

Forest City



Brewers

Rockford, IL

Dedicated to the Art of Home Brewing

The Barley Whispers

**Official Newsletter of the
Forest City Brewers**

October/November 2015 Edition

Next meeting will be held at Rockford Brewing Company

Wednesday, November 4th, 2015 - 7:00 PM

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October Meeting Recap

New People

The club was pleased to welcome Josh, Scott, Jeff and Connie to their first meeting.

Mike Sears

Reminded those present that the 2016 style survey is available on Survey Monkey. As of the October meeting, only 18 people have responded. The survey closes October 24th.

The club is in need of more hosts for Brewers Guilds. Members were reminded and encouraged to attend when possible; the Guilds have been limited to a select number of attendants.

The club is looking for another barrel. Those present were asked for ideas of where we might procure one.

The club was amenable to purchasing a fruit press from Matt Berthiaume. The unit was being offered for \$150 and will require some cleanup. Details and vote to purchase will be at November's meeting.

The club may have an opportunity to acquire a 5# CO₂ tank for free. The acquisition would require the purchase of a regulator and the occasional cost to fill it.

Shirts left over from Screw City were available for purchase for \$10.

The club was invited to visit the Wisconsin Brewing Company for a private tour and tasting as well as an opportunity to meet the brewer, Kirby Nelson. Look for a bus trip early in 2016.

Mike Gifford

The After-Christmas Party will occur sometime in January depending on the venue. Mike Coisman and Matt & Amy Skorniak have volunteered to host. The club will provide meat and some club beer. Stand by for details as they come available.

Eric

Encouraged members to volunteer to serve as beer stewards. Rachel would like to take a break from the role but has agreed to stay on in that capacity in the interim. Please let the officers know if you would like to participate.

Trish

Gave an update on club funds. There is currently \$2600 in the club account, up from \$2300 at the beginning of the year. Club expenditures include insurance, four club kegs, jockey box reconditioning, new pitchers, Big Brew expenditures and the New Glarus bus trip.

The roster currently stands at 79 dues-paid members.

Other Members

Jerry gave a brief presentation on hops and hop preservation.

Cory informed those present that home hop growers can have their harvest tested for AA content (and other particulars) at Midwest Hop and Beer Analysis in Evansville, WI.

Blake reminded attendees that years-old hops are perfect for lambic brewing.

Tim gave a recap of September's Brewers Guild at Steve and Allison's place. They brewed an ESB. October's event will be at Tim Lundquist's house.

November's Brewers Guild will be at Matt Berthiaume's house and will coincide with National Learn to Homebrew Day. See the website for directions and details. The club also decided that March 2016's Brewers Guild will be Jim Locklund's place to brew an Oktoberfest on his big system.

Officer Nominations for 2016

The call for officer nominations was put out at the October meeting. With one exception, the incumbent officers are uncontested. See below. **Please inform the officers via email if you would like to run for any of the open positions prior to November's meeting.** Voting will take place at that time. The officers encourage any active member to participate if they so desire.

President – Mike Sears
 Treasurer – Trish Phillips
 Secretary – Eric Johnson
 Activities Coordinator – Mike Gifford
 Technical Director – Darin Kolls, Brent Shelton

Upcoming Beer Events

Rockford Area Events

FCB Tasters' Guilds and locations:

October – Thunder Bay
 November – Hope and Anchor
 December - Carlyle

If you have any ideas about new places to go for upcoming Tasters' Guilds, please let us know at the meeting.

Brewers Guild Information:

October Brewers Guild will be at Tim Lundquist's house. Check the FCB website for directions and details. RSVP and bring some beer to share (snacks are more than welcome, too!). November's Brewers Guild will coincide with National Learn to Homebrew Day on November 7th. Matt Berthiaume will host.

Please stay tuned for upcoming Brewers Guild dates and locations. See Tim Lundquist if you'd like to volunteer to host.

North American Whiskey Fest – The Olympic Tavern – October 24th

\$20 in advance (\$25 at the door) to sample 12 of the continent's finest whiskeys. Distillers will be on hand to serve their product and talk about the art of whiskey-making.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/847812598673434/>

Firkins and Gherkins – Rockford Brewing Company – November 14th

There isn't much more than a picture of pickle's worth of information available, but neither one of those things can be bad. More info to come.

