



# BURP NEWS

Be Sure to  
Enter Spirit of  
Free Beer by  
May 11!

The Official Newsletter of  
**BREWERS UNITED FOR REAL POTABLES**  
"So Many Brews So Little Time"

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May 1996

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May 11, 1:00	Meeting, Porter Contest, and Chili Contest, John Esparolini's home. <b>Bring Spirit of Free Beer entries to the meeting!</b>
May 11	<b>Deadline for Spirit of Free Beer Entries</b>
May 18	Spirit of Free Beer. Judges and Stewards only!
May 25	<b>Deadline for June Issue of BURP News</b>
June 22	Wheat Beer Contest and Meeting at Trish & Larry Koch's home
July 27	Brewing Battle of the Sexes and Meeting at Alice & Jim Davis's home
August 23-25	Mashout

### April Issue of BURP News Plagued by Misinformation

Due to persistent computer errors, the April issue of the BURPNews contained some articles which were not, strictly speaking, accurately reporting true events.

Our apologies to the monks, your washing machine (which can be used to make an excellent eggplant salad), and Winning Colors, who is alive and well and living in Kentucky.

BURP News is the official newsletter of Brewers United for Real Potables. BURP is dedicated to promoting homebrewing. Annual dues are \$15 for individuals and \$20 for couples. If you care about the beer you drink, join BURP. Please submit new memberships, changes of address, and corrections to BURP, 7430 Gene Street, Alexandria, VA 22310. Articles for the BURP news should be delivered on diskette or paper to the Editor (address is in the masthead) or uploaded to the Enlightened BBS at (703)370-9528. Microsoft Word or text format is preferred.



## Koch's Korner

Larry Koch, your Fearless Leader

In yesterday's mail I received my Summer '96 issue of Zymurgy and was thrilled to find a feature article about our very own Wendy Aaronson and Bill Ridgely. It was the combination of my joy for them and my deadline to submit this column that led me to consider the many wonderful people in BURP and the avenues these people can open to us.

I consider Wendy and Bill to be close friends. Their activities and knowledge in the world of beer are very broad. Their willingness to share their vast experiences with us in a personal manner will always be greatly appreciated.

As it turns out, the author of the Wendy and Bill article is a fairly new member to BURP, Scott Bickham. Scott is a BJCP Master beer judge and a BJCP examination director. He brings his talents to our club and has shown his desire to work for the club.

Speaking of beer judging and working with the club, Rick Garvin has been a tremendous asset. Rick's beer judge classes, general discussions and individual comments have given the club many new or improved judges and raised our level of knowledge as a whole.

Jim Busch is someone you can go to for knowledge. His technical understanding, his ability to write and speak, his production experience and his willingness to share are there for all who ask. I believe Jim's contributions to the new Victory Brewing Co. give many of us an uplifting feeling just because he is our brewing friend.

Tim Artz and his lovely wife Dot have been instrumental in the creation and implementation of The Spirit Of Free Beer and The Spirit Of Belgium, not to mention ongoing work every year.

As a club we have the great honor of having as a member Rhett Rebold, AHA Homebrewer of the Year and winner of the Ninkasi Award for 1995. What a guy to rub elbows with.

And there are many, many others. Katy and Delano, Polly and Bruce, Alison Skeel, Ralph Bucca, Phil Seitz, Becky and Dave, Jim Tyndall, .....

These are my friends and helpers, peers and idols. Make them yours.

## NEW MEMBERS

Bill Ridgely

Welcome this month to **Lynn Ashley** of Arlington, **Robert Beasley** of Ashton, **Robert Carroll** of Arlington, **Jean Cobb & Wesley Kodama** of Takoma Park, **Warren Grimes** of Shadyside, **Jeff Kapteyn** of Arlington, **Ray Pfaff** of Chantilly, **Scott Philbrook** of College Park, **Greg Thompson** of Reston, and **Bret Wortman** of Vienna.

Hope to see you all at upcoming meetings!

