



The Midnight Brewer

Official publication of the Midnight Homebrewers' League

Carroll County, Maryland

Year 2005
Issue No. 1

Beer Festival closing in on Carroll

By Neil Mezebish

Many of our members are probably aware that the Maryland legislature is considering a bill to establish a beer festival at Union Mills Homestead.

"I think it would be wonderful," said Gregg Norris, owner of Clay Pipe Brewing Co. in Westminster. "I think we should have three or four." Such a festival's greatest success would be teaching people about craft breweries, and the many different styles of beer.

The House of Delegates approved the bill, HB 863, on March 17, 2005, after which it moved to the Senate. The Education Health and Environmental Affairs committee gave it a favorable recommendation, and on **April 5, 2005 it passed the "second reading", which means it is one step away from becoming law which appears at this stage all but assured.**

The one or two day event would focus on Maryland microbreweries and include food vendors and live music. While a beer festival probably wouldn't be as large as the Maryland Wine Festival, it would get support from home-brewers in Carroll and surrounding counties, as well as the state's microbreweries.

As Midnight Homebrewers' League President, Neil Mezebish, recently told the Carroll County Times, the event could easily avoid attracting a rowdy crowd by focusing on small samples. For the people most likely to attend such a festival, those who have a great interest in specialty beers, the attraction is the quality of the product, rather than the quantity.

This festival would not be allowed to take place on the same weekend as the Maryland Wine Festival, the Cumberland and Shenandoah Valley Wine Festival or the Anne Arundel Beer and Wine Festival.

Snow Day Equals Brew Day!

By Larry Hitchcock

The weekend of January 22, 2005 brought the first threat of the great white death. If you'll recall, the predictions had been for up to 15 inches of snow, which gave everyone something to talk about. Personally, I have no need for snow, and if I never saw any again, I would not miss it; however, many people like it and the ski industry and snow-plow drivers depend on it, so I tolerate it for the sake of others.

Even though the snow ended mid-afternoon Saturday, the unrelenting wind and bitter cold temps kept us in for the day. I had purchased ingredients to do an all-grain Irish ale, but logistically, could not brew on my deck in the snow and wind. But once you have the thought to brew, it must be done.

So I searched my inventory. When I buy ingredients, I often buy some extra stock: hops in various varieties, maybe some yeasts, and a few specialty grains, but usually only the base malts for what I plan to brew next. Since building my Brewladder last year, all-grain batches have become more convenient, so I haven't stocked any extracts. The pickings were slim.

I did have a one-pound bag of light DME, but in the back of one shelf, I found a four-pound can of liquid wheat malt extract. I was talked into buying it a year ago by a well meaning homebrew supply guy, but I really didn't want it. It was pre-hopped and old, but he gave me a deal, so reluctantly, I bought it even though I never thought I'd use it.

Well, my eyes grew wide with excitement, thinking I could do a batch on the stove. I had hops, I had yeast, and the pipes hadn't frozen. So with the can of malt, I had all I needed. I plugged everything into my SUDS program for a three gallon batch. To bring the gravity

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Club Hoppenings

Chili Competition

By Larry Hitchcock

Saturday, January 29th, found more than 25 members and friends of the Club gathered in Gary and Lydia Cress' garage for their annual Chili Cook-off. The event has become a staple in the calendar of the Club, with just as much creative energy spent to showcase innovative chili recipes as shown to homebrew recipes.

In all, eleven chilies were entered, and as the Beano was passed around, the call to find a seat was made around 7:45. Throughout the evening, Karen Lambrecht and Lydia served tasting-sized portions of each chili. Almost 300 bowls of chili were served that night...good thing the bowls were disposable.

The chilis showed some real ingenuity. Various meats, beans of all colors, vegetables and spices were evident — from the traditional to the extreme. Entries included an array of cuts and grinds of beef, meatballs, pork and even Italian sausage and shrimp!

