

February 14  
NFBL Meeting

Saccharomyces Journal  
February 2008

# Saccharomyces Journal

## President's Message

Matt Ruddell



What does beer mean to you? I know that I have strong feelings and opinions on the beverage I choose to drink. Much of it is reactionary to the many stereotypes that exist out there in respect to beer, but I fear that sometimes I may go too far. Am I an obnoxious beer snob (as I have been called on the local beer blog more than once)? I don't know, I hope not.

I have always thought of beer as everyman's beverage. I like to think that it is more approachable than wine, more social than other alcoholic beverages, and more complex than the watered down fizzy beer drunk by most Americans. Fritz Maytag (Owner of Anchor Brewery) even made that statement. He owns both a brewery and a vineyard but confessed to Michael Jackson that his true love is beer because it "belongs to the people". As beer drinkers we are never exclusionary. I certainly enjoy a fine wine on occasion, as well as a great Scotch, Tequila, or Rum. For me though, a good beer is my preference.

More approachable is the fact that beer tends not to have pronunciations which are difficult (anyone can say IPA!), or specific rites and rituals which must be followed. Sure there are some basic ground rules, but even they are pretty flexible. You **can** drink a Belgian beer out of a pint glass and only the most obnoxious beer snob would scoff, out loud anyway. You can drink great beer out of a bottle and enjoy it (and I have), even if most of us prefer to drink from a glass. Good beer is not just the ultrahoppy or ultra-high-alcohol brews that the American microbreweries are pumping out. It is also a nicely balanced English bitter, or a malty Scottish ale. Great beer can be a dark roasty stout or a delicate pilsner. There is a beer out there for everyone. The problems with approachability are created by ad campaigns and close mindedness.

Drinking a pint of brew just seems to invite conversation. It is one of my favorite things about the beverage. The conversation can be over almost anything, sports, politics, religion. The relatively low alcohol content in beer as opposed to wine seems to invite long evenings of quaffing and chatting. Beer loosens the lips and lubricates the mind allowing us (as social animals) to do what comes naturally, socialize. I got into a tiff awhile back with an anonymous posted on our local blog named "Floyd." Floyd is a die hard Pabst Blue Ribbon drinker, and damn proud of it. He was describing my appreciation for a beer called "Duchess" and laughing hysterically thinking of me ordering said beer at a bar. I think I was able to win the argument by saying that the great thing about beer is that Floyd and I could walk into the same bar, order very different beers, sip our beers both thinking the same thing, "Damn, that's a good beer." Of course we would both look at each other down the bar and laugh at what the other person is drinking, but we would be united in our love for beer.

Unfortunately, in my opinion most Americans don't know all that beer can be. When they hear beer they can only imagine a pale yellow, fizzy, ice cold mega brew. What I enjoy is not beer to them. It is too exotic, heavy, bitter, or weird for them. I truly pity these people. They are missing out on the hundreds of beer styles and flavors that exist. They will never know the wonderful chocolate notes of a fine porter, or the complex phenolics of a great Belgian. Beer is so complex, the flavor combinations are almost endless. These complexities in beer allow people of every taste a chance to enjoy a common beverage. Beer is brewed throughout the world, in many different cultures and with many different ingredients it is hard to not find one for everybody. The true tragedy is in not trying...

Continued next month...

Mark Your Calendars	
Feb. 14	NFBL Meeting
Feb. 22-23	Pre-judging for Best FL Beer
Feb. 28	EC meeting
Feb.29-Mar. 1	Final judging at Best FL beer
Mar. 13	NFBL Meeting
Mar. 17	St. Patrick's Day
Mar. 29	Springtime Tallahassee

~ruddellmj@comast.net

## Treasurer's Report

**Balance:** The Club's account balance as of 1/26/08 is **\$2079.42**. The Club has **57 active members**.

**Rick Savage** is our newest member. Give him a big NFBL welcome at our next meeting.

Membership renewals due February 2008:

Carol & Buddy Brown  
Sarah Bridegroom & John Larsen  
Alyssa Wiedenmayer & Jason Dickey

Membership renewals due March 2008:

Jennifer & Brian Hall  
Chris Sella

Derek Vollmer  
Martin Brungard  
Randy Desilet

Membership renewals past due:

Amy & Vince George  
Melissa Horwitz & Marc Dixon  
Courtney & Rob Shoen  
Emily Boyd & Stuart Davis  
Jimmy Nelson & Robbie Nelson

Annual membership is \$20 for individuals and \$30 for couples. Please see me at the next meeting with your dues or mail checks to NFBL, PO Box 3325, Tallahassee, FL 32315-3325. Attention Randy Desilet.

## Randy Desilet

**Membership Cards:** Remember that it is important to keep current with your club dues. The NFBL card is used to identify members as being up-to-date with their dues and eligible for discounts at The HomeBrew Den. Only membership cards of active NFBL members will be honored.

