

Forest City



Brewers

Rockford, IL

Dedicated to the Art of Home Brewing

The Barley Whispers

**Official Newsletter of the
Forest City Brewers**

July/August 2016 Edition

Next meeting will be held at The Prairie Street Brewhouse

Wednesday, August 3rd, 2016 - 7:00 PM

Contents

July Meeting Recap – Page 3

Upcoming Local/Regional Beer Events – Page 5

June and July Contest Results – Page 6

FCB Style Competitions for 2016 – Page 6

Competition Corner – Page 7

Beer in the News – Page 7

Brewing Tips and Techniques – Page 8

FCB Club Member Benefits as of August 2016 – Page 11

July Meeting Recap

New People

The club was pleased to welcome Matt to his first Forest City Brewers meeting.

Mike Sears

The club will be starting a committee to improve the beer stewarding process. We're looking for five or six volunteers. Details to follow.

Please limit your sample sizes at the tasting tables. With increased attendance, some participants have not been able to sample all the offerings.

The better brewer presentations will be hosted every other month, with a question and answer forum in between. August's presentation will be on hot side vs. cold side of the beermaking process.

A big thanks to Mike and Rachel for hosting the club picnic.

Barrel project: the wee heavy was brewed at Jim Locklund's place in June. The current barrel will be drained and replaced this month. The new barrel beer will be an Imperial brown ale. If you would like to participate, see Tim or Joe for the recipe.

Look for the 2017 style survey to come out via email within the next month. Your participation is strongly encouraged.

The club would like to look into improving the monthly competition by changing the way we do the open table. Some ideas up for discussion are eliminating tracked points for the open table, having a winner-take-all competition on a month-to-month basis, etc. Look for a Survey Monkey link for voting. Other suggestions are welcome.

We still need beer for Screw City and Racine. [As of the meeting] there are still passes available for both festivals. As Racine is not sold out, participation in the festival is strongly encouraged.

We may be required to have BASSET certification for pouring beer at Screw City. The club is investigating this and how to comply with the law.

The New Glarus Oktoberfest bus is booked. The trip will be open to all. We may start taking money as soon as the August meeting.

We are still working on the trip to Wisconsin Brewing Company. If the trip occurs in 2016, it will likely happen in November.

Mike Gifford

The apparel order is not done yet. The printer is short on some colors.

The bulk grain buy may need to happen through another supplier. With changes in Brew & Grow's supply chain, prices and availability are uncertain. The club will look into Farmhouse or Northern Brewer as potential alternatives.

Brent Shelton

We are looking for feedback on the .us website. The site is available for use now, but we are targeting Sept. 1st for a go-live date. The site is mobile-friendly and features a better layout, new calendar, etc.

The member page is still full of blank information. Please fill in (with whatever information you are comfortable with sharing) by sending an email to the club or to Brent directly.

We would like to feature a blog in conjunction with the new site. Brent is looking for contributors and volunteers for a committee.

Other Members

[At the meeting] Mike Coisman invited those present to spirits tasting at his house. See facebook for information and to RSVP.

Upcoming Beer Events

Rockford Area Events

FCB Tasters' Guilds and locations:

August – Pig Minds

September – Der Rathskeller

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

Brewers Guild Information:

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

Tour de North End – Saturday, June 4th at 7 PM

The first ever Ballpark Ale Fest will feature over 80 Illinois craft beers with food and live music at the Rockford Rivets stadium. The event's founder, Josh Seago will be present at this month's meeting to talk about FCB participation. He will also be offering a \$5 discount to club members.

<http://ballparkalefest.com/>

Midwest Events

Oak Park Micro Brew Review – Saturday, August 20th, Oak Park, IL

The ninth annual Micro Brew and Food Review is put on by Seven Generations Ahead and promotes zero-waste and sustainable living. There will be over 70 breweries represented and the festival will also feature local food and music.

<https://sevendgenerationsahead.org/events/oak-park-microbrew-and-food-review/>

Wheaton Brew Festival – Saturday, August 6th – Wheaton, IL

Standard fare: local brews, live music and food at Wheaton's Memorial Park.

<http://wheatonparkdistrict.com/events/brewfest/>

Great Taste of the Midwest – Saturday, August 13th – Madison, WI

As always, tickets to the Great Taste have long since sold out. For those of you lucky enough to have a ticket, stay tuned to your email for details about the bus trip.

<http://greattaste.org/>

National Events

Nothing to report this month.

