part (or perhaps more common sense) I think it is an issue that can be dealt with in way that can make everyone feel welcome, even those of us who like to include our children.

While I certainly can understand adults wanting to do adult things without the fear of offending little ears or eyes, I feel very strongly that a large community-based beer festival is not such a place. In my opinion people who overindulge to the point of acting stupid at a beer festival should be the ones not allowed to attend, not the families with children. Beer is supposed to be inclusive, not exclusive. Children need to learn about responsible enjoyment of an adult beverage, quality over quantity, and locally produced products. Beer festivals seem to be a great place for valuable lessons for the next generation. Just my two cents.

What's your take? What do you think?

ruddellmj@comast.net

Mark Your Calendars

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|------------|----------------------------------|
| Jan. 10 | NFBL Meeting |
| Jan. 24 | Executive Board Meeting |
| Jan. 25 | Best FL Beer Comp entry deadline |
| Jan. 26-27 | Hogtown Medieval Faire Weekend 1 |
| Feb. 2-3 | Hogtown Medieval Faire Weekend 2 |
| Feb. 14 | NFBL Meeting |
| Feb. 28 | Exec. Board Meeting |

Treasurer's Report

Randy Desilet

Balance: The Club's account balance as of 12/30/07 is \$1803.51. The Club has 55 active members.

Membership renewals due January 2008:
Denise & Charles Howard
Corrigan Loduha & Johann Pautz
Dan MacDonald
Jerry Swerczek
Jimmy Nelson & Robbie Nelson
Mike Hankin

Membership renewals due February 2008:
Carol & Buddy Brown
Sarah Bridegroom & John Larsen
Chris & Joe Pignatiello

Michael Johnson
Alyssa Wiedenmayer & Jason Dickey
Allen Turnage

Membership renewals past due:
Orin Walker
Amy & Vince George
Theo Francis
Melissa Horwitz & Marc Dixon
Courtney & Rob Shoen
Emily Boyd & Stuart Davis

Annual membership is \$20 for individuals and \$30 for couples. Please see me at the next meeting with your dues or mail checks to NFBL, PO Box 3325, Tallahassee, FL

32315-3325. Attention Randy Desilet.

Membership Cards: Remember that it is important to keep current with your club dues. The NFBL card is used to identify members as being up-to-date with their dues and eligible for discounts at The HomeBrew Den. Only membership cards of active NFBL members will be honored.

NFBL Stuff For Sale
We have Club t-shirts (\$15), Henley shirts (\$20) and bumper stickers (\$1), available at our monthly meeting. See Randy at the meeting for the selection.

December 13 NFBL Minutes

Corrigan Loduha

December is the time for our annual best and worst competition, and many members brought brews to contribute. And this year, December was also the month for bulking up our raffle to fund some very special educational sessions. January will be another chance for members to donate beers and gifts for the raffle benefiting these same sessions. Everyone brought some very nice things which were raffled off in five individual draws:

Raffle #1- Winner: Allen Turnage
Full Sail Ale- Randy Desilet
Nectar Ales Red Nectar- Sean Patronis
Bell's Special Double Cream Stout- Chris Sella
Leinenkugel's Berrywiess- Randy Desilet

Raffle #2- Winner: Chris Sella
Grand Homebrew Basket- Homebrew Den

Raffle #3- Winner: Michael Johnson
Sierra Nevada Celebration Ale x 2- Chris Sella
Lagunita's Cappuccino Stout- Chris Sella
Red Hook Winter Hook- Johann and Corrigan
Oktoberfest Steins- Martin Brungard

Raffle #4- Winner: Jen Hall
8 Pilsner Glasses

Raffle #5- Winner: Lee Marchman
Popcorn Gift Basket- Joe Pignatiello

Contenders for the Worst Beers of 2007:
Joe Pignatiello- Bad Amber
Chris Sella- Red Ale

Worst Whit- Thomas
Winner: Chris Sella

Contenders for the Best Beers of 2007:
Buddy Brown- ESB
Thomas Crawford- Robust Porter
Martin Brungard- Dusseldorf Alt
Jennifer & Wade Feltman- Belgian Double
Thomas Crawford and Johann Pautz- Saison
Jen and Brian Hall- Hard Cider
Winner: Thomas Crawford

Each contender won a \$25.00 gift certificate to our beloved Den.

December 20 EC Meeting Minutes

Corrigan Loduha

All agreed that despite a bump or two along the way (non-matching keg and tap connections), the winter party at Randy's house was a success, and if it had been twenty or thirty degrees cooler, that rain would have been snow and Robbie stopped off at Market square on the way over, and the reindeer in Randy's yard have heads that move back and forth, so who could ask for anything more? All enjoyed a festive atmosphere, great food and good companionship. And plenty of great beer.