Third place went to Richard Eisberg, and second place to Robin Marcus, friend of Glenn and Nancy Codner. First place went to Larry and Lin Hitchcock, with a spicy recipe including barbequed brisket and sweet corn. Each winner received a commemorative ribbon.

Thanks to everyone who entered a chili and to everyone who lent their taste buds as judges.

Mardi Gras Tasting

February 5 was this year's date for Michelle and Steve's annual Mardi Gras-themed tasting. We had many excellent home- and micro-brews to accompany the menu which included Muffuletta sandwiches imported from the Central Grocery in New Orleans. There are two great things about hosting a well-attended tasting such as this: 1) all I have to do is crawl upstairs to bed when it's over rather than drive home; and 2) there were many great beers left in my 'fridge after everyone left. Thanks to one and all!

Beekeepers Association Meeting

On Wednesday, February 16 Greg & Karen Lambrecht and Steve Kranz attended the monthly meeting of the Carroll County Beekeepers Association at President Mark Glannon's invitation, to discuss using honey to make beer and mead. Our presentation included several handouts, a brief history of our relatively new friendship with the beekeepers group, and a general discussion of meadmaking procedures and practices. We also discussed the Midnight Special Pale Ale project and our use of Carroll County honey in this commercial beer. The audience of about 25 people was extremely

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Benefits of Membership

Members of the Midnight Homebrewers' League get these benefits in addition to this newsletter:

- Priority registration for tastings and other events
- Nifty color membership card, good for discounts at local homebrew supply shops
- Purchase club-logo T-Shirts
- Membership Directory - get help from other members
- Library of "Classic Beer Style Series" brewing books to borrow
- Buy, sell, trade anything "beer" in free member ads

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Brewer's Tips

This new feature will bring to you some short, simple and easy-to-remember tips to help you get through your brewing, bottling, or other brewing-event day.

Please send your Brewer's Tips via email to smkranz@adelphia.net, with the subject line Brewer's Tips.

Have sanitizer at the ready

Keep a spray bottle, the type used for houseplants, filled with sanitizing solution. Use it for sanitizing various equipment at all stages of the brewing process. Fermenting buckets and lids, racking tools, wine thieves, bottle caps - anything that doesn't need to be completely submerged. A misting is sufficient for many purposes. This will save water, sanitizing agents and a lot of time and money. [But label the bottle so that someone else doesn't mistake it for water.]

Reduce or eliminate boil-overs

Boil-overs occur when proteins

in the wort coagulate as the wort comes to a boil. The steam that is released by the heating wort gets trapped in a dense foam of tiny sticky bubbles instead of being allowed to escape. There are several ways to help reduce or prevent this wort bubble from boiling over:

1. Skim off as much of the thick foam that forms on top of the wort as you can, as it nears the boiling point;
2. Throw a few hops into the wort before it comes to a boil.

Better Beer Buckets

After you clean your fermenting bucket, refill it to the brim with a dilute solution of bleach and water (one teaspoon of bleach per gallon). Let it "pickle" until your next brew day. Rinse with boiling water. The poor reputation of plastic fermenters probably comes more from the way they are stored between brewing sessions than anything having to do with the plastic.

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Treasurer's Report

(as of 1/31/05)

By Larry Hitchcock

As expected, there's been a lot of activity in our Treasury. Besides our usual expenses, the banner, Beernecks and honey for the Clay Pipe project have consumed more funds than in previous years; however, all for the enrichment of the Club.

Previous Balance \$ 906.53

Cash Received	
50/50 raffle	88.00
Holiday party	270.00
Memberships	533.00
Total income	891.00

Cash Disbursed	
Club banner	140.25
Printing	82.67
Meeting expense	40.00
Beernecks	409.40
Contest prize	25.00
Holiday party	270.00
Guild dues	20.00
Honey Clay Pipe	
Project(1/31/05)	275.00
Total spent (1,262.32)	

New Balance \$535.21

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Larry



Make your plans to attend the National Homebrew Conference, June 16—18, 2005

The Midnight Homebrewers' League will be a participating club at the 2005 National Homebrew Conference in Baltimore. Make your plans now to attend the conference and join other club members in making this a memorable event.

