

# BURP NEWS

THIS SPACE  
FOR RENT

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

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| December 17,<br>6:00 PM         | Meeting/ Belgian Beer Contest/Holiday<br>Banquet at Oxon Hill |
| December 27                     | Deadline for January BURP News                                |
| January 18, 1997<br>3:30 p.m.   | Meeting at Clipper City                                       |
| February 11,<br>1997 at 6:00 PM | <b>Elections/ Meeting / Stout Competition</b><br>at Oxon Hill |
| March ???                       | <b>Perhaps at your house? Call Larry<br/>Koch.</b>            |
| April 19, 1997                  | Meeting at Langlie home in Silver<br>Spring                   |



*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 22315-3509. Articles for the BURP news should be delivered on diskette or paper to the Editor (address is in the masthead), uploaded to the Enlightened BBS at (703)370-9528, or e-mailed to Bruce Feist at [bfeist@mnsinc.com](mailto:bfeist@mnsinc.com). Microsoft Word or text format is preferred.

## Koch's Koncepts

Larry Koch

Some of you might believe that I haven't submitted a column for the Burp News since... well, maybe I shouldn't mention a month. That's just not the case. In fact, I sent in an October column. (Okay, so maybe I caused it to be lost in cyberspace.) Well, here I am, ready to accept your love and praise.

Our Holiday Banquet at the Oxon Hill JayCee Center is planned as a dish to pass event. It's always been one of our finest culinary events and with your participation that tradition will continue. The scheduled competition is Belgian beers. As it turns out, the emerging theme beer of the meeting is cask conditioned ales served from hand pumps. It appears we'll have the best of three worlds.

Our election of officers has been postponed from the January to the February meeting due to the remote location of the January event at the Clipper City brewery in Lithicum, Maryland. Now is the time to consider nominations. Who do you think would be good at that job? Or, do you want to throw your own hat in the ring?

Well, I still haven't brewed since July. Some of you might consider that a positive. I hope to have a cask ale ready for the holiday banquet. That'll be easy. It only takes a couple of days, right Tom?

### New Members

A big BURP welcome this month to **Jeffrey Brown** of Riverdale, **John** and **Ann-Marie Dittmann** of Annandale, **Jonathan Feist** of Fairfax, **Scott Gruber** of the District, **Clement Mesavage** of Fairfax, and **Laura Whitestone** of Riverdale.

John & Ann-Marie come to us from New England, where John is a member of several homebrew clubs and an officer in the largest and most well known, the **Boston Wort Processors**. Jonathan is the brother of 1/2 of our newsletter editor. He's already making significant contributions to the *BURP News*.

We look forward to meeting everyone at the Holiday Banquet!

### Semler Homebrew Equipment Donated

The family of late BURP President and founding member Ralph Semler has graciously donated all of Ralph's homebrewing equipment and supplies to the BURP Club. Included in the donation is a large number of Coke-style kegs, brewing pots, fermentation vessels, and carboys, plus several significant items, including a 4-tap keg refrigerator, a Corona grain mill, and a full CO<sub>2</sub> setup including a 5lb CO<sub>2</sub> tank and regulator.

All of this equipment is to be made available to BURP members after it is inventoried and sorted, most likely through a silent auction at a future meeting.

BURP is very grateful for this donation and thanks in particular Ralph's widow **Margot Semler** for her generosity. BURP has also made a monetary contribution to the family's designated charity in Ralph's honor.

## Education Update

Wendy Aaronson

The BJCP Exam Preparation Class is over, and the comments from the 19 participants were overwhelmingly favorable. A large majority of the participants took the exam, and I'm confident that these individuals will join the ranks of the BJCP in the coming months. The success of the class had a lot to do with the format laid out by Scott Bickham and the high quality presentations by the tasting session leaders. Many thanks to the following for their time and efforts:

Bill Ridgely - Porters and Stouts and Wheat beers and Lambics.

Tom Cannon - Strong ales, Old Ales, and Barleywines and Belgian ales

Rick Garvin - Kolsch, Alt, and Cream ales

Polly Goldman - Lambics

Randy Paul - Wheat beers

Rob Mullin - Amber and Dark Lagers

Jim Busch and A.J. Delange- Light Lagers

Delano Dugarm and Bill Szymczak - Pale ales, IPAs, and Bitters

Of course, a special thanks goes to Scott whose contributions to this class were especially noteworthy. Scott not only provided insights on the exam and helped participants focus on what they needed to know to pass the exam, but also led four other tasting sessions: Doctor Beer, Kolsch, Alt, and Cream Ale, Amber and Dark Lagers, and Strong ales, Old Ales, and Barleywines.

The other aspect that led to the success of this class was the hospitality of Robert and Anne Stevens and Doug Kruth and Lynne Ragazzini, who hosted the Maryland and Virginia tasting sessions, respectively. Their willingness to accommodate the weekly sessions over the 2 month period certainly reduced my organization headaches for which I'm eternally grateful.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the continuing support of local homebrew shops, BrewMasters and Brew America. BrewMasters offered discounts on recommended reading books and hosted 3 of the general sessions. At Brew America, we were able to inaugurate the beautiful new classroom facility for the Belgian Ale session.

Although the duration and scope of this class was, at times, a challenge to organize, everyone's assistance and cooperation made it worthwhile. If elected as Minister of Education next year, I guarantee that this class will continue to be a part of the education program.



**BURP Finances**

Doug Kruth

Category	11/1/96	11/24/96
	<b>Inflows</b>	
<i>Events +:</i>		
Baltimore	\$300.00	
Cider Trip '96	\$7.50	
<b>Total Events +</b>		\$307.50
Interest Earned		\$6.13
Dues		\$460.00
Donations +		\$178.00
<b>Total Inflows</b>		\$951.63
<b>Outflows</b>		
Education -		\$166.34
<i>Events -:</i>		
Baltimore	\$525.00	
<b>Total Events -</b>		\$525.00
Meeting		\$10.00
<i>Membership -:</i>		
General & Admin	\$5.95	
<b>Total Membership -</b>		\$5.95
Drawing Prizes -		\$177.93
<b>Total Outflows</b>		\$885.22
<b>Overall Total</b>		\$66.41

**BURP Account Balances**

11/24/1996

Cash	\$33.00
Payable	\$0
Receivable	\$250.00
Savings	\$3,041.88
Checking	\$2,694.06
<b>Net Worth</b>	\$6,018.94

**Competition Notes**

Dave &amp; Becky Pyle

**January's Competition: Pale Ale**

Style Guidelines:

<u>Style</u>	<u>Gravity</u>	<u>IBUs</u>
English Ordinary	1033-1038	20-35
English Special	1038-1045	28-46
English Extra Special	1045-1052	30-55
Classic English Pale Ale	1044-1056	20-40
American Pale Ale	1044-1056	20-40
India Pale Ale	1050-1070	40-60

**English Ordinary:** Gold to copper color. Medium bitterness. Light to medium body and low to medium residual malt sweetness. Diacetyl and fruity-ester properties should be minimized in this form of bitter. Lovibond degrees 8-12.

