

# The Worthouse News

A Publication of the Edmonton Homebrewers Guild

May 2006



## Upcoming Events

### May Meeting

May 1, 2006

Alley Kat Brewing

Theme: BURRP!

### June Meeting

Saturday June 10, 2006 (Tentative)

ABC competition hall

Theme: End of season

### September Meeting

September 11, 2006

Alley Kat Brewing

Theme: Start of new season

## The Edmonton Homebrewers Guild

### Executives (Sept 2005 to August 2006)

President ..... Kevin Zaychuk

Vice-President ..... Bruce Sample

Secretary ..... Mark Nesdoly

Treasurer ..... Ray Duperon

Competition Chair ..... Arnold Moerth

Newsletter Editors ..... Kurt Stenberg

Bob Boufford

Web Administrator ..... Sean Cormican

### Guild Meetings

Edmonton Homebrewers Guild meetings are held on the first non-holiday Monday of a month from September to June at Alley Kat Brewing, 9929-60<sup>th</sup> Ave in Edmonton.

Meetings start at 7:30 PM. A few meetings each season will be held at other local beer establishments.

Each meeting includes a theme or style session with a "mini-competition" where anyone attending the meeting can have one's beers tasted, evaluated, and judged. Several meetings over the year will be AHA sessions where the winner is forwarded to an AHA event.

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The Edmonton Homebrewers Guild

*The Worthouse News* is sent monthly to paid members, guild sponsors and WCBC member clubs. Past issues may be read at <http://www.ehg.ca>.

Original articles may be reprinted in other homebrewing club newsletters with credit to the author and The Edmonton Homebrewers Guild. Submissions welcome and may be sent to the editors.

## View from the Top of the Tun

By Kevin Zaychuk, President

BURRP! is upon us and we are only one month away from our last meeting.

I think this is a good opportunity to reflect on the year and what it takes to make this club the great club that it is. A great club is a result of the efforts of ALL of its members and of course a few extra hard-working people on the executive doesn't hurt either. The efforts of the past executive to ensure our brewing and judging skill are constantly improving (and of one of our current exec who consistently writes educational articles for the newsletter) was very obvious in the super showing of the EHG at the recent ALES competition. Congratulations to all who took home a medal and especially to Roxy for winning the BOS. Please bring your schweg to show off to the rest of the members in May.

It also goes without saying that members with new ideas and seemingly inexhaustible enthusiasm are essential to the health of this club. It is always appreciated when a person steps up to the plate to take on a project and carry it through. Please let someone know when you have appreciated what they have done and if you have any suggestions for improving an event, then step up and help organize it.

Another aspect that is key to our club and often seemingly overlooked except during our competition season, is the sponsors and supporters of our club. Unless you have recently awoke from an ice age you will realize that it takes all of these elements to produce a thriving home brewing and craft beer industry. As I make my way back from Portland, OR (wearing my Rogue Dead Guy Ale sweatshirt and Hop Union T-shirt 'Making the world a bitter place one pint at a time') I reflect on how all of those elements come together to make for a very rich beer culture or "Beervana" as they say in Portland. As an aside, this was my second trip to the city in which claims more microbreweries than any other city in the world. Not only did I enjoy many great microbrews AGAIN but I also had the pleasure of sharing this experience with 2 close friends, the other 2/3 of the KGB Brewery. (Continued on Page 2)

*May Monthly Meeting*

*May 1st, 7:30 PM*

**View from the Top (Continued from Page 1)**

In the city of Portland, the co-dependency of the knowledgeable brewers and consumers is very apparent. Bruce and Glen and I visited many establishments ranging from the 'micro' microbrewery The Tugboat on Ankeny to the Rogue Ales Pub and Distillery on Flanders. We squeezed in a stop at Henry's (over 100 taps), several visits to Whole Foods to ogle the beer selection (and fill up on all the free food samples), a visit to an Organic Microbrewery called Roots (go figure) to taste a 'no-hop' Heather Ale (think BURRP), a stop at a great Homebrew Supply Store and a day trip to Yakima, WA for an unforgettable tour of HopUnion by none other than the Owner/Manager Ralph Olson. We finished that day off with a pit stop in Stevenson, WA at the Walking Man Brewery (winner of two 2006 World Beer Cup Medals), shook hands with Bob the Brewer (and owner) and headed back to Rogue for a night cap.

The common denominator of all the establishments we visited was the customer service, knowledge of beer and cooperation. The brewpubs aren't afraid to sell another breweries products and 'guest taps' are ubiquitous. All of these points help to increase the customers' knowledge and perpetuate the craft. Although Edmonton and Alberta is a long way off from Portland, we have an extremely strong base and we as home brewers have to continue to support the industry as they support us. Drink the local brews, ask for an Alley Kat, support the homebrew shops and support the sponsors who support the club or have supplied you with a gift for winning a competition (no matter how small or large). Send them a letter of thanks and tell them what you like (or dislike) about their business or products. Improvements in their business are based on feed-back (positive or negative) just as your brewing improves based on the feedback from your peers.

Support the industry and they will support you!

See you at the May meeting to continue this discussion and sample a few brews!

