

# The Grain Mill

*Publication of the Scioto, Olentangy, & Darby Zymurgists, Inc*



President's Corner  
May 2010  
By Vic Gonzales



On April 3<sup>rd</sup> Elevator Brewing Company provided wort to make a Poor Richard's Ale clone at the brewery. Next Monday we will be back at the brewery to sample some of these beers. There were about 30 batches made with all sorts of variations to the recipe, so there should be some interesting beers to try. Many of the people that participated in this event were not part of SODZ but will be joining us at our next meeting to share their versions of Poor Richard's. This is a homebrew friendly meeting so bring your best ales and lagers to show them off at our last meeting for the year. If you would like to thank the Elevator for hosting our meeting and providing a brewing event then stop by the restaurant before the meeting to pick up a bite to eat and a beer.

Speaking of brewing events, Eric

Bean and Columbus Brewing Company went all out for National Homebrew Day. I arrived a little after 8:00 am for the Big Brew Event and the pig was already cooking, the mash was steeping and the rain was falling. Soon after, homebrewers were arriving and setting up their brewing equipment. We had about 30 people brewing to make over 220 gallons of beer. The wort was a bit high at about 1.065; we had the option of watering it down to make a weaker beer or boiling it down to make a stronger beer. I decided to boil it down and add 14 ounces of simcoe hops. The hops had soaked up so much wort that I only ended up with 4 gallons of beer. I chilled it down to 65 degrees and put it in the cooler until I left. When I got home I pitched an active starter of

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American Ale yeast and had activity in two hours. In a few days I will dry hop it with another few ounces of simcoe hops and add some black patent that I cold steeped and call it a black wheat IPA.

I know some SODZ members are not into homebrew competitions but some are really into it. SODZ members did very well this year at the 1<sup>st</sup> round of the National Homebrew Competition. Overall our club members scored 46 points that puts us in a three-way tie for 8<sup>th</sup> place after the first round. Some individuals who did well are Jeff Lewis and Kyle Bullock who are now in a 35-way tie for 56<sup>th</sup> place and Bill Bopp who is in a 33-way tie for 91<sup>st</sup>. As a club we did very well and I wish the people who advanced good luck in the second round.

## Brew Pub Update

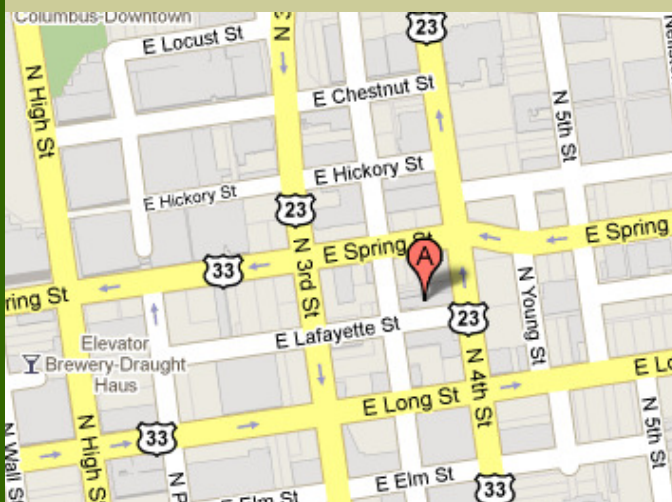
<u>Gordon Beirsch</u>	<u>Weasel Boy</u>	<u>CBC</u>	<u>Barleys #1</u>	<u>Barleys #2</u>	<u>Elevator</u>
Gold Export	Ornery Otter Blonde	Ohio Honey Wheat	Mild Child Organic Mild	Hoptopus	Mexican Lager
Hefeweizen	White Weasel Wheat	Apricot Ale	Ivan Porter	Left Coast Pale Ale	Poor Richard's Ale
Czech Lager	River Mink Mild Brown	Pale Ale	Blurry Bike IPA	Ali Ali Ale	Milk Stout
Märzen	Plaid Ferret Scottish	90 Shilling	Irish Rogue	Saint Joan's Revenge	Barrel-Aged Barleywine
Schwarzbier	Brown Stroat Stout	1859 Porter	J Scott Francis ESB	Centennial IPA	Heiferweizen
<i>Seasonal</i>	Dancing Ferret IPA	Columbus IPA	Alexander's Russian Imperial Stout	MacLenny's Scottish Ale	Horny Goat Porter
Maibock	Bourbon Barrel Aged Super Genius Barleywine	Rhapsody	MacLenny's Scottish Ale	Pale Ale	Flying Hydrant Light
	Bitter Sable Imperial Black IPA		Pale Ale		Elevator Xtra
	<i>Guest Tap:</i> Flying Dog Raging Bitch		Pilsner		Mogabi
					Bear Ass Pale Ale
					Three Frogs IPA
					Bleeding Buckeye Red Ale
					Dirty Dick's Nut Brown Ale
					Dark Horse Lager
					Procrastinator Doppelbock

