



BURP NEWS

The Official Newsletter of the
BREWERS UNITED FOR REAL POTABLES



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November 2009

4305 Vermont Ave
Alexandria, VA 22304



**November Meeting
Real Ale Competition
Rockville, MD**

**Saturday, 7 November, 2009
12:00-6:00 PM**

Please see information regarding crowd control

**December Meeting – Holiday Party
Winter Warmer Competition
Arlington, VA**

**Wednesday, 16 December, 2009
6:00-9:00 PM**

**January Meeting
Competition TBD
Gaithersburg, MD**

**Saturday, TBD January, 2010
1:00-6:00 PM**

Rambling with Andy

By Andy Anderson, Fearless Leader

This is it! It's finally here! My favorite BURP meeting is the November Real Ale meeting, and we have finally reached November! It is such a beautiful sight to see, on average, 50 corny kegs of cask-conditioned real ale and 25 beer engines all lined up just waiting to dispense their lovely, luscious, liquid libations. (Hmm ... Edgar Allan Poe said that the letter "L" was the most sonorous letter in the English language, and that was said to be a reason why he used it for some of his female characters such as "Eulalie", "Lenore", and "Ulalume". Maybe all those English professors were wrong; maybe he was just thinking of Real Ale. Hmm...)

All joking aside, this truly is my favorite meeting of the year. When **Tom Cannon** and I first got involved in this in 1997 (the only year it was held at my house, but then again, we only had 12 entries), we had two goals: improve the median level of both the judging and the brewing of real ales. While I believe that the BURP judging capability for Real Ales has improved somewhat, I definitely believe that the skill of the brewers has tremendously increased. For the first few years of this contest, I would inevitably come across an "interesting" beer which would soon be watering some shrubbery at Bill and Wendy's house; but no more. For the last few years, I have not had a "dumper". While some beers are better than others, there are no bad beers on the porch. In addition, some of them are truly outstanding. The November meeting is also when we nominate people for BURP Offices. If you have not been an officer

Please submit all articles for publication in either plain text or Microsoft Word format to the e-mail address above. Deadline for articles is 2 weeks before each scheduled BURP meeting unless otherwise indicated. Changes to membership records should be sent to membership@burp.org.

before, or, if it's been quite awhile since you last served, please consider running for office. We will also keep the nomination period open for 2 weeks after the 7 November meeting so that people who may not be in attendance at the meeting might still have the opportunity to "throw their hat into the ring".

Before I forget, I want to thank **Bud and Helen Hensgen** for allowing us to meet at their fine house for the October meeting. While the day started off quite over-cast and rainy, it soon blossomed into a fine day. BURP mojo works again!

This year is rapidly coming to a close. After this week's November Real Ale meeting, we only have the December meeting on 12/16 at Lyon Community Center. For those who are new to BURP, what November is to Real Ale, December is to beer cuisine! So start getting those creative dishes ready. We managed to reserve it an hour earlier than usual, so we can start the festive prep work for the space as early as 5 PM that day.

In the meantime, go brew a beer! Cheers!

Artz's Craft: Enlightenment Update

By Tim Artz, Minister of Enlightenment

Well, I hope everyone has been busy making some great homebrew, mead and cider. We have quite a few full fermenters bubbling away here.

In October we had a nice class on mead making. The attendees all seemed to have fun learning and sampling some mead. Bill Newman promised to write up the class – I guess he actually was paying attention. It's great to add some meadmakers to BURP's growing group. We can all look forward to sampling these folks' wares next year. Hopefully, by then we will have enough interest to have a club competition. Also, as many are aware by now, there is a new upcoming mead judge program under the BJCP. If there is sufficient interest, we can get a group together to prep for the test. I downloaded the study guide, and can tell you it is one of the best mead resources out there. The only part I found a little troubling was the emphasis on obscure single blossom varietal honeys. Not only are these very hard to find in order to experience the taste (beyond memorizing what the guide has to say), they are often quite expensive for mead making.

I spoke with **Ty Ming** at the October meeting, and unfortunately he let me know that no one signed up for his extract to all-grain transition class. Hopefully Ty and others will be able to do this sort of thing again in the future. Let's help each other brew better beer!

I know **Wendy Aaronson** and **Tim Pohlhaus** are working on the Yeast Metabolism lecture. Hopefully, we will have new details to report on that soon. Likewise, with **Dave Pyle's** Lambic blending session.