Cheers,

Kevin

**From the Bottom of the Mash**

By the EHG Editors

This brewing season sure has gone by fast. I still feel like I am trying to rush in a few more batches to enter into this years ABC. I'm especially rushing my Dapplebock! What beer needs lagering anyways? It's just a gimmick right? I hope Neil doesn't notice that I cold conditioned my "double-goat" for a week! On that note, I think we all need to thank Neil for all of his support from Alley Kat. Everything from hosting our meetings and barbeques, to hosting EHG's involvement with this years Big Brew day. Alley Kats sponsorship this year is also very much appreciated with the chance to brew the winning dapplebock with Neil. We can't thank you enough for all of your support. Speaking of support, I would also like to thank everyone in the EHG for making the EHG what it is. We couldn't be a club with out members and we couldn't run as a club with out executive members and eager people that plan events and organize such events that you all get to enjoy. So thanks to the executive (who aren't just members who meet once a month to drink!) and to the membership for attending such events and meetings.

Salute,

Kurt

For some of us, the brewing season is winding down, while others of us look forward to summertime when the weather and long bright evenings allow for wonderful shirtsleeve brewing on the patio or balcony. With the variety of cooling systems now available, it's very easy to brew year round.

With a background in horticulture, spring and summer are also times of re-growth and renewal as I watch the grass grow, the trees leaf out and the flowers bloom in the infinite life cycles that go on around us.

It's also time for my cycle of involvement in the Guild to shift a bit and step down from an editorial role to focus on changes in the day job and use what time is available to brew and study brewing. I'm very pleased to have had Kurt and Matthew before him, step up to being lead editor. I hope one of you can step into the cycle with Kurt to continue publishing the best homebrew club newsletter in Canada.

Bob

## Upcoming Competitions

### Fourth Annual Brewing Under Really Ridiculous Parameters! (BURRP!): "Don't Hop, Jump Back to the Beginning" May 1, 2006

This year's ridiculous parameter is to brew a beer with no hops but any other herb or spice to provide the bitterness and flavouring.

And this year there will be real prizes! Details on the competition can be read in January issue of the newsletter available for reading on the EHG web site.

### EHG 2006 Aurora Brewing Challenge June 8-10, 2006

#### Entry Deadline: Friday, June 2, 2006

##### Rules of Engagement

- Home brewed beer and mead is eligible. "Home brew" means beer or mead, which has been made on "home brewing" equipment only. Beer made on a Brew-On-Premise is not eligible. Beers made from commercially available kits are eligible.
- An entry consists of two (2) 300 - 500 ml unmarked beer bottles with plain or blacked out caps, a \$6.00 entry fee, and the provided entry forms. For the 4th and additional entries, the fee is \$4.00. Attach a form to each bottle with an elastic band. *Entries with forms taped to the bottles will be disqualified.* Incomplete entries will not be judged. Bottles will not be returned. Any type of bottle will be accepted.
- Enter as many beer styles/subcategories as you wish. You may enter more than one entry per subcategory. Identify each of these subcategory entries with a unique number or name.
- All entries must specify a style and subcategory. Acceptable subcategories are listed under each style. Each entry will be judged based on the category indicated. Entries not categorized as above will not be judged.
- Special medals will be awarded for Best of Show, Brewer of the Year (most medal points in the competition), and Best Club (most medal points). Medals will be awarded in each beer style and in the mead category. Only one beer in each category will advance to MCAB.
- Judges qualified under the Beer Judge Certification Program (BJCP) will perform the

judging. Everyone who enters will have an evaluation form returned to them for each entry within 30 days of the end of the competition. Results will be posted on the Edmonton Homebrewers Guild web page at <http://www.ehg.ca>, within 48 hours of the competition close.

### Medals will be awarded in each class - 1st place in qualifying MCAB styles are eligible for MCAB 9 in 2007

The Masters Championship of Amateur Brewing (MCAB) is a grass roots amateur brewing championship. The format of the MCAB is a small invitation "champions' championship," where amateur brewers compete head-to-head under ideal conditions, and with the highest standards of judging. The MCAB 9 will be held in 2007.

Twelve local competitions in North America have been selected as MCAB Qualifying Events. Edmonton is the only Canadian site. First place Qualifying Styles at each Qualifying Event receive an invitation to enter the MCAB finals in that style category. MCAB entrants are free to enter any one beer they wish in their Qualifying Style, including samples from fresh batches brewed specially for the MCAB. This format allows MCAB entrants to brew and submit beers at peak levels of freshness and conditioning, and have their beers judged in small flights by panels of highly experienced judges.

For more information, please contact the Competition Chair, Arnold Moerth, 780-451-9117, [armoerth@telusplanet.net](mailto:armoerth@telusplanet.net)

## New EHG Style for ABC 2006!

### 66. BURRP! Beer

#### Basic rules for Brewing Under Really Ridiculous Parameters! (BURRP!)

1. Five kg (10 lbs) of 2-row pale malt (preferably Western Canadian malt) -OR- 2.5 kg (5 lbs) of 2-row pale malt and 2.5 kg (5 lbs) of pale dry malt extract.
2. Additional really ridiculous parameters as established each year. For 2006, "No Hops!" is this year's extra parameter.
3. See the January 2006 issue of The Worthouse News (<http://www.ehg.ca/newsletter/2006-01.pdf>) for additional details and rules.