**English Special:** More robust than ordinary bitter. It has medium body and medium residual sweetness. In addition, the special bitter has more hop character than ordinary bitter. Lovibond degrees 12-14.

**English Extra Special:** Medium to strong hop qualities in aroma, flavor and bitterness. The residual malt sweetness of this richly flavored, full-bodied bitter is more pronounced than in other bitters. Lovibond degrees 12-14.

**Classic English Pale Ale:** Gold to copper color. Displays English-variety hop character. High hop bitterness, flavor and aroma should be evident. This medium bodied pale ale has low to medium maltiness. Low caramel is allowable. Fruity-ester flavors and aromas are moderate to strong. Chill haze is allowable at cold temperatures. Diacetyl (butterscotch character) should be at very low levels or not perceived. Lovibond degrees 4-11.

**American Pale Ale:** Ranges from gold to light copper in color. The style is characterized by American-variety hops used to produce high hop bitterness, flavor and aroma. American pale ales have medium body and low to medium maltiness. Low caramel character is allowable. Fruity ester flavor and aroma should be moderate to strong. Diacetyl should be absent or present at very low levels. chill haze is allowable at cold temperatures. Lovibond degrees 4-11.

**India Pale Ale:** Gold to deep copper color. Characterized by intense hop bitterness with a high alcohol content. A high hopping rate and the use of water with high mineral content results in a crisp, dry beer. This ale has a full, flowery hop aroma and may have a strong hop flavor (in addition to the hop bitterness). Medium maltiness and body. Fruity-ester flavors and aromas are moderate to very strong. Chill haze is allowable at cold temperatures. Lovibond degrees 8-14.

### \*\*\*Don't forget: December's Competition: Belgian

Style Guidelines:

Style	Gravity	IBUs
Belgian Ales	1044-1054	20-30
Strong	1062-1120	16-30
Double	1060-1070	18-25
Triple	1080-1095	18-25
Oud bruin	1045-1060	15-25
Oud bruin (with fruit)	1045-1060	15-25
Lambic	1044-1056	12-16
Gueuze	1044-1056	12-16
Fruit	1040-1072	15-21
White	1044-1055	15-22

**Belgian Ales:** Pale to brown. Bitterness, hop flavor and aroma should be noticeable, Low to medium esters. Low malt aroma, toasted malt flavors ok. Medium body. No diacetyl or alcohol flavors. Medium carbonation and easy drinkability.

**Strong Ales:** Pale to dark brown. Low hop bitterness and aroma ok. Medium to high esters. Phenols ok. Medium body. Medium to high carbonation.

**Double:** Dark amber to brown. Sweety malt aroma. Faint hop aroma ok. Medium to full body. Malty plum-like flavors. Medium to high carbonation.

**Triple:** Light to pale. Low esters. Malty and hop aroma ok. Malt sweetness in flavor ok. Medium to full body. High carbonation.

**Oud bruin:** Red to deep copper or brown. Acidic aroma with some fruitiness. Flavor sweet, sour and fruity. Lactic acetic and oak flavors ok. Medium to full body. Medium carbonation.

**Oud bruin (with fruit):** Same as above with additions of raspberries and cherries or other fruit.

#### Lambic:

**Gueuze:** No color specifications. Clean sourness. No hop bitterness. High carbonation in Gueuze. Light body. Lactic character predominate in flavor and aroma.

**Fruit:** No color specifications. As above, unusually carbonated. Should be noticeable color from fruit adjunct. Intensely fruit flavored and sourness should be very noticeable.

**White:** Yellow to gold. Cloudy when chilled. Coriander flavor and mild acidity. Wheat and bitter orange peels flavors desirable. Mild hop flavor ok. Medium to high carbonation.

### Competition Schedule for the Upcoming Year

January	Pale Ale
February	Stout
March	Alt
April	Bock
May	Pilsner
June	Wheat
July	Brown Ale
August	Indian Pale Ale
September	Oktoberfest/Marzen
October	Weird Beer
November	Belgian
December	Holiday Banquet - No competition held



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## 1996 BURP DC Pub Crawl Recap

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Bret Wortman  
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The 1996 BURP DC Pub Crawl was a success. Nearly 30 BURP members and friends converged on Virginia Beverage Company in Old Town Alexandria on Nov. 9 to begin a tour of area brewpubs. All transportation during the crawl occurred on metro trains, so this dictated some obvious omissions to the schedule (Sweetwater Tavern & Dominion were both too far from metro lines to walk).

VBC welcomed the group with open arms. We arrived around noon and were directed to the restaurant's mezzanine which had been set aside for our exclusive use. We were also provided with a dedicated server who did a wonderful job of dealing with the questions and demands of over 25 dedicated beer geeks. Assistant brewer Ed Heid and incoming head brewer Vince Falcone took our group through VBC's brewhouse and talked about the up and down sides of their equipment as well as the brewing process itself.

Some of the favored brews at VBC included the smoked beer (GABF Bronze medal winner) which, fortunately, was available that day. While its smoked character was described as "overdone" by some, my informal and unscientific poll said it was the favorite. Also worth mentioning was VBC's bock, which had some definite high alcoholic characteristics, but was a very clean, polished, drinkable beer.

VBC's food, beers, and hospitality were exemplary, and they provided a fantastic kickoff to our tour. New manager Addison Hall and everyone who were part of making us so welcome deserve a big BURP salute. Thanks also to Kevin Tracy who was extremely cooperative the first time I tried to put this event together unsuccessfully.

Leaving VBC, the group headed into DC to try out Cap City II at Union Station. We had not managed to make any contact with Cap City prior to the day before the crawl, and were told that the brewers would all be off for the day. Our expectation was a quick in and out for a single beer and then on to Bardo.

When we arrived, the wait staff and manager set up a large table for us, brought complimentary pretzels for the group even though we weren't ordering lunches, and Bill Madden, head brewer, showed up at our table to welcome us. He had been in the brewhouse anyway working on changing over a serving tank and so sat down, chatted with the group for a good half hour before taking us on a brewhouse tour in two groups. We were treated to tastes of several Cap City brews right off the fermenters including an oatmeal stout, helles bock, porter, alt, and an English pale ale that should be on tap by the time you read this (the porter will follow shortly thereafter).

Crawlers enjoyed the tart but full character of the harvest ale, the British hop aroma and flavor in the bitter, and the nutty toastiness of the brown ale. Some critics noticed hints of DMS and diacetyl. The harvest ale was an interesting brew, made roughly from equal parts wheat, rye, and oats, flaked barley and some crystal malt with 2-row pale malt as the base.