I will be setting a date for the Sake class in December. I hope it will be cool by then. Interested parties should let me know to get on the list.

December will wrap up my 2009 tenure as your Minister of Enlightenment. I hope everyone had a chance to learn some new things and have fun doing it. We did not get to all of the things I'd hoped we'd do, but we did make quite a bit of progress. Remember that volunteers are what makes BURP great, so don't be afraid to come forward with your ideas and your know-how to contribute to that greatness. If folks are happy with the job I'm doing, I would be glad to give this job another go. If not, I will fully support my successor!

In closing, I have some sad news. I was shocked to hear of the untimely death of a friend and great brewer, Greg Noonan, on October 13th. Greg was a fixture at all of the early AHA conferences that Dot and I attended. We got to know him well, and no matter how much time there was between our meetings, it always seemed like we just picked up where we left off. Through Greg's excellent writing in the classic *Brewing Lager Beer*, I learned the art of decoction mashing. Greg was easy to get along with, very hilarious, and full of great brewing information. He will be missed. In honor of Greg, it would be great if we could have someone do a decoction mash class.

BURP Real Ale Competition 2009

By Tom Cannon and Andy Anderson

Just a reminder that the November meeting will be in conjunction with BURP's 13th Real Ale Competition. Because of the massive number of beers we are expecting and the fact that all of the brewers would like them to be drunk (the beers, not the BURPers!), the meeting will start at 12:00 Noon. We will endeavor to have half of the kegs on from 12:00 until 2:30 and the other half from 2:45 to 5:00. The winning beers will be announced at 2:45, after the beers have been changed over.

For the competition, kegs are being accepted at Bill and Wendy's house beginning Sunday, 1 November. Please contact Bill if you are planning on dropping off a keg. Understanding that Rockville is a bit of a schlep for some of us that live in Virginia, Tom will be happy to transport kegs up for entries from Virginia on Tuesday evening, 3

November and Wednesday evening, 4 November. Give him a call (703) 204-2256 or drop him an e-mail if you want Tom to take your keg up for you. For all entries, please provide a gas-in fitting attached to each entry (unless you have a keg that can be vented without a fitting). If the fitting is attached, at the end of a piece of string, there's a much better chance that it won't disappear during the meeting. Also, please provide the style category for your beer(s) (acceptable style guidelines are on the BURP Real Ale Page <http://burp.burp.org/Default.aspx?tabid=390>), along with your estimated starting and finishing gravity and, if you have one, a clever name for your beer. All of these will be posted on the beer engine while your beer is being served at the Saturday meeting.

VERY IMPORTANT: The Real Ale Competition, on the Friday before the BURP meeting is a closed competition for judges and stewards only. If **Bill Ridgely** or Tom has not contacted you to either judge or steward, please don't show up Friday night. Don't worry, though. There will be plenty of Real Ale to drink at the meeting Saturday, and we'll make sure every entry is on for at least two and a half hours during the meeting. Also, since we'll have plenty of Real Ale, November is a no beer meeting; that is, you don't need to bring any beer to the November meeting, unless, for some weird reason, you don't like British Style Ales!

After the meeting has started and we are confident the beer is pouring smoothly, **Tom Cannon** and **Andy Anderson** will be holding a Real Ale educational session. If you want to learn more about this distinctive style, including what is and what is not Cask Conditioned Real Ale, plan on being at the meeting by Noon. One final note - We are asking everyone attending this great BURP event to please respect our members' property, which are the beautiful beer engines out on Bill and Wendy's deck. Understand that these pumps are a significant investment for their owners, and, if their owners are anything like us, love them like they are one of our children. Everyone is encouraged to pull their own pints at the meeting, but please don't mess with any of the fittings, and if you think there is anything wrong with the engines, let Bill, Andy, or Tom know so we can straighten it out. We've already lost one beer engine (and a nice one) to this meeting because someone did not respect that person's property. We don't want to lose any more. See you all at the Aaronridge Pub!