### An ABC Doppelbock might be the next cool Alley Kat!

Are you sending in a doppelbock for this year's Aurora Brewing Challenge? Entries in the BJCP [Category 5C - Doppelbock](#) will be considered for the next Alley Kat beer. There is still time to brew a doppelbock, which could be the next Alley Kat beer. So get those kettles going!

## Meet Your Fellow Guild Members!



**Name:** Bob Boufford

**Day job:** Team Lead, e-Learning Support and Development, The University of Alberta

**Years with EHG:** little over 3 years

**How long homebrewing:** Brewed my first beer on December 2, 2001, so little over 4 years

**Favorite beers, (besides Alley Kat!):** Any beer that is not a light lager or pilsner

**Past awards or acknowledgments:** Three medals and Best of Show for the first Brew House Brew-off.

**Current Brew System:** A 14th floor apartment brewing system, which means an eclectic mix of brewing equipment for doing anything from hacking Brew House kits to all-grain brewing. System has evolved into doing 3-gallon batches.

**How did you get into homebrewing?** My brother introduced me to homebrewing with some of his kit brews, but it was EHG that really got me into homebrewing.

**Did anyone teach you or help you in the beginning?** I'm pretty much self-taught. However, it's everyone in EHG who has helped me, especially Roxy, Neil and Frank. I was still pretty new to homebrewing when I came from the States and joined the Guild.

**How has your brewing changed from the beginning?** Like many other brewers, I started with kit beers, usually from Williams Brewing in the States, making the standard 5-gallon (19 l) batches. Since then I've downsized to primarily 3-gallon (11 l) batches as it better fits available storage space and my ongoing interest in trying out lots of different styles.

**What are some things you have done to experiment?** Currently working with the malted triticale from Alberta Agriculture. So far the triticale tripels and triticale barely wines are giving good promise. I like to also do split batches, usually Brew House kit hacks, with different yeasts and other additions.

**What is the strangest brew or experiment you have done?** Nesquik and Coco-Puffs porters for BURRP! 2 that are also some of the best beers I have brewed so far.

**Is there one brew or style of brew you would be known for best?** *Dante's Mixed-up Lambic*, a mixed-berry fruit pseudo-lambic.

**What is your favorite beer you have ever made despite feedback?** The malted triticale beers I have been making recently. Folks either like the taste or think it's terrible. But then again, I can't stand the light lagers.

**Do you use any special or unique ingredients in your brews?** Except for BURRP and the malted triticale, I tend to stay with the common ingredients available locally.

**What things are most important to you to producing a good brew?** Sanitation and temperature. I have pretty good control on sanitation. However, temperature is a challenge in a south-facing high-rise apartment. This year was difficult. It's getting time to either buy a fermentation fridge or a house with a basement.

**Do you have any future goals you would like to achieve with brewing?** I would like to try doing some of the cold conditioned ale styles once I get the right cooling setup. A long-term goal is to develop a compact 3-gallon electric HERMS system as a "nano-brewery" for apartments.

**Do you have any brews planned in the near future?** If time allows, I would like to do some lower gravity session ales similar to Tetley's English Ale.

**Do you have any memorable moments involving beer?** Through the late 70's I was one of those typical unwashed masses of the American Midwest who drank Bud, Strohs and Pabst. Finally got tired of the taste of "beer" and barely drank any beer for the next 20 years. After changing jobs in 2000, I was with my new boss in Boston, who offered to buy me a beer. "Harpoon IPA, okay?" I said "Sure" not wanting to offend the new boss but also not to show my lack of knowledge as to what an IPA was either. "Wow!, This is beer?" It was nothing I've ever tasted before and that started my return to the great joy of beer.

**Do you have any tips for fellow homebrewers?** Find a homebrew club like the EHG and join. If you are not in the Edmonton area, find a club that follows Roxy's great motto, " We are not just a bunch of all-grain beer snobs, we are simply a bunch of beer snobs, making the best brews possible by whatever means we choose."

## Travel Tales

### The KGB Infiltrate the United States through Portland, Oregon.

April 21-24, 2006

"I never met a beer I didn't like" – Thomas Hannah  
I've heard how clean and well organized the city of Portland is but I couldn't believe it till I saw it for myself along with Kevin and Bruce last weekend. Portland doesn't feel like a city. It has a small town feel with warm, accommodating citizens. Two of my favorite interests lie there: bicycles and microbrews. And plenty of them. The city has a wide network of cycling paths and trails to accommodate the cycling craze. I met a couple that moved there a couple of years ago from LA for that reason. They traded in their car for two bicycles and haven't looked back since.

Portland is on the south bank of the Columbia River in the green state of Oregon across from Vancouver, WA. God has blessed this city with two major beer ingredients key in producing great quaffs. Clean, fresh water from the lakes and rivers of the Cascade Mountains and American hops from the nearby Yakima and Willamette (pronounced "wil-LAM-ette" right Kevin), valleys.