## Trish's Tips

Trish Koch, your First Lady of BURP

*Dear First Lady: I tasted some grossly awful beer at the last meeting. PHEEWW!! It still makes me gag! What are you going to do to keep people from bringing such inferior beer to the meetings?*

*Signed: A Great Brewer*

Dear Great Brewer: Well, well, well. It's nice to know that some brewers are born to perfection. No need to learn from trial and error. Nooooooo, just start brewing prize winning beers from the get-go. First of all, a change in attitude is in order. One of the principles of **BURP** is to provide a positive environment for people to share their homebrew, and to get some constructive feedback on ways to improve future batches. Everyone is encouraged to bring homebrew for others to sample and discuss. One phrase that can be used in difficult circumstances is "My, that's different" followed by a helpful suggestion such as "A Pilsner is actually *lighter* in color than a stout." This way the novice brewer is encouraged to try again. Our meetings are a place for informal learning, and most homebrewers get a great deal of their technical knowledge just by talking to each other, comparing techniques and recipes.

If you do taste a beer that is infected, spoiled, or otherwise undrinkable, do not make a great display of disgust with facial expressions, gagging noises, or dramatically tossing the offending beer into the shrubbery (moi?). Instead, try to be unobtrusive as you quietly empty and rinse your glass. If you know the cause of the problem, you might comment on how to avoid it in the future. For instance: "I find I get better results if I bottle with freshly boiled caps instead of the ones my dog has licked." You might want to make a mental note of which bottle you just sampled so you don't try it again.

## BURP Officers

Office	Officer	Phone
Fearless Leader	Larry Koch	(301) 578-5293 H
Minister of Education	Wendy Aaronson	(301) 762-6523 H (301) 594-5649 W
Ministers of Culture	Becky & Dave Pyle	(703) 273-2108 H
Ministers of Truth	Bruce Feist Polly Goldman	(703) 709-4736 W (703) 370-9509 H
Minister of Propaganda	Bill Ridgely	(703) 971-5744 H (301) 827-1391 W
Minister of Finance	Doug Kruth	(703) 671-0857 H
Liberarian	Bob Cooke	(703) 451-1540 H

## Competition Notes

Becky & Dave Pyle

Thanks to all who entered the Bock Competition!

1st Place - Bob Dawson.

2nd Place - Dave Pyle & Mike McMarlin

3rd Place - Tom Cannon

### June's Competition: Wheat

Style Guidelines:

Style	Gravity	IBUs
Berliner Weisse	1027-1032	05-12
Weizen	1045-1050	08-14
Dunkel	1045-1055	10-15
Weizenbock	1066-1080	10-15
American Wheat	1030-1050	05-17

**Berliner Weiss.** Pale in color. Light body. Sour character with low alcohol content. Virtually no hop bitterness. No hop aroma. Color (SRM): 2-4.

**Weizen.** Pale in color. Light to medium body. Flavor is slightly sour with refreshing qualities. Flavor and aroma suggests cloves and banana. Lightly hopped. Color (SRM): 3-8.

**Dunkel.** Deep amber to dark brown color. Light to medium body. This style of beer is much like the Weizen listed above but can be a bit stronger. With chocolatelike maltiness this tones down the clove and banana character somewhat. Low bitterness. Color (SRM): 17-22.

**Weizenbock.** It can be either light or dark (helles or dunkel). Medium to full body. Malty sweet character with high alcohol content. Low bitterness. No hop aroma. Fruitness and esters OK. Color (SRM): 7-30.

**American Wheat.** Pale in color. Light to medium body. No sourness whatsoever. This beer is like the Weizen listed above but American Ale Yeast is used instead of German wheat yeast. Lightly hopped. Color (SRM): 2-4.

### May's competition is Porter

Style Guidelines:

Style	Gravity	IBUs
Porter	1.040-1.050	25-35

A traditional description of the style of beer is hard to come by because it is so controversial. It is a dark ale unlike a stout. It uses chocolate malt instead of roasted malt. Medium bodied beer with various degrees of sweetness and hop character. A good commercial example would be Anchor's Porter and Samuel Smith's Porter.

Here's a recipe to try for extract brewers.