Several club members have booked rooms at one of the two conference hotels, to avoid the risks associated with driving home in an impaired condition. If you have any hopes of getting a room, we urge you to contact the hotels immediately through www.beertown.org. If you change your mind or aren't sure, you can always cancel, but if you wait, you will be out of luck

For the complete schedule of conference events, please visit the AHA (www.beertown.org). Also, if you do plan to attend, you should also consider joining the AHA. The registration discounts you'll receive as a member can almost pay for your membership, and you'll receive Zymurgy magazine for a year!

National Homebrew Conference judging

However, there are some unique opportunities to participate not only in Club Night and other conference events, but to volunteer as a Steward in the 2005 National Homebrew Competition. As you have already read in earlier emails, the final round of the competition is judged during this conference, on Thursday and Friday. The organizers are seeking volunteer

judges and stewards. While I am unaware of any Beer Judges in our club, we certainly have many qualified stewards. Stewards are needed to bring beers from the cellar to the judges tables, keep the judges tables supplied, clear empty bottles, and generally help the judges do their jobs. I am looking forward to seeing how a real beer competition is judged and run. To volunteer, go to www.brewingcompetition.com and fill out the online form. It costs nothing to be a volunteer steward, and there are three separate sessions for which you can volunteer: Thursday morning, Thursday afternoon, and Friday morning.

Club Night

"Club Night" is Friday, June 17, from 7—10 PM. Clubs from around the United States and the world gather in one room to meet each other to show off and serve their beers. Each club sets up a booth (really, a table), and many clubs create themed displays and beer delivery systems, complete with costumes. We are working on various options to play on the "midnight" theme. We will also be bringing a number of food items to serve.

You will receive additional emails describing our club's plans, and our need for volunteers to help with this effort, in the near future. All individuals attending Club Night will need to register and pay for the event. Please go to www.beertown.org for info.

Patrick McCarthy's accident

Brenda McCarthy is home making dinner for her husband Patrick when Tim Finnegan knocks at her door.

"May I come in, Brenda darlin'?" says Tim sadly, "I've somethin to tell ya."

"Of course, Tim, come in, but where's Patrick?" she asks.

"That's what I'm here to be telling' ya, Brenda," says Tim. "There was an accident down at the Brewery."

"Oh, God NO!" cries Brenda. "Please don't tell me....."

"I'm so sorry, darlin'" says Tim, his voice breaking, "Your dear husband Patrick is dead."

Brenda buries her face in her hands and asks tearfully "How did it happen, Tim?"

"It was a terrible thing to see, Brenda. He fell into a vat of Guinness Stout and drowned."

"Oh my dear Jesus! But tell me true, Tim, did he at least die quickly?"

Tim hesitated. "Well, no, darlin, not really, no."

"NO?"

"No, in fact he got out three times to pee."

What's up with the Germans?

To U.S. homebrewers and real beer drinkers, the Germans used to be a reliable lot. Deutschland was the place where real beer was brewed not just because they could, but as a matter of law (the "beer purity law" or Reinheitsgebot). And from the more aesthetic standpoint of beer consumption, it was where real beer was drunk at Munich's annual Oktoberfest the right way, from a large, heavy glass, served by sprightly young damsels.

Ach!...the Germans are breaking my heart.

First, it's the Reinheitsgebot. Not that it really, really matters to me, but when I first started brewing, this historic artifact of German law was like a shining beacon of Truth, in a troubling world of "lite", "low" and "near" beers.

But the Klosterbrauerei Neuzelle has won a court battle against Reinheitsgebot, the country's 1516 law that limits beer ingredients to malted grain, hops, yeast and water. The Federal Administrative Court has ruled that the Klosterbrauerei Neuzelle brewery can continue to add sugar syrup to its beer and call the product a beer.

