

BURP NEWS

**WEB SITE:
WWW.BURP.ORG**

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

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- February 16 at 6:00 PM Meeting / Stout Competition at Oxon Hill. Directions on back cover.
- March 12 Newsletter Deadline
- March 16-18 Scottish beer tasting, Brickskeller, \$27 (202) 293-1885
- March 27 at 1:00 PM Meeting at Alison Skeel's, 3911 Spruell Drive, Kensington, MD (301) 942-3622
- April 13-14 Belgian Beers and Ales, Brickskeller, \$27 (202) 293-1885
- May 18 Michael Jackson, Brickskeller, \$27 (202) 293-1885
- May 20 Michael Jackson, National Geographic, \$29 (202) 857-7700
- June Spirit of Free Beer VII

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Marler's Madness

Steve Marler, Fearless Leader

Being Fearless Leader has already become stressful because now I have to think of something to write for this column every month. It will never be Cannon Fodder, but hopefully it will not be too hard to swallow.

First off, I want to thank all the BURP members who voted last month, regardless of who you voted for. Your participation made this year's election exciting and forced the election official, Alison Skeel, to actually count votes. Alison worked very hard setting up and implementing this year's election and deserves a big round of applause. I believe that Rick Garvin and John Dittmann deserve our thanks for voluntarily throwing their hat in the ring for a job most people do not want. I want to especially thank Bill Ridgely and Wendy Aaronson for continuing to serve as Minister of Propaganda and Mistress of Enlightenment, and also thank Andy Anderson, Delano DuGarm, and Bill and Christine Newman for taking the plunge. I think that this will be a great year and I am looking forward to working with this group of officers.

The newly elected cabinet went right to work and got together on Friday, January 29 to discuss this year's activities. Here is a summary of the decisions made at the meeting:

We are shooting for late May or early June for the Spirit of Free Beer. The date will be determined by the availability of the host facility. We are looking for volunteers to assist in the various aspects of the SOFB. This is a great opportunity for you to get more involved in BURP, and we need your help to make this year's SOFB the most successful yet. This is especially true if you are a new member of BURP. It is a great opportunity for you to get to know more of the BURP membership. Contact Andy Anderson or myself if you would like to volunteer.

The monthly commercial beer tasting will continue to be held before the official meeting start time, usually around 12:30. Meeting business will be moved from just before the raffle to just before the monthly beer judging begins. The raffle will continue to be held at the end of the meeting.

We will be giving the Minister of Culture the flexibility to hold the monthly beer judging at some time other than during a meeting when appropriate.

We will start giving BURP members the option of getting their newsletter in an electronic format. See Delano's column for more information.

If there is enough interest BURP will sponsor a Beer Judge Certification class, and a Beer Judge Certification exam. If you are interested in the class, the exam, or both please contact Wendy Aaronson ASAP.

We are going to begin a BURP Brewer of the Year Award. This award will go the person who has received the most points based on winning BURP monthly competitions.

We are also moving forward with the Brewers Challenge competitions. These competitions will be in addition to the regular monthly competitions. The goal of these competitions will be to brew a beer that is as similar as possible to a given commercial example.

If there is enough interest, in addition to the BJCP classes we are also going to start a Technical Education series that will explore in greater depth topics such as malt, yeast, water, adjuncts, sanitation, etc. If you are interested in such classes please let Wendy Aaronson know that you are interested, and what topics you are interested in.

That is it for my first edition of Marler's Madness. Remember that this is your club, please feel free to contact any of the other officers if you have any suggestions or comments.

Upcoming Competition Deadlines

February 20

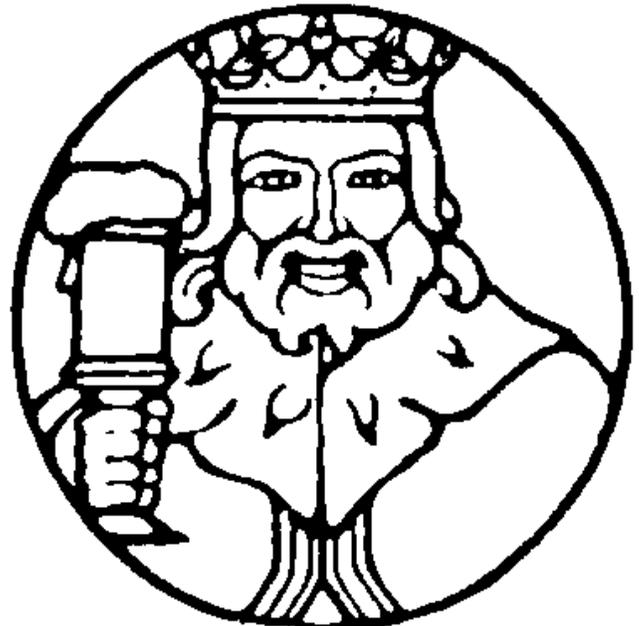
Boston Homebrew Competition, Boston, MA
Ken Jucks (781) 276-7985 jucks@cfa.harvard.edu