June Contest Results

Open Contest

- 1st – David Benson
- 2nd – Matt Ralston
- 3rd – Mike Belden

Honorable Mention:

Cory Ellis, Tim Lundquist, Mike Bohn, Tanner Young, Joe Mongan, Brent Shelton, Blake Aper, Jerry Machula, Jason Verilek, Matt Skorniak, Jeremy Krieger

Style Contest – Extract American Wheat

- 1st – Chris Giovingo
- 2nd – Mike Bohn
- 3rd – Blake Aper

Honorable Mention:

Tim Lundquist

July Contest Results

Open Contest

- 1st – Brent Shelton – Mosaic Pale Ale
- 2nd – Mike Belden – Pale Ale
- 3rd (tie) – Jerry Machula – Rum Barrel Vanilla Porter
- 3rd (tie) – Joe Mongan – American IPA

Honorable Mention:

David Benson, Mike Bohn, Tim Lundquist, Blake Aper, Matt Skorniak, Jason Kline

Style Contest – Spotted Cow Clone

- 1st – Jerry Machula
- 2nd – David Benson
- 3rd – Mike Bohn

Honorable Mention:

Tim Lundquist, Blake Aper, Ron Derry

Upcoming Styles for 2016 (Categories are 2015 Guidelines)

- January – English Porter (13C)
- February – Specialty Red IPA (21B)
- March – Irish Red Ale (15A)
- April – Fruit Beer (29A)
- May – SMaSH American Pale Ale (18B)
- June – Extract American Wheat (1D)
- July – Spotted Cow Clone (34A)
- August – Saison (25B)
- September – Oatmeal Stout (16B)
- October – Märzen (6A)
- November – Mead (All “M” Categories)
- December – Belgian Tripel (26C)

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

[Music Can Affect How We Perceive Beer](#)

It has always been a good idea to give any “bad” beer a second chance, in case you may have gotten a bad batch or it was served from dirty tap lines, etc. but you may want to consider what you’re listening to while you drink.

[Serving Beer at 35,000 ft](#)

Heineken and KLM have been working to solve one of the toughest problems facing humanity today: how to serve draft beer on long-haul flights.

[An Update on State Beer Laws](#)

State by state laws are slowly changing, and fortunately in the right direction.

[Feds Green-Light Merger between AB InBev and SABMiller](#)

The \$100 billion dollar merger has now been cleared by the US Justice Dept. as AB InBev won approval from the antitrust lawyers.

Brewing Tips and Techniques

As a primer for August's *Better Brewer* presentation, the following is a 2013 blog post from Bertus Brewery on cold side processing of beer and its importance in defining the finished product.

<http://www.bertusbrewery.com/2013/01/the-cold-and-boring-side-of-brewing.html>

T H E C O L D (A N D B O R I N G) S I D E O F B R E W I N G

We're always excited about a new recipe we want to try, our next brew day, or a new piece of equipment to brew with. Unfortunately, that same enthusiasm rarely carries over to fermentation, and that's where the magic happens. Great brewers will tell you: "Good beers are all about fermentation", "Fermentation, Fermentation, Fermentation", etc, but despite the importance, it seems to be the least romanticized part of brewing. So I decided to write a post about how I care for my yeast, and what happens after the flame goes off. FYI, a lot of this might be repetitive for some brewers, but I've had a number of requests for this topic.

The first thing every home brewer should be told is that the brew day isn't that important. You can commit the brewing equivalent of murder during the the brew day, and if the beer was fermented well, it'll most likely still be good. Let's define some terms first. The 'hot-side' is wort production; the part of the brew day where you're making wort. It starts when you mill your grains (or mix in your extract), and ends when you kill the flame on your kettle. The 'cold-side' is everything that happens after you turn off the kettle (fermentation, clearing, packaging, etc), and the handling of your yeast. Even though it's much more fun to add hops to a kettle, great beer is made during the cold-side.

Yeast

Yeast make beer. It sounds silly, but wort itself doesn't taste good. The flavors and compounds that yeast generate are what make beer, *beer*. So yeast should be your primary focus. The first question every brewer should ask before starting a batch is: "Do I have the proper amount of healthy yeast for this beer?" Now in the case of a 1.035 Bitter, it could be as simple as a single vial or smack pack. For a 1.080 Imperial Stout, we're going to need a massive starter, multiple vials, or re-pitch yeast from a prior batch. I don't need to cover pitching rates and cell counts here, as there are a bunch of great calculators available. I use mrmalty.com, and get good results from his numbers. I find his viability percentages to be a bit too conservative, but it's otherwise spot on. The important thing is to stick with one calculator, try it, find out if it works for you, take notes, and adjust as needed.

Oxygen

Most home brewers oxygenate by some means that introduces atmospheric air into wort. Most home brewers (myself included) don't get enough oxygen saturated into their wort. It takes a *lot* of shaking, with a decent amount of head space to get 8ppm of O₂. I finally broke down and bought an O₂ regulator and stainless diffuser stone so I can aerate with pure O₂. I noticed an immediate difference on high gravity beers, and batches where I re-pitched yeast. If you don't brew high-gravity beers or re-pitch yeast, you might not see the benefit. I, personally, will never go back.