Helmut Fritsche has been fighting 10 years for the right to dose his Schwarzer Abt with sugar. A local court ruled in favor of authorities who tried to fine him, but the Federal Administrative Court overturned that decision, ruling that because the sugar is added after the

beer was fully brewed, Fritsche can market the product as a "special beer" - as do breweries that add herbs to their products at the end of the brewing process.

Meanwhile, one beer garden at Munich's Oktoberfest will serve beer in plastic cups in September, and the city's breweries are outraged. Wiggerl Hagn, who runs the Lowenbrau tent, said that he is tired of cleaning up broken glass and waitresses' complaints about hauling mugs that hold 1.5 liters of beer and weight a kilo (2.2 pounds) empty. "We cleaned up almost 26 tons of broken glass on the floor of my tent," Hagn told a Munich newspaper. "The waitresses won't have to carry such heavy loads anymore."

Calling it an "absurd idea", Toni Roiderer, a spokesman for the city's breweries, said Hagn had been warned he would have to go it alone. "Here in Bavaria, beer is a cultural treasure. When we sit together and chink glasses, the sound is like our church bells, a symbol of harmony and good cheer," said Roiderer.

Man pees his way out of avalanche

A Slovak man trapped in his car under an avalanche freed himself by drinking 60 bottles of beer and urinating on the snow to melt it. Rescuers found Richard Kral drunk and staggering along a mountain path four days after his Audi was buried in the Tatra

mountains.

He told them that after the avalanche, he opened a window to try to dig his way out. But as he dug, he realized the snow would fill his car before he managed to break through. He had 60 half-litre bottles of beer in his car as he was going on holiday, and after cracking one open to think about the problem he realized he could urinate on the snow to melt it, local media reported.

He said: "I was scooping the snow from above me and packing it down below the window, and then I peed on it to melt it. It was hard and now my kidneys and liver hurt. But I'm glad the beer I took on holiday turned out to be useful and I managed to get out of there."

This story prompted the following exchange on one internet forum:

"Of course, it might have worked just as well if he had poured the beer on the snow, but why take any chances?"

"But if it didn't work, at least you would be feeling no pain."

"That's awesome! I wish I could get trapped like that"

"I'm no thermodynamics whiz, but I'd say warm pee melts snow better than cold beer. Plus, there's the whole moral dilemma about pouring out perfectly good beer."

"Hu—hu. You said "whiz."

The Malolactic Thing

By Larry Hitchcock

Most commercial wineries finish their better wines with a secondary fermentation using a culture of *malolactic bacteria*. This process gives the buttery roundness to dry whites and the velvety mouth feel to dry reds.

Simply put (because I'm not a chemist), malolactic bacteria converts the malic acid in the wine to lactic acid. This reduces the acidity in the wine, and the result is the desired finish. You really don't need to understand it fully to make it work...it knows what to do.

Before I used this culture for the first time, I went to the White Labs website for guidance. They recommend against using the bacteria in kit wines due to their use of potassium sorbate in the stabilizers, which inhibits the conversion of the acids. It is best used with wines made from 100% grape juice which naturally ferments to completion.

Since *most* home winemakers don't have a vineyard outside our back door, many of us do make wines from kits. But our experience is that if the malolactic culture is allowed to ferment for two to four months after stabilizing and before bottling, and the bottled wine is left to condition for 6—12 months, your kit wine will be much better.

You can purchase the malolactic culture at the homebrew shop and add it to your kit wine after the clarifying process. It works. It's easy. Try it.

To mead or not to mead

By Larry Hitchcock

My experience with making mead has been going on for many years. I've used the Antipodal Mead recipe in the original "The New Complete Joy of Homebrewing" almost exclusively. The recipe is easy, calls for 15 pounds of honey (I prefer light honey to wildflower or dark varieties), along with some additives like yeast nutrient and Irish moss, and a 15 minute boil. The yeast I've found that works best is Cote de Blanc. This wine yeast is a slow fermenter, but will leave more of a residual sweetness in the final product.