Bill's brewhouse tour showed some of the potential problems that can happen with a new equipment installation, including fermenter problems and cleaning hassles. I'm sure none will forget the circumcised fermenter. Bill's hospitality helped make the stop more enjoyable than we'd hoped.

We proceeded to Bardo Rodeo, where everyone was eagerly anticipating a taste of Sierra Nevada Celebration Ale. Four pitchers arrived along with a smattering of Bardo beers. Before long, we were offered a tour of the brewhouse, which most of us accepted. One of the largest operations in the area, it also had produced what the group decided were some uncharacteristically clean beers. The Abbey Ale was very fruity and dry but some thought the body a bit thin, while the Buffalo stout had satisfying qualities of both sweet and dry stouts.

We hadn't expected the kind of universal quality we got from the house beers at Bardo, and everyone left feeling that it would have won the award for most-surprising or most-above-expectations.

We then walked down to Blue 'N' Gold, where we'd hoped to arrive around 5 or 6:00 PM. Unfortunately, by 8:00, they'd had to give our tables away. We were directed to the bar to slake any remaining thirst we had by general manager Dennis Gease, who seemed less than thrilled that we were there during dinner rush. As the pub crawl organizer, I should have called Blue -N- Gold and notified them that we would be arriving late. I was remiss in not performing this common courtesy, and for that I offer Dan and everyone at Blue -N- Gold my sincere and heartfelt apologies.

We retired to the bar and were surprised when most of those ordering the cask-conditioned Union Jack sent their orders back for replacement. The beer was so sour and undrinkable that none of us could even begin to judge it critically. We later learned that the keg had been on the pump for 13 days. As I believe BNG uses a cask breather to keep a blanket of CO<sub>2</sub> on their ales and therefore prolong their lives, this is not necessarily too long on the tap. Unfortunately, the beer was also on the warm side, and this, according to local experts, may accelerate a cask ale's deterioration.

We pointed out to the bartender that the beer had definitely turned. He told us that maybe we just didn't understand how cask-conditioned beer is supposed to taste.

Fortunately, Vlad Ponomarev happened to still be standing at the bar and we asked him for a quick brewhouse tour, which he gladly provided. We settled our bar tab and left, not a single one of us happy with the overall experience.

We left BNG and decided to grab a bite to eat at Hard Times. Chili and more Celebration Ale helped turn a potential low ending to a good day into cause for...well...Celebration. They readily accommodated our group and both service and food were outstanding.

Over dinner, it appeared that VBC won everyone's hearts as the favorite brewpub restaurant. Bardo surprised everyone and became our favorite brewpub tavern. We enjoyed the in-depth tour and novel brews at Cap City II as well, while BNG dropped to the bottom of the ranking due to both hospitality and quality problems.

In short, the BURP DC Pub Crawl '96 was a roaring success, and those of you who missed it, stay tuned for the Spring Crawl '97. Planning for the spring crawl will begin shortly, anyone interested in helping, contact Bret Wortman at 703-369-0558 or [bret\\_wortman@stratus.com](mailto:bret_wortman@stratus.com).

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## BURP Takes Baltimore

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John Dittmann  
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On a bright and crisp November 23rd morning a hardy group of BURPsters gathered in the West Falls Church Metro station parking lot. A great odyssey was being prepared - an organized search for Baltimore's best beer. Consumption had already started as the Bus pulled out of the parking lot. Next stop, the Greenbelt Metro station.

Or so we thought.

In fact the next stop was somewhere on the Anacostia Parkway as the closing of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway caused a formidable backup. Luckily the quick thinking crawlers turned this temporary stop into the unofficial first stop of the trip and more malted beverages were served.

We finally reached our exit and wound our way to 495 and the Greenbelt Metro station. There we found the rest of our contingent, shivering in the parking lot. This infusion of fresh crawlers led to more beer being served as the bus moved off on its way to Baltimore.

First stop in Baltimore was the Brimstone Brewing Company on Brewers Hill in the Canton section of town. Located in part of the old National Bohemian brewing plant Brimstone is keeping brewing tradition alive in that part of town. Brimstone is producing ales on a regular basis (Honey Red, Raspberry Porter and Stone Beer) and will release Big Strong Barleywine in the very near future. Several bottles of the barleywine, sans labels, were enjoyed.

Owner/Brewer Marc Tewey, amazed that we were there ready to drink beer at 10 am, led us on a tour of his establishment. After a quick mention of the mash tun and boil kettle Marc described how he made his stone beer and his struggle to find the right stones.

The stones are heated in a half barrel that resembles Swiss cheese with all the holes cut in it, then dropped in the brew kettle. When the hot stones hit the wort sugars are caramelized and coat the stones. Later these stones are added to the conditioning tank where the burnt sugars reintegrate with the beer and add caramel and a slight smoke flavor to the beer. Many stones were turned into sand before Tewey consulted with a geologist and purchased the right kind of rocks. Tewey uses American hops, mostly Cascades, in the Stone Beer. Many six-packs of the Stone Beer, along with some barleywine and other selections, left with us.

Tewey started bottling the Brimstone products in October using a bottling line scavenged from parts found at breweries and soda plants. These pieces were assembled by George Kalwa, a retired G Heilemann employee. Kalwa helped locate parts, its rumored that some of them came illicitly, and assembled them into a working bottling line. Tewey and the other Brimstone workers helped Kalwa and gained an understanding of how the line worked, and more importantly, how to fix it when it broke.

While at the Brimstone Brewery a small group of crawlers went off to explore the shell of the old National Bohemian brewery. The brewery has been mostly gutted but the grain mill and fermentation tanks are still in place in the upper reaches of the building. The tallest part of the building, about seven floors up, where the grain mill is located, also afforded a spectacular view of Fort McHenry and Baltimore.

Second stop was The Brewer's Art, a recently opened restaurant that alas has not gotten their brewery operating yet. Located in Baltimore's first fireproof building Brewer's Art is a first rate restaurant offering dishes such as fig-stuffed quail and wild mushroom lasagna, and a line up of interesting appetizers. We enjoyed the Tapas platter and the Alewife platter of breads, vegetable and cheeses, but unfortunately could not try the garlic fries.

Volker Stewart showed off the building's elegant upstairs bar, parlor and dining rooms, and a basement that is funky with several alcoves for privacy. The ten hectoliter brewing system is located in the back of the dining area with fermenters in the basement. Stewart said he plans to brew Belgian styles with the first batches a Belgian pale ale and a dubbel. Stewart hopes to begin brewing within a couple weeks and hopes to begin serving his products before Christmas. Currently Brewer's Art serves an extensive selection of bottled Belgian beer and a selection of beer on tap that includes Rodenbach Red, Wild Goose Oatmeal Stout and Sierra Nevada Celebration Ale. Many crawlers had the Rodenbach for their first beer at Brewer's Art.