Randy provided his treasurer's report, and funding was discussed for educational sessions for the upcoming year. There are some very cool ideas being thrown around, we all have some fun stuff to look forward to. The group talked about ways to make our meetings start more or less on time, at least by our standards. Also discussed were possible initiatives for tallying raffle items on a sign-up sheet with the intention of making our raffle lists as accurate as possible, properly recognizing in our newsletters the members who donate to each raffle,

and ALSO enabling us to begin our meetings more efficiently.



Introducing & Tasting New Hop Varieties

Sarah Bridegroom

On the heels of recent meeting discussions about the current hop situation, the timing seemed natural to introduce and discuss some hop varieties that may be little known to homebrewers. Some of these varieties are considered new agriculturally, others are considered new in terms of their practical application.

That doesn't mean that you can't brew your favorite styles. Many hop varieties have suitable substitutes as many hops are genetically similar. Some hops are more challenging to match than others, depending on the regions of the world in which they are grown, their storability, and their practical characteristics. But for the most part, lots of options exist and finding yummy combinations not only will keep you brewing strong, but also will increase your knowledge of hops and their uses.

As we discussed in December, many craft breweries will be faced with the question of whether to alter their recipes to accommodate the current marketplace, and homebrewers might be making the same decisions. Although in general terms, we in Tallahassee are in good shape regarding hop supply, there will occasionally be times when a particular hop variety is out of stock, or a variety is on a ration plan to accommodate as many brewers as possible.

At the January NFBL meeting, we will be sampling a few new hop varieties. We will taste them and talk about them. I'll provide some background on the hops themselves and offer a few tips of how to incorporate them into your brewing. Join us.

2008 NFBL Tasting Schedule at Beef 'O' Brady's

Sarah Bridegroom

Please take a look at the accompanying article, *Coming Up in 2008*, for more detailed information about the tasting schedule. We're hopeful that you can bring some homebrew to the meetings from time to time. We all sincerely appreciate the generosity of our members, and it's the homebrew that makes the NFBL world go 'round. Please remember that if you bring beer to the meetings to use the back door off of the parking lot. Also, please remember that if you are bringing homebrew to the meeting, it should be for the beer tasting and not for individual consumption (Beef O Brady's will frown on the latter). We'll do our best to keep the number of beers to a reasonable level (should we be so lucky as to have lots o' homebrew).

The Executive Committee recently discussed the need for the committee to be diligent about starting the meetings on time. The official meeting start time of club business is 7:30 with applicable presentations and tasting to follow. In 2008, a more concerted effort will be made to honoring that start time.

- January Presentation - Introducing and tasting new hop varieties
- January featured beer style - Open call: Bring whatever you would like to share. (Commercial beer samples will be provided.)
- February featured beer style - Brown Ales: Milds, English Browns, American Browns and Scottish Ales
- March featured beer style - Pale Ale and Amber: English Pale Ale, Bitters, American Pale Ales, American Amber
- April Presentation - TBD.
- April Featured beer style - Open call: bring whatever you would like to share. Commercial beer example will be provided.
- May featured beer style: India Pale Ales (IPA): English IPA and American IPA
- June featured beer style: American Light Ale, Blond and Cream Ale, Wheat
- July Presentation - Yeast and Fermentation temperature
- July featured beer style - Lagers and Hybrids (Kolsch, Alt, Steam)
- August featured beer style - Fruit, Vegetable, and Herb/Spice beers
- September featured beer style - Porter and Stout
- October Presentation - Making Cider
- October featured style - Mead, Cider and Braggot
- November featured beer style - Belgians
- December featured beer style - Best and Worst of the year



The NFBL Ultimate Grand Raffle Challenge—Part Deux

Sarah Bridegroom

Thank you all for such a terrific raffle in December. We had many contributions and we made significant headway in generating some seed money for the Spring beer and food pairing event. With such great momentum, we move to the second half of this raffle plan. All of the proceeds from the January raffle will go into the food and beer pairing event coffers.

To quickly recap our purpose... as part of the NFBL educational objectives for 2008, Matt and I have been discussing a food and beer pairing event for NFBL members. The event will highlight some of the methods used to successfully pair food with beer and we will feature some techniques of how to maximize the enjoyment of food and beer. In order to keep the costs for attending the event as low as possible, we are building a budget by way of the raffle for two months only.

HomeBrew Den will again offer a beer bucket full of goodies – brewing supplies, gifts, and beer. To use my words from last month...if you have an item that you would like to donate to the raffle, please bring it to the January NFBL meeting to liven the loot. And of course, bring an extra dollar to enter the raffle – not only to increase your chances of scoring the swag, but also to help get us going on the path of a solid food and beer tasting event for next year.