5 gallon batch

Ingredients

1. 2 cans of pale malt
2. 3 pounds of spray-dried malt extract (dark)
3. 1 OZ of Styrian Golding Whole hop pellets (boiling)
4. 1 OZ of Styrian Golding Whole hop pellets (finishing)
5. 1 teaspoon of Irish moss
6. 1 package yeast
7. 3/4 cup of priming sugar

Take 1 1/2 gallons of water bring to boil. Add the cans of malt and spray-dried malt. Stir in the Styrian hops. Stir for 15 minutes and add Irish moss. In the last ten minutes add the remaining hops. Take 3 1/2 gallons of cold water, put in fermenter and pour the wort in the fermenter. Let the wort cool. Add the yeast and let ferment for 7 days. After 7 days siphon off the beer and leave sediment. Bottle.

### Competition Schedule for the Upcoming Year

May	Porter
June	Wheat
July	Brewing Battle of the Sexes
August	Lawn Mower Beer
September	Oktoberfest/Marzen
October	Weird Beer
November	Belgium
December	Holiday Banquet - No Competition
January	Pale Ale
February	Stout
March	Alt
April	Bock

### BURP meeting schedule for most of 1996

May 11 Saturday	John Esparolini Vienna, VA
June 22 Saturday	Trish & Larry Koch Silver Spring, MD
July 27 Saturday	Alice & Jim Davis Lake Barcroft, VA
August 23-25 Weekend	Helen & Chuck Popenoe Flintstone, MD
September 7 Saturday	Rod Rydlun Potomac, MD
October	Alan Hew UMD at College Park

### Keep Your Pets Away from Hops

According to an article in the latest issue of *BarleyCorn*, you should keep your spent hops away from your pets. Hops contain a yet unidentified chemical that can be fatal to dogs. The National Animal Poison Control Center (800-548-2423) has recorded at least 8 cases of hops toxicity in dogs.

## April Meeting Report

Delano DuGarm

April's meeting was held at Jim Caldwell's estate in eastern Maryland. We were all grateful for the fine weather Jim had arranged for us. Given the distant location of the meeting venue, there was a very big turnout. This might have been for the guest of honor: an entire smoked pig, prepared on the legendary Porkulator by Tim Artz. This was great meat, tender and juicy with a wonderful smoked flavor. All hail the Porkulator! Many BURPers brought side dishes to complement the guest of honor, ranging from potato salad to cheese boards to an unusually large amount of Kentucky Fried Chicken.

After the food, the high point had to have been the beer. Bob Dawson brought a great raspberry wheat, and Joy "High Gravity" Hansen produced a keg of American ale. A generous BURPer brought a minikeg of Kostrich schwarzbier (newly available in the US), a treat for those of us who have brewed the style without ever having had an example of it. Arguments erupted over the new Dominion Spring Brew. Most of those who tried it suggested that it was considerably different from the 1994 Dominion holiday beer, Dominator, but I am of the opinion that it is quite close, though perhaps weaker and less chocolatey. It's still a beer well worth trying.

I brought a couple of bottles of Moonbeam hard cider, a product of the Dobbs Brothers cidery near Fredericksburg. This place is definitely worth a visit, if for nothing else than to see the beautiful old cider press they use. The cider should be on sale in Northern Virginia by now, in both Grolsch-type bottles and in 650 ml bombers.

The silent auction was an innovation at this meeting. As a change of pace from the regular raffle this time we auctioned off some very nice brewing equipment and breweriana. This included a cornelius keg, a bag of malt, a zapap lauter tun, two Koch's Koolers, several beer trays and mirrors, and an enormous Corsendonk sign, suitable to hang by your front door to announce to your neighbors your good taste in beer. Doug Kruth nabbed that one: I guess he doesn't have a neighborhood association to worry about. Thanks go to Rick Garvin for donating the bag of malt, Larry Koch for donating the Koch's Koolers, and Polly Goldman, Bruce Feist, Randy Paul, and Yeongi Paul for donating the Corsendonk sign.

### RAIL-TRAIL BIKE RIDE

BURPer Ralph Bucca is organizing a bike ride of the North Bend Rail Trail over Memorial Day weekend, May 24-27. The 61 mile trail in north central West Virginia is newly completed and should be one of the premiere rail-trails in the east. It runs from Walker to Wilsonburg paralleling Rt. 50, and because of its east-west orientation through the Appalachian Mountains, has many tunnels (12) and bridges, in addition to historic towns.