Next stop was the Baltimore Brewing Company where Theo de Groen gave a tour of the automated 17-barrel brewing system. The BBC brews German-style beers using either a step-infusion or single decoction mash. On tap were a Märzen, Dunkles, Pils, Weizen and Weizenbock. A rauchbock was spotted in a lagering tank and should be available soon. It was said that BBC had the most professional-looking brewing set-up we saw on the crawl.



The BBC was our lunch stop where many enjoyed the venison goulash and others enjoyed a burger or mesquite-grilled chicken breast sandwich. When we entered the BBC we found two long tables set up and ready for us. At each place setting was a souvenir pin, a very nice touch. When we returned from our tour of the brewery we found pitchers of BBC beer waiting for us. We pulled ourselves away from the Theo's place and moved on to the Wharf Rat.

Many people chose to enjoy a walk instead of taking the Bus to the Wharf Rat. Some took a direct route walking down Pratt Street, but others took the scenic route along Baltimore's inner harbor. This route took the group by Baltimore's National Aquarium and past a pair of llamas at one corner. Refreshed by this walk in the brisk air the group entered the Wharf Rat ready for some of Oliver's cask-conditioned ales.

We were greeted by a special of three mugs of ale for three dollars. Because of our official crawl status this special was amended to one mug for one dollar. The special draft at the Rat was Oliver's Christmas ale. A spiced ale that was available on both a firkin draft system and regular cask system. Also on tap was a cream ale which turned out to be a misnomer. It was actually a bitter that was served on nitrogen giving the ale a rich, creamy head. Brewer/Owner Bill Oliver said the beer was not selling when he called it a bitter so he changed the name and it has turned into a success. Ah, marketing.

Oliver treated small groups to tours of his operation which is contained in cramped cellar. He said his ales are cellared at 50 degrees and by the time they travel from the cellar to tap they have reached prime serving temperature of 54 degrees. While at the Wharf Rat some crawlers played pool, others watched the football game, some purchased souvenirs, but all enjoyed fine English ales.

We made our way back onto the bus, waiting briefly for a straggler, and wound our way through the streets of the city to Baltimore's smallest and oldest brewpub, Sisson's.

Brewer Jack Callanan gave the group a tour of the brewery where we were all amazed how cramped the system was. The beer at Sisson's is brewed, fermented and conditioned just a short distance from where it is served. On tap was Gunga Din IPA (with a robust 39 IBUs), Old Yeats Irish Red Ale, Raspberry wheat, Edgar Allen Porter, the Marble Golden Ale, and the Stockade Amber Ale, an APA made with 100 percent Cascade hops. Callanan brought out one of the first kegs of Sisson's Christmas Ale for the crawlers. This was an very nicely

balanced beer spiced with cinnamon, ginger, orange and honey. Also on tap was Sisson's own Root Beer for those who had consumed enough beer for the day.

For others there was our last stop of the crawl - The Oxford Brewing Company. Located just south of Baltimore in Linthicum, Oxford was the only brewery we visited outside of the city proper.

Brewer William Bohrer gave us a tour of the 15 barrel brewery and said Oxford produces around 6,000 barrels per year. Brewing at Oxford is a labor-intensive operation, almost the opposite of the situation at the Baltimore Brewing Company. Bohrer described a situation where the brewers had to unload bags of malt from a truck, load it on pallets then store it. When ready to brew they would take down a pallet from the racks, carry the bags to the grain mill, grind it, load it back in the bags and carry it back to the mash tun.

Bohrer said large scale brewing was a learning process and they had to work at it before getting it right. "I had a full head of hair when I started," said the balding brewer.

Four beers were on tap for us; a Raspberry Wheat, IPA, Special Old Bitter and the Santa Class. Santa Class is a seasonal beer that changes style annually. This years version was a cherry porter. It was a very good porter with just a hint of cherry. Other beers receiving good comments were the Raspberry Wheat and the IPA.

As we left Oxford and boarded the bus bound for the DC area many crawlers were seen carrying full cups of Oxford beer onto the bus. This was just the thing to keep us lubricated on the ride home. We made our way safely home to DC, telling tales about the many beers and many adventures that had befallen us on the long day of beer drinking. The general consensus was the Baltimore crawl should be done again.

We said good-bye to the people getting off at the Greenbelt Metro station and continued on to West Falls Church. This was where things started getting dicey when jokes started bouncing around the bus. The last bit of beer was finished, we said good-bye to our bus driver and departed for home, ready for sleep after a long day of drinking and learning about beer.



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## Andy's European Beer Journal: Poperinge Hop Festival 1996

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Andy Anderson

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Every three years, on the third week-end in September, the Flemish town of Poperinge plays host to a huge festival all in honor of the hop. Poperinge is the Belgian hop capital with its 330 ha of hops being 75% of the total Belgian production of hops. The cultivation of hops in Poperinge dates back to the late Middle Ages. Poperinge used to be an important cloth-producing center but quarrels with the rival town of Ieper destroyed the cloth trade in Poperinge. The Abbey of Saint-Omer (in France) introduced the hop to the Poperinge soil and by the 15th century, it had become the major crop of Poperinge. In 1409 Count John the Fearless founded the Hop Corporation and Poperinge has been associated with hops ever since.

The Poperinge pageant in honor of the hop dates back to 1956. At that time it was envisaged that the festival would be an annual event. However, by 1960 spiraling costs dictated that the festival would only be held once every three years. To be politically incorrect, the Poperinge Hop Festival is like Mardi Gras in New Orleans, but without the tits and beads. Poperinge is a tiny little town, yet there are in excess of 1200 people, all in different colorful costumes, who perform in the grand parade on Sunday.

I had never heard of this Hop Festival until I attended the Great Belgian Beer Festival last November in Antwerp. Some of the people I met there had mentioned the Festival and recommended that I attend. When I found out it was only a triennial event, I just had to go this year. About six months ago I checked with a contact in Brussels about this Festival. At that time he told me that all the hotels in Poperinge were already completely booked. That really made me want to attend! I ended up staying all the way over in Ghent and taking the train to Poperinge, but it was worth it.

The Festival is a three day event, but it is Sunday, the final day, which is the really big day. Friday has brass bands playing in the evening and Saturday evening sees the election of the Hop Queen (Yes, the Hop Queen) but Sunday is when everything happens.

I started my Sunday by going to the Hop Museum where for BFr 100 you get a tour, see a film of hop pickers from days-gone-by, and get a glass of Hommel Bier. For those of you who may not have had a Hommel before, the beer is made in Poperinge and is, not surprisingly, one of the hoppiest Belgian ales you can find. No, you won't mistake it for a Sierra Nevada Celebration, but it is quite hoppy for a Belgian ale. Anyway, I found myself standing in line for a tour of the Hop Museum. The tours were offered in two languages: Flemish (Dutch) and French. The queue for the Flemish-language tours moved much faster because being in Flanders, the people don't cater much to the Walloonians and their French. But silly me remembered that I had studied French back in High School, so I just HAD to wait for the French tour. When I finally got the tour, I remembered that I don't speak French, started wandering around on my own, and eventually came out for my Hommel Bier.