February 20

Mazer Cup, Brighton, MI
Ken Schramm (248) 816-1592
schramk@wcrea.k12.mi.us

March 13

South Shore Brewoff 99, Cranston, RI
Glenn Markel (508) 226-3249 gmarkel@aol.com



Burp.org Report

Lynn Ashley, Minister of the Web

Thanks for your support in keeping me on as your webmaster for burp.org. Following is a update on some of the things which have been happening on burp.org.

Burp.org can be divided into three general areas:

1. the BURP web site pages at <http://burp.org/>
2. the BURP internet mailing lists, such as BurpList@burp.org, and
3. the @burp.org email aliases.

The Web Site

The burp.org web site has expanded and matured in the two years since I have become Minister of the Web. The following site statistics for the month of January 1999 give an insight into the activity on the burp.org web site:

- Average 85 visitors per day, compared to 35/day in Nov 1997.

- The most active day of the week is Monday with 114 visitors.

In Nov 97 the most active day was Tuesday with 46 visitors.

- The least active day of the week is Friday with 70 visitors.

Formerly it was Saturday with 27.

- About 10% of visitors are from foreign countries, mostly Canada, UK and Australia.

- Interestingly most of you visit burp.org during mid-day with the daily peak just after lunch. Another peak occurs after dinner between 20-22:00.

- Bandwidth is the amount of data which the server sends for a site over a given time. For burp.org the average is now 7M bytes per day.

- Currently the burp.org web site uses about 25M bytes of disk space. Most of this is for over 300 photos & other images (~15MB) and for the BurpNews pdf files (~7MB). BurpNews is expected to expand in the near future.

Thanks to several BURP photographers, the "Past Meetings Photos & Report" pages are quite popular.

I give high priority to keeping the BURP Calendar up-to-date.

In descending order, here are some of the most visited web pages:

Main page (index.html), Past Meetings (photo reports), Calendar, Drinking Quotes, Club Competitions, Next Meeting Page, Homebrew Suppliers, Style Guidelines, Members Web Sites (links), SoFB98, BurpList, BurpNews, Libeery.

There are also some "hidden" pages on burp.org which do not have links to them from other pages. They provide "private" club information for members:

CENSORED

Mailing Lists

Several internet mailing lists are supported on burp.org. The most popular is BurpList which is the main mailing list for members to discuss club and related topics. Activity on the list is cyclic and averages about 2 messages a day. BurpList began operation in November 1997 and now has over 120 subscribers.

There are also administrative mailing lists on burp.org. These include lists for the officers, Spirit of Free Beer and the Spirit of Belgium.

E-mail Aliases

An email alias is an address which forwards mail sent to it to another email account. For instance, mail send to ashley@burp.org is automatically forwarded to lynn@ashleys.net.

There are currently about 60 @burp.org email aliases in use. See <http://burp.org/alias.htm> for a list. Any BURP member may have an @burp.org email alias. Let me know, at ashley@burp.org, what alias you want and the email address to which you want it to forward.

Note that some aliases are already used or are reserved. I'll let you know if the alias you want is not available.

As for the future, I expect burp.org to be providing support to Delano and Bill Ridgely in their efforts to provide an electronic version of BurpNews. Also there has been some discussion about providing a master on-line index to the newsletters to permit users to access the wealth of information they contain. Anyone who is interested in working on such a project, please contact me at ashley@burp.org.

And of course, if you know of beer related events which BURP members would like to know about, please send them to me for inclusion in the BURP Calendar.



Competition Notes

Andy Anderson, Minister of Culture

For those of you interested in knowing the BURP Club Competition schedule for 1999, please allow me to enlighten you.