The group will be camping in North Bend State Park near Cairo, WV. Any BURPers interested in joining the ride should contact Ralph at 410-257-0022 or Bill Ridgely at 703-971-5744. The trail is not paved but is graded and rolled so should be smooth enough for touring bikes with good tires.

## Try A New Adjunct- Sorghum

Bill Ridgely

Wendy and I just returned from Southern Africa and are planning to purchase some grain sorghum for experiments in African indigenous brewing.

Unfortunately, grain sorghum is not in abundant supply in this country and must be special ordered from Southern States Co-op in Purcellville, VA. The minimum order of 50 lb. will cost us a rather steep \$110.00.

The grain available to us is an unmalted (but seed grade) yellow form of sorghum (species *Sorghum bicolor*), somewhat different from the red variety (caffrorum or blackhull) grown in Africa for opaque beer brewing. It should nonetheless serve as an interesting grain to experiment with. Wendy and I plan to malt our portion in an attempt to make a domestic version of traditional opaque or "7-day" African beer. Sorghum can be successfully used as an adjunct, however, as well. In Nigeria, a portion of sorghum is used to brew the licensed version of Guinness Foreign Extra Stout. Because of its high tannin content, sorghum is best used in intentionally cloudy beers like Bavarian weizens or in very dark, opaque beers like stouts. Some industrial malters in Africa add a very small amount of formaldehyde to their steep water to reduce tannin content, but I wouldn't recommend this in the home. When used as an adjunct, it is not necessary to germinate the grain. It simply should be boiled to gelatinize the starches and then added to the mash in the same manner as corn grits or rice.

BURPers interested in trying their hand at grain sorghum as a brewing adjunct (or in doing their own malting experiments) should call Bill at **703-971-5744**. He will be happy to sell a portion to anyone interested for \$2 per pound.

## 1996 Chili Cookoff Rules

Cooks are welcome to arrive early at John Esparolini's to prepare their chilies for the competition. Judging will take place promptly at 3:30 PM. Prizes will be awarded for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place chilies. Judging will be by popular ballot, with all present participating, so please make enough for everyone (50-60 people) to get a spoonful (at least a gallon).

1. All entries must use beer (preferably homebrew) as an ingredient.
2. No commercially prepared chilies will be allowed.
3. All ingredients must be combined and cooked at the meeting, although individual ingredients, such as vegetables and meats, may be prepared beforehand (i.e., sliced n' diced).
4. All ingredients must pass inspection by the club veterinary officer.
5. No sabotaging of other contestants' chili will be permitted.
6. Chili recipes must be provided to BURP on request.
7. GOOD LUCK TO ALL!

## Treasurer's Chest

Doug Kruth (dkruth@us.oracle.com, 703.671.0817)

Club Finances for the period 1-APR-96 through 26-APR-96

### New Business

- Savings account with Washington Federal opened to earn the club 3% interest. Our checking account earns 2.5% interest.

### Old Business

- Spirit of Free Beer planning in progress

### Income Statement

4/1/96 Through 4/26/96

	4/1/96	4/26/96
Category		
Inc./Exp		
Income		
Membership +	\$70	
Promo +	\$243	
Donations +	\$103	
Receivable	(\$88)	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$328</b>	
Expenses		
Competition -	\$393	
Festival -	\$97	
Newsletter:		
Reproduction	\$41	
Total Newsletter	\$41	
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$531</b>	
<b>Total Inc/Exp</b>	<b>(\$203)</b>	

### BURP Account Balances

4/26/1996

Cash	\$0
Payable	\$0
Receivable	\$98
Savings	\$3,000
Checking	\$3,581
<b>Net Worth</b>	<b>\$6,679</b>

*What does all of this mean?*

Income - Funds received during the reporting period.

Expense - Expenses incurred and paid by the organization during the reporting period.

Accounts Payable - Expenses that we have incurred that have not been paid. Generally this will reflect a zero balance since we pay most if not all of our bills when these expenses are incurred.

Accounts Receivable - Receivables from individuals or vendors that owe us money. Again there should not be much activity here however I plan on developing a forecast model that would generate a figure here for membership renewals and estimated new memberships.