Real Ale Festival Crowd Control

Last year's effort to control entry to the Real Ale Festival by way of a check-in table in the Aaronridge carport was very successful, and we'd like to follow the same procedure this year. The club is seeking volunteers to work at the check-in table for a short period of time during the fest - perhaps ½ hour per volunteer if enough people are willing. The current forecast is for a pleasant day with moderate temperatures, but a propane heater will be set up for volunteers if cooler temperatures prevail. Please contact Bill and Wendy at 301-762-6523 or e-mail aaronridge@comcast.net if you would be willing to help out. The hosts would like to remind those attending that this is primarily a BURP event for BURP members. While bringing guests is not discouraged (and attendance by potential new members is greatly encouraged), the hosts would very much appreciate being contacted beforehand by all those who wish to bring guests to the event. They would also like to request that everyone attending wear a name tag and indicate on the tag whether they are a club member or a guest. Guests will be approached by club officers and encouraged to join the club. After all, a public Real Ale Festival such as the one held in Baltimore last month requires a fairly significant outlay of money. A BURP membership costs only \$15 (\$20 for couples) and provides a full year of great activities outside of Real Ale (not to mention excellent educational opportunities). It's not too much to ask of those who are not already members.

Thank you all in advance for helping to keep this primarily a club event for enthusiastic real ale aficionados and not just an opportunity to consume mass quantities of free beer.

BURP Election 2009 Call for Nominations

Our country recently participated in one of the most rousing election seasons in recent memory, with thousands of candidates, volunteers and voters energized to go to bat for the greater good of our country. Whatever your party affiliation, it would be difficult not to be heartened by such an out-pouring of caring by citizens from across the political spectrum. Now we urge you to rouse yourselves and come forward to run for a BURP office. Active officers and other volunteers are crucial to the continued success of Club. Please step up to the plate and do your part to make a positive difference in the life of BURP.

Nominations will open at the November Real Ale meeting on Saturday, November 7, and will close at 11:59 PM on Sunday, November 29.

Voting will be on-line from Wednesday, December 2 through Tuesday, December 15. Members also will have the option of casting a vote using a paper ballot at the December meeting on Wednesday, December 16.

BURP offices are:

- Fearless Leader (President)
- Minister of Culture (Competition Organizer)
- Minister of Enlightenment (Organizes Seminars, Classes, Workshops)
- Minister of History/Libeerian (Manages the Club Library and Historical Records)
- Minister of Finance (Treasurer)
- Minister of Truth (BURP Newsletter Editor)
- Minister of Propaganda (Membership)
- Minister of the Web (Manages Web Content)

Please contact Andy or any of the other officers, if you have questions regarding the day-to-day duties of these positions.

The BURP Officer position descriptions are as follows:

Fearless Leader (President)

Duties: Coordinates BURP activities with other officers. Makes announcements at meetings. Represents BURP to the public. (Which means that you can send articles to your relatives, who will do almost anything to avoid telling their neighbors what you do for fun). Initiates and coordinates major BURP activities (conferences, festival participation, etc).

Minister of Culture (Competitions)

Duties: Runs monthly club competitions and writes articles about styles for the BURP News. Orders awards for contests. Is the competition organizer for the Spirit of Free Beer, but may recruit someone for this job. May organize trouble-shooting corner at meetings.

Minister of Enlightenment (Education)

Duties: Organizes educational sessions about brewing techniques or particular styles. Sets up yearly preparation courses for the BJCP exams. Holds pre-meeting commercial beer tastings to assist club members in honing style recognition skills.

Minister of History (Libeerian/Historian)

Duties: Maintains the BURP Libeery, a great resource, which is underutilized. Sends the BURP goon squad after people who have not returned Libeery material. Writes

interesting articles based on libeery resources for BURP newsletter. Maintains the club archives and serves as de facto club historian.

Minister of Finance (Treasurer)

Duties: Knows where the money comes from and where it goes. Maintains the BURP bank account. Participates heavily in financial forecasting issues, such as "can we afford to front the money for club memorabilia". Makes reimbursements when presented with appropriate receipts.

Minister of Propaganda (Membership)

Duties: Serves as BURP'S point of contact with folks who are interested in joining. Maintains the club membership database and electronic newsletter notification e-mail list. Prints the membership cards. Sends out renewal notices.

Minister of Truth (Newsletter)

Duties: Edits the BURP News and gets it to you in time for you to know when and where the next meeting is. Solicits articles and people to be meeting reporters. Serves as BURP's Secretary for its official functions.

Minister of the Web (Web Page)

Duties: Administers burp.org. Maintains the web site. Creates new pages for upcoming BURP events and updates the web pages. Keeps the BURP Calendar current. Custodian for BurpList and BURP's administrative internet mailing lists. Maintains the @burp.org email aliases.

Sticky Issues: A Super Sweet Mead Class On Sunday October 17

By Bill Newman

Six sweet-toothed BURP'ers buzzed into the Artz' brewhouse to learn all about beekeeping, honey production and tasting, mead-characterization, meadmaking, mead-evaluation, and mead-tasting.