**NFBL Stuff For Sale**

We have Club t-shirts (\$15), Henley shirts (\$20) and bumper stickers (\$1), available at our monthly meeting. See Randy at the meeting for the selection.

## Jan 10 NFBL Minutes & Jan 24 EC Meeting Minutes

## Corrigan Loduha

**NFBL Minutes:** This month, our meeting focused around hops. Sarah got us all "hopped" up on juices made from several different varieties of hops. Many of us want to know more about types of hops we choose from when we are homebrewing, as well as the end results we can yield in the final product and this tasting session gave everyone a chance to consider some of the differences between hops found in many of the commercial beers we enjoy. We also held a raffle, with proceeds going toward the planning of our beer and food pairing session.



Raffle Items:

- Fat Tire Golden Ale- Chris Sella
- Old Chub Scottish Ale- Chris Sella
- Schall Beer- Chris Sella
- White Ox Wheat Ale- Chris Sella
- 1 oz. Nugget Pellet Hops- Chris Sella
- Beer Hat- Chris Sella
- Abita Restoration Pale Ale- Johann Pautz
- Golden Promise Ale- Johann Pautz
- Hoegarden x 2- NFBL
- Full Sail Wassail x 2- NFBL
- Terrapin Imperial Pilsner x 2- NFBL
- Becks Dark- Joe Pignatiello
- Sierra Nevada Celebration Ale- Joe Pignatiello
- Terrapin Coffee Stout- Craig Magnum
- The Brewmaster- Randy Desilet
- Homebrew Gift Basket- Homebrew Den

Homebrews:

- Stout- Chris Sella
- California Common- Johann Pautz

**EC Meeting Minutes:** The committee met to discuss upcoming calendar events and possible educational sessions. There are parties and club brews to plan, as well as other organization's events which we may want to be a part of. The beer and food pairing event happening this spring was also much discussed. It's going to be a fun year!



## Club Brews & Parties

As many of you know, a regular component of NFBL activities (and part of our mission) is hosting club brews and socials.

The beer club typically schedules a few club brews during the year where we get together and brew a few batches together. We then drink the beer at the following club party. The club pays for the beer, the brewers brew it and supervise it, and bring it to the party. We usually do 2 or 3 five-gallon brews at the group brew - often brewers' choice of style. The brewers bring their equipment to the brew site to brew the beer. Often, the host brewer brews as well - since they usually have

brew equipment of their own at their house.

Club brews are great ways to learn new techniques, steal a few brewing tricks, and to simply learn about the brewing process. Club brews can be a mix of extract and all-grain brewing, so as to offer some tutelage when needed. And of course, they are just plain fun and social. The low-key and relaxed atmosphere of club brews is really conducive to advancing brewing knowledge.

The club is currently trying to schedule the first club brew for this year. Possible brew dates (that take into account other in-town

## Sarah Bridegroom

festivals, other beer events, and holidays), are February 23 and March 8. We have often brewed on Saturdays because it seems to appeal to the greatest number of people, but Sundays are included as well from time to time.

If you would like to host a club brew or if you can brew at a club brew, let us know. Email me ([sarah@homebrewden.com](mailto:sarah@homebrewden.com)) or Matt ([ruddellmj@comcast.net](mailto:ruddellmj@comcast.net)).

# How Now Brown Cow-What's Next for Brown Ales? Sarah Bridegroom

We're tasting some brown beers this month – yummy, malty goodness. We have included English Brown Ale, American Brown Ale and Scottish Ale in the month's featured style - all good, all reasonable to brew on a homebrewing scale, and all versatile in their composition and their place at the dinner table.

Most of us know Newcastle Brown as the classic example of English Brown Ale. Newcastle and similar beers that were launched in Northeastern England are different than their Southern England counterparts. Southern English browns are often darker and sweeter and are sometimes lower in alcohol content.

There was a while in recent craft brewing history where American breweries weren't doing much with the Brown Ale style. Then Pete's Wicked Ale and Brooklyn Brewery came along with their versions of the style - slightly higher in alcohol content, the use of more chocolate and some black malts, and some higher hop levels. Both beers did well in the craft brew marketplace. Over time,

Pete's Wicked Ale has been bought and sold and brewed in a variety of contract breweries. The current version of the beer (which might not even be available in Tallahassee anymore) is a bit of a boring version of its former self. In its place however is a new wave of Brown Ale brewers, some of which are expectedly pushing the Brown Ale limits. DogFish Head's Indian Brown is as close to a Porter as I suspect any Brown has ever been. In contrast, many Brown Ales use none of these darker malts at all and we would be hard pressed to distinguish them from Amber Ales these days. Even if we're not sure what to call them, you can be relatively sure that something called Brown Ale will have a solid malt backbone to its core. Whether it's lowly or highly hopped, the blend of base malt and specialty malt should be the star of a Brown Ale show. In the American craft brewing market, there's lots of room for more Brown Ales. Hard to say if the breweries will take it there, but the hop situation might have made it a little more attractive.