Cash - Cash on hand that has not made the bank yet. Petty cash.

Checking Balance - Just that. The balance of our checking account at the time of this report.

Net Worth - is the total of (our checking account balance + cash on hand + accounts receivable ) - accounts payable.

### Club Expense Policy

Expenses incurred by individuals for BURP will be reimbursed only when accompanied by an original receipt for the expense. There will be no exceptions to this policy. With our incorporation it will be even more important to document our cash flow for tax purposes.

Expenses in excess of \$50.00 that are not typical or recurring expenses (such as the newsletter) should be discussed with either Larry Koch or me before being incurred.

### Commercial Yeast Propagation Workshop for Homebrewers

On Saturday, June 1, 1996, 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm, American Type Culture Collection (ATCC) will present its second annual Yeast Propagation Workshop.

The course will cover basic microbiology behind fermentation, and how to grow and store yeast cultures at home. Participants will be able to take home five yeast strains (from more than 30 available) along with some basic yeast propagation equipment, like an Erlenmeyer flask, capped vials, and growth media. The workshop includes hands on propagation.

The workshop will take place at 12301 Parklawn Drive (2 blocks from Brew Masters/Near Twinbrook Metro Stop), Rockville, Maryland 20852

Cost is \$30.00 Individual/\$45.00 Couples, which includes 1 set of materials and 5 yeast strains)

e-mail kcarter@atcc.org to register (Sorry, they didn't include a telephone number)

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## Beer in China

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Abner Oakes

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For two weeks at the end of March, I and five other adults accompanied 21 kids on a tour of the People's Republic of China, spending time primarily in Beijing and Shanghai. While I was with a group of my students, I still had beer on the brain, worried about the bock I had fermenting at home and wondering what these cities had to offer in the way of barley beverages. The local beers, while cheap, were not particularly tasty, resembling a slightly more bitter Miller or Budweiser, but I hit the proverbial jackpot when, in an illegal Beijing newspaper put out for that city's "ex-pat" community, I saw an advertisement for the San Francisco Brewing Company.

Just a few months ago, Alex Wong, a native San Franciscan whose first brewpub is in that city by the Bay, moved to Beijing to open his second. With everything imported from the States and elsewhere--the three fermentation tanks were built for him in the US, and he pays big tariffs on all hops and other ingredients that he must bring in. Alex has not looked back, brewing fresh beer weekly, serving American food, and showing the likes of the NCAA Final Four games on the bar's big screen TV.

On the last night that I was in Beijing, two of us snuck out of the hotel and got over to the SFBC just as Alex was closing and heading off to hear a rock 'n' roll band that he wanted to play at his place. But puffing on a big cigar, Alex poured us a fine red ale and provided tastes of two of his other three beers: a hoppy IPA and something that he called a "dark ale." I liked the red ale the most, by the way: it had great color and a well balanced taste. Each ten ounce glass was a little more than \$3.

"The hardest part's been running the restaurant," Alex told me that night. "Brewing beer's been the easiest." He complained of hiring local help that didn't understand the food service standards that he'd learned in San Fran, but he was committed to Beijing--and teaching his staff--understanding the huge potential this city possesses for any businessman. If the Hard Rock Cafe and TGI Friday's and Kentucky Fried Chicken, which has a huge complex right across from Tiananmen Square, can make it in Beijing, why can't the San Francisco Brewing Company?

As we drained the last of our ales, it was obvious Alex was anxious to get out from behind the bar and hear that band, and I was sorry that I hadn't come earlier or on another evening: there were more beers to drink, more stories to hear about brewing in Beijing. But no doubt Alex will be there when I return with another group of kids--my school's beginning a long-term relationship with another in the Chinese capital--and next time I'll take a whole afternoon off, sending the cherubs off to the Forbidden City with other chaperones and settling into a stool at the SFBC for a few hours of blissful, beerful peace.

If you're going to Beijing, the San Francisco Brewing Company is in the West Wing of the Asia Jinjiang Hotel--although I think it's now called the Asia Beijing--at 8 Xinzhong Xijie, Gongti Bei Lu. My cabbie seemed to have no problem finding it.