After a brief critique of Google maps, **Terri Fischer, Jay Nogle, Mike Bucher, Mike and Megan Evans** gathered around an actively bubbling fermenter (Tim had recently brewed a Scottish 80 Shilling in honor of Greg Noonan) to taste a dozen honeys while Tim addressed the basics of keeping bees. This included some hands-on show-and-tell with sticky, honeycombed,

beehive parts and questions that covered topics from queen-bee costs to number-of-times-that-Tim-has-been-stung. Tim mentioned good sources of mead information including some straightforward mead making instructions at Morebeer.com and the 150-page rich BJCP mead exam study guide. In between, the class noted honey characteristics such as gumminess, color(pale-straw to dark-brown), sweetness-intensity, spiciness, and odd flavors like raisins, wood, and medicinal (from the buckwheat honey, Maine-blueberry honey, and Italian chestnut honey, respectively).

As the subject shifted to the relationship of pollen to the honey-making role of bees, the class learned about the intricacies of a 'queen excluder' and that the biggest nectar flow comes from tulip trees and black locust trees. So, when you see dandelions and fruit tree blossoms, it is time to add the 'honey super' so the bees can start feeding and make honey. As active beekeepers, Tim and Dot shared their passionate beliefs in sustainable beekeeping, disease and mite control, and the need to re-queen every year (Make a note **Steve Marler!**)

The final honey we tasted (home produced Black Locust/Tupelo Honey) had also been used to make the first mead we tasted, Tim's Italian Plum Melomel which was 3rd place Best-of-Show at this year's Spirit of Free Beer. Most noted the bold aromas while wondering at the flavor difference of the mead compared to the honey. As more homemade mead samples were poured, tasted, and discussed; we learned that mead can be classified by Original Gravity (hydromel, standard, sack mead) and Final Gravity (dry, semi-sweet, sweet) Then, Tim made a batch of mead while we watched! As he hydrated 2 packets of wine yeast and outlined the importance of nutrients such as GoFerm, DAP, and Ferm-Aid K; a mead was born (hatched? excreted?) before our eyes. While targeting 25% Brix, Tim added approximately 1 gallon of pitted Italian plums (he found a good deal at Costco so washed, pitted, and froze the plums into 1 gallon freezer bags) to 1 gallon of boiling water. That was added to a sanitized fermenter bucket mostly full of cold tap water and stirred as we were reminded that the water must be at least 10 degrees warmer than your honey so it will dissolve. To this mess, he dumped in 12 pounds of his own honey and took a refractometer reading. The reading showed that we were well short of target, reinforcing Tim's suspicion that the bucket held too much water. So he grabbed another vessel of Artz-honey, poured it in while stirring, took a final reading and declared it 'close enough' so pitched the yeast. Done!

We debated the number of times the mead should be racked and the benefits of plastic buckets (to access/remove the whole fruit) and glass carboys (to

see how the mead is clearing) and learning that, by bottling time, it will have been racked 4 times over the course of a year. At this point the pages of my notebook stick together depriving you of the bounty of flowery adjectives used to describe the honeys tasted including: Blueberry(Maine), Home-produced Clover/Thistle, Raspberry, Home-produced locust/tupelo, German Acacia, Home-produced tulip tree / wildflower, and buckwheat. And you missed out on tasting the following home-made meads:

1. 2008 Kaffir Lime Mead. Metheglin, Sparkling, Hydromel
2. 2008 Cyser. Sparkling, Hydromel.
3. 2005 Traditional Mead. Sweet, Still, Sack mead.
4. 2008 Traditional Mead. Semi-sweet, Still, Standard Strength mead.
5. 2008 Italian Plum Melomel. Semi-sweet, Still, Standard strength. 3rd place SoFB 2009.
6. 2005 Mixed Berry Melomel. Semi-sweet, Still, Sack mead. 1st Place SoFB 2008.
7. 1990 Pyment. Dry, still, standard strength.

So go make some mead - it is easy, interesting, and bees need the love.