Temperature

People are unhappy when they are too cold or too hot; yeast are no different. Steady, controlled temperatures are very important to clean fermentation. A sizable chunk of yeasts' ester production occurs during the growth phase of fermentation. That happens to be the first 12-72 hours or so. For this reason, I am a proponent of pitching my yeast into wort that's a few degrees colder than my target fermentation temperature. This allows the

yeast to slowly acclimatize to the environment, and ensures they won't take off like gangbusters. Lag time isn't something you should fear, assuming that you sanitize properly and pitch a proper amount of healthy yeast.

Now that the yeast have acclimatized, started to multiply, and warmed up the wort to my target fermentation temperature, my goal is to keep that temperature consistent. Firstly, ambient temperatures do not equate to fermentation temperatures. Buy some of those cheap little liquid crystal stick-on thermometers for like \$1-2. They are surprisingly accurate, and will show you what the temperature of your wort is. There was a BYO article a few years back that showed the temperature of fermenting wort in the center of the fermenter was no more than .5F off from the temperature sticker stuck to the outside (Do keep in mind we're talking about 5 gallon buckets and carboys.) For the skeptics, a sanitized probe thermometer will also work.

There are a number of methods to keep a fermenter cool. Swamp cooler setups, frozen water bottles, refrigeration, or just a cool basement all work. I live in Arizona, so it didn't take me long to opt for refrigeration and a temperature controller. I tape my temp probe to the side of the fermenter; it works well. Whatever method you choose, just make sure that your temps are reasonably steady. 1-2* of swing isn't too bad, but I'd work to keep it from swinging any more.

Fermentation will reach a noticeable peak, and then activity will start to slow down. Every strain is unique, but generally, allowing the fermenter to slowly warm up at this point is a good idea. I ferment most of my ales around 62-66*, but at this stage, I'll let them free rise to 68-72. The yeast will take up and metabolize diacetyl, as well as a host of other compounds that could lead to off flavors later on. Keeping the yeast warm and happy at this stage will also aid the yeast in entering their dormant stage. They'll floc better, and generally be healthier for re-pitching.

Re-pitching Yeast

Don't re-pitch yeast from a prior batch if you weren't completely clean and sanitary throughout the process, or if anything about the fermentation seemed *off* in any way. Since I typically only re-pitch for a couple generations, and don't store my yeast for more than a couple days, I don't bother to separate the trub from the yeast. Using a thoroughly sanitized ladle, I mix up the slurry at the bottom of the fermenter, scoop up a measured amount, and directly re-pitch to the next batch.

Don't pitch onto an entire yeast cake; it's bad practice. You're almost always over-pitching, and you should be fermenting in a clean, sanitized fermenter. It's not that hard to measure out a specific volume of slurry; take the time to do it right. Also, yeast nutrients and oxygenation become increasingly important with re-pitched yeast. Wyeast, Fermentis, White Labs, etc all grow their yeast in nutrient rich environments. They are healthy and ready to rock out the smack pack, satchel, or vial. Re-pitched yeast is not as healthy and ready to rock, so a healthy dose of O₂ and some nutrients go a long way to a healthy fermentation.

Maturation and Packaging

I don't need to go into depth here, but there's a few things worth covering. First, I'm not a fan of the month-long primary. I just don't feel it does anything. It is a good idea to leave the beer on the yeast for a couple days after fermentation has ceased, but the yeast aren't contributing anything after that. The beer is maturing, which is a good thing, but it can mature off the yeast just as well as it can on the yeast.

At this point, your beer is fragile. It's vulnerable to sunlight, bacteria, and oxygen, so take care of it. Clean and sanitize your kegs or bottles well, and do everything possible to avoid oxygenating the beer at this stage. Those that keg might try flushing their kegs with CO₂ prior to racking, especially for hoppy beers. Brewers that bottle shouldn't be as concerned, as the yeast will take up most, if not all, O₂ in the bottle when they ferment the priming sugar. Also, don't keg or bottle in direct sunlight, as hoppy beers skunk very quickly in direct sunlight.

Wrap Up

As with every part of brewing, take detailed notes. Note how the fermentation is progressing, what's happening with the temperature, and anytime you change something. The more you work with a specific yeast strain, the more familiar with it you'll become. Every strain behaves a bit differently, and there's no substitute for experience with a strain. WLP007 for example will attenuate 2-5 gravity points after all signs of activity have stopped. Every yeast has its own quirks, and detailed notes will help you better understand the yeasts you use most often.

I know most of my points in this post aren't earth-shattering, but the take-away should be to really sweat the small stuff when it comes to the cold-side of brewing. Minor and even major mistakes made during the hot-side portion of the brew day can be washed away with a solid, clean fermentation.

FCB Club Member Benefits as of August 2016

- 10% discount on ingredients at Brew & Grow
- 10% discount on most items at Farmhouse
- 20% off your bill for one member and one guest at Lucha Cantina
- 20% off your entire tab at Pig Minds
- 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