Kevin introduced Bruce and I to our first stop, Tugboat Brewing Co. Located in the bowels of the Tower District this brewpub attracts students and artists. They carry a half dozen of their own American style ales topped off with their signature beer Chernobyl Stout (7.5%). They only serve this in ½ pints for obvious reasons. What's great about this place is they brew more styles than they can serve so the ales rotate from month-to-month. Guest taps are abundant with select Oregon microbrews. No Bud or Busch here! They only accept cash. Pints range from \$2 during happy hour to \$3.50 regular.

<http://www.d2m.com/Tugwebsite/home.htm>



I'm sure everyone's heard of Rogue Ales. Based out of Newport on the Oregon Coast they opened a second location in the Pearl District. Too many beers to mention here but all I can say is to check them out. Their founder, legend and brew master, John Maier popped by when he

heard the KGB were in town. Rogue Ales is getting into distilling rum at their Portland location and vodka and gin in Newport. A special Thank You to Andy or Alex (even the bartender didn't know his name) for taking an hour of his time and showing us around. FYI – anyone visiting Rogue soon is eligible for a free pint courtesy of Bruce. He left a Rogue license plate on the bar. Didn't remember too much that night. <http://www.rogue.com>



What used to be a household name in Oregon microbrews is no longer active. The late, great Henry Weinhard power plant has been given a second life. Now called Henry's it's more an upscale pub/nightclub. If you're looking for action or a piece of it this is the place to go. Over 100 micros here – all on tap! I tried a Terminal Gravity IPA from the brewery of the same name – yummy. Cascades lots of Cascades. I should make note that Henry Weinhard Brews are available including his world famous Root Beer but all are brewed under license by a different company.

With all the brewpubs and microbrews available on Portland alone it's no wonder there are next to no brewing supply stores in town. Bruce found two in the Yellow Pages. We checked Let's Brew, a



supply shop east of town. We took the #20 bus out of town and after a thirty-minute ride arrived at Let's Brew. The husband is a sheet metal tradesman and his wife runs the store. All his grain bins are sheet metal and he tinkers a bit with stainless. He'll fabricate almost anything you want from draught towers to conical fermenters. Lots of specialty grains in transparent dispensers. Pay by the pound. Oh ya! They carry White Labs.

<http://www.letsbrew.net>

Roots Organic Brewing is Portland's first certified organic brewery. I sampled their Heather Ale. The perfect 2006 BURRP entry brewed with no hops. I couldn't bring a sample home as they don't bottle. <http://www.rootsorganicbrewing.com>

VooDoo Doughnuts is an over night doughnut shop open from 10:00pm to 08:00am. For those with a sweet tooth looking for late night munchies or simply a place to hang because you've been punted from all the brewpubs – you're welcome

here. They have a wedding package starting at \$175. Yes you can get married there! A strange business model run by a couple of eccentric individuals or "quacks". However it seems to work. Their motto: "The Magic is in the Hole". I'll leave it at that. <http://www.voodoo doughnut.com>.

I recommend you spend a day outside of the city and drive the I84 along the Columbia River out to Hood River. Spectacular scenery. Great views of Mount St. Helens and Mt. Hood. Stop at Cascade Locks and Multnomah Falls for a stretch or pee break. Full Sail Brewing and Big Horse Brewing reside in Hood River and if we had more time we would have checked them out. All the more reason for a return visit. Kevin thanks for driving.



East of Hood River we took Hwy 97 over the Columbia River up to Yakima, WA where we met Ralph Olson of Hop Union CBS. Ralph along with his business partner (the other Ralph)

bought Hop Union CBS (craft brewery supplies) from Hop Union USA in the late 90's to focus on the micro market. Ralph showed us their facility - everything from their cold storage warehouses to their pellet machines. Activity was idle as the growing season is still in its infancy. Inventory is running low which is great in Ralph's eyes. In late summer/fall things go nuts as they head into heavy production of leaf, plug and pellet hops destined for microbreweries and retailers globally. Our visit concluded with a stop at Ralph's private bar. His walk-in fridge hosts a plethora of brews from all over the States. We complimented his selection with a couple of six-packs of Full Moon kindly donated by Neil. You can rest assured Neil they made it there - full! We sampled many fine ales from the Russian River Brewing Co. along with his Hopfen Tropf liqueur. Kevin you helluvaguy thanks for driving. <http://www.hopunion.com>

North of Cascade Locks on the Columbia River in Stevenson, WA lies Walking Man Brewing. This quaint brewpub opened in 2000 by Bob Craig and his wife Liz and serves as a public living room for the town. The décor is basic but appealing and well planned. The bar stool and chair frames are



constructed of rebar by the local blacksmith. Try lifting one of their chairs. I dare ya - just try! I enjoyed their Walking Man Imperial Pale Ale which took Gold in the 2006 World Beer Cup - American style ESB's. Kevin did I say thanks for driving? <http://www.walkingmanbrewing.com>

Well before we knew it, it was Monday and time to head home. Feeling depressed my spirits were enlightened when we came across the Rose City Café at the Portland Int'l Airport (PBX). So the entire day wasn't all that bad. Because of our early arrival, we had time to slam down a couple of pints: a Fat Tire Pale Ale and a Bridgeport IPA for me and a couple of Hefewiezens for Bruce.