Next, I moved on to the Grote Markt for a few beers. This is the main square in the town and it had several cafes facing onto the square. It was a lovely, sunny day, so I sat outside and had a few beers (Deconinck, Brugse Tripel, Hommel Bier, and Duchesse de Bourgogne for those of you who wonder if I take notes.)

Anyway, it turns out that my choice of cafes was quite propitious. The outside seating of the cafe was adjacent to a fenced-off area about 50' by 100ft in size with rows of hop vines on trellises. I thought they were just part of the general decorations of the town, as almost every shop had hops hanging from the doors and awnings. But at 2 PM a group of about 20 people, dressed in the hop-pickers' traditional costumes, arrived via horse-drawn carts. They then proceeded to take up seats inside the "hop field" and then lowered each hop vine individually and picked them clean over the next hour. Very illuminating, but I could see the real advantage once the mechanized hop-picker was invented.

I remained at my cafe table to see what would happen next. Then at around 3 PM the main parade began. This parade is the highlight of the whole Hop Festival, and my cafe table was right next to the parade route. (You see, there is an advantage to just sitting, drinking your beer, and allowing the world to come to you.) There were 41 different groups who performed in the parade. These ranged from brass bands, to children in costumes portraying flea-beetles and caterpillars, to the royal procession of the Hop Queen. There was even one parade group there representing Native American Indians from the state of Washington. Included in these 41 groups were 12 different floats illustrating different themes of the life cycle of the hop. I could see why the festival was only held triennially. This is a lot of effort for such a small town.

The parade lasted for about two hours. Once it ended, the crowd split up in two directions. The townspeople and other locals all went to a huge community center for a sit-down dinner and drinks. All the other guests went off to the marquee for their own beer festival. The marquee basically resembled a scaled-down Munchen Oktoberfest tent. While the marquee might not hold the 5000 of a Spaten tent, it did look like it could hold a thousand or so. However, your intrepid reporter went to the locals' dinner. Unfortunately, I was not granted access after the doorman's Flemish left me completely confused. I was then directed (in English) to the marquee.

(Uh-oh, here is where I get into trouble as I step onto my soapbox and begin to preach.) I went into the marquee and had two beers before catching a train back to Ghent. I would have been quite willing to stay longer, but for the choice of beer. There was only one beer you could buy in the marquee and that was Jupiler. For those of you not familiar with Jupiler, this experience would be analogous to going to the GABF in Denver and then drinking Bud all night. Jupiler is a mass-produced lager which is also one of the best selling beers in Belgium. Anheuser-Busch may be right: appealing to the least common denominator is paramount to success. OK, OK, no more preaching. So anyway, I took the train back to Ghent and visited a few of the good Belgian beer bars where I was able to finish the night off with a Bos Keun, an Abbay de Bonne- Esperance, and a Kasteel which washed the taste of Jupiler off my lips.

Jupiler comments aside, the Poperinge Hop Festival was an enjoyable experience. It is not so much a beer festival but rather the celebration of the hop itself. Watching an entire town celebrating this one plant was an inspiring event. For those of you who really like to plan ahead, the next Hop Festival will be held in Poperinge on September 19, 1999.

And now for a personal note. This may be the final column for "Andy's European Beer Journal". By the time you read this, I should already have moved back to Washington, DC. I am presently scheduled to return on 6 December. I have thoroughly enjoyed living in England for these past two years. It has been an extremely rewarding experience. I have also enjoyed writing this column for BURP. Hopefully, some of what I've written has proven useful or informative to those back in the States. I have enough notes to write a few more columns, but I don't know how appropriate that would be once my address becomes "Alexandria, VA" and not "Bath, England". In any event, I must leave you now in pursuit of a few last pints of research.

Cheers!

### **BURP Appears in New Publication - "Finding Fun & Friends in Washington"**

BURP is one of many organizations highlighted in the new 3rd edition of *Finding Fun & Friends in Washington - An Uncommon Guide to Common Interests*. The book, published by **Piccolo Press** in Alexandria, VA, contains listings for over 1,000 clubs, organizations, and classes available to DC-area residents.

The philosophy behind the book is to help residents find activities and programs of interest to them while building a network of new friends with similar interests. BURP certainly subscribes to this philosophy and is happy to be represented in the book's "Culinary" chapter.

BURP members who would like to purchase the book are offered a 30% discount by the publisher. To order a copy, simply send a check or money order for \$10.50 (regular price \$14.95) to **Piccolo Press**, 901 King Street, Suite 102, Alexandria, VA 22314. You can also contact them at **703-519-0376** or via e-mail to **piccolopr@aol.com**.

The company also offers a 30% discount on its other book, *Raising Your Child in Washington - A Guide for the Growing Years*, which is designed to help parents find the best doctors, schools, family activities, classes, and childcare options in the DC area. The price is \$11.00 (regular price \$15.95). The company will be happy to provide further details and a brochure on either publication.

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## MJ & BURP @ NGS = SRO

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Jim Tyndall

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On November 20<sup>th</sup>, Michael Jackson presented a lecture and beer tasting at the headquarters of the National Geographic Society to a sold out audience of 400 thirsty beer drinkers. After the lecture, which was held in the Society's auditorium, everyone adjourned to the cafeteria for the tasting session.

Fourteen of BURP's finest members volunteered to help serve the beers, which were provided by Maurice Coja of the Brickskeller. With bottle openers at the ready, and six-pack holders in hand, each BURPer delivered nine different beers on cue from Michael to their designated tables in mere seconds. These dedicated volunteers also helped empty the extra bottles that accidentally got opened and did a fantastic job of cleaning up after the event. BURP got a nice round of applause from the audience for their efforts in serving the sample beers, and many other compliments from the Society's Lecture staff and Director of Food Services.

My thanks to: Tim and Dot Artz, Bill Ridgely, Wendy Aaronson, Doug and Lynn Kruth, Scott Bickham, Polly Goldman, Jim Busch, Liz Pitts, Dan Brown, Klaus Heimburg, Jeff Brown (a long-time friend, co-worker, brewer and BURP's newest member), and Larry Koch (to whom I apologize for the mix up in parking) for helping to make Michael Jackson's lecture and tasting a terrific success.

