



The Midnight Brewer

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The Winter Brewing Doldrums

By Steve Kranz

Every winter season, but this one in particular, I find myself in the winter brewing doldrums (WBDs)...neither brewing very much, or even wanting to brew very much. Worse yet, I'm not even drinking much beer these days (not that my waistline is any better for it). Part of the story is that the Spousal Unit is very diligent about putting a freshly made Old Fashioned, Manhattan or Bloody Mary (with spicy pickled asparagus or string bean garnish) into my hands at the appropriate times. Another part of the story is plum laziness. But I think my WBDs are also an unfortunate side-effect of other external events, namely the end of the holiday season, and the stress-inducing merger and consolidation which is once again occurring at That Place where I spend my weekdays.

The last time I brewed was when Kevin and I seized the opportunity presented by a balmy day in early January. Everything went right with the brewing session, and the whole day was going perfectly, until those stinkin' Ravens played one of their worst games of the season and lost to Tennessee that evening...grrr. But the Buffalo wings still came out great from the deep fryer, and by the next morning the yeast was working. The Blonde Ale we brewed has since been safely kegged. Once I get around to drinking it, I expect it will make one dandy Black & Tan, combined with the Guinness clone brewed at BrewCamp in October.

The winter has been seemingly long and cold, but hopefully by the end of March (after the college audition tour is finally OVER), I will be able to shake the WBDs and settle back into a routine of drinking and brewing beer. Whatever their cause, I am trying to force myself into making the best of this "down time" by at least thinking about beer and brewing. To that end, I'm developing (so far only in my mind) a new enhancement to my kegs, which will be an external "sight tube" to show the beer level inside a keg without having to either open it up, or lift/tilt it to see how heavy it is. Conceptually, it should work: drill holes in the side of a keg near the top and the bottom, figure out some kind of a fitting, and attach a clear plastic tube or hose (flexible beer line would probably

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Buy & sell homebrew gear on eBay

By Steve Kranz

If you are not otherwise opposed to buying online, then eBay, the online auction site, can offer great opportunities both to save money, and to get rid of stuff. Anyone can browse on eBay, but to buy or sell you must first sign up. It's a simple process.

Searching: I won't take much time here to go into how to search on eBay, since it's a fairly self-explanatory process, except to say that when entering your search words:

1. Use logical variations, and both singular and plurals of words (e.g. "home brew", "homebrew"; grain, grains);
2. Don't assume everyone calls or describes things the same way you do. Use your imagination...one man's malt mill is another man's grain crusher.

My Rules for bidding:

1. Know what you are buying

No different than buying anywhere else online...just know what the item costs elsewhere. If the description is unclear, ask the seller a question. You might be buying from a commercial vendor, or from a private individual, so your right to return an item may vary. Don't be shy about asking before you bid...it will avoid misunderstandings later.

2. Pay attention to shipping charges

The object is to buy at a total delivered price that's less than you could buy it elsewhere. Hence, you need to know what it will cost to ship. I don't buy from sellers who charge shipping rates which are obviously inflated to make a few extra bucks. If the auction doesn't state a shipping charge or give you the option of figuring it based on your zip code, ask for a quote. Some sellers include the cost of shipping materials (i.e. padded envelopes), which is reasonable so long as you know that you're paying for it.

3. Know The Seller

There is NO guarantee that you won't get hosed on any

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Club Hoppennings

Tastin' Chili Again

By Larry Hitchcock — On February 7th, the Membership gathered at Gary and Lydia's home for the 4th annual Midnight Homebrewers' League Chili Cookoff. This has become a well anticipated Club event, where the beer is not the focal point of the evening.

About 45 members and friends of the Club sat down to savor 10 chili samples, the goal being to pick the best of the entries. Of course there was plenty of beer. Gary had several of his on tap, and there were more on hand in his fridge out in the snow. Chili and beer on a cold winter's night — what could be better?

Lydia, Karen Lambrecht and the rest of the volunteer kitchen crew served up the sample bowls. Some were served with cornbread or fresh bread, some stood on their own. At first, the samples seemed small, but by #4, you knew they were sized just right. By #10, you'd had enough!