February	Stout
March	IPA
April	Bock (also for AHA Club Competition)
May	Belgian Ales
June	Pilsner
July	Cider/Mead (also for AHA Club Competition)
August	Wheat (both American and German)
September	Porter (also for AHA Club Competition)
October	Weird
November	Real Ale
December	No contest

The results from January's Pale Ale Contest

1st - Andy Anderson - British pale ale

2nd - Robert Stevens - American pale ale

3rd - Bob Dawson - British pale ale

BURP is also sponsoring/hosting a Club Only competition for AHA. "Specialty & Experimental" beers will be judged on February 14 at Brew America. If you are interested in helping with the competition, please speak with Tom Cannon. He will run the competition, as yours truly and the previous Minister of Culture, Jay Adams, are off on a fact-finding junket.

Congratulations to Art Blanchard and his Rye Lager which will be the BURP submission for this contest. Finishing second in the qualifying round were Tom & Colleen Cannon with their spiced ale, and in third place was Randy Paul with his Basil beer.

My final note concerns the next AHA Club Only competition. That will be for Belgian beers and will be held in March. If you have a Belgian ale you think might do well, please see me with two bottle of your magic elixir. I will run a competition off-line, similar to the Weird Beer competition, to determine who represents BURP at the March AHA competition.



Who Was Dan McCoubrey?

Delano DuGarm, Minister of Truth

This month's competition is named the Dan McCoubrey Memorial Stout Competition. So who was Dan McCoubrey? According to long-time BURPers and his obituary, Dan was quite an individual. He was a sports copy editor at the *Washington Post*, a co-founder of BURP, and a great lover of things Irish, including traditional Irish music, cooking (his recipe for Irish stew for a hundred appeared in the *Post* Food Section), and above all, stout. He only brewed stouts, and was his own best fan.

As Angus Phillips wrote in his appreciation of Dan, "His love for beer, particularly his own home brew, produced one of the more impressive bellies in Washington. It was an attribute McCoubrey bore with distinction. He favored garish tee shirts, stretched to near breaking across his great girth."

As a BURPer Dan was the founder of the newsletter, which started off as a monthly letter to "BURPers and friends," and steered the club through many early problems.

Dan died thirteen years ago of a massive heart attack, but lives on in the memory of his friends, and in the club he did so much for.

Stout Guidelines

from BJCP Guidelines

A. Dry

A rich, dry, extra-dark, almost black ale. The dryness comes from the use of roasted unmalted barley and a high hop bittering rate; flaked unmalted barley may also add a creaminess. A small % of soured beer is sometimes added to balance the dry roast flavors. Starting gravities are low in Ireland, higher elsewhere. COMMERCIAL EXAMPLES: GUINNESS STOUT, MURPHY'S STOUT, SIERRA NEVADA STOUT.

OG 1036-55	Bitterness 25-40 IBUS	Color: 40+ SRM
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B. Sweet

An English style of stout. Dark roasted grains and malts dominate the flavor as in dry stouts, though generally some unfermented sugar is left in the beer. Lactose is often added to provide this residual sweetness. Very dark amber to black. Gravities are low in England, higher in the exported product. Hopping is moderate and tends to be lower than in Dry Stout. COMMERCIAL EXAMPLES: MACKESON STOUT, SAM ADAMS CREAM STOUT, WATNEYS CREAM STOUT.

OG 1.038-56	Bitterness: 15-25 IBUs	Color 40+ SRM
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C. Oatmeal

A variation of sweet stout but has oatmeal added to increase the fullness of body and flavor. The result is often described as giving a firm, smooth, and silky character to the beer with some nuttiness to the flavor. Otherwise similar to sweet stouts. COMMERCIAL EXAMPLES: SAMUEL SMITH'S OATMEAL STOUT, YOUNG'S OATMEAL STOUT.

OG 1.038-56	Bitterness: 15-25 IBUs	Color: 20+ SRM
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D. Foreign Extra

High gravity stouts brewed for 'tropical' markets. Both dry and sweet versions exist. They possess many of the same characteristics as the low gravity versions but with a much stronger alcohol level. Above 1.060 it becomes difficult to produce a truly dry stout as the malty fullness and fruity esters tend to take charge. OG's are typically in the 1070 range. COMMERCIAL EXAMPLES: DRAGON STOUT (SWEET), ABC STOUT, GUINNESS FOREIGN EXTRA STOUT.