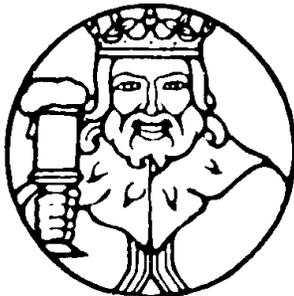
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### BURP Officers

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## Tasty Travels Goes to Bruce and Polly's Basement

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Jonathan Feist  
jonfeist@mnsinc.com

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Delano DuGarm has referred to my brother and sister-in-law as "beer survivalists." Indeed, their extensive collection is a source of great family pride. It occurred to me, when Bruce asked me to take care of their birds while he and Polly were off bushwhacking their way through a Peruvian rain forest, how the closest places to our homes are often overlooked, when we seek diversions. For example, in the nine years I lived in Boston, I visited the fantastic Museum of Fine Arts only four or five times. Similarly, in those dark months I spent locked in Bruce and Polly's basement, I somehow overlooked the wonderful storehouse of fine beers that had been so easily within my reach.

This week of bird-sitting gave me a perfect opportunity to revisit my old stomping grounds, and to finally do justice to the rich resources which I had neglected when their address was also my own. Through the eyes of a tourist, I was finally able to experience and appreciate the diverse, vibrant character of a unique watering hole.

Before beginning my account, I must make a final comment. There has been some negative feedback regarding my previous articles, criticizing their lack of technical information. While I reiterate that my relationship with beer is relatively informal, in an attempt to placate any riotous crowds that may be forming, I have herein included some technical tips regarding infection-control. Hopefully, this travel-log will appeal to a wider readership than have my previous submissions.

The vibrant, bustling atmosphere of Bruce and Polly's basement is a unique place on the planet, to be sure. The fantastic array of computers here is reminiscent of the starship Enterprise's bridge, similarly humming and beeping incoherently, taking up most of the available table space (though there is always enough exposed surface area to park a foaming pint). To ignore the dozens of cameras, hundreds of partially dissected computer components and thousands of comic books would be to be woefully incomplete in my description, as would it be to omit the rustic cobwebs and colorful piles of laundry at various stages of the process. Finally, the part of the basement dedicated to brewing would inspire — if not intimidate — the most sophisticated of tasty travelers. Two large chest freezers, modified to maintain perfect beer-storage temperatures, rest side by side like two vampiric coffins. Various carboys gurgle merrily alongside a collection of kegs containing their yeast-brethren's projects, the group occasionally infiltrated by a zymurgic imposter of home-crafted soda.

Variety is the name of the game here, and throughout the week I did my best to sample as many of the brews as possible. I counted over forty different varieties of bottled beer, and at least seven on tap, representing breweries from all over the world.

My tasting began with a bottle of Celis White, which I have always liked (though I generally gravitate towards darker styles). I could only find a few bottles of this, which perhaps needed extra-special storage requirements as they were kept in a sealed carton marked "Poison" in what was indubitably Polly's handwriting. I also should remark that this chest freezer was remarkably difficult to open. The lock seemed to have somehow engaged itself, perhaps as a result of the modification to the thermostat, and the key was nowhere to be found (if it wasn't for the easy access of a drill and crowbar at the nearby workbench, I probably wouldn't have been able to get in at all). These special precautions were successful, I am pleased to report, and the Celis was in perfect condition.

After polishing off the Celis, and a couple bottles of Dominion's "Millenium," I decided to try some of the imported beer stored in the same freezer. I should have kept better notes on these than I did (I admit to losing most in a drunken stupor). However, I suspect that many of the imports will no longer be stocked after I report some apparent storage problems. In this section, I found several varieties from Belgium, which I have always heard were very good and wanted to try. The names were all "something-or-other Kriek." Unfortunately, all seven bottles I tested were similarly infected. I'm not up on my terminology for describing the specific infections that cause very sour, almost citrus tastes, but all seven bottles I sampled were similarly flawed, sadly, to the point where they barely recognizable as being beer.

Now, my assignment had been to keep an eye on the house and take care of any emergencies that may arise, so I went right to work. The first thing I did, upon discovering the infection was to pour any bottle marked as being "Belgian" down the laundry sink and hopefully prevent further spread. Most importantly, however, I wanted to try to save all the homebrews that were in process. Because the carboys were open, it seemed that these were highly at risk of contamination, as did their closely-neighboring kegs. I had remembered reading somewhere that bleach solutions were a good way to control infections, and therefore poured a quarter cup of Clorox into each active carboy and keg, hopefully halting any pesky bacteria in their tracks.

I was similarly concerned about the other bottles in the chest with the Belgians, which mostly consisted of Dominion, Potomac, and Sierra Nevada products, as well as a few unpronounceable Germans. Luckily, there was a bottle-capper close at hand. I wasn't sure how much bleach was appropriate for bottle-sized quantities, and therefore decided on a second method for controlling infections I remembered from my backpacking days: heat. I uncapped each bottle so that they wouldn't explode, immersed them in boiling water for ten minutes or so, and then recapped them. Unfortunately, the labels got a bit mixed up in the process, as they all came loose in the soup pot. But at least the infections were finally controlled.

Only a few days remained in which I could avail myself of the remaining beers, and turned my focus towards the other freezer, which I hoped was safe from infection. Thankfully, all were very good. I also wanted to test consistency between the various bottles, though the hundred-plus bottles were much more than I could comfortably get through in a week. Therefore, with the continuing assistance of the bottle capper, I was able to test a small amount from each. I am pleased to report that consistency in this refrigerator was, in fact, just fine, from bottle to bottle.

Despite the problems with the Belgians mentioned above, I think that Bruce and Polly's basement is a very good place to stop in for a couple brews. The variety there forms a magnificent rainbow of styles. The kitchen upstairs usually has a tasty assortment of left-overs, the atmosphere is always an inspiration, and the prices certainly can't be beat. So, if you're in the neighborhood and are looking for a satisfying pint, I heartily recommend that you stop by.

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## Internet Humor

Passed on by Bart Brazier  
<brazier@wsu.edu>

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An Irishman walks into a bar in Dublin, orders three pints of Guinness and sits in the back of the room, drinking a sip out of each one in turn. When he finishes them, he comes back to the bar and orders three more.

The bartender asks him, "You know, a pint goes flat after I draw it; it would taste better if you bought one at a time."

The Irishman replies, "Well, you see, I have two brothers. One is in America, the other in Australia, and I'm here in Dublin. When we all left home, we promised that we'd drink this way to remember the days when we drank together."

The bartender admits that this is a nice custom, and leaves it there.

The Irishman becomes a regular in the bar, and always drinks the same way: He orders three pints and drinks them in turn.

One day, he comes in and orders two pints. All the other regulars notice and fall silent.

When he comes back to the bar for the second round, the bartender says, "I don't want to intrude on your grief, but I wanted to offer my condolences on your great loss."

The Irishman looks confused for a moment, then a light dawns in his eye and he laughs. "Oh, no," he says, "everyone's fine. I've just quit drinking."

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## Letters to the Editor

From: Lynn Ashley <73744.3234@CompuServe.COM>  
Subject: Web Minister - New BURP office???