Each sample was judged on chili characteristics: color, aroma, texture, flavor of course, and appearance, among others. There were vegetarian offerings, some with ground beef, sirloin steak chunks and even venison. There was one offering which stood out, made with pulled pork, corn, fresh tomatoes and a savory hot sauce. Unbelievably, it didn't place in the top four. I think it had too much cilantro.

After a couple hours, the results were announced. In fourth place was Gary's, third place went to Richard Eisberg, second place to Gregg Norris, and the grand winner was Greg Lambrecht. Greg seems to have a lock on taking first place, and for good reason! His chili is always perfect.

After a few more hours of hanging out together, the

evening closed, as well as another successful chili cook off. Get your recipes together- there are only 11 months till we do it all over again.

Treasurer's Report

By Larry Hitchcock

Here's the state of our treasury. As always, the start of the new year brings in membership renewals and some miscellaneous reimbursements from the close of the previous year. With this being the 10th anniversary of the Club, the Officers have been discussing several ideas to celebrate, which may require some expenditures over what is normally spent. If you have any ideas, feel free to contact us.

Previous Balance		\$646.53
Cash Received		
Holiday party reimb.	194.00	
50/50 raffle	41.00	
Club towel purchase	24.00	
Memberships	<u>410.00</u>	
		669.00
Cash Disbursed		
Club towels	200.00	
Holiday party cost	<u>125.00</u>	
		(325.00)
New Balance		\$ 990.53

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns about our Club's funds.

Benefits of Membership

Members of the Midnight Homebrewers' League get these benefits in addition to this newsletter:

- Priority registration for tastings and other events
- Nifty color membership card, good for discounts at local homebrew supply shops
- Purchase club-logo T-Shirts
- Membership Directory - get help from other members
- Library of "Classic Beer Style Series" brewing books to borrow
- Buy, sell, trade anything "beer" in free member ads

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work perfectly) to the fittings. When the keg is filled with beer, the hose would also fill with beer. Even when closed and under pressure, the liquid level in the hose would be the same as in the keg, since the pressure in both hose and keg would be the same...I think. I could then even calibrate the hose with marks every half gallon. The hose would be fixed to the fittings with hose clamps for a tight fit, and thus be removable for easy cleaning or replacement.

The downside (there has to be one, I suppose), is if I don't drill the holes properly in the stainless steel keg, or if the fittings don't seal tightly, I risk ruining one of my kegs. Another downside, even if it all works as envisioned, is that it would add a level of complexity to cleaning and sanitizing the kegs. But human achievement always comes at some risk. (I keep saying to myself that all of this expenditure of brain power would be totally unnecessary if someone would just come up with clear, polycarbonate (plastic) kegs that would use the same gas & liquid fittings we already use for kegs. They would be way cool...but probably also cost several hundred dollars each, whereas I figure I should be able to muster up the necessary items for my sight tube idea for less than \$20.) If you have any thoughts on how to help make this idea work, let me know and maybe we'll share the royalties.

Another mind-numbing idea I've been thinking about is a new version of my 3-tier deck brewing rack. The two previous designs I have created and still use, both use the deck railing itself as an integral support member. What I really want is a stand-alone rack which will:

