

# The Worthouse News

A PUBLICATION OF THE EDMONTON  
HOMEBREWERS GUILD

JANUARY 2001

## The Edmonton Homebrewers Guild Executive

*(Sept. 00 to June 01)*

President..... Roxy Hastings  
Vice-President ..... Frank Kuzemski  
Secretary ..... Gunther Trageser  
Treasurer ..... Robert Charmanati  
Competition Chair .. Kevin Zaychuk  
Newsletter ..... Jim Scott

## Club Meetings

EHG meetings are held on the first non-holiday Monday of a month, from September to June, at Alley Kat Brewing, 9929 – 60 Avenue, Edmonton. Meetings start at 7:30 p.m.

## Contributions

The Worthouse News is a monthly publication of EHG, mailed to paid members, club sponsors and sister Brew Clubs. Articles in the Worthouse News may be used in other homebrewing newsletters providing credit is given to the author and EHG.

Submissions to the Worthouse News may be sent to the editor/publisher.

## View from the Top- President Roxy Hastings Bitch Bitch Bitch!

It's times like these where it's pretty hard for Jim and myself to get inspired to continue writing and



producing a newsletter for this organization. Although there is a small core of loyal attenders of meetings, and the executive is working to keep the organization going and stable, it seems that the general membership has lost interest in putting any effort into maintaining the Guild. Last year I thought we were on a roll: meetings were pretty well attended, the newsletter had a number of contributors aside from me, we hosted the first rounds of an international competition, and we had a number of newer faces who were starting to make a name for themselves in competition. We were Best Club in every CABA competition in Canada and we were ranked the number one club in the nation by the AHA. You'd think with all that success that there would be no problem having enthusiastic meetings, with lots of people turning out to talk about, share, and enjoy beer. But that doesn't seem to be happening.

In fact our membership is down and we seem to have lost a number of long term members. Or we have long-term members who while still with the Guild show up only rarely. January's meeting was a case in point. It was attended by only eight members, most of whom were the executive. As I said there is a small core of faces I see meeting after meeting and these people still seem to be enthusiastic about brewing. What about the rest of you? Do you brew anymore? What I'd like to hear from is those people who haven't shown up for a while or do so only sporadically. What it is that the Guild is no longer offering to them that they

are no longer supporting the club? While the executive is responsible for maintaining the club, we are not solely responsible for generating all the ideas, enthusiasm and activities that go into making up a strong organization. Membership should drive the organization with the executive being there to direct activities and ensure that ideas are put into action. Without active member support this organization will not maintain itself.

Ok, enough bitching, I just had to get that out of my system because it was really starting to bring me down. I love this hobby and with all the neat new products out there to play with, with so much friendly competition available, and with a sizable pool of gifted local brewers, I just find it hard to believe that we are not all just bursting with pride and enthusiasm over what we do! We're the best, why aren't we there to celebrate it?

### **Competitions**

The new year brings with it a new competitive brewing season and judging on past year experience, EHG members need little cajoling to enter competitions, but this year brings with it a new incentive with our introduction of the Canadian Homebrewer of the Year. Starting with March in Montreal, brewers will be able to score points towards the Canadian Homebrewer of the Year Award throughout the year. In addition to MIM, the Great Canadian Homebrew Competition in April, the Aurora Brewing Challenge in June and All About Ales in November will be the recognized competitions for this award. Another competition may still be added.

Full rules for Canadian Homebrewer of the Year will be posted on the CABA website [www.realbeer.com/caba](http://www.realbeer.com/caba) by the time this newsletter is published but essentially brewers will score points based on their best

three results in each competition. The competition is open to all brewers who are residents of Canada. You don't have to be a member of CABA, but if you want to Make a run for the title, it makes sense to join as most competitions have a \$3 difference in entry fees between CABA and non-CABA members, plus you'll get all the benefits of CABA membership including a subscription to a good magazine.

Winning and being named Canadian Homebrewer of the Year will obviously be a great honor for that individual, but CABA's main objective is to recognize accomplishment in homebrewing. We will therefore award those brewers who achieve predetermined point totals with certificates of merit.

March-in-Montreal entry deadline is fast approaching as all entries must be received in Montreal by March 17th. The classes for MIM are Continental Lager, Pale Ale, Brown Ale, Porter, Stout, Specialty, Belgian – Extra Strength and Belgian -Sour. For a full set of rules see: <http://www.realbeer.com/caba/pdfs/MIM01.pdf>.