OG: 1.060-75	Bitterness: 25-60 IBUs	Color: 40+ SRM
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E. Russian Imperial Stout

Originally brewed to withstand shipping from Britain to the Baltic and thus of high alcoholic strength. Often has an intense 'burnt currant' character. Esters from fermentation and roastiness from the dark roasted grains used are also

prominent. Highly hopped for bitterness, aroma, and flavor. Very full bodied. Very dark reddish-black opaque in color. COMMERCIAL EXAMPLES: SAMUEL SMITHS IMPERIAL STOUT, JOHN COURAGE RUSSIAN IMPERIAL STOUT.

OG: 1.075-95+	Bitterness: 50-90+ IBUs	Color: 20-40+ SRM
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New Members

New Members

A big BURP welcome goes out this month to **Cathy Croteau** of Gaithersburg, **Mike & Sue Darnell** of Sterling, **Dave Robinson** of Alexandria, **Dick Steward** of Upper Marlboro, **Larry Weaver** of Gaithersburg, and **Brenda Willingham** of Waldorf.

Hope to see all of you at upcoming meetings.

Meeting Report

Delano DuGarm, Minister of Truth

January's meeting saw us in shirtsleeves, with temperatures as high as 70°. We were grateful that Rick Garvin, our host, was able to get his Tesla weather coil working for the occasion. It sure helps having people who work for. . . oops. That last paragraph is no longer operative.

This was the election meeting, and for the first time in many years there was a contested election: not two but three candidates for Fearless Leader. All through the meeting there was frantic politicking by the candidates, including nametags that said "Vote for me!" After years of Soviet-style lockstep voting for single candidates put forward by the Secret BURP Cabal®, it wasn't clear that BURPers would be able to rise to the occasion. We need not have worried. The electors made only one mistake, in not re-electing Dan Brown for Minister of Truth. They have only themselves to blame for twelve months of *Adjunct News*.

As usual the groaning tables testified to the great cooking skills and generosity of BURP members. Along with a variety of home made baked goods, I noted chili, Cajun beans and rice and Chimay cheese.

Among the many excellent beers I tried, one commercial example stood out. Bud Hensgen brought bottles of Shenandoah Brewing's Oktoberfest beer. Though it was a bit old, it was an excellent beer. This struck me, because when Shenandoah first started bottling, I tried some of their products, and was disappointed by some flaws. I had never tried their beer again. This confirmed my opinion that brewers do themselves no favor by releasing inferior products when they first open. Also, I should give new breweries a second chance.

The pale ale competition had 18 entries, and there were some problems in getting enough judges. If you are interested in judging or just want to learn more about a style, don't hesitate to volunteer to Andy Anderson. No experience is required, just an open palette.

By the time the elections and raffle had finished it was getting dark. In the Garvin household that's when the grills and large chunks of meat came out. I think Alan Hew had something to do with some beautiful roast beef. I know that Rick brought out many feet of homemade sausage. Many BURPers stayed around to enjoy, but I received the Hairy Eyeball from my spouse, and had to leave.

Editorial

Delano DuGarm, Minister of Truth

This is my first issue of the newsletter, and first of all I would like to thank Dan Brown, Polly Goldman and Bruce Feist, the last three newsletter editors for their help. All of the errors in this newsletter are my fault, of course.

First, I'd like to discuss my campaign promises.

Hemp Paper

Looking on the web, I find that hemp paper costs as much as \$30 a ream. This is too expensive for a newsletter.

Electronic Newsletter

The idea here is to save paper and expense by cutting down the number of newsletters we publish. This is the largest month to month expense the club has, and many members have suggested that having an electronic version of the newsletter would be preferable to getting it on paper in the mail. How to do this, though?

Nicknames

I don't want to be fed poisoned beer, so I'm dropping this plank.

After discussion with Lynn Ashley, Minister of the Web, we have decided that the best way to handle this would be to post the newsletter on the BURP website (www.burp.org) in PDF format. We would then send an e-mail to each BURP member that preferred the electronic newsletter, rather than send a paper copy to him or her. The BURPer could then get the newsletter from the web site and read it using the free Adobe Acrobat reader.

If you would like to get your newsletter electronically, send an e-mail to Bill Ridgely, the Minister of Propaganda

Upcoming Newsletter Articles

I am always interested in articles for the newsletter. In the next year, I'd like to expand our coverage in *BURP News* to include subjects other than beer and beer brewing, including mead and cider brewing, wine making, soda and seltzer water making. We're starting out in this issue with articles on mead making and seltzer water.