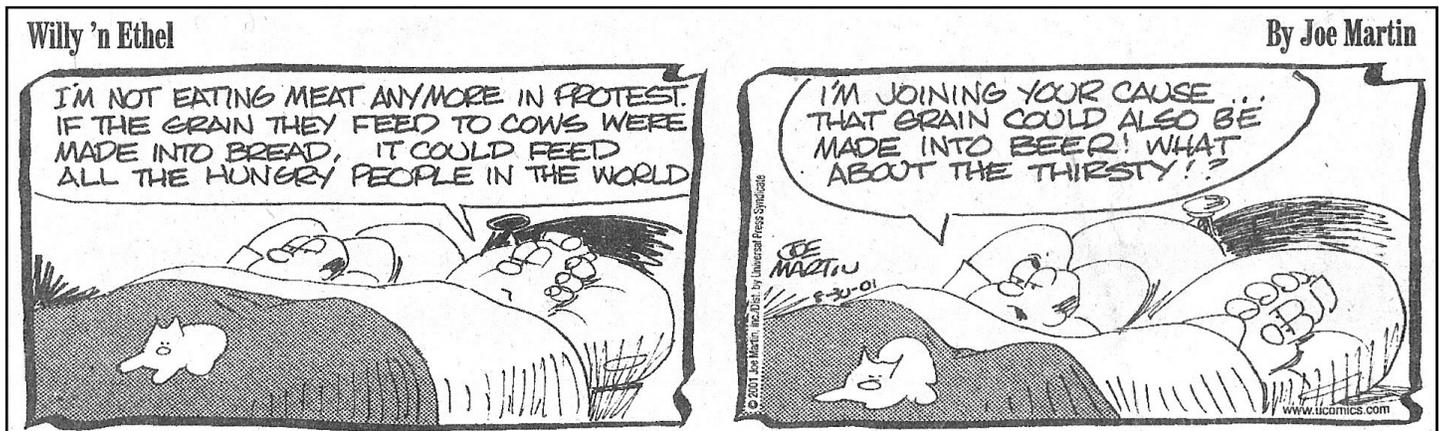
1. support two heavy vessels (mash tun and hot liquor tank) without any risk of collapse or tipping over when the weight shifts between the two vessels during mash/sparge;
2. be totally self-contained and self-standing with as few separable (removable) parts as possible;
3. be totally collapsible for easy transport and storage; and
4. be light enough to easily be handled by one person.

My first thoughts are to stick primarily with wood, probably 2x4 lumber (or smaller if I can get away with it, to make the whole thing lighter). Wood is easy to work with, and cheap enough to be forgiving if I mess up a cut or measure wrong. So I'm thinking my next step with this idea is to buy a gross of those flat, wooden tongue-depressor craft sticks and try to build something in model-size first...kind of like the miniature, functioning Time Machine that Rod Taylor built in the 1960 film of the same name. I am concerned that this project might entail more engineering skill than I can muster. But if all I spend is \$7-10 for a box of tongue depressors and some Elmer's, and end up just make a big mess on the kitchen table before determining it won't work, I won't feel too badly.

Then just this week, I mentioned my project to Paul Seegers at lunch, and it occurred to me that what I'm looking for might already exist, pre-made: a 6-foot step ladder. With some modifications (a top platform, and a middle platform to hold the mash tun, I can see going the easy route on this instead of trying to reinvent the wheel.

In the meanwhile, there is other work which I must force myself to do until the WBDs pass. The taps and beer lines on the beer 'fridge need major cleaning. There is a keg I emptied over a month ago that still hasn't been cleaned. I have an Orange Blossom Special mead that I intended to bottle two months ago, but which has languished in the carboy. I'm telling myself that it's just getting better by sitting there, but the Spousal Unit is also talking, telling me that the OBS is occupying precious real estate on the kitchen counter and has to go...soon. Hum. Maybe this weekend. And those two full carboys of wine laugh at me every time I leave my basement office...they've probably both gone bad (like, the airlocks have nothing but air in them...hah!), but I'm just afraid of tasting them and facing the fact that I'll probably have to dump them.

It's supposed to be pushing 60° this Saturday. Maybe I should just brew some beer and play my banjo, to chase the WBDs away.



The Spring Beer Tour

(masquerading as a college audition tour)

By Steve Kranz

'Tis the season for our high school senior to audition for admission to music schools. So far, we've had the kid to Cleveland (OH) and Rochester (NY). In each town, I've found brewpubs to keep me distracted from the long return drive home.

CLEVELAND, OH

The **Cleveland Chophouse & Brewery** is a busy downtown spot, but happily, we were early enough that we did not wait once we got in. As the name suggests, the menu is heavy on beef, ribs, and chops. I had one of the most flavorful steaks I've had in a long time, very tender and cooked perfectly. Kid Tuba also had a steak, but a different kind (I forget what they both were). The tab for the two of us was \$100 including tip...yikes!

I had a sampler of their six house beers. They were good-sized samples, at least six ounces each...enough to conclude that they all seemed to be well-made and generally true to style. I didn't take notes, though.

Great Lakes Brewing Company is off the beaten path, surrounded by a not-so-great part of town. But it was open on a Sunday night so that's why we went there. In spite of the neighborhood, a steady stream of patrons headed to the place. We only had to wait a few minutes for a table, but were seated in the bar area which was loud and crowded.