<http://www.rockfordbrewingco.com/event/firkins-and-gherkins/>

Midwest Events

Wisconsin Craft Beer Festival – Harley Davidson Museum, Milwaukee WI – October 23rd and 24th

Check out the premier beer tasting and brew teaching event in the Great Lakes region. The event will feature tasting sessions and brewing classes taught by Randy Mosher, John Palmer, Stan Hieronymus and Brad Smith.

<http://wisconsincraftbeerfestival.com/>

National Events

Nothing to report this month.

September Contest Results

Open Contest

- 1st – Kent Runte – Cherry Milk Stout
 2nd (tie) – Jerry Machula – Old English Ale
 2nd (tie) – Tim Lundquist – Barrel-Aged Sour Porter

Honorable Mention:

Cory Ellis – Rum Barrel-Aged Wee Heavy, Joe Mongan – Pale Ale, Chris Gioringo – Imperial IPA, Blake Aper – Citra IPA, Eric Johnson/Eric Mueller – Scottish Ale, Mike Coisman – Australian Sparkling Ale, Nikki Messink – Strawberry Rhubarb Wheat

Style Contest – Mead

- 1st – Mike Coisman – Melomel
 2nd – Tim Lundquist – Blackberry Melomel
 3rd – Blake Aper – Silver Top Honey Mead

Honorable Mention:

Pat Yun – Braggot, Curt Meyers – Pomegranate Cherry, Mike Bohn – Cherry Melomel

October Contest Results

Open Contest

- 1st – Cory Ellis – Russian Imperial Stout
 2nd – Brent Bryan – APA
 3rd (tie) – Blake Aper – Oak-Aged Colonial Stock Ale
 3rd (tie) – Joe Mongan – Robust Porter with Roasted Hemp Seeds

Honorable Mention:

Tim Lundquist – Sour Cherry Malt Liquor, Shannon Shanks – Brett IPA, Brett & Nikki Messink – Black IPA

Style Contest – Oktoberfest

- 1st – Jerry Machula
 2nd (tie) – Blake Aper
 2nd (tie) – Trish Phillips

Honorable Mention:

Tim Lundquist, Curt Meyers, Mike Bohn

Styles for 2015

January – Sweet Stout (13B), Oatmeal Stout (13C), American Stout (13E)

February – Robust Porter (12B)

March – Scottish Export 80/- (9C)

April – American Amber (10B)

May – American Wheat or Rye (6D), Roggenbier (15D)

June – Black IPA/Cascadian Dark Ale (23)

July – ‘Lil Sumpin’ Sumpin’ Clone

August – Cream Ale (6A)

September – Meads (24, 25, 26)

October – Oktoberfest (3B)

November – Pumpkin Beer (21A)

December – Russian Imperial Stout (13F)

Competition Corner

Area Competitions

Local

As always, bring your beer to the club meetings for our monthly tasting competitions.

Regional/National

For details on upcoming AHA sanctioned competitions, go to:

<http://www.homebrewersassociation.org/pages/competitions/aha-bjcp-sanctioned-competition/calendar>

Beer in the News

[Fancy Some Unique Icelandic Beer?](#)

Not news, per se, but this is an interesting review of a beer that hasn't yet made its way to US liquor stores. Perhaps the club could do a clone next year?

[Big Beer's Five-Point Assault](#)

This article from *Time* presents a succinct and (fairly) comprehensive look at the ongoing David and Goliath struggle between the little guys and the cronies.

[To Sell, or Not To Sell?](#)

Facing AB-Inbev and SAB Miller's unyielding appetite for devouring craft breweries, many of the country's nearly 4000 independent operators face this difficult decision every day.

Brewing Tips and Techniques

As a companion to Jerry's discussion about hop storage last month, following below is an April 2008 blog on the subject by Brad Smith from BeerSmith.com. If you prefer to read it electronically, please click the link below.

-Eric

<http://beersmith.com/blog/2008/04/15/brewing-hops-storage-preserving-precious-hops/>

Hop Aging and the Enemies of Hops

All hops will age over time. Precious hop oils including both aromatic and bittering oils tend to break down over time, and old hops will lose aroma, flavor and bitterness as they age. Stale hops will take on a cheesy or skunky flavor that can ruin your beer. Hops have three main enemies: heat, light and oxygen.