Mission Statement: The North Florida Brewers League is committed to sharing, promoting, and teaching the hobby of homebrewing to both beginners and experienced brewers through community involvement, regular meetings, and the Big Bend

North Florida Brewers League

NFBL
PO Box 3325
Tallahassee, FL 32315



This month's style:
Introducing & Tasting New Hop Varieties

Newsletter submissions should be sent by the Friday following the full membership meeting to mdjohnson472@earthlink.net

Long Term Calendar

January 10—NFBL meeting

January 25—Pending entry deadline for Best Florida Beer Competition in Tampa

January 26-27—Hogtown Medieval Faire weekend one in Gainesville

February 2-3—Hogtown Medieval Faire weekend two in Gainesville

February 2—9th Annual Domras Cup Mead Competition, Savannah, GA

February 5—Last Day for beer to leave for AHA Club-Only: dark lagers

February 9—Beerfest, Mirboo North, Victoria, AU

February 14—NFBL meeting

February 16—AHA Club-Only Competition: Dark Lagers, Fargo, ND

February 28—The Coconut Cup, Miami, FL

March 7—Kona Brewer's Festival Homebrew Competition, Kailua, Kona, HI

May 10—AHA Club-Only Competition: Extract Beers, Naperville, IL

August 2—AHA Club-Only Competition: Mead, Minneapolis, MN



Be there or be square.

We have a few things on the educational horizon for 2008. Each year, our goal is to not only promote homebrewing education to the community, but also to provide educational opportunity to our members. Our hope is that we all continue to brew good beer and to have some fun while doing it. The educational plan for this year includes the educational information in the newsletter, standard tastings at meetings, periodic presentations at the general membership meetings, occasional educational seminars in addition to the regular meetings, club brews, and community brews. Here's the rundown.

Educational Information in the Monthly Newsletter

Typically, the *Saccharomyces Journal* features a beer style article or some other beer or brewing information article on a monthly basis. We'll continue to include some educational info in the monthly newsletter. It may take the form of a beer style article, industry news, brewing techniques, or brewing stories. We'll do our best to keep it useful and fun. Feel free to send me suggestions or items for inclusion.

Tastings at Regular Monthly Meetings

You'll see a few differences in this year's NFBL meeting/tasting schedule from last year's model. We've rearranged a few things, and offered some new tasting opportunities. For most months, we will feature a traditional beer style (both commercial beer and homebrew when available) for our meeting tasting, just as we have done for some time. A couple of months will offer an open call for beer. On those months, we encourage brewers to bring whatever beer they would like to share.

Periodic Presentations at NFBL meetings

In a few cases, but not all, the open call style of beer tasting is scheduled on a month that features a brief beer education presentation at the monthly meeting. Although we intend to provide more in-depth education seminars during the year, we understand that sometimes it's tough to get out to another gathering during the month. To accommodate the full membership, we will provide an educational discussion at the membership meeting once a quarter. Currently, those presentations are scheduled at the beginning of each quarter: January, April, July, and October. For some months, but not all, the presentation materials will be tied to the featured style of the month. Information about the presentations will be published in the newsletter.

Educational Seminars

While providing presentations at the full meeting can accommodate many people, it is challenging to adequately cover some educational topics in 15-20 minutes. So, in addition to the quarterly meeting presentations, we will offer some brewing and beer education seminars. These seminars will be scheduled periodically throughout the year. Typically, these sessions take place at a club member's house or another outside location. We have a couple of topics in the hopper, but please let me know if you have something in mind that you would like to learn more about. I'd love to hear it.

You may recall from previous newsletters and meetings that Matt and Amanda Ruddell will be coordinating a food and beer pairing event for the Spring. Be sure to check out the raffle article in the newsletter that describes our plans for raising some seed money for this tasty event.

Club Brews

It's little secret that I have a soft spot for club brews. It's one of the best ways to get lots of hands-on education, see many different brew techniques, and to learn more about our fellow brewers. The EC is hopeful that we'll have some members volunteer to brew this year on behalf of the club. We brew not only for our NFBL party consumption, but also to set the stage for some of our newer members who might be looking for some tutelage.

Community Brews

I'm working a few leads right now with restaurants, cafes, and other establishments in town at which we can provide basic brewing demonstrations. The goal is for the NFBL to provide some community-based brewing education. There's a fair amount happening in the community that encourages craft brewing and we can participate in a unique way by brewing on site (on a small scale of course – nothing too crazy). If you know of a place (perhaps one that you visit) that might be interested in a brew demo, let me know.