The menu was large but definitely more "pub-like" than the Chophouse. Kid Tuba had a Portobello mushroom sandwich. He and I shared a couple of good appetizers, including a soft Brewers Pretzel made with spent grains, and spicy artichoke dip. I ordered a Brewhouse Burger, which was large but not too large, and well cooked.

Again, I ordered a Sampler of the house beers and the waitress came out with a tray with eight beers. A guy at the table behind us asked me if the waitress just brought that out to me (he must have been an out-of-towner). I informed him that she'd bring him one, too, if he ordered it.

I also took notes of the beers this time:

Cream Ale — soft, smooth, light and semi-sweet. Good, very balanced.

Locktender Lager — Munich Helles style. Light, zesty and clean.

Dortmunder Gold — Much like the Lager, but with a slight aftertaste I didn't care for.

Highlander-something — I seem to recall it was a nut brown ale. Malty and nutty, caramel hint. Low hops, but very clean and tasty.

Burning River Pale Ale — good, strong hit of hop aroma and flavor.

Complimented the spicy artichoke dip. Malty, great balance.

Amber Lager — Medium body, mild flavor, got sort of lost against the spicy artichoke dip appetizer.

Irish Ale — Verrrry smooooth. Light hops, more malty than hoppy.

Dry Porter — could drink a log of this one! Super nutty/chocolate flavor with no aftertaste.

ROCHESTER, NY

During our to Rochester, New York, we were only able to visit one brewpub, so I chose The Distillery, said to be the most popular sports bar in the area. No distilling goes on here. Stylistically, it is a trendy, upscale-looking place on the outside, and a comfortable and attractive sports bar/restaurant on the inside with lots of wide-screen HDTV sets hanging from the walls and ceiling, but the volume is turned down to feature whatever background music is playing.

I will start out by saying that both Fritz and I agree: The Distillery's food was excellent, to the point of superlative. We split a spinach & artichoke dip appetizer, which was not as thick as others we've had, but was very tasty and full of large artichoke hunks. Served with tortilla chips, it included a small side dish of an excellent salsa to alternate with the dip. We both had the wings and baby back rib combo platter...Fritz had "hot", and I had "medium" wings. The ribs were just perfect, and the wings were crispy on the outside, but not over-done inside. Outstanding! Sadly, we had no room for dessert.

The Distillery is a brewpub, for sure, but

if you didn't know it going in, you might never know it by the time you leave. This is because there is little said about the house beers. The only mention of the fact that they brew their own beer is a small blip on the back page of one of those multi-page Denny's-style menus. Even there, it refers the guest to the server to inquire as to the current house beers. There is not even a mention of the house beers on a separate Beer Menu that is already on the table...just bottled and draft domestic and imported beers. Hmmm...what didn't they want me to know?

My suspicions raised, I asked our waitress about the house beers, and was informed they had an Iroquois Amber, a British Ale that she said was similar to Bass Ale, a porter, and a raspberry beer. I went for the British Ale to start. Upon being served mm beer, I was struck by yet another dark signal that brewing is not high on The Distillery's priority list: their own house beer, which should be a brewpub's featured brew, was served in a "Genny Light" pint glass. I always assumed that any brewer worth his salt and proud of his beer would slit his wrists before letting his beer leave the bar in such a disrespectful manner. Either I was wrong, or this brewer is neither proud nor worth his salt.

The Distillery has an extract system, and uses concentrated wort kits and pelletized hops from the manufacturer (see article at <http://celebrator.com/200208/flour.html>). That shouldn't necessarily mean that their beers have to take a back seat to other commercial beers, but in this case, their emphasis just is not on their house beers, which is too bad.

The British Ale tasted nothing like Bass. While it was not bad per se, it was kinda mild and sweet (but not a good malty sweet, more like from an incomplete fermentation), with no perceptible hop presence and a mildly unpleasant aftertaste. My second pint was the Iroquois Amber. It had the exact same color and aroma as the British Ale, and tasted generally the same but with a cleaner overall flavor.

Next up: Baltimore (heh, been there before) and Boston.