Heat accelerates the chemical breakdown of hops including both aromatic oils and the precious alpha acids that provide most of the bitterness in beer. The relationship between temperature and hop bitterness is exponential – it is cut in half for every 15 degrees C (27 F) of lowered temperature. Hops stored at 75F will degrade almost 4 times as fast as hops stored in a freezer. To slow the aging of your hops, always store them in the freezer at a temperature between 30F and -5F (-1 to -21 degrees C).

Light is also a natural enemy of hops. Hop cones are susceptible to breakdown from sunlight from the first minute they are picked, so hop growers go to great lengths to make sure that hops are not exposed to sunlight after picking. Hop cones exposed to light will break down rapidly, leaving off flavors in your beer. When possible, store your hops in a dark place and avoid exposure to sunlight.

Oxygen is also an enemy of hops because hop oils and alpha acids will oxidize. Oxidized alpha acids lose their bitterness, and old hops will take on a “cheesy” aroma. A plastic/poly bag is the worst storage vessel for your hops because plastic bags are still permeable to air. You can smell the hops right through a typical plastic bag, which is an indicator that it is not much of an oxygen barrier.

An oxygen barrier bag or an airtight jar make a much better container, though these still typically contain some air. The best container is a vacuum sealed oxygen barrier such as a vacuum packed foil pouch, typically made from a layer of food grade plastic and layer of mylar.

Note that whole hops degrade faster because of the larger surface area exposed to air. Most hop processors will at some point pelletize their aging hops because the highly compressed pellets age more slowly than whole hops. Pellets also take less space and are easier to vacuum pack, which is why they are often used in homebrewing and microbrewing.

Hop Storage Index: How Long Can I Store My Hops?

The speed of aging varies by hop variety. The aging rate for a particular variety is measured using the Hop Storage Index (HSI), which is the amount of hops alpha acid potential lost in 6 months when the hops are stored at a constant temperature of 68 F (20 C). Hops will last over three times as long as their HSI would indicate if frozen and stored properly.



For example a hops with a starting alpha of 10% and HSI of 25% stored for 6 months would lose 25% of its alpha potential, resulting in an new alpha rating of 7.5% if stored at 68F. The same hops stored for 6 months at 28F (-2C) would only lose 10% of its alpha acids leaving it at 9% alpha content. To see sample HSI ratings for various hop varieties, visit our [Hops Listing](#) and click on the hop variety of interest. The HSI is on the detailed page for each hops near the bottom.

The HSI does not tell the whole story however. Hops will age at a much slower rate if stored in cold temperature and in a proper container. [BeerSmith](#) has a Hop Aging tool (Tools menu) you can use to calculate a particular variation of hop packaging, temperature and age, and also has the HSI in its hops database so you can just pick a hop variety, set your storage conditions and calculate the resulting alpha.

Which brings us to the final question – how long can you store your hops without ill flavor effects? It turns out the aromatic hop oils are the most susceptible to aging, so if you are looking for a burst of aromatics with hops added at the end of the boil or for dry hopping, choose fresh hops. If properly stored, many varieties can be kept for several years.

You can use the HSI or detailed hop aging tool as a guide as follows: Hops are considered “bad” by commercial growers when they drop below 50% of their original alpha acid content. At this point, the hops typically take on a “cheesy” aroma, and should be discarded. I will note that even “poor” HSI hops with 50% HSI will last the better part of a year if stored properly in a freezer and oxygen barrier bag.

Hops are a precious commodity, and likely to become more scarce until the 2008 crop is harvested and processed. Please remember to keep your hops away from light, in the freezer, and in an oxygen barrier container.

FCB Club Member Benefits as of August 2015

FCB Memberships are now half price as the year is half gone. \$15/person or \$30/cohabitating members

- 10% discount on ingredients at Brew & Grow
- 10% discount on most items at Farmhouse
- 50% off appetizers (with purchase of one beer) at The Olympic
- 50% off appetizers (with purchase of one beer) at Rockford Brewing Company (not on club night)
- 50% off food at Kryptonite until 9 PM