Lending a Hand

I'm hopeful that we will have many opportunities throughout the year for member participation. With club and community brews, parties, educational presentations, newsletter writing, and monthly tastings, there's a lot going on. Please give some consideration to participating however you can – by bringing homebrew to the meeting, leading a brew on a brew day, hosting an NFBL gathering, writing for the newsletter, and lending a hand at the monthly meeting. Many of you know, in addition to administering educational plans for the club, the VP handles the tasting activity at the meetings: table set-up, pouring beers, feedback sheets and clean up. Also, the EC members collectively handle the raffle. Please consider lending a hand to these activities now and then. It certainly makes the meetings run more smoothly, and helps us all enjoy ourselves.

Call or e-mail me with questions, suggestions, volunteerism and the like - 219.1310 or sarah@homebrewden.com. I'll be using the e-mail addresses from the NFBL membership list to send updates and additional information throughout the year. Please check to see that your e-mail address is current by visiting your member data on the NFBL web site (nfbl.org). If you cannot access your info and need a username or password, please e-mail Sean spatronis@gmail.com or Charles frodare@gmail.com.

The Hop Shortage

Sarah Bridegroom

~some of this information was presented at the December NFBL mtg

Most people have heard (in some form or another) that there is currently a worldwide hop shortage. I emphasize the word "worldwide" as it truly is a global situation. Although the hop shortage may appear to have come out of nowhere, more accurately, it is a long time coming. Now, it's here. Some beer authors have written about this situation in apocalyptic terms. Others have written with a more cautious, but serious tone. In truth, many smart business analysts will work for some time to really get their arms around the true state of the hop crop in upcoming months. Meanwhile, I'll do my best to share information and some insight.

Worldwide, the acreage available for hop growing increased less than 5% - a significantly lower rate than the increase in hop demand. So as we might predict, when demand is up and supply is down, shortages occur. In worst case, it leads to absolute non-availability; in better cases, it leads to controlled availability with higher prices.

Hops are a worldwide agricultural product. They are used all over the world - bought, sold and traded all over the world. However, they are not grown all over the world, and recently, they have not been growing in abundance. Further, the amount of acreage dedicated to any single variety can be quite small - putting a lot of pressure on a healthy crop for that particular region or farm. In recent history, the primary players in hop production have been Germany, Czech Republic, Slovenia, UK, China and of course, the US. Very recently, the UK has all but gotten out of the biz, and several of the other hop countries have not been able to produce good crop yields. In short, there are simply not enough hops being grown in the world to meet the demand.

Poor prices to the hop growers have lead many farmers to either switch their crops over to more financially viable crops or have lead to many farmers simply selling off land altogether. Further, more and more farm subsidies and financial incentives are being offered for other crops. Poor weather in Europe this year lead to dismal harvests for the region. That puts intense pressure on the crops elsewhere in the world to make up for the hop deficit.

For a short while, there were enough surplus hops in the marketplace to cover the shortage, even while land availability was hitting its critical point. Eventually, that safety net ran out. Meanwhile, large breweries unequivocally drive the world market. While the shortage looms, large breweries can pay top dollar for all available hops in the world. When that happens, incredible pressure is placed on all hop growers and suppliers to sell to those companies, leaving smaller breweries, and of course homebrewers to simply wait and see what is left.

A few economical obstacles lay ahead that still need to be overcome before we see smooth sailing in the hop future. The infrastructure needed to start new hop farms is not inexpensive or something that happens rapidly. Farmers will need to see the incentive and the benefit to return to hop farming or to enter into the hop growing industry. Each farmer will weigh the value of his land for perhaps more profitable crops. The US dollar is extremely weak in the worldwide marketplace. That affects the ability to trade, to profitably grow and sell to several brewing markets. Large breweries and their buying practices will always have intense power in the hop market. Many economic groups, government organizations, and of course brewing trade associations will be negotiating for some time to come.

It's fair to assume that in the future, we will read and hear more about the hop situation as it unfolds. The shortage will probably get a little bit worse before it gets better. On a homebrewing level, we can expect to see a shift away from low yield hops. You'll probably notice a shift in the commercial beer market in that the brewing of over-the-top IPAs might drop. We'll see some changes in hop selections for recipes - both commercial and homebrew. And as we have already seen, some increases in hop prices. It might mean that your 5-gallon batch is \$29 rather than \$25. But, with good luck and some smart brewing practices, it won't mean that we all have to put our brewing on hold. If you can't find a particular hop variety, it could be that the hop variety simply had low yield, might have had some susceptibility to disease, or was an early casualty of the agricultural landscape. It might be that it was simply bought up quickly in the race of major breweries to ensure their own supply.

During this time, I encourage us all to do what we can to support your favorite craft brewers, your local establishments (including your local homebrew shop of course) and the supply chain. For some commercial breweries, this situation will be catastrophic. If they have not been participating in an organized supply network, they may be left out in the cold. If your favorite brew costs a little bit more, don't be surprised and please do your best to purchase it when you can.