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given deal. Transactions are insured up to \$200 less a \$25 processing fee. Plus, most credit card purchases are protected against fraud. eBay has matured to the point where it is hard to come across a seller who doesn't already have "feedback" by which to gauge his integrity. Feedback is a public area where buyers and sellers leave comments about other eBayers they've dealt with. If someone is selling great brewing gear at a good price, but the last ten people who dealt with him left negative comments, bid at your own risk. Use common sense, and if you have a bad feeling, don't bid.

4. Bidding Strategies

Decide for yourself the most you will pay, and **stick to it**. Take, for example, the soda/beer vending machine I bought for my basement. (If you want to see a red glow in the skies over Westminster, call and ask the Spousal Unit about that one, then look out the window in our direction.) I bid on four of these machines starting before Christmas, before winning one. The reason I lost the first three is that the price went too high. My patience paid off. The machine I won is brand new and went for less than the others, which were all used.

One tactic I use is to lurk until the very end — I mean the **very** end, like the final twenty seconds — of an auction before you bid. If you pop in your best bid in the last 15-20 seconds of the auction, you can win by not leaving other bidders enough time to outbid you. You have to be at your computer and signed onto eBay when the auction is ending. Constantly refresh your browser to see what the current bid is. Then, if the item is still within your price range, enter your bid in the final twenty seconds of the auction, and cross your fingers.

Some people consider this tactic to be

underhanded and unethical. So what? There is no rule against it, and I don't know those people anyway. If it's something you really want, you WILL be tempted to bid early. Don't do it, or you'll prematurely set the high bid for an item that someone may decide is worth outbidding you for.

Closing the Deal

If you win an auction, you'll get an email giving you the seller's email address. You should also receive an email from the seller. If paying online with PayPal, do it right away. If you are sending payment, email the seller right away to get his address if you don't already have it. Pay promptly!

How To Pay depends on the options accepted by the seller...just read the auction listing, and don't send cash.

Selling on eBay

Let's say someone gave you a brand new copy of *Clone Brews* for Christmas. It's a nice book, but you already have it. You can either tell them the truth, or accept it gracefully and then sell it. Here is the drill for selling on eBay.

1. Optional: Establish positive feedback by purchasing a few things on eBay, before listing something for sale. It will make potential bidders more comfortable dealing with you.
2. Decide on the minimum price you'll accept, and start your auction there. Your book lists for \$14.95, but someone shopping for this book already knows they can buy it at amazon.com for \$10.50, so he's on eBay looking for a deal. You need to offer buyers a better deal than they can get elsewhere. Since it was a gift, you won't

lose no matter how low you sell it for...but you don't want to give it away, either. For the sake of this example, let's set your starting price at \$6 which, if nothing else, will buy you a six-pack of microbrew.

3. **eBay Fees** include Listing Fees and Final Value Fees. For your book, the Listing Fee is \$.35, and the Final Value Fee is 5.25% of the final price (up to \$25...anything over \$25 incurs an additional fee). So if the book sold for \$9, your fees would be \$.30 plus \$.47 (5.25% of \$9) for a total of \$.77.
4. Describe your item honestly, and include at least one picture if you can. If the item is brand new, say so both in the headline and in your description. If it's used or has been around for awhile, describe the good and the bad...but don't shoot yourself in the foot (e.g. "This book sucks and every recipe I made from it was bad").
5. **Shipping** Media Mail (book rate) is the way to go here. Include a (free) calculator in your listing, so bidders simply enter a Zip code to determine the shipping cost based on the weight of the package (which you must first know). You also have the option of adding the cost of a padded envelope.
6. **Payment options:** The more payment options you accept, the more likely you are to sell your item. Cash, checks, money orders, PayPal, or other online payment services are all options available. If you accept personal checks, make sure you state in your listing that it will delay shipping until the check clears their bank...I use a flat 10 business days.

The Earliest References To Beer

(Credit to Melinda Byrd for citing this article from Fosters' web site)

The Chinese brewed beer called 'Kui' 5,000 years ago. In Mesopotamia, a 4,000 year-old clay tablet indicates that brewing was a highly respected profession - and the master brewers were women.