The trend here currently is to Imperialize everything. If that's the right term to use. That means bigger, bolder and stronger. The trend attracts home brewers like myself because I like my beers a tad on the heavy, more body side. Something the bigger breweries don't offer because of the lower yield thus lowering the bottom line. Rogue ales even carries an Imperial Pilsner. I'm not going to comment on them. I'll leave that up to you on your next visit. All I will say is that I concur with the quote above my father told me years ago.

The weekend's motto: "Too many pubs - not enough time." When I do revisit I'll bring the Mrs., my cruiser, stay downtown and hangout for a week...or even two.

Enjoy, Glen.

### **EHG *The Worthouse News* Co-Editor position**

For the upcoming 2006-2007 brewing and meeting season, The Edmonton Homebrewers Guild is looking for a co-editor(s) of the Guild's *The Worthouse News*. Primary responsibility is what is often known as the "composition and layout editor" which basically means trying to fit all the great articles that the Editor (that's Kurt) manages to find and reshape them into a newsletter layout. If you are good at puzzles, this may be the position for you.

Pay is lousy, benefits are great! Position requires about two to three hours of computer time, once a month. Experience with Microsoft Word is preferred but will also accept Microsoft Publisher experience or even no experience at all. Training is available.

If you are interested, contact Kurt or Kevin.

## Beer Fault of the Month

by Mark Nездoly

I kind of glossed over sanitation in my first column on phenols a few months ago, but with the ALES competition in Regina still fresh in my mind, I wanted to go over it in more detail.

Judging beer is simultaneously one of the easiest and hardest things you can do. Sometimes it is very easy, for instance if one beer is head and shoulders above everything else in the flight. However, if you get 10 or 11 infected or phenolic beers in a row, it becomes very tough to be a judge.

I'll tell you a little secret: the beers that win at a competition frequently stand out because they're not infected, and not because they're classic examples of the style. You'd be very surprised at the sheer volume of infected entries you come across in a competition. My gut tells me that sometimes it's at least half the entries, if not more. The question becomes: just why are bacterial or wild yeast infections so common?

I believe it's because most brewers overestimate the cleanliness of their methods, equipment, or ingredients. I cannot stress this enough: treat EVERYTHING as a possible source of contamination and take appropriate precautions. Only extreme heat or proper chemical sanitizing solutions will kill beer-spoiling microorganisms.

The subject of sanitation came up a few times during our (Kevin Z, Greg W, Kurt S, Ryan R, and yours truly) recent Regina excursion. I managed to convince Kurt to buy Star San when we stopped at Paddock Wood for supplies. Greg picked some up for the first time as well.

They bought Star San mainly because Kevin, Ryan and myself raved about it. It's great stuff. It only requires a 30 second contact time to kill or seriously disable every nasty microorganism on your equipment. Iodine and bleach take two minutes. It's also a no-rinse sanitizer, which means just that: you dip/soak your equipment, pour off the excess sanitizer, and it's good to go. Iodophor is also no-rinse, but it takes longer to do its job, and it's very nasty if you spill it. I caught hell from my wife many times for faint iodine stains on the floor, wall and countertop.

Star San is also reusable. I keep a sealed 5-gallon pail full of premixed solution. Just use reverse osmosis water to mix it, and it keeps for a long

time. I keep mine for about a year before I dump it out and mix a fresh batch.

Bleach is nasty stuff. It stinks, it makes your skin stink, crack, and dry out. Everyone knows what happens if you splash it on your clothes. It's also very bad if it contacts organic materials, such as those found in beer. Some of the compounds which are formed are carcinogenic – poisonous, in other words. For these reasons, bleach must be rinsed off. Well, that's where you're going to get the infection.

Unless you use preboiled sterile water to rinse off the bleach, you're simply recontaminating everything. That's because most people think tap water is sterile. Bzzz. Wrong. It's not. It's cleaner than river water, but sterile it's not.

I conducted a little experiment this past week. On Monday I made a small jar of starter using some DME, yeast nutrient and water. The jar was then pressure cooked for 10 minutes. This is how I prepare all my starters, by the way. After it had cooled back down to room temperature, I opened the jar and poured just a little bit of Edmonton tap water into it right from the faucet. I then replaced the lid and set the jar aside.

Nothing really seemed to happen until Thursday, when the lid was very noticeably bowed upward. There seemed to be a little bit of slime on the surface too. On Friday, curiosity got the better of me and I opened the jar. It smelled awful – very sour, but some rotten vegetable thrown in too. I didn't taste it – I didn't need to.

It was infected, and the tap water was the culprit. I've saved unopened jars of starter solution like this for over a year with no infections, so it was definitely the tap water. I hope this opens some eyes. If you've ever had judging sheets which consistently said something about phenols, sourness or an infection then you need to take a long hard look at what you're doing and how it needs to be changed. I'm not talking about an odd beer here or there.....If you enter 10 beers in a competition and 3 or more end up being infected – you need to change your ways.

Here's one other anecdote. My Dusseldorf Alt took a bronze in Regina. It's so far out of style, it surely didn't deserve to. However, there were only 4 entries in that category. That leads me to believe that there was one entry that was very badly infected. It's the only reason why that beer got a medal at all. That's pretty bad when you think

about it: 4 entries, and one just had to be infected – it's the only explanation why my beer got a medal.