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## SPIRIT OF FREE BEER IV

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### DROP-OFF POINTS

Bill Ridgely

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The following homebrew shops have kindly offered to serve as drop-off points for entries to the **Spirit of Free Beer IV** homebrew competition. Entries may be dropped off any time up to the entry deadline.

Competition entry forms are available at all of these locations. Please patronize the shops that patronize our club.

#### Barley House

C/O John Cole  
2780 Metro Plaza  
Woodbridge, VA 22192  
703-494-7929

#### Brew America

C/O Miles Smith  
138 Church St. NE  
Vienna, VA 22180  
703-938-4805

#### Brew Masters I

C/O Reuben & Judy Rudd  
12266 Wilkens Ave  
Rockville, MD 20852  
301-984-9557

#### Brew Masters II

C/O Matt Young  
1017 Light St.  
Baltimore, MD 21230  
410-783-1258

#### Brew Pot

C/O Gene Thomas  
13031 11th St.  
Bowie, MD 20715  
301-805-6799

#### Flying Barrel

C/O Bob Frank  
111 S. Carroll St.  
Frederick, MD 21701  
301-663-4491

### BURPers Get Discounts

As Becky Pyle called around, collecting prizes for Spirit of Free Beer, one of our sponsors, Cairo Liquors (in DC) asked her to please remind everyone that they give a discount to BURP members.

Actually, this is a good time to remind you that your BURP membership card gets you discounts at many places around town. Most suppliers give BURP discounts, as do a few liquor stores like Cairo and the Brickskeller (tastings only).

Just remember to ask.

## Andy's European Beer Journal: Homebrewing in England, or "Anarchy in the UK"

Andy Anderson andy@fpusa.demon.co.uk

Erma Bombeck is wrong; the grass is NOT always greener on the other side of the septic tank, at least if you're a homebrewer. I have lived in Bath, England for the past 1.5 years. I was an avid homebrewer when I lived back in Washington, DC, so since the U.S. Government paid to have my belongings shipped to England, I took all my brewing equipment with me. For almost the first year I was here I did not brew because it was just too easy to get good beer. I have to walk all of 100 yards to get to my local (my first priority in choosing the house which I rent was its proximity to good pubs) and fine English bitter. Thanks to the wonderful European Union laws, I can take my car via the ferry to Belgium and then literally fill the car up with the best of Belgian beer. A friend who lives 200 yards from my house lends me his old coal cellar for my "Belgian Beer Cellar". To top it all off, I can always go to the closest U.S. Air Force Base and stock up on cases of Budweiser Budvar when I feel a craving for a lager. (For those of you who may not have had the opportunity to try a Budvar - it sure ain't Bud! Budvar is one of the world's greatest lagers, but it cannot be sold in the U.S. because of trade mark laws.)

Once I moved into my house, I turned the conservatory into a shrine to beer. I put up beer mirrors as well as the ribbons I had won in U.S. homebrew contests. In a sense, it became my vanity room. When friends saw the ribbons, they asked if I still homebrewed so I showed them how half of my two car garage was devoted to storing all my homebrew equipment. When they asked to try my beers, I gave them samples I had smuggled into England with the rest of my equipment. However, when they asked what I had brewed since living in England, I could only make feeble excuses about "not having enough time". Eventually, the abuse became too much and I decided that even though I was living in a land of milk and honey (well ... maybe a land of beer and cider), it was finally time to brew once again.

I was told that homebrewing was big in the UK, and this seemed true based on the number of homebrew shops I saw advertised in the local phone-book. However, my experience to date has left me somewhat jaded. It seems that the vast majority of homebrewing is simply kits sold by chemists (drug stores) to beat the tax on alcohol. In the U.S., beer from a bar or restaurant tends to be 2-3 times more expensive than that which you pay in the grocery or liquor store. In England, the grocery store charges about the same as the pub. The UK has an extremely high tax on packaged alcohol. The cheapest 6-pack equivalent costs \$6 to \$7 at a minimum. This results in many "homebrewers" fermenting liquids solely to get cheap alcohol. Not surprisingly, homebrew ends up with a rather poor reputation.