Bruce:

You outlined the upcoming annual BURP election in the November 1996 BURP News. I noticed that the Minister of Truth "May run the BURP home page on the world wide web."

I have a suggestion. If a new office, such as 'Minister of the Web' was created, whose only job was to run the BURP home page, then I'd like to run for that office.

I believe that splitting the office makes sense since it is obvious that the newsletter is probably the biggest single task in BURP. Heaping the web site on the back of the Minister of Truth means that if time is ever short (as it seem to be for so many of us) then the less critical web site will lose out.

I haven't seen any update of other activity on the BURP home page over the last year. The last item covered was the May 1995 SoFB. Haven't talked to Rick Garvin about it but it would appear that he may be too busy to keep up with it.

<campaign statement deleted - BF>

Thanks,  
Lynn

*Thanks for the suggestion, Lynn. I agree that it is a good idea to have a separate Web officer; although the nature of the work is similar to that done by the Newsletter Editor, the volume is too high. A well-designed, current web page would be a good way for us to get our message out to a wider audience, at a very low price; it would allow us to do a better job of publicizing our major competitions, and passing information on to the public. Next issue we will publish campaign statements by all candidates who submit them; I will include the rest of your message then. I believe that other members of our club are interested in serving as Web Minister as well.*

BF

From: Donald Lief <dwlief@teleport.com>

Hi Bruce! Mike Horkan passed on the last Burp News when he was out here in Portland. Quick comments on Griffin's article:

When in Kalama (Hart/Pyramid) he ignored the delightful Apricot Ale which is a real winner even among non-admirers of fruit ales. See a recent Barleycorn tasting results on peach and apricots.

They are now producing a hefeweizen with authentic German yeast that's not to be found in the hugely popular Widmer product.

Although I'm not a chauvinist for Oregon, I have to note that Greg when in Kalama was a lot closer to our amazing array of product than to Yakima where Grant's is really the only class act. I suspect the Griffins really wanted to get over to that part of Washington, but if they went primarily for the beer I am sorry they didn't venture an hour south of Kalama instead.

Thank goodness they got to taste Rogue Red (dry-hopped). Brewer John Maier is a wonder, constantly trying new limited-run things, some of which take off, like Younger's ESB which began as the house ale at my neighborhood pub, The Horse Brass. Halloween last night at the Brass found Rogue's Brutal Ale to be exceptional!

Anyway, I enjoyed Greg's reaction to places and the beers; Big Time is a favorite.

Keep up the fine work.

*Thanks for the information and the compliment!*

BF

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## BURP at the GBBF

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Tom Cannon

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It takes 12 hours, almost exactly, to get from the Dominion Beer bar at the Dulles Mid-Field terminal to the Pultney Arms, Andy Anderson's local, in Bath, England. This is by the most direct means of transportation, and was tested by the crack BURP beer drinking team of Larry and Trish Koch, Mark and Barb Stevens, and Colleen and myself. Our purpose on this trip was to assess the cultural importance of the Great British Beer Festival (GBBF) and evaluate the quality of beer available at the festival and in England in general. Bath was only our first stop.

Bath is a Georgian city on the Avon river about 120 miles southwest of London. As dedicated newsletter readers know, it has been the home of BURP member Andy Anderson for nearly 2 years. We decided to take advantage of free accommodation and acclimate ourselves to the time zone and the warm flat stuff known as British Real Ale.

Of course, you can't start a good beer hunt without visiting a brewery. Fortunately, Mark Stevens paid attention and took notes (See the October Newsletter) but if you want a detailed assessment of the Ushers's fermentation room, ask Barb for her impressions.

Friday in Bath started with a civilized country pub lunch at the Hop Pole (Steak and Kidney Pie, Chicken and Mushroom Pie, Buttcombe Bitter) and finished with Cheese on Toast, Belgian Beer and single malt Scotch at Andy's house. In between was the Bath pub crawl featuring 6 pubs and pints of beer such as Courage Best, Moreland's Old Speckled Hen, Smiles Summer Bitter, and Bass Ale from the cask. Unfortunately, a tasting of Andy's extensive single malt selection wiped any details of the pub crawl from our collective memories. The rest of the Bath portion of the trip remains a series of blurry events including Roman Baths, Cask Conditioned Weizen Bock and weird British animal games (ask Larry about his gorilla). Sunday morning we were off to London.

After checking in to our luxury accommodations in the dormitories at University College London (UCL) in Camden Town, we made our way via the tube to The White Horse on Parsons Green. The White Horse is known for the quality of their Real Ale which is a direct result of the cellar management skills of their Master Cellarman Mark Dorber. We were able to hook up with friends from the Chicago Beer Society, Steve Hamburg and Ray Daniels and they helped arrange a tour of the White Horse's Cellar. The tour featured tastings of some of the past champion beers of Britain which were at the White Horse that week in conjunction with the GBBF. Of special note was Timothy Taylor Landlord and Cottage Brewery's Norman Conquest, last years GBBF Champion Beer. Mark also told us of the White Horse's effort to get Adnams ESB on as a regular beer at the pub which effectively saved the beer which went on to become Champion Beer in 1992. Our next stop was the Dove in Hammersmith, a pub on the river Thames with exceptionally served Fullers beers, where we met up with more friends and finished the evening.

Monday was a tourist day for most of the group, but Colleen, Andy and I managed to do some pub crawling and discovered the

Bishop's Brewery in Southwark. This very small, two barrel brewery was chosen to brew the GBBF festival beer, Eros Ale, a hoppy, rich, relatively strong brew. We were also directed by the owner and brewer, Andrew Bishop, to a nearby pub to try their variety of beers. We finished the evening with a pub crawl in and around the City of London.

Tuesday started with the threat of rain, but was further darkened by the arrival of Keith Chamberlain (just kidding, Keith). We met him at the Young's Brewery Tap and went in to tour the brewery. Again, Mark's eye for detail provided a good description of the tour in Octobers newsletter. We spent a short period of time at the Young's tasting room because the GBBF began that afternoon.

For the past 6 years, the GBBF has been held at Olympia in West London. The building itself was built in the 1930's to hangar dirigibles and served very well as a place to hold a festival the size of the GBBF. With 310 Real Ales available plus 180 foreign beers and 40 ciders and perries, we spent the first evening wandering the hall, trying whatever looked interesting. I decided on a strategy of starting each session with a few half pints of Mild to get me going and then working my way through Bitters, Best Bitters and Strong Ales. Mark, on the other hand went in thirsty for Strong Ales. Notables from our first night at the festival were the beers from Brain's in Wales and the Hop Back brewery including their pale, potent Summer Lightning. On the first night the crowds were reasonable and we were looking forward to our first full day at the festival.