## AHA Club Only (& Other) Competitions

Sarah Bridegroom

Each year, the American Homebrewing Association (AHA) hosts club only competitions. In these competitions, a beer style is selected, and registered beer clubs (of which we are one) send one entry that represents the whole club in the contest. AHA typically hosts five or six of these competitions each year. Various homebrew clubs across the state host the beer judging for their respective beer style. When the NFBL enters a beer, the club pays for the competition entry fee and the shipping costs to send the entry.

This year, the NFBL has decided to pursue at least two, possible three of the six club-only competitions set for the year: Porter, Mead and Imperial Anything (respectively). The Porter competition is already on the AHA schedule for March and the Mead competition for June. The Imperial Anything competition is not yet solidified, but is tentatively scheduled for the fall. When that Imperial Anything date firms up, the Executive Committee will revisit the schedule and decide whether to pursue it.

So for now, if you have a Porter or a Mead in mind that you would like to put up for consideration, please keep an eye on the newsletter and e-mail bulletins for the specifics. Matt will be taking the lead on how the beers will be evaluated, and I will take the lead on the schedule and getting them shipped to their respective locations.

For those of you who are interested in sending your beers to individual competitions, there are several coming up this spring. The Tampa-Dunedin group hosts the Best Florida Beer Championships, the Palm Beach crowd hosts the Hurricane Blowoff and our Gainesville brethren host the Hogtown BrewOff. Dates and links to individual competition sites rules can be found on [www.beertown.org](http://www.beertown.org). Click onto the homebrewing section and the competitions link. Also on that Web site will be information about the AHA National Homebrewing Competition. First round judging for the South will be hosted in North Carolina. If you have questions or need some guidance on how to navigate the system, let me know.

## Event & Other Educational Updates

Sarah Bridegroom

The December and January NFBL raffles were a great boost to the planning budget for the Spring food and beer tasting event. We raised a couple of hundred dollars of seed money for the delicious day. Thank you to everyone who contributed and thank you to everyone who entered. Raffle funds always go to club activities, so it's terrific to keep those going strong. In coming months, Matt will update us on the event details and how we all can help.

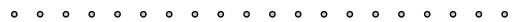
Last month's club meeting was also a busy one in terms of information. Thanks to Matt, Corrigan and Jen for their help in serving our hop samples for the educational presentation. They kept things moving pretty briskly and kept us on task.

There's a new public event opportunity on the horizon. The Tallahassee Scottish Highland Games and Celtic Festival has invited us to perform a brewing demonstration at the event. We will be able to set up an NFBL brew booth where we can talk to patrons about beer and homebrewing. We also have a sweet booth location next to the beer tent.

We have actually tried to serve this event in the past and simply had some bad luck with weather. This year, the event has a rain plan, so with that out of the way, we have been asked once again to brew on. Allen Turnage is our contact for the April 19 event, so please consider accepting what will likely be his and the club's request to take part in manning a shift at the NFBL booth and meeting some of the event patrons. For more information about the festival itself, visit [www.tallahasseehighlandgames.com](http://www.tallahasseehighlandgames.com).



*Mission Statement: The North Florida Brewers League is committed to sharing, promoting, and teaching the hobby of homebrewing to both beginners and experienced brewers through community involvement, regular meetings, and the Big Bend Beer is a wonderful thing.*



NFBL  
PO Box 3325  
Tallahassee, FL 32315



North Florida Brewers League

**Newsletter submissions** should be sent by the Friday following the full membership meeting to [denise.karnes@gmail.com](mailto:denise.karnes@gmail.com)

This month's style:

Brown Ales

## Long Term Calendar

February 9—Beerfest, Mirboo North, Victoria, AU  
February 14—NFBL meeting  
February 16—AHA Club-Only Competition: Dark Lagers, Fargo, ND  
February 22-23-Pre judging for Best Florida Beer  
February 28—The Coconut Cup, Miami, FL  
March 7—Kona Brewer's Festival Homebrew Competition, Kailua, Kona, HI  
March 13—NFBL meeting  
March 17—St. Patrick's Day

March 29—Springtime Tallahassee  
April 7—Brew Year's Eve  
April 8—Easter  
May 3—**Club Brew/Big Brew in celebration of National Homebrew Day**  
May 10—AHA Club-Only Competition: Extract Beers, Naperville, IL  
August 2—AHA Club-Only Competition: Mead, Minneapolis, MN



*Be there or be square.*