Trivial Beer-Suits

By Charlie Pavitt



The October 5th Washington Post included a piece by Howard Schneider on the Taybeh Brewing Company, the first Palestinian brewery. Opened in 1995, its continued existence is most likely aided by the fact that it is located in Taybeh, a Christian-dominated town reported to be the only West Bank municipality with no mosque, although they have begun to brew a non-alcoholic beer in order to meet Islamic dietary codes. The usual fare appears to be a German lager of some sort. The article reports on their fifth annual Oktoberfest, replete with handicraft bazaar, falafel stands, and music along with beer. You can look them up at <http://www.taybehbeer.com/>

On to the regularly scheduled broadcast: This month we return to Stephen Harrod Buhner's Sacred and Herbal Healing Beers and his chapter entitled Yeast: A Magical and Medicinal Plant. Buhner thinks that the ancients must have been aware that something in the air was responsible for fermentation, and tried to save for repeated brewing what we now know as yeast cultures. In a couple of places in the New World, some finished brew was stored in pots or even woven baskets

(in which the yeast would, in his terms "insinuate itself" into the weave), and then added to the next year's wort. In what is now Norway, juniper branches or birch logs were placed in the fermenter, with the yeast-covered wood dried and maintained until the next brewing.

Fermentation was a sacred affair. Before pitching, some yeast might be offered to the gods or sprinkled in the four corners of the brewing house to increase the odds of a good brew. Some cultures would have loud, dance- and music-filled ceremonies for the opposite reason; yeast was believed to respond with increased agitation. The Charoti of South America are said to have seen fermentation as "the birth of the good spirit" in worts, and the point of their singing and instrument playing throughout the first night of fermentation is to keep bad spirits from getting into the beer and preventing the good spirit's birth. Buhner makes the point that, metaphorically speaking, they had it right; we endeavor for the yeast we intend to take form and prevent unwanted airborne yeasts from taking over the process. The Ainu, an original Japanese culture, believe and act similarly, along with offering the first glass of what reads as something sake-like to the good spirit in exchange for insuring the successful brew.

In other cultures, brewing was a solemn occasion, because the yeast was thought to work better in quiet surroundings. The Tarahumara of northern Mexico are, as the author puts it, of the "quiet" school. They ferment in sacred, never-washed jars, and once fermentation begins, the jars are placed next to jars not yet fermenting in order to teach those jars how to do so. As the jars are never washed, yeast residue remains in them, aiding in the next fermentation.

In a footnoted aside, Buhner reports that in the 17th century legislation was passed in Norway prohibiting fermentation at high temperatures, as that was thought to produce beer which was too highly intoxicating.

I finish by quoting part of a brewing ceremonial speech from the Papago of the Sonoran Desert area (more on them in the next Beer-Suits):

Some little things I planted in my field
Crawling on hands and knees
With my wind hoe.
Nothing could I raise
That would ferment.

Only my child knew the plants
That were around us.
Repeatedly did he go picking them,
And in the palm of my hand he placed them.
With water I mixed them;
Crouching before the jar I sat,

Desiring that speedily it would ferment.
After two mornings it felt kindly toward me
And gloriously it fermented.

BURP 10 and 20 Years Ago

Compiled By Bill Ridgely

20 Years Ago, Nov 1989

The November 1989 BURP meeting was a very special one. First, it was held at the home of local beer heroes **Bob and Ellie Tupper** in Bethesda. Bob and Ellie were already renowned for their monthly beer tastings held at the *Brickskeller* in DC, but a visit to their home was always a special treat because of their extensive collection of beer cans and other breweriana. This meeting was made even more special, however, by the attendance of **George and Pat Saxon** of *Phoenix Imports, Ltd*, purveyors of an incredible selection of specialty beers from the European continent (and in particular, Belgium and the UK). The Saxons put together a tasting of their finest products for the club, embellished by the Tupperes, who showed slides of several of the breweries represented by *Phoenix* (such as *Liefmans* in Belgium and *Eldridge, Pope, and Co* in the UK). Prior to the presentation of the fine specialties, a tasting of beers brought back from the Himalayas by your humble compiler was given. Can you say "He-Man 9000 Deluxe Beer" (a strong lager from Sikkim)? As meeting reporter **Mark Kelly** commented, "these beers were generally not rated as high as the mountains Bill trekked". Soon, however, better fare was on its way around the room - from Belgium, two ales from *Corsendonk* and three from *Liefmans* (including the original "Goudenband", at that time one of the finest beers available); from England, "Royal Oak Pale Ale" and "Thomas Hardy's Ale" from *Eldridge, Pope*; and from Switzerland, the pale and dark versions of "Samichlaus", at the time the strongest beers in the world. Several other celebrities attended the meeting, including beer writer **Jack Erickson** and Washington Post nightlife columnist **Eve Ziebart** (who gave BURP a nice shoutout in her subsequent column). The meeting raffle was one of the most memorable thanks to contributions from Jack (signed copies of his book "Great Cooking with Beer") and the Saxons. Lucky winners went home with a 750ml bottle of "Cosendonk Brown Ale", a 750ml "Liefmans Goudenband", a 1984 edition of "Thomas Hardy's Ale", and a very special 150th anniversary 1987 "Thomas Hardy's Ale" aged in sherry wood. Fittingly, the last prize went to one of BURP's founding fathers, **Chuck "Pops" Popenoe**. On a personal note, my fondest recollection of this meeting was that it was the first attended by an attractive young lady named **Wendy Aaronson**, an experienced brewer and