Following March in Montreal, the next event on the competition calendar is the Great Canadian Homebrew Competition with an entry deadline of April 21. As this is the Canadian qualifier for the American Homebrew Association's National Homebrew Competition a full range of styles will be included in this competition. Details to follow soon.

I'm writing to let you know that the Urban Knaves of Grain is hosting our >Third Annual Drunk Monk Challenge on March 24th at Two Brothers' Brewing Co. >in Warrenville, IL. It'll be the 1st competition on the 2001 Midwest

>Homebrewer of the Year schedule, as well as one of the Qualifying Events for  
>MCAB IV. I'm sending along a listing - I was wondering if you could  
>disseminate this info to the club over there - also, I'd like to extend an  
>invite to you folks over there, in case you have the time, to come on over  
>and partake in some UKG hospitality. If you have any questions, don't  
>hesitate to write me back or call (630) 378-4694, or contact the links that  
>are in the listing below.  
>  
>3/24/00  
>The Drunk Monk Challenge, Warrenville, IL  
>AHA Sanctioned Competition, MWHBOY and MCAB IV Qualifying event  
>Sponsored by the Urban Knaves of Grain.  
>Entries due 3/17/00. Entry fee: \$6/1st entry, \$4 ea./2 or more entries.  
>Contact Joe Formanek at (630) 378-4694 (home) e-mail:  
>Jformanek@griffithlabs.com, or see the UKG homepage at  
><<http://www.sgu.net/ukg>>  
>  
>Thanks!  
>Joe Formanek  
>Urban Knaves of Grain

### **Brewing in an Office Basement –**

Jim Scott

For those of you who don't know – I combine my legal work with my brewing hobby!! For me, it works!! And, for my clients, who wander to the basement, grab a brew, and wander to the boardroom – it also seems to work!

Now, I guess the worst thing that could happen, is that I serve the clients a bad brew – the only thing that might be worse, would be to lose a case!! To avoid that, in the past year, I have thrown out three brews – two North German Pils, and one Porter!!

Our fearless leader, Roxy, tried to make me feel good by suggesting that it was/is the water. I wanted to believe it, and, for a while, I did!

Then, one day, as I tasted another brew – an IPA – I tasted what I thought were the unpleasant characteristics of the three dead guys – a sulphur, like, sour taste!! That same evening, I was doing another brew (can't remember what!), and was getting something from the pail where I have a lot of gizmos soaking in water and Javex. As I fished for the rubber stopper, I felt some crystalline stuff on the side of the pail. I tasted it. Javex crystals!!!! Yuk!!! I tasted the IPA, again, that sharp taste – like, “Yuk” again! I went back, and read my notes, same stuff on the three brews I had thrown out!! I checked my carboys (I used to let water and Javex sit in them...) – low and behold, Javex crystals!!! I was putting all that delicious wort into a carboy laced with Javex crystals!! Damn!!!!

I am convinced that was the basis of my failures! Not the water (thanks Roxy!)

So, I did a check – imagine my surprise when I discovered that everything I was brewing with, that was glass or plastic, had some crystallization. Out went the Javex solution, and I spent the next several hours looking for a neutralizer (vinegar works). I cleaned, I scrubbed, and I tasted. Finally clean.

I then took a look at the overall process I carried out, and, I cleaned up. Gone is the grain dust, gone is the sticky wort from the floor, and, gone is the yeast buildup on the bottom of some of the bottles. I have read a lot of the need for good brewing habits, now I know that to be the case. I don't want to serve a bad beer, nor do I want to lose a case!!

### **Time Savers**

Roxanne Hastings

The biggest reason I always hear for not brewing is not having enough time. Here are some tips for saving time in brewing or at least reducing the amount of time you have to devote to any one session. Trying to find a clear 8 hour period to do a full, start to finish, 5 US gallon batch can be difficult even for the most organized among us. We can try to reduce the total amount of time we need to brew or we can split it up so there is less time needed for the main job. Beer making is composed of a whole lot of tasks, so saving a few minutes here and a few minutes there can really add up to saving a whole lot of time on the total process. Efficiency is critical. Like any other sport, the more you practice the more efficient you become in your art form. The more you brew the quicker and easier it becomes. Divide and Conquer

One way to resolve the time problem is to split it up into two days. Weigh and grind your grains a day or two before you brew. That can save you 30-45 minutes on the day you brew. Measure out your water into your brew pot, do salt adjustments and have it on the stove. That will save about 5 minutes. Have all your equipment laid out the night before you brew. Again that will save about 5-10 minutes. Getting organized the night before can save you almost an hour of time on brew day.