In closing, anything that touches the beer from the boil onward must be sanitized, either by a no-rinse sanitizer, hooch (alcohol), or by heat. Watch plastic and vinyl tubing, as they're notorious for harbouring bacteria. Plastic & vinyl always have microscopic cracks and scratches which will hide these nasty beasts. Also remember that tap water is clean, but not sterile.

## Oak aged Porter

Kurt Stenberg

This year the EHG has got their hands on a 44 gal "swish" oak barrel. In case you are wondering, "swish" is the term used for the whiskey you obtain out of the barrel after a "run". You see, the barrels come from an unknown distillery where they age whiskey. They age their whiskey around 90 % alc. or higher for extended periods of time. Once properly aged, the distillery dilutes this potent alcohol to the 40% hard liquor you see on your shelves. Between "ageing" the distillery uses a flame to char the inside of the cask before adding the next green batch to condition. Once they cannot use the barrels anymore people like myself, and now the EHG, picks up these barrels to suck out any remaining flavors and alcohols. Many places, such as Canadian tire and greenhouses, sell these barrels as planters to the general public. (Don't worry, our barrel came from a legitimate source – not a greenhouse!) To make swish, as I have done in the past, you add 12 L of water to the empty barrel and turn slightly every day during the summer to slowly absorb the whiskey from the pores in the wood for about a month. In the end, you drain and filter then usually end up with a generic whiskey around 35 – 40 % alc.

This year we plan on using the barrel for a greater achievement; conditioning a nice roasty porter. A porter would blend nicely with the flavors of oak and whiskey as opposed to a lighter colored beer that would pick up a burnt character that would be undesirable. The next concern would be sanitation. Since the barrel is already soaked with 90+% alc. I don't believe this will pose a major problem. Obviously there will be a definite unknown characteristic that we can all look forward to tasting next season. We have chosen a tried tested and true porter recipe from Bruce and will ferment it with

British Cask Ale Wyeast. We may also "tinker" slightly with the recipe in order to tailor it to our unstable conditioning vessel. Other than that we will just let it go! More details to come! See me (Kurt) for more information.



Each year on the first Saturday in May, homebrewers unite non-brewing and brewing friends and family to celebrate [National Homebrew Day](#), joining with thousands of homebrewers from around the world in brewing the same recipes and sharing a simultaneous toast at noon Central Time.

Before the event, participants that are planning BIG BREW events register their site on this web site (<http://www.beertown.org/events/bigbrew/index.html>) These registered sites help the American Homebrewers Association track how many participants celebrated the event. Event results will be posted on this page a few weeks after the event.

**When:** May 06, 2006

**Where:** Alley Kat Brewing, 9929 - 60 Avenue Time: Mash-in @ 8:30 AM

**Lunch** @ noon with a toast to the Homebrewers around the World

**Wrap-up** and clean up at 2:30 PM

**Cost:** *BBQ lunch and a couple pints available for a small fee (approx. \$10 total).*

*A nominal fee of \$1 will be charged per litre for the wort.*

*Please bring a sterile carboy(s) and yeast for a Koelsch Ale ready to pitch (see Andrew @ Brew Crew Southside)!!*

*And bring a lawn chair.*

**PLEASE PRE-REGISTER WITH RYAN**  
[ryan.rybchuk@arc.ab.ca](mailto:ryan.rybchuk@arc.ab.ca) or Kevin  
[kzay@telus.net](mailto:kzay@telus.net)

**Sponsored by The Edmonton Homebrewers Guild and**



## Little Dog's Breakfast

### Best of Show at AHA Canadian First rounds – Regina 2006

by Roxy Hastings

Little Dog's Breakfast is a beer with a story. It's a beer born of abnormal circumstances. It brings a decade of brewing full circle. It's a beer that exemplifies the friendly rivalry amongst Guild members that makes our club the best in Canada.

Little Dog's Breakfast is American Pale Ale that was inspired by Flying Dog Brewing Company's Snake Dog IPA. Now for those who know me, you know that in itself is pretty unusual - clone beers being pretty much at the bottom of my to-do list when it comes to crafting beers. I typically like to brew recipes that just come out of my own mind that I feel will best fit the style. But sometimes ya gotta break the rules to move on. And this was one of those times.

Flying Dog's Snake Dog IPA is one of my favourite import commercial beers, but still being a cheap homebrewer at heart, I didn't want to always have to pay \$14.00 a six pack if I could make it at home. Flying Dogs has a great web site (<http://www.flyingdogales.com/cut-fd-story.asp>) that gives the basic ingredients for all their beers plus O.G. and IBU. So with this information I set out to see if I could make a reasonable knock off and Little Dog's is the result.

I called it Dog's Breakfast because it has a strange hopping pattern. It has three different kinds of hops, two American and one British and each hop is put into the beer at a different stage. To me that's a dog's breakfast. No attempt is made to build a base flavour profile and to carry this through to the finish of the beer. I typically like to create a symphony of hops where each hop adds a note that builds on the next to follow. Flying Dogs style is more of a jazz jam session. This was another of the beers abnormalities and the fact that I stuck with this hopping pattern is not at all to my usual style.