microbiologist who worked at the time at the *Brew Masters* homebrew shop in Rockville. Wendy had a great time and joined the club at the meeting. Things were never quite the same for me after that ...

The Nov 1989 BURP News contained a great mix of technical articles and beer travels. Newsletter editor **Erik Henchal** continued his efforts to make BURPers better brewers, this month addressing the use of yeast starters and the relative merits of using B-Brite for equipment sanitization. Next up, **Jim Dorsch** reminded BURPers in his "Whole BURP Catalog" that the new "Beer Hunter" television series, starring **Michael Jackson**, was scheduled to debut on the Discovery Channel in early 1990. BURPer **Al Lowry** contributed an extensive review of new and upcoming brewpubs and microbreweries in the region, including *Sisson's South Baltimore Brewing Co* and the soon to open *Baltimore Brewing Co* in Baltimore (How many of you recall the original flagship products of *Sisson's* - the light golden "Marble Ale" and the amber, hoppier "Stockade Ale"?). Al also visited and reported on the newly-opened *Wild Goose Brewing Co* in Cambridge, MD. The brewer there, Englishman **Alan Pugsley**, had recently moved to the area after successfully opening *Geary's Ales* in Portland, Maine. The final article in the newsletter was your humble compiler's review of the beers of the Himalayas, both commercial and indigenous (the latter represented by chang and tomba, in addition to a home-distilled concoction called rakshi).

10 Years Ago, Nov 1999

BURP's 3rd Real Ale Festival was held at the Aaronridge Pub in Rockville on Sat, Nov 20, 1999. Once again, in a now established protocol, the competition judging was held the evening before in a closed session. BURP members were then invited to finish the kegs at the festival the next day. There were a record 34 entries in this year's competition - 5 more than the previous year. Two thirds of these entries achieved a score of 30 or above, showing that BURP brewers took the competition seriously and brewed their finest efforts. The competition behind the scenes, however, for BURP's first "Brewer of the Year" award, was the most interesting. Prior to the competition, **Andy Anderson** led in BOTY points with 16, and **Mike Megown** followed right behind with 15. At the conclusion of the Real Ale Competition, Mike had been awarded 1st place for his Ordinary Bitter and Andy 2nd for his Mild. This resulted in a tie between the two brewers, with each achieving 18 points. As Fearless Leader **Steve Marler** wrote in his follow-up newsletter column, "So what to do? Can you say brew-off? January BURP meeting. Be there." Keep an eye on future BURP history columns for the conclusion of this story. Third place in the competition went to **Alan Hew and Larry Koch** for their Ordinary

Bitter, making the competition a sweep for low alcohol session beers - what many of us believe constitute the best of English-style cask ales.

The combined Nov-Dec 1999 issue of BURP News kicked off with an excellent article by **Mike Megown** on techniques used by English brewers for cask conditioning their ales and how these could be applied by homebrewers. Mike's recipe for smoked ale (1st place smoked beer in the 1998 SOFB) was also featured in the newsletter. In the travelogue department, **A.J. deLange** wrote about his recent trip to Ascension Island in the South Atlantic. The only commercial beer he found worth drinking was canned Guinness, but this provided him with an outlet to expound on the relative merits of the new Guinness "widget can" as well as the potential for brewing classic pilsners on the island's American military base thanks to the vacuum distilled, very soft water used on the base.

The Trail Of Beers

We Survived – Just Barely

By John Gardiner, The Frugal Biker/Brewer

We met at Rock Bottom in Ballston to begin our bike ride/pub crawl. We saluted our leader General **Craig Somers**. As most know, **Craig** organizes BURP bike rides. We were "**Somers'** soldiers," a small band of warriors, consisting of **Craig Somers, Wayne Vance** and **John Gardiner**.