In ancient Babylon, the women brewers were also priestesses. The goddesses Siris and Nimkasi were patronesses of beer, and certain types of beer were reserved exclusively for temple ceremonies.

In 2,100 BC Hammurabi, the 6th King of Babylonia, regulated tavern keepers in his law code. These provisions covered the sale of beer and were designed to protect the consumer. The punishment of short measure by an innkeeper was drowning.

An ancient tablet in New York's Metropolitan Museum lists Babylonian beers as: dark beer, pale beer, red beer, three fold beer, beer with a head, without a head etc. It records that beer was sipped through a straw - in the case of royalty a golden straw, long enough to reach from the throne to a container of beer kept nearby.

3,000 year old beer mugs were uncovered in Israel in the 1960s. The find at Tel Isdar indicated that beer drinking in Israel went back to the days of King Saul and King David. An Assyrian tablet of 2,000 BC lists beer among the foods that Noah used to provision the ark.

The Egyptian era

Some 5,000 years ago in the Imperial Egypt of the Pharaohs, beer was an important food item in the daily diet. It was made from lightly baked barley bread, and also was used as a sacrament.

People gathered in the evening to drink at a 'house of beer'. As well as being a drink, beer was also used as medicine. A medical document from about 1,600 BC lists about 700 prescriptions of which about 100 contained the word 'beer'.

The Egyptians provided their dead with food and beer. An Egyptian tomb bears the inscription: "...satisfy his spirit with beef and fowl, bread and beer". In the houses of beer in Egypt, the favorite toast was "Here's to your ghost".

A keg of beer was considered the only proper gift to the Pharaoh by a suitor seeking the hand of a royal princess. 30,000 gallons a year was also offered as a gift to the Gods by Pharaoh Rameses II (1,200 BC). It is recorded that a similar amount was offered to appease the gods when they became angry.

Isis, the nature goddess, was Egypt's patroness of beer brewing and an important official was charged with the task of maintaining the quality of beer, an integral part of everyday life and religion.

Other references to beer from Egyptian times include mention of beer brewed from barley in the Egyptian's Book of the Dead. Many ancient Egyptian wall hangings also depict the brewing of beer.

The Greek and Roman Era

It was the Egyptians who reputedly taught the Greeks how to brew beer. In fact it has been suggested by historians that Dionysus, the wine-god of Greek mythology, was actually a superimposition of Dionysis, the beer-god from pre-historic times.

The famous Greek writer Sophocles (450 BC) stressed moderation, and suggested a diet of "bread, meat, green vegetables and zythos (beer)". Other early Greek writers, Xenophon and Herodotus, also mention beer.

The Greeks in turn taught the Romans to brew, and Julius Caesar, following the fateful crossing in 49 BC of the River Rubicon, toasted his officers with beer. The Romans then showed the savage tribes in Britain the art of brewing.

Pliny and Tacitus are classical writers who record the development of the brewing art among the Celtic and Teutonic peoples of Britain and Central Europe.

The Christian Era

Beer came into its own with the advent of the Christian era, through the influence of the monasteries which brewed and improved the beer. Monks often built the first breweries as pioneers of the hotel business, providing shelter, food and drink to travellers.

Three Christian saints are listed as pa-

trons of brewing: Saint Augustine of Hippo, author of the confessions; Saint Luke the Evangelist; and Saint Nicholas of Myra, better known as Santa Claus.

Other saints also had links with brewing. Saint Columban, doing missionary work in Germany, found people preparing to consume a cask of beer in a ceremony to a pagan god. He blew upon the case, which fell apart, and when the crowd became penitent he miraculously increased the small amount of beer left. Saint Bright is credited with changing water into beer to feed lepers. She brewed ale at Easter time to supply the churches in the neighborhood. Saint Mungo, the patron saint of Scotland's oldest city, Glasgow, established a brotherhood in 540 AD, and one of the brothers started brewing to supply the others. Brewing is still regarded as the oldest industry in Glasgow. Saint Patrick, according to Senchus Mor, the book of the ancient laws of Ireland (438-441 AD), numbered among his household a brewer - a priest called Mescan.

Medieval times

The Emperor Charlemagne (AD 742-814) considered beer as essential for moderate living, and trained the realm's brewmasters. King Arthur served his Knights of the Round Table with beer called bragget.