Other ways to split up time is multitasking on brew day. Two big blocks of time where there is nothing you can do directly to speed things up are mashing and boiling. Use these down times to do other things. For example, a big time saver is to always be cleaning as you go. Always clean out your mash tun as soon as you have the pot of wort on the stove -don't wait until the brew is done to clean. Also, don't wait until you have a full kettle before you get it boiling. As soon as you have a few gallons of wort in the kettle, put it on the stove and get it going.

## Total Time Savers

The easiest way to save total time is to simply brew smaller batches. Yes, you get less beer per time invested but you also invest less time per batch. The choice between having no beer or a few bottles of beer is pretty obvious to me. Some people feel that there is not much time savings between a 3 and 5 gallon batch, but from a lot of experience brewing both, I can assure you there is. It's the many little steps principle. It takes less time to weigh out the grains, it takes less time to grind the grains, it takes less time to heat the mash water, it takes less time to go through the temperature steps, it takes less time to transfer the mash, it takes less time to sparge, it takes less time to boil, it takes less time to cool, it takes less time to hop back and rack into the fermenter. Later on it takes less time to siphon the beer, it takes less time to organize and clean the bottles, and it takes less time to bottle and cap 'em. It all adds up to saving yourself about 1.5 hours of time on brew day. I often find it easier to brew more often, with less time on any one day, than to find large blocks of time for a big batch. I also prefer to have a smaller amount of a large variety of beers in my house than a large amount of a small variety of beers.

Another way to save time is to invest in a propane burner. These guys can boil a pot of water in a few minutes and really save a lot of time throughout the mashing and boiling stages.

And, don't be so proud as to not brew an extract beer. Again the choice between not having brew in the house and brewing extract is pretty obvious. You needn't think that extract beers are beneath your standards. Just try a few brews made by Boyd! Extract brewing is by far the best way to save time and Boyd tells me that is the single biggest reason he sticks to extract brewing. Not having to mash and sparge will easily save you 1.5-2 hours on brewing day.

Finally, at bottling you can save a lot of time and hassle by not bottling at all! Invest in a good kegging system. It's a lot faster to clean out one keg and rack the beer into it than to clean out, sterilize and siphon beer into 30-50 bottles. An added time bonus - the beer is ready to consume in less time!

### **Gold and Other Medals**

None that I know of recently...however, there are competitions coming up, and, rumor has it that our good friend Ian McLaren is brewing a few times per week - it does sound promising! Not only that, but, in this newsletter, there is information of a few competitions coming up! To avoid Roxy's Rage, it seems that a plethora of entries would be great! I'm doing my thing, with a handful of Belgian's that I have brewed in the past few months.! By the way, if anyone has a chance ask to try Frank's Imperial Ale - it is Gold Medal stuff in my view!

### **Web Sites**

New stuff found by your editor - if anyone else has any - send them to me:  
[jrscott@scott-company.com](mailto:jrscott@scott-company.com)

Canadian Homebrewing Directory  
[www.chbd.com](http://www.chbd.com)  
A good index of stuff!

Brewery Lane  
[www.brewerylane.com](http://www.brewerylane.com)  
stuff to buy - grains, etc.

Brewtique  
[www.brewtique.ns.ca](http://www.brewtique.ns.ca)  
I can't remember, I either liked or disliked this one!!! Age, you know!

Canadian Homebrewing Directory  
[www.chbd.com](http://www.chbd.com)  
A good index of stuff!

Halifax Brewnosers  
[www.to.ns.ca/recreation/brewnose/no-frames.html](http://www.to.ns.ca/recreation/brewnose/no-frames.html)  
Hm, maybe there is a reason to contemplate a name change!!!

The Brewery  
[www.brewery.org](http://www.brewery.org)  
I do recall - I like this one!

Redstick Brewmaster  
[www.hbd.org/~redstick/redstick.html](http://www.hbd.org/~redstick/redstick.html)  
A good site!

Gambrinus' Mug  
<http://brewery.org/brewery/gambmug>  
One of the great one's - lots and lots of recipies!

### **Odds and Ends**

Well, this is the first attempt of your technically challenged editor to satisfy the masses, and avoid "The Rant"!!! So, if it all works, some will be in color, some will be by email, and, hopefully, everyone enjoys! I still can't find the infamous template, ergo, my style - next month, it will be done thru Publisher!

As Roxy says, in her "Rant", we could use some help - recipes are always welcome, articles even more so, and, tidbits would be a delight!

Finally, in the next issue, we will give notice of a proposed bylaw change, to allow an overlap of executive positions - so we don't hit a vacuum at the end of every term!  
Enjoy your brews!!