It would not surprise me if the homebrewing scene in the England of today is similar to the U.S. of twenty years ago. These are some of my observations.

- While some people mash, the vast majority use kits, and many of these kits are the equivalent of the beer-in-a-sack presents we may receive as Christmas presents from our non-brewing friends.

- The majority of homebrew stores only sell kits and dried yeast for making cheap English bitter. The closest store to Bath with any selection at all is located in Farnborough which is 100 miles away. I went there once, but I don't fancy that drive again.

- There are a couple of mail order stores, but they are relatively rare and Royal Mail costs are somewhat expensive for shipping. - The majority of homebrewed beers are just variations of the standard cask-conditioned ales one finds at a pub. There is very little diversity in brewing styles.

- You can find wonderful Maris Otter pale ale malt if you wish to make English-style ales, but don't even think of buying any other country's malts. Belgium may only be a train ride away, but their malted barley cannot be found in England.

- Don't bother bringing over a CO2 tank; you won't be able to get it filled. One company has the monopoly for selling bottled CO2 and they will not fill a tank unless they own the tank and you rent it from them. If that wasn't bad enough, they will not rent you a "food grade" CO2 tank because they don't want to aggravate the pub trade. To get a CO2 tank, you have to get cozy with a pub landlord.

- The freshness of ingredients can be absolutely abysmal. Hops are placed in ordinary plastic bags, stored at room temperature, and usually do not even have Alpha Acid values or packaging dates listed. Malted grains are pre-crushed with no sell-by dates listed. With regards to yeast, a Wyeast packet I recently bought mail-order was eight months old, and the company was proud that they even stocked a liquid yeast. - There are almost no homebrew clubs in the entire country, although the Craft Brewing Association has made some attempts to form them. - The only homebrew contests I have heard about are sponsored by kit companies and to enter a beer you must have made it from one of their kits.

OK, enough of the negative waves. I have brewed a few batches over here, but it's difficult. Bath has lousy brewing water. It's quite hard and also has elevated iron levels. My house has a water filtration system which makes the water much better to drink, but it also adds a lot of salt. This means the water may be fine to drink, but it ruins a lot of beer styles. When I first got back into brewing over here, I sent many e-mails back and forth with A.J. DeLange on water chemistry issues. However, the only thing which really seems to work is when I drive to the US Air Force base and buy 25 gallons of bottled Scottish mineral water.

Now, for the actual brewing process. I use a Cajun Cooker with a cut-up keg as a boiler and mash in a picnic cooler. Given that I'm using propane, all my brewing operations are outside. Unfortunately, it rains a lot in Bath. So, I rig up a huge tarp suspended by various ropes and ladders to keep me and the brewing equipment relatively rain-free. However, all this takes time to set up. Brewing is now a two day operation. 1/2 day to set up, 1 day to brew, and 1/2 day to take everything apart and clean up. The good thing is the weather is quite mild, meaning you can brew outside all year round. Unfortunately, I forgot that occasionally the temperature can get below freezing. Around Christmas time I visited a friend down in Devon and forget to bring inside two carboys which I had left full of sanitizing

solution out in the garden . When I returned a few days later they were frozen glass shards. It then took another month to find a source of glass carboys in a size larger than one gallon.

When I finally brewed my first beer, a pale ale, I decided to keg it since I didn't want to be bothered with bottling. However, I could not get any CO2 to dispense the beer. I ended up just bringing a keg of the beer and my beer engine to a party and serving the entire keg. This is fine for parties, but it means that I can't enjoy the keg over a period of weeks because of oxidation.

Well, that's enough of my personal whining. I'm more concerned with the English homebrewers who really do care about their product. The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) recently came out with some statements to the effect that homebrewers should be taxed at the same rate as commercial beer. Heresy! CAMRA also dropped the homebrewing column from their monthly newsletter. If CAMRA starts campaigning against homebrewing, homebrewers will truly be in a bind. Fortunately, in the manner of all good politicians, CAMRA administration recently backed down from their anti-homebrewing stance and started soft-shoeing the whole issue.