We soon experienced incoming rounds. I intercepted a hefeweizen. It tasted more than "*hefe*". Love wheat beers but they're often too domesticated. By the time it's a hefeweizen, it's often a bit too delicate for me. Not this one, it had character. **Craig** drank a Capaberra, a dark lager patterned after Negra Modelo. **Wayne** went for the Bourbon Stout. How's that for a beer selection all on draft? And we just started.

We tried each other's beers, and all were good. Next, I had a Belgian Anniversary Ale. Higher gravity and pretty good. Too much Anniversary, not enough Belgium. Saw the waiter coming with the bill and quickly excused myself to the toilet. **Wayne** snagged the check. We had our rations. This ride was going to be a breeze.

We started out, and I had my first accident of the day. Had a bit of trouble getting my feet on the pedals. Couldn't get my shoes into my stirrups. My feet kept dragging the ground. Wanted to be a brave **Somers'** soldier, but these are the times that try men's soles, the agony of the feet.

Embarrassingly, I tipped a little, and my hand hit a stopped car, an SUV. The driver asked if I was all right. Tried to get \$20 for my injuries but he wouldn't go for it.

Next pub was Rustico in Alexandria. We took more incoming rounds. Rustico, while not a brew pub, has a huge beer selection and knowledgeable staff. **Craig** bought us a \$35 beer from De Glazen Toren Brewery. Was wrapped in paper. My eyes were "*de glazen*" over when I saw "*de*" price. Yeah, it was wrapped in paper - so's fish! It was called "Saison Epre-Mere". You've got to be kidding! Anyone who brews a **\$35** beer and calls it "**MERE**" should have his poetic license revoked.

\$35! That's more than I paid for my suit! Now I admit, it was from Belgium (the beer not my suit). Actually, **Pat** calls it my Salvation Armani (my suit, not the beer). We ate lunch there (Rustico's, not the beer or the suit). (I can't explain everything to you people.) Try to keep up will ya'? Oh by the way, the Saison was dull normal, **Saison la vie**.

We also ordered a five glass sampler. A memorable one was Victory Donnybrook Stout. We shared them, that way we could select our favorite to order. Don't know whether my grilled cheese and French fries were as yummy as they seemed or I was just starving, suspect both. **Wayne** had two glasses of Sierra Nevada Anniversary beer. The weather was fantastic. We sat outside at each pub, next to our bikes. I was happy, didn't want any unnecessary exercise.

Rustico's was so fun, we watched trains pass by! We each had another interesting beer called Zwickle. It's an unfiltered German style lager. Zwickle is named for the master brewer's key. She uses her zwickle to open the spigot on the fermenter to taste the beer. The key's necessary to keep the staff from using the -- *brew key* to pour a -- *brewsky*. No one can touch her zwickle.

Craig and **Wayne** each had a glass of "Fuel". Is that a good name for a biker beer? 'Twas a Wee Heavy Scottish style ale. Went great with the yummy keg rolls. Saw the waitress coming with the bill and darted to the toilet. **Craig** got the tab. Life is good.

And we're off on our next ride. I tell ya', 'twas a little harder this time. The trail was bumpy and my buns were getting sore. With friends like **Craig**, who needs enemas. Was tough going, **Wayne's** legs were cramping and poor **Craig**, the motor on his electric (ah-hem) bike was getting warm. I had stirrup trouble again, (I always stir-up trouble) and fell into my next car, a Subaru. It was really funny, when we turned, the Subaru stayed about 30' away to the side. Word got out -- cars were scared of me now!

Next came my vocabulary lesson. **Wayne** taught me a new term "sag wagon"! A sag wagon picks up weary bikers. 'Twas originally "Voiture Balai" (French for "Broom Wagon"). It's the car that 'sweeps up' cyclists who wiped or wimped out. Can't imagine why he's telling me this.

Hit our last pub (figure of speech, finally adjusted my stirrups), Cap City in Shirlington. **Wayne** and **Craig** each got a coffee beer. The brewer uses Arabica coffee beans. They're high-grown and hand-picked. They're roasted locally at Misha's, a coffee house and coffee roaster, in Old Town Alexandria. Coffee beer is too great a violation of the **Reinheitsgabot** for me. Kept thinking of the Drew Cary show. Remember, he invented a coffee beer and started a brewery?

And it took its toll, by this time **Wayne** had enough beers that he started calling **Craig** - Carl. **Craig** had enough beers, he liked his new name!