I prefer still meads to sparkling, and plain over those with added flavors. Given the usual four-month fermentation and conditioning, stabilizing is usually not necessary...but it doesn't hurt. Just be sure it's very clear before you bottle, because it won't clarify in the bottle. Be patient. If you want to guarantee a sparkling mead, add some honey at bottling time. Since this mead comes in at about 12% or higher, I bottle in 12oz. bottles for portion control.

Some of our members have the strength to save meads to sample after many years. I am not so strong. I love to make a batch at our annual Brew-ha-ha to savor in late Winter into early Summer. That way, when it's gone, I'm ready to brew another batch by July.

Once you make a batch, you'll know how easy it is to do!

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Check your thermometers

If you use a dial-type thermometer with a stem (as opposed to a glass job with a colored liquid indicator), be sure it is giving you accurate readings, and recalibrate it if necessary. Check it by first immersing it in a glass filled with ice, and a couple of inches of very cold water. The glass should be just tall enough so that the probe will reach all the way to the bottom, but hold it so that it's not touching the bottom. It should read at or very near 32°. Then hold the same thermometer in a pan of boiling water, making sure the probe doesn't touch the bottom or sides of the pan. It should read 212°. If the reading at either temperature extreme is off, make tiny adjustments either up or down by turning the nut on the back of the thermometer with a pair of pliers. Take the same readings again, and make additional adjustments as necessary.

Pre-boil your top-off water

If you brew using a concentrated wort boil, you can maximize your beer's chances of excellence by pre-boiling the extra 2-3 gallons of water you'll need to top off your fermenter to 5 gallons. Boil the 2-3 gallons in a separate pot the night before or that morning, and put the pot (with lid) in the 'fridge until you need it. Or, pour the water into clean and sanitized water jugs or coolers.

Recipes: It's Spring...brew your Lawnmower Beers now!

With Spring already here, we present three recipes to choose from. One is all-extract, one is extract with grains, and the third is all-grain. Whichever you choose, brew it now so it will be available to quench your thirst after slaving over your lawn when it's warmer outside. At my house, I need it after fighting with my kids to get them to do the mowing. Whatever your particular battle, go for something light and easy to drink.

All Extract

American Wheat

Ingredients for 5 gallons:

- 1 packet Nottingham yeast
- 3.75 lb. can Coopers hopped Wheat malt extract syrup
- 1lb. Wheat Dry malt extract
- Corn sugar for priming

Procedure:

by Steve Gorsuch

It's an America's Best American Wheat recipe (from Maryland Homebrew).

Basically, you boil one gallon of water, remove from heat and stir in malt extracts.

Then fill a sanitized fermenter with 4 gallons of tap (or bottled) water. Stir in the malt mixture from your kettle. Let the wort cool until it is below 80 degrees, and sprinkle the yeast on top. Let it sit for five minutes, then stir vigorously for three minutes using a sanitized spoon (create foam when stirring). Seal fermenter tightly, install airlock, etc.

After 5 days transfer to secondary fermenter. Bottle on day 10 to 14.

[Steve served this beer at the Mardi Gras tasting in February. I not only enjoyed it very much then, but during the week following the tasting, as a few extra bottles were left behind in my fridge. It is a refreshing, clean-tasting beer which I think I will brew myself to have on hand for the summer — Ed.]

Extract With Grains

Honey Weizen

Ingredients for 5 gallons:

- 1 lb. pale malt
- 8 oz. 20L crystal malt
- 1 lb. honey malt
- 8 oz. toasted pale malt
- 1 lb. wheat malt
- 1.5 lb. dry wheat malt extract
- 1 lb. clover honey
- 1 oz. Mt. Hood hops (60 min.)
- .5 oz. Mt. Hood hops (30 min.)
- American ale yeast (Wyeast 1056, etc.) or
- German wheat yeast (Wyeast 3333)

Steep grains in 1 gallon of water at 152° for 90 minutes. Slowly sparge (rinse) grains with 2 gallons of 168° water.