On Wednesday morning, we were faced with a London Tube strike. We managed to make our way to the festival by bus (very crowded, lots of traffic) and when the festival opened, we found the trip was worth it. Most Londoners preferred not to try to make their way there on the day of the strike, so the entire hall was nearly deserted. What a day for drinking! All BURPERS present, proudly wearing their BURP T-shirts (except for the First Lady who chose to make her own fashion statement). Andy was working one of the beer stations as a CAMRA volunteer. We were able to find out the winners of the 1996 festival and do our own pretentious judging of the winning beers (put 3 or more BJCP judges together and this kind of thing is inevitable). Of particular note that day were the winning ordinary bitters including the 1996 Champion Beer of Britain Woodfordes Wherry. Very pale, with lovely hop balance, it was crisp and exceptionally refreshing. It became a standard beer to try every morning of the festival while it lasted. Also of note were some of the other ribbon winners, especially Caledonian's Deuchars IPA, and Brain's SA Best Bitter. We were also able to catch up with Steve Hamburg and Ray Daniels again before they took off for a trip up to Burton and chatted with Mark Dorber from the White Horse who was in charge of the cooling system for the beers at the festival. Last year was a disaster for the beers in that the festival was held during a rare London heat wave and the 90+ degrees F temperatures and inadequate cooling spoiled many of the beers before the festival's end. This year they tried an experimental method of cooling the beer with copper coils and it worked well. I noticed no significant degradation of the beer during the four days we were there. All in all, Wednesday at the GBBF was a delight and by far our best day of the trip.

On Wednesday and Thursday the festival was open from 11:30 to 3:00 and then from 5:00 to 10:30. Afternoon sessions were

usually attended by hard core beer fanatics (like me) and a few business men who worked in the area and would come in for lunch. Pretty mild crowds. Thursday evening, however, the Londoners who were kept away by the Tube Strike all showed up. Veteran GBBF attendees told me that it was the most crowded they had ever seen the festival including Friday and Saturday nights! Long lines for beer with many going dry early made it a rough time to get good beer. We compensated, however, by trying the less crowded cider and perry stand, the foreign beer section, and then making our way over to the Brewerania stand to check out and procure beer engines. Through masterful bargaining by our Fearless President, Larry, we were able to procure a package deal for four reconditioned engines with our choice of handles for a 20% discount. That made each engine about \$127. Pretty good deal. Even with the crowds Thursday, we considered it a successful day.

Friday morning, we all went back for the afternoon session, but left as the Friday evening crowds started to pour in. We did a short pub crawl in Belgravia (a posh west London area) including a pub recommended by Dave and Becky Pyle, the Turks Head, and one of my own favorites, The Star, with their nearly perfect pints of Fuller's beer. Saturday and Sunday were spent touring and pub crawling in the West End (Covent Garden, Leicester Square, Piccadilly and Mayfair) and on the Kings Road in South West London. Mark, Barb, Colleen and I finished our last pint of the trip back at the White Horse on Parsons Green. Larry and Trish stayed two days longer, but I'm sure their last pint was at one of Larry's favorite places, the student pub right outside his dormitory at UCL.

In total the group went to over 50 pubs on the trip. It was impossible to document all the beers we were able to drink, but I took a poll of the group as to what their favorite beer of the trip had been. Here's the list:

Barb: Guinness Stout  
 Mark: Passageway's Redemption Rye Ale  
 Keith: Marston's Owd Roger  
 Colleen: Woodforde's Wherry  
 Trish: Hop Back's Entire Stout  
 Larry: 99% of the beers he drank (what a surprise)  
 Tom: Brain's Dark

In closing, I would like to mention what a fun trip it was! The combination of great travel companions with warm sunny weather and exceptional beer made this one of the best vacations I have had. I look forward to more beer adventures with Andy, Keith, Mark, Barb, Trish, Larry and of course Colleen. Who's going to organize the BURP trip next year?

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## Oxidation

Benjamin Schwalb  
 benjamin@romulus.ncsc

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Oxidation is a word that causes homebrewers to cringe. It's right up there with contamination, toxic waste, and Bill Clinton.

What is oxygen? It's two oxygen atoms bound together, a molecule without which we cannot live. Furthermore, it's important in brewing since yeast cannot reproduce without it.

Unfortunately, oxygen has its downside. It seems to want to react with things. For instance, when your car rusts, that's oxygen reacting with the metal. It also reacts with components in wort, causing unpleasant odors and flavors.

How does wort get oxidized? The mere presence of oxygen is sufficient to cause a reaction, and since air is about 20% oxygen, wort exposed to air will oxidize. If the wort splashes, air (and therefore oxygen) will mix and react with it much faster.

Heat speeds up all reactions, and oxidation is no exception. Splashing hot wort will cause "hot-side aeration". This can happen while stirring boiling wort, dumping a mash from a mash tun to a lauter tun, pouring sparge water on top of a mash, or dumping hot wort into a fermenter that's partially filled with cold water.

Cold-side aeration happens when racking wort into a secondary fermenter, bottles or a keg. The reaction is slower than hot-side aeration, but it is damaging nonetheless.

Note that splashing pure water, either hot or cold, does not cause oxidation. This is because pure water has nothing for the oxygen to react *with*. It is the proteins, lipids, hop resins and hop oils in wort (plus the alcohol in fermented wort) that oxygen can react with.

We homebrewers have an advantage over commercial breweries regarding oxidation. The live yeast in our bottles is an oxygen scavenger - it eats (actually breathes) most if not all the oxygen in the beer, while filtered commercial beer is stuck with whatever oxygen gets in there before it's capped (despite purging bottles with CO<sub>2</sub> before filling, a tiny bit of oxygen remains in there, and this is what shortens shelf life). Furthermore, many breweries pasteurize their beer, and the heat greatly increases oxidation (but Coors is *expected* to taste like crap, so nobody seems to mind).

Oxygen combines with higher alcohols to produce aldehydes which give beer a stale character. It also contributes to the reduction of hop flavor and aroma. Light beers start to taste like wet paper or cardboard, and dark or heavy beers take on a sherry-like flavor. Other off-flavors can result too. Since lower temperatures slow oxidation, bottled beer should be stored cool.

Yeast breathes or at least attempts to breathe as long as it has food, so accidentally aerating wort at bottling time isn't a big problem, as the yeast will breathe the oxygen because it is being given more food (priming sugar). Aerating when racking into secondary is somewhat of a problem, as the yeast has run out of food and is not getting any more, so it will not breathe the oxygen. Hot-side aeration is the worst, as the damage is done quickly and there is no yeast to take up the oxygen.

Hops can oxidize in storage. This usually decreases their bittering and flavoring potential. Badly oxidized hops turn from a healthy green to a sickly brown. However, a little oxidation can, in some instances, be beneficial. For example, two of the many oils found in hops are humulene and myrcene (the latter is found in high concentrations in Cascade hops). When oxidized, they can give a pleasant floral aroma, and myrcene can give a spicy aroma as well. Whether these are positive additions is a matter of personal preference.