An Analysis of Mead Making

Mike Megowen

Introduction

Honey is a remarkable liquid. Made by humble insects, it is far more than a simple mixture of sugars. Honey contains, in addition to a rather complex mixture of sugars, enzymes, proteins, organic compounds and trace minerals. It is these interesting compounds, present in minute quantities that give honey its distinctive flavor and characteristic aromas. Many of these are carried over into a mead produced from these honeys and lend a similar, recognizable distinction to the finished mead.

MEAD INGREDIENTS OVERVIEW

Honey

Many mead makers recommend the use of fresh honey that has undergone the least processing possible. Honey blends may be consistent, a good base honey for fruit meads, and offer repeatable results, but it is our contention that far more interest, variety and complexity can be achieved through the use of pure honey sources. These can then be blended by the mead maker to adjust deficiencies, dilute over range constituents or add pleasing aroma and flavor combinations.

Water

Water for mead making varies both due to the source and to the composition of the mead. Honey contains quite variable concentrations of minerals and ash, water contains quite variable concentrations of minerals. The secret lies in selecting a honey/water combination that provides an acceptable balance in the finished mead. High mineral waters clearly are not desired in high ash honeys. Conversely, since yeast requires a certain amount of minerals to prosper, a low ash mead and a low mineral water would also prove unacceptable.

Nutrients

Yeast require nitrogen in the respiratory phase of growth. Since honey is a poor source of nitrogen mead fermentations without adequate nutrition are notoriously slow. The addition of yeast nutrients (diammonium phosphate), yeast energizer (diammonium phosphate, magnesium sulfate, yeast, folic acid, niacin, sodium pantothenate and thiamine) or yeast hulls is very important to promote complete fermentation. These materials are readily available and their use is encouraged.

Acid

The use of acids citric, malic, tartaric, acid blend, or lemon juice has been recommended by many authors to balance any residual sweetness in the finished mead. We agree that some sweet/acid balance is desirable, but feel that it is optional. Furthermore, the addition of acids pre-fermentation can reduce the pH of the honey must, resulting in a sluggish fermentation. The pH of honey is already low, and since there is very little buffering capacity, when fermentation commences, the pH drops to a range at which the yeast slows. We will expand on this point in the following section. It has been our experience that addition of acid to a finished mead is a more reliable method to achieve the desired sweet/sour balance.

Yeasts

A large number of yeasts are now available to the small-scale mead maker for conducting the fermentation. Most wine yeast strains will perform nicely, and indeed some are very good at fermenting low nutrient musts. There are several commercial sources for high quality mead yeasts and most of these are now available as pure cultures on slants, thus eliminating bacterial contamination commonly encountered in the dry yeast packets. We have discovered, however, that bacterial contamination is a minor issue in mead fermentations. Of far greater consequence is the potential for post-fermentation contamination during processing or storage with acetobacter species that may result in the production of honey vinegar. Most of these problems can be prevented with good sanitation practices, prevention of aeration during transfer or preventing oxygen from reaching the mead by keeping carboys or barrels filled.

Since meads generally start out with high sugar content (on the order of 20%) it is prudent to pitch a large volume of yeast, we recommend pitching the slurry from a starter prepared that is 10% of the volume of the main fermentation.

Fermentation

A major issue in mead fermentations is the notoriously long time it can take to reach completion. Fermentation rate is dependent to some extent of the honey variety, but through proper selection of yeast strains, agitation during fermentation, yeast nutrition and control of pH, one can dramatically increase the fermentation rate. Therein lies another controversy; clearly, commercial operations are interested in rapid fermentations. As small scale mead makers, perhaps the economics of capital tied up in fermenters is not so problematic for us.

Of more significance is the effect on flavor. There are some that find the flavor of mead that has had a long, slow fermentation on the yeast objectionable due to the taste associated with autolysis. Others find the taste familiar and similar to that of a fine *sur lie* champagne in which the toasty/yeasty flavor of autolysis is a welcome and integral part of the taste profile. I prefer a more relaxed approach, which favors long fermentations, although recently I have been experimenting with accelerated methods.

The single most significant factor effecting the rate of mead fermentation is yeast health. This may be ensured by providing adequate nutrients in the form of yeast energizer and yeast nutrients as well as careful monitoring of the pH throughout the fermentation. Most of the required nutrients are available in the commercial preparations, but other additional nutrients that may be helpful such as biotin, pyridoxine and peptone.

Make Seltzer Water!

Katy DuGarm

Take a clean, empty, cornelius keg. It doesn't hurt to sanitize it, but if you have only had seltzer in it, the keg only needs to be cleaned out every three to six months.