Craig explained, "After all, never heard of **Craigling Black Label Beer** have you? And there's no **Craigsberg**, (the beer of Danish kings)." So, for the rest of the ride we called **Craig** - **Carl**. We thought "The **Craigling**" would be a great name for his brewery! Kinda like "The Changeling."

Cap City was wunderbar. Again, the service was great. A "thunder" of motorcycles went by. What do you call a herd (more like heard) of motorcycles? Could call 'em a "rumble". And are mufflers expensive for motorcycles 'cuz none of 'em seemed to have any?

The waitress was bringing the check and I was off to the toilet. Unfortunately, "**Carl**" and Wayne wised-up to my toilet trick. They held it 'till I returned (they held the check, not the toilet.) Fortunately, we'd eaten lunch on "**Carl's**" dime and drank more when **Wayne** paid. "**Carl**" and **Wayne** explained that *tipping* was more than what I'd been doing on my bike. They assured me, I faced a greater risk of *tipping over* than *over tipping*.

We headed back to Ballston and I discovered an interesting phenomenon. Did you know; if you ride downhill goin' -- **it's uphill comin' back?** Not good! The road was more inclined than I was. We were going uphill real slow and I was going downhill real fast. We were **Somers'** soldiers, unfortunately it was the fall. I had my two falls and was about to cause my third. My bad. A BMW driver attempting to avoid being hit by me, hit **Wayne** instead. No injury, but **Wayne** did a great acrobatic split. For some reason, **Wayne** did not find this as amusing as I did.

Everywhere, people were so friendly. No one complained when we took our bikes on the elevator. They even held

doors for us! Was a long fun day 11am to 8pm, whew, 9 hours. **Wayne** had a bike computer and said we averaged 10 miles per hour and rode 20 miles. So actually, that would be 90 miles. That felt about right. Math's not **Wayne's** strong suit. By, the way, did I tell you about my suit, the Salvation Armani? Oh yeah, I remember now. Where was I?

We were the Magnificent Three, but I was an army of one. I moved through the ranks. My *private* parts were a hurtin'. It felt like *corporal* punishment. I had *major* fatigue. I felt *general* aches and pains everywhere.

I was proud. I put my mettle to the pedal. When we were finished, no one had greater rank than I!

Can't wait to go again. When's the next ride, **Carl**?

Hop Notes from the Li-Beery

By Bill Ridgely, Minister of History

The most recent issue of Brew Your Own (Nov 2009) just arrived in the BURP li-beery. The contents will eventually be displayed online at <http://byo.com> (but none are listed so far). The lead article is "Small Space Brewing Tips", with good recommendations for those of you with limited space to brew. A complimentary article describes how to build a countertop all-grain brewing system. Just in time for Halloween, the online version of BYO offers a clone recipe for Rogue "Dead Guy" ale, a favorite of many beer consumers. Check it out at <http://byo.com/component/resource/article/1975-send-in-the-clones>.

I also just received the latest issue of Zymurgy (Nov-Dec 2009). You can check out the contents at http://www.beertown.org/homebrewing/zymurgy_magazine/index.html. The current issue features lager brewing, with an article by Horst Dornbusch on bockbiers and an interesting piece by Drew Beechum on pushing the envelope brewing dark lagers. An online special article on brewing Imperial Stouts is also available on the site.

As always, if you see an article of interest in either publication, simply contact me at ridgely@burp.org (or call 301-762-6523), and I'll make a copy of your requested article and bring it to the next BURP meeting.

The contents of the BURP li-beery are available anytime for your perusal at <http://burp.burp.org/Default.aspx?tabid=414>. If you would like a book loaned to you, just let me know, and it will be delivered to you at the next BURP meeting. And, as always, if there is a book that you feel should be

added to the collection, please contact me at the address above.

If you are planning to brew a specific beer style and need some guidance, I may be able to help you with an appropriate publication. Just contact me at the e-mail address or phone number above.

Editor's Corner

By Beth Madden, Minister of Truth

Thanks to the BURP membership for their contributions to this newsletter. As always, I invite anyone interested in submitting anything from a feature or general interest articles to travelogues, recipes, etc. to do so. Please send to madfox@comcast.net.

BURP Doxology

*Praise BURP from whom beer blessings flow,
Praise BURP ye brewers here below,
Praise BURP above ye heavenly hosts,
Praise barley, hops and yeast the most
Aaaaaaaaaaaaa, Drink!
(Al Lowry, 1994)*

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