The "Little" in Little Dog's Breakfast recognizes that this is an APA and not an IPA. Although to be honest, Flying Dog's Snake Dog IPA only has an original gravity of 1.056 and an IBU of 48, so it's more a cheat IPA (Flying Dog calls it a Colorado style IPA) than what the BJCP style guidelines would suggest. However, the high IBU:OG ratio certainly makes it taste like an IPA, just without the alcohol warming but with lots of drinkability for full-blown hop heads like me.

Winning the BOS with Little Dog's this year was especially meaningful for me as it was 10 years ago this year that I last won BOS at the Canadian Nationals – coincidentally with another American Ale, an American Brown. That year the competition was hosted here in Edmonton. It celebrated the 10th anniversary of the EHG as a brew club. It was also the first year that the competition was held outside of Toronto, its former home, and that competition was the start of the rise of the dominance of western Canadian brew clubs in the Canadian scene. So for me this win was especially sweet, if totally unexpected.

Finally, this brew was born in large part due to the friendly rivalry between myself and my good friend Harry Wagner. For the last 5 or so years Harry and I have been competing to see who can make the best American Pale Ale and who can make the best American India Pale Ale. Harry has always won the American Pale Ale and I have always won the India Pale Ale. This year we both pulled out all stops to beat the other person in their best category. And you know what happened this year? Harry won gold in IPA and I won in APA! A complete reversal of five years of fiercely contested results. But I tell you, with all due modesty, those 5 years produced some of the best homebrewed American Ales in Canada.

That type of friendly rivalry is what makes the Edmonton Homebrewers Guild the best brew club in Canada! So here's to another 10 years of fun, friendship and great beers!

- Little Dog's Breakfast American Pale Ale
- 5.25 US/ 20 L, 1.056 OG, 1.016 FG, 48 IBU (Target OG was 1.060)
- 10.0 lb/ 4.5 kg Westcan 2-row
- 1.5 lb / 68 gm Crisp Caramel malt
- 0.5 oz /14 gm Warrior – 16.3 AA = 32 IBU – 60 minutes
- 2.15 oz/ 61 gm Goldings 5.5 AA = 16 IBU – 20 minutes
- 1.5 oz/ 42 gm Columbus 12 AA – dry hop
- 60% RO
- 1400 ml London Ale 1028 Culture

1 step infusion mash, 1.5 qts/lb, 157 F/69 C for 2 hours. Mash out at 180 F/82 C. Total boil time 80 minutes.

10 days primary ferment at 66 F/19 C. 28 days secondary at 66 F/19 C.

Note to Kevin. This was the Crisp Caramel malt that you managed to have donated to the club. You asked us to tell you the results. While I guess this kinda does that. ☺

## The Beerstein “The Bees Knees”

by Greg Wondga

It's really nice to see the rising numbers of mead entries in major home-brewing competitions such as Regina's ALES NHC qualifier and Edmonton's Aurora Brewing Challenge. I believe that home-brewers are realizing that by developing the skills to make beer, they are more than qualified to make wine, cider, and mead. In fact, beer requires far more trouble-shooting, and therefore making mead is a little bit like a vacation. The intent of this article is to describe the many different kinds of mead and to give the reader a basic idea of how to produce this amazing elixir.

When I bring a bottle of mead to a friend's house or present it as a gift I find myself having to answer the question, “What is mead?” The easiest answer of course is to say that mead is a “honey wine”. (I used to say that mead is fermented honey, but such a description tends to turn people off.) However, wine must technically be made from fruit, therefore mead is not really wine at all. It isn't beer, because beer is made from cereal grains. So mead is really in a category of its own. Historically, mead was believed to have some very practical uses, one being its ability to increase one's libido. A traditional gift for newlyweds was a month supply of mead – known as the honeymoon. It was believed that by consuming the mead, the couple would increase their chances of having a healthy son. This is a great story to convince people to try mead by the way.

Meadmaking is an experimenter's dream. There are almost as many styles of mead as there are of beer:

**Show Mead (Traditional Mead):** A basic straight mead with no additional flavorings. This is the most difficult style to do well because you cannot hide faults behind a flavoring.

**Sack Mead:** A strong sweet mead.

**Melomel:** Mead fermented or flavored with fruit.

**Cyser:** A specific type of melomel where the fruit is apples. Often a cyser can be a blend of mead and hard apple cider.

**Pyment:** A specific type of melomel where the fruit is grapes. Often a pyment can be a blend of mead and wine.

**Metheglyn:** Mead fermented or flavored with herbs and spices.

**Hippocras:** Pyment fermented or flavored with herbs and spices.

**Braggot (also spelled bragot or bracket):** Mead made with malted grain – typically malted barley.

There are still many more traditional styles! As a meadmaker you can blend as many varieties of mead as you see fit. With one 5 gallon batch of traditional mead, you can split it into five 1 gallon jugs and experiment with fruit, wine, spices, beer, milk, and even a combination. Dogfish head makes a magnificent three way blend of mead, wine, and beer called Midas Touch. It was inspired by a recipe for mead discovered at the tomb of King Midas.