Pour in 1/4 cup lemon juice and 1/4 cup lime juice. I'd suggest using reconstituted juices, because pulp can clog lines.

Add water to the top. I leave about 2 inches of head space. Since we use a counter top water filter, it is easy to fill the keg.

Close the keg and put it under 30 lbs. pressure until carbonated. This usually takes about 36 hours.

Put on your seltzer tap and enjoy!

BURPer Does Well

Delano DuGarm

Jay Hopkins, our fellow BURPer, is active as the newsletter editor for the Herndon Wort Hogs. His newsletter won second place in the recent AHA newsletter competition. Congratulations!

BURP EDUCATION UPDATE

Wendy Aaronson, Minister of Enlightenment

FEBRUARY COMMERCIAL TASTING: In my campaign statement, I promised to continue to meet the educational needs of our membership, and one of the goals was to continue to have an educational segment at each meeting. Ideally, I would like to conduct a commercial tasting of the beer style that will be judged during the club competition. The purpose is two-fold. On an individual level, one will be able to discuss the style and taste a range of beers within that style. It is also an opportunity, especially for non-BJCP judges, to gain experience in evaluating beer with regard to adherence to a style and technical flaws. On the club level, the goal is to prepare members for judging at BURP club competitions. Hopefully, those who have participated in the tasting will enthusiastically volunteer to judge.

As you know, the beer style that will be judged at the February meeting is stout. Instead of a standard discussion on stouts as we have done for the past two years, I have decided to conduct a blind tasting. We will briefly talk about the style guideline, and then we will blindly taste 5-6 commercial examples and match them up with descriptions of the beer obtained from a number of sources. The one(s) with the most matches will get a prize. Besides having some fun with a style that most people have some knowledge about and brew, I think this will be a good exercise in identifying what you are tasting and matching it up with descriptions from the experts. The tasting will begin promptly at 6:30 p.m. Latecomers will not be able to participate after the tasting begins.

BJCP Exam Preparation Class: I would like to start planning a BJCP Exam Preparation Course if there is sufficient interest. To make it cost-effective, it is best to have a class of ten to twelve people with at least five people who are committed to taking the exam. The general format will be weekly midweek evening sessions starting in mid-March and running approximately 12 weeks. The cost is around \$60. If interested, please give me a call at 301-762-6523 no later than February 21.

REINHEITSGEBOT EDUCATION SERIES: Based on the overwhelming success of the advanced BJCP exam preparation class, our new fearless leader has proposed a series of in-depth technical sessions that examine the effects of malt, hops, water, and yeast on beer. BURP ran a program like this in 1994 which was highly successful in raising the level of brewing expertise for all participants. Robert Stevens and I plan to begin this in April. We intend to have monthly three-hour sessions until June, break for the summer, and finish in the fall. You will be able to register for one class at a time or for the entire series. If you have any additional ideas for technical sessions (e.g., recipe formulation or quality control), please give me a call at 301-762-6523.

BURP Brewer of the Year

Steve Marler, Fearless Leader

BURP is starting a Brewer of the Year Award. This honor will be awarded to the BURP member who has earned the most points by placing at the BURP monthly competitions. The person who has earned the most points by the BURP Holiday Party will be crowned BURP Brewer of the Year.

At each BURP monthly competition the first place winner will receive 3 points, second place 2 points, and third place 1 point. So far this year based on last month's Pale Ale competition, Andy Anderson has 3 points, Robert Stevens has 2 points, and Bob Dawson has 1 point. The next competition is the McCoubrey Stout Competition on February 16.

Brewers Challenge Competitions

Steve Marler, Fearless Leader

BURP is going to begin the Brewers Challenge Competition Series. The idea behind this competition is for BURP members to brew a clone of a given commercial example. The person who brews a beer that is judged to be the closest to the commercial beer will be the winner.

The first Brewers Challenge will be held during the July meeting. The beer that you need to replicate will be Anchor Steam Beer. There is another twist though. For this particular Brewers Challenge we are bringing back the ever popular Battle of the Sexes. To enter this competition you must brew with at least one other person of the same sex. If you are a cross-dresser or transvestite, you must yield to your God given equipment when deciding which sex you will enter as. Those who have had sex change operations may enter under the sex of your new equipment. The team of men or women that brew a beer that is closest to Anchor Steam Beer will be declared the winners.

The following Brewers Challenge will be in October and will be an Oktoberfest beer. We will disclose the commercial example that you must replicate in the March edition of the newsletter.