Bring wort to a boil and add first hops. After thirty minutes, remove briefly from heat to add the honey and mix it thoroughly. Return to boil and add the second hops for an additional 30 minutes.

Remove from heat, chill to below 80° and add to fermenter. Top off your fermenter with cooled (to room temperature), pre-boiled water to a total volume of 5.25 gallons. Check that the wort temperature is somewhere around 68-74° and pitch yeast.

Ferment at 68° for two weeks, then rack to secondary and condition for 3 to 4 weeks at 50—55° if you can.

Prime with 7/8 cup corn sugar and bottle.

All Grain

Sam Adams Summer Ale

Ingredients for 5 gallons:

- 4 lbs. malted wheat
- 5 lbs. Pilsner malt
- 8 oz. Carapils malt
- 1 lb. flaked wheat
- 1 oz. Hallertau hops (45 min.)
- .5 oz. slightly crushed Grains of Paradise (*See below.*)
- 1 oz. shredded lemon zest
- .5 oz. Hallertau hops (5 min. steep)
- Belgian white beer yeast (Wyeast 3944 or equivalent)

Mash malts in 3.5 gals. water at 152° for 60 minutes. Sparge with 4 gals. water.

Total boil 60 minutes. Add first hops after 15 mins. At 55 min., add lemon zest and crushed Grains of Paradise. At 60 minutes, shut off heat and add final hops. Steep for 5 min., remove hops, chill and pitch yeast.

Ferment for 2 weeks, rack and condition for additional 2-3 weeks. Prime and bottle.

Grains of Paradise (*Aframomum melegueta*), also known as melegueta pepper, Guinea pepper and alligator pepper are native to West Africa. Related to cardamom; previously an important spice, especially around the 14th and 15th centuries. Today they are not used much outside of West and North Africa. Grains of paradise are pungent and aromatic, and are used sometimes to flavor vinegars, beer and wine, in herbal remedies, and in veterinary medicines.

Available at amazon.com and elsewhere.

Events Calendar

For all tastings, \$5 per member (\$7 for guests) covers the host's costs. RSVP directly to the host, or as indicated. If you wish to schedule an event, contact any club officer.

April

4-15 First Round entries due in 2005 National Homebrew Competition. For rules or entry forms, visit www.beertown.org or contact Steve Kranz.

22 Happy Hour hosted by Lin and Larry Hitchcock. 4-7:30 p.m. See item below for details!

May

7 Big Brew 2005 (National Homebrew Day, hosted by Gary Cress (410-876-6605)

June

16-18 2005 National Homebrewers Conference in Baltimore, MD

April 2005

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

May 2005

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

June 2005

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

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welcoming and receptive, and the questions we took were all very informed and indicative of people who know their product. A number of audience members have dabbled in meadmaking, and the most interesting (to me) part of the discussion revolved around the use of heat to pasteurize the honey when using it to brew beer or mead.

Happy Hour April 22nd

Friday, April 22nd, Larry and Lin Hitchcock will host a happy hour at their home from 4-7:30pm. Stop by on your way home from work for a beer and a bite to eat. Pack some homebrew in a cooler that morning to share. RSVP by phone or email, but if it's a spur of the moment decision, that's ok too. Our address is 2545 Deer Park Road, Finksburg. Directions: from 140, turn south on 91, then left on Deer Park. You can reach us at 410-833-4409 or email at ldhitchcock@adelphia.net

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up a bit, I added two cups of sugar (please don't hold that against me), set up a 30 minute boil with some flavor and finishing hop additions.

All went well from start to finish, and my desire to brew had been satisfied; however, a very important lesson had been learned.

Nothing must stand in the way of brewday- time, weather or lack of ingredients. My next trip to the homebrew supply shop will include the purchase of a couple cans of extract to have on hand just in case they're needed.

Yes, there is joy in Beerville!