Even in medieval times, beer was generally brewed by women. After the monasteries had established the best methods of brewing, the 'ale-wives' took the responsibility for further brewing.

In England at this time a checkered flag indicated a place where ale and beer could be purchased. Few people other than the clergy could read or write, and a written sign would have been of little use.

Many events of this era incorporate the word 'ale'. Brides traditionally sold ale on their wedding day to defray the expenses - hence 'bride-ale' which became 'bridal'. The Christmas expression 'yule-tide' actually means 'ale-tide'.

Saint Thomas A'Becket was selected as patron saint of one of the London Guilds, the Brewers' Company. When he went to France in 1158 to seek the hand of a French princess for Prince Henry of England, he took barrels of British ale as gifts.

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Recipe:

MaiBock Fix (Extract)

By George Fix
(from www.beertown.org)

INGREDIENTS (for 5 Gallons):

- 8.5 lbs Extra Light Dry Malt Extract
- 0.5 lbs CaraVienna Malt
- 2.00 oz Hallertauer Mittelfruh Hop Pellets, 4.5% AA, 60 min
- 0.75 oz Hallertau Hersbrucker Hop Pellets, 4.75% AA, 30 min
- 0.75 oz Hallertauer Mittelfruh Hop Pellets, 4.5% AA, 15 min
- Wyeast 2633 (if you can't find 2633, 2124 Bohemian Lager is a good second choice)

OG: 1.070-1.074

FG: 1.016-1.018

25 IBU

INSTRUCTIONS:

Add grains to 2 ½ gallons of water. Heat to 170° F, then remove grains. Stir in malt extract and bring to a boil. Add boiling hops and boil for half-an-hour. Add second hop addition, boil another fifteen minutes then add finishing hops. Boil fifteen minutes more, then transfer to fermenter with enough cold water to make 5 gallons. When sufficiently cooled, aerate well and pitch a large yeast starter (George recommends using a starter twice the size as for a normal lager) or rack onto a yeast cake from a previous batch.

Ferment at 50° F until gravity drops to 1.020, around 12-14 days.

Lager six weeks to six months.

Clipper City Beer Dinner

By Larry Hitchcock

As I sit here at my computer opening yet another bottle of Backfin Ale, I want to give you all a review of a beer dinner Lin and attended on February 18th. Bo Brooks Crab House on the waterfront in Canton was the site of a four-course dinner featuring Clipper City beers paired with regionally inspired dishes by Chef Marc Marchand. Each table setting included a goodie bag with a beer glass and a bunch of brochures. The event, which was attended by about 50 people, was organized to showcase Clipper City's latest release in their new High Seas line, Small Craft Warning. In addition, a portion of the evening's proceeds benefited the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

As we were seated, the staff served a glass of Clipper City Gold, just to whet our appetites. As the food began to be served, Hugh Sisson gave commentary on the beers, while Chef Marc described the courses. As with the dinner Clay Pipe and Harry's put on late last year, each beer was meant to compliment the food. Or was it that the food complimented the beer? Either way it worked. What attracted Lin and me to the dinner was that three of the four courses included jumbo lump crabmeat-hard to resist deep in the days of February. The theme of the dinner combined Baltimore styled dishes with Baltimore beer- also hard to resist any time of the year.

The appetizer was a serving of Ostrowski's Polish kielbasa (both smoked and fresh), with the chef's own creation: crab sausage. This was paired with McHenry beer. The everyday taste of the McHenry contrasted nicely with the spicy sausages, and the mustards and chunky sauerkraut added great flavors.

The salad course was a bed of bitter greens with warm goat cheese, roasted red peppers, beets and almonds with a mound of lump crab. Drizzled with a light vinaigrette dressing, this was served with Clipper City Pale. Very, very good;

however, the beer was more bitter than the salad, but that didn't stop us from enjoying both!

The entrée was beef tenderloin in a demi glace sauce with caramelized sweet onions sautéed in McHenry, roasted sweet potato slices and skinny little carrots, topped with a huge portion of lump crab, served with both Winter Storm and Small Craft Warning beers. Lin and I agreed that a nice dry cabernet would have been better with the beef, but, hey, it was a beer dinner! I didn't complain. No one else did either.