By far, the most important thing to consider when making mead is the quality of the honey. The best honey to use is fresh off the hive. If you buy pasteurized honey from a supermarket, you will be very disappointed. The best place to find fresh honey is directly from honey farmers. You can find them by using the yellow pages or by going to farmer's markets. I am very lucky to have a father in law who makes honey as a hobby. Some years the honey makes very good mead, and some years the mead comes out as exceptional. One thing is certain, however... the honey is never the same twice. The point that I am trying to make is that it is very difficult to know if honey will make good mead until you actually try it out and consistency is as impossible with mead as it is with wine.

Once you have some fresh honey, the process of making mead is actually quite simple. Add the honey to hot water, raise the temperature until almost boiling, let it sit at this temperature for 15 minutes, crash cool, transfer the must into a sanitized fermenter, and then pitch the yeast.

**How much honey should I add?** The ratio of honey to water is very important because it will determine the original gravity of the must and define the style of mead that you intend to make. For a basic traditional style of mead a typical ratio is 5 pounds of honey per gallon of water. Every resource that I've looked into says that one pound of honey in one gallon of water will produce a must with a specific gravity of 1.035. Therefore, 5 pounds of honey in one gallon of water will produce a must with a specific gravity of 1.175. However, in my experience, I tend to hit a gravity of 1.110 with such a honey to water ratio. I would advise having

an original gravity above 1.080 in order to prevent producing a thin mead.

**Boil or not boil?** There is a debate among meadmakers as to whether or not the must should be boiled prior to fermentation. One obvious benefit to boiling is that sanitation is easily accomplished without the addition of sulfites. The negative effect of boiling is that some of the honey aromas are quite volatile and will be lost. Personally, I do not boil, nor do I add any sulfites. I raise the temperature to 95°C, let it rest for 15 minutes then crash cool it using a wort chiller. One benefit to heating the must is that the honey dissolves well into the water. Also, it helps to add Irish moss while the must is hot. If you want clear mead, adding this clearing agent is a must (pardon the pun). The choice to boil or not boil is a personal one – try both and judge for yourself.

**What else should you add to the hot must?** If you wish to add spices, you may do so at this point, or wait until racking to a secondary fermenter. I prefer to wait because then I can blend small amounts of mead with whatever I plan to add, test for taste and aroma, and then scale it up. Some meadmakers add yeast nutrient at this point. I highly recommend this practice, because unlike with malt, there is very little in the way of nutrients in honey. If you do not add yeast nutrient, the must will take a very long time to ferment – like YEARS! Some meadmakers use the yeast nutrient found in wine making shops, and others use natural forms of nutrient such as raisins or Grape Nuts Flakes.

**Should I adjust the acidity of the mead?** The short answer is “it depends”. I would never recommend adjusting the acidity of an unfermented must. By reducing the pH of the must, you make it even more difficult for the yeast to do their job, and remember that must is not the optimal environment for yeast as it is. Let the must ferment into mead and then taste a sample. If it comes across as being too sweet, try adding a small amount of acid blend to a sample and get the acidity to a point where it balances nicely with the sweetness without being overly acidic and then scale up. There are tests that can be done to measure the acid content of wine and mead, but I personally prefer the accuracy of my taste buds.

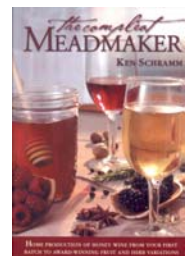
**Should I oxygenate the must?** Without a doubt, yes! Just as with wort, an oxygenated must allows yeast the opportunity to build up their glycogen stores. In must, the yeast have a much more challenging task ahead of them than they would

with any wort, so oxygenating is essential. Sometimes fermentation will start off well but then slow down part way and stop. Do not add oxygen after the yeast start fermentation! You will oxidize the mead and it will become quite bland. In such a situation rack the mead onto another yeast starter.

**What kind of yeast should I use?** Interestingly, this is another area where the meadmaker can experiment! By using ale yeast varieties, you can get fruity esters in your mead. Lager varieties with produce a more sulphur-like character. Wine yeast varieties work very well. I find that champagne yeast (Lalvin EC – 1118, Lalvin DV10, and Lalvin K1V – 1116) ferments too clean and dry for my taste but it works well to reactivate a stuck mead. To bring out wine-like characteristics or to enhance fruity flavors try Lalvin 71B-1122, Lalvin R2, and Lalvin RC212). There are many other great varieties of dry yeasts that work very well so experiment as much as possible.

**How long does fermentation take?** If the must is well nourished and oxygenated fermentation can finish up as fast as beer, but often it takes much longer. I once had a mead that went for two years and then kept carbonating after it was bottled. I blended it with another mead, bottled it and then in two months I had exploding bottles. Nothing is harder to clean up than mead. Normally, it is not necessary to use chemicals in mead, however, if you blend a strong mead with a weak one, the yeast could take off again, so be careful! You may want to stop fermentation with a yeast stabilizer.

As a brewer who likes to compete, it is easy to sometimes feel a bit restricted by the style guidelines. Meadmaking could be the answer for the creative bug in you. It is easy to make a variety of meads in one batch. Making mead is not as costly in terms of time as beer is, so give it a shot. One great book to reference when making mead is the *Compleat Meadmaker* by Ken Schramm. It has clear steps, recipes, tables, descriptions of yeast varieties, and much more valuable information. Perhaps one day we will need separate competitions for beer and mead!



Best of luck,

.Greg

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