However, there is reason to hope for a better future. The UK Homebrew Digest ([uk-homebrew-request@rhubnc.ac.uk](mailto:uk-homebrew-request@rhubnc.ac.uk), to subscribe body of message = SUBSCRIBE DIGEST) just celebrated their one- year birthday. So, there are people out here in Britain who are interested in making better beer. I personally believe that the U.S. HBD was quite influential in raising the cognizance of homebrewers in the States. I can only hope that it does the same in Britain.

There is also a new organization called the Craft Brewing Association (CBA). It's the national homebrewers association for Great Britain. They are actively trying to get homebrewing clubs started around the country. They are also attempting to persuade CAMRA not to take such a militant tone with homebrewers. For those of you with WWW access, check out the UK-Homebrew web page at <http://sun1.bham.ac.uk/GraftonG/homebrew.htm>

With regards to ingredients, there is a company called BruPaks whose products sell through many homebrew stores around the country including the few mail order stores. These products seem to have a higher level of quality than the majority of items normally seen on store shelves over here. Hopefully, this trend of improvement in ingredients will continue.

To sum up, I believe the standard and goals of homebrewing are greater when the reason for brewing is to make the good beer which just isn't commercially available. While the state of craft brewing in the U.S. is quite healthy these days, it wasn't a couple of decades ago when homebrewing came back into vogue. I haven't even mentioned Belgium, but there is almost no homebrewing over there simply because of the diverse selection of truly marvelous beers without the crippling tax found in England. So just remember, you may envy the English for their beer, but they may sigh wistfully when sampling the best of U.S. homebrew.

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## Secondary Fermentation

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Primary fermentation is the several days of fervent action that causes our airlock to bubble and gives us hours of entertainment (actually, if you find yourself staring at the airlock for that long, you really should seek professional help). When the airlock stops bubbling most of the yeast and trub have settled out. Some people like to do a "secondary fermentation" which involves racking the wort into another bucket, sealing, inserting the airlock, and allowing several more days or even a few weeks for fermentation to completely finish and for the wort to clear. We don't just let it sit in the primary for all that time because the settled yeast would autolyze. By racking into secondary, most of this dormant yeast is eliminated, minimizing autolysis and any resulting off-flavors. The drawbacks to secondary fermentation are increased work and more chance for oxidation and contamination.

If secondary fermentation is too long (over a month for ales; over a year for lagers), it is possible for so much yeast to drop out that the little remaining will be unable to properly condition the bottled brew. At the very least, it will lengthen conditioning time.

Secondary fermentation is necessary only if you're particular about clear beer. You can add finings in the secondary, or simply let time do the work. If clarity is not a consideration, you needn't bother with a secondary. You might end up with more sediment in each bottle, but so what? Sure, this yeast might autolyze in the bottle, but the small amount that's there to autolyze will not produce enough chemicals to change the beer's flavor. However, if you're kegging, a secondary is strongly recommended - you don't want trub in your keg's dip tube.

There's a product called a Fermentap that ostensibly eliminates the need for secondary fermentation. It enables fermentation in an upside-down carboy, so that our fermenter is now tapered on the bottom instead of the top. I won't explain the technical details, but the basic operation is that as the trub and yeast settle down, they can be drained off, so racking into a secondary container is not necessary in order to remove and/or store the slurry. At bottling time, the carboy can be uprighted, and the wort can be primed in and bottled from it. Thus opportunities for oxidation and contamination are minimized. Professionals use this principle. If you've ever toured a microbrewery, you've probably seen fermentation vessels where the top half is cylindrical and the bottom half is conical, so that it comes to a point on the bottom. This enables trub to slide all the way down. Unfortunately, carboys are not perfectly cylindroconical - they are mostly cylindrical; the angle of the tapering near the neck is not nearly steep enough to allow all the trub to slide into the neck when the carboy is inverted. Take it from one who knows - I have a Fermentap, and the only way to make proper use of it is to alternately swirl the carboy and drain off the little trub in the neck several times, which is tedious. The fault lies not in the Fermentap, but in the shape of the carboy. There is a way to use TWO Fermentaps and TWO carboys in such a way as to get successful racking as well as minimized contamination and oxidation, but this involves more equipment and expense (another Fermentap and carboy, and a CO2 bottle for replacing the receiving carboy's air with CO2 before racking), as well as more work.



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