The dessert, which rounded out the evening, was a chocolate crepe with berries marinated in champagne and brandy. Oxford Raspberry Wheat accompanied this course, which went very well together.

There was a short presentation by a representative from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and a few door prizes awarded. All in all, this was a very pleasant way to spend a Wednesday night. The food and the beers were excellent, but as the evening closed, Lin and I mingled a bit, grabbed our goodie bags and then headed back to the friendly confines of Carroll County.

Hugh Sisson described Small Craft warning as a pilsner bock. It is light in color, big on hop bitterness and aroma (very big), and weighing in at a hefty 7% alcohol. It should be a welcomed addition to the craft beer lover's list of favorite beers. It should be in bars and stores in early March.

Ahhhh, now that I'm done with this review, I think I'll have one more Backfin Ale before I turn in for the night. I think I'll brew tomorrow.

Events Calendar

For all tastings, \$5 per member (\$7 for guests) covers the host's costs. RSVP directly to the host, or as indicated. If you wish to schedule an event, contact any club officer.

March

20 Tasting @ Steve & Michelle Kranz's

April

TBA Anti-Tax party hosted by Mark Kaidy
7-16 National Homebrew Comp. entries
due (see www.beertown.org/events/nhc/index.html for rules, etc.)

May

1 Big Brew celebration of National Homebrew Day! Details later...

June

TBA Summer Solstice tasting hosted by Larry & Lin Hitchcock

July

3 BrewHaHa @ Neil Mezebish's
10 Guild summer picnic @ Patapsco State Park

October

TBA Tasting/party hosted by Greg & Karen Lambrecht

(Continued from page 6)

Beer was also handed out free of charge to weary travelers when the Wayfarer Dole was established in England. A Pilgrim's Dole of ale and bread can still be claimed by all wayfarers at the Hospital of St Cross, Winchester, England. This is said to have been founded by William of Wykeham, (1367-1404), and was claimed by Emerson, the American essayist, when visiting Winchester.

1400 onwards

Today, "ale" and "beer" are used interchangeably. However, ale, which consisted of malt, water and yeast, was replaced at the start of the 15th century by beer. Introduced from Flanders, beer was bittered with hops and kept better than English ale because of the preservative quality of the hops. By the end of the century, beer had almost replaced English ale, and was being exported to Europe. Records show that almost half of the ships' cargoes taken across the North Sea and the Baltic Sea were barrels of beer.

Until the middle of the 16th century, beer making was mainly a family operation and had little commercial application. However, it was an integral part of everyday diet. Ladies-in-waiting at the court of Henry VII were allowed a gallon of beer for breakfast alone. Queen Elizabeth, when traveling through the country, sent couriers ahead to taste the local ale. If it didn't measure up, a supply would be shipped from London for her.

William Shakespeare's father was an ale-taster or "conner". The "conner" tested the ale by pouring some upon a bench and sitting on it while drinking the rest. If there

was sugar in the ale, or it was impure, their leather breeches would stick after sitting for half an hour or so.

The Dean of St Pauls, in the 16th century, is credited with the invention of bottled ale. Dr Alexander Norwell put ale in a bottle when he went fishing and left the bottle in the grass. Returning some years later he found the cork came away with an explosion but the taste and quality of the ale was still good.

European beer first arrived in America with Christopher Columbus. On his last voyage to America in 1502, Columbus found the natives of Central America making a first-rate brew "of maize, resembling English beer". The Pilgrim Fathers landed at Plymouth Rock, instead of further south as planned, partly because they were out of beer. A journal entry dated December 19, 1620 said: "We could not take time for further search or consideration; our victuals being much spent, especially our beer".

At the end of the 17th century, the weekly allowance for pupils of all ages at one English school was two bottles a day. Beer was a good deal safer and more palatable than the available drinking water which was often drawn from polluted rivers. Beer was also common in the workplace. Benjamin Franklin, who lived in London from 1757-1774, recorded the daily beer consumption in a London printing house which he visited. The employees each had a pint before breakfast, a pint between breakfast and dinner, a pint at dinner, a pint at six o'clock and a pint when they finished work.

March 2004

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

April 2004

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

May 2004

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					