## Meeting agenda

7 pm Start  
 Officer Reports  
 Poor Richard's Ale  
 NHC 2nd Round Entries  
 Club Summer Functions  
 Brewery Tour  
 Adjourn

## Meeting Location

Elevator Brewery  
 (NOT THE RESTAURANT)  
 165 North Fourth St.  
 Columbus, OH 43215



## May-June 2010

## Schedule of Events

- 5/17 SODZ meeting at the Elevator
- 5/17-5/23 American Craft Beer Week
- 5/28-5/29 Columbus Beerfest

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

# NHC Invades Weasel Boy Again

## (How did we get ourselves into this?)

By Jay Wince

In April of 2008 as we were finishing up with Saturday afternoon judging of the NHC first round regional at Gordon Biersch Columbus, then club president and NHC first round organizer Frank Barickman asked in passing if Lori and I would be interested in hosting the 2009 event at Weasel Boy Brewing Company in Zanesville. His rationale in part was that it was one hour closer to the eastern states in our region and would possibly pull a more diverse pool of judges from the other states involved. Also considered were the facts that a hotel room could be had for about half the cost of those in downtown Columbus and that there would be no parking fees for any of the judges either at the hotels or at the brewery. We immediately, and without thinking it through I might add, jumped at the chance and quickly answered with a hearty yes!

Jump forward two years and here we are again finishing up the judging of the NHC east regional. Two years ago when we quickly answered yes we hadn't taken a couple of things into consideration. First we hadn't thought as to where we were going to stage the 500 hundred plus bottles of beer that would be arriving daily leading up to the event. As many of you had seen our walk-in cooler was small and usually stacked two high with full kegs of beer. Second, we hadn't considered that we (or someone) would have to be there every day, all day, to receive these parcels so they could be put in the aforementioned unknown location. Third, our taproom wasn't really big enough to accommodate the 60+ persons judging and stewarding beer without some sort of drastic rearranging or temporarily borrowing some space from the landlord, especially during open hours.

Well things seem to have a way of working out for the most part. Over the year that followed we obtained a second cooler, hired a couple more employees, and more than doubled our taproom space as well. We literally finished painting the expansion where the judging was to be held four days before the 2009 event started! Separate rooms in the space made bottle staging for the cellar masters a breeze and gave some sense of privacy to the team recording and organizing the judging sheets. 'The brewer formerly known as Gordon Strong' had a special room dedicated in his honor as we had our very own 'Ninkasi Suite' for some of the judging to take place in. From our perspective the judging went smoothly and almost all of the flights were hammered out in three sessions over Friday night and Saturday. The two final flights were finished up Sunday morning even before Lori and I made it to the brewery. (I guess that Saturday was a good night!)

Things seemed to go so smoothly and the space was so complimented that at dinner that evening Frank just kind of threw out there for all to hear 'Does everyone want to come back

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to Weasel Boy and do this again in 2010?’ Those may not have been his exact words but it was his meaning. Response to the suggestion was overwhelmingly positive and Lori and I found ourselves looking back at a roomful of judges, stewards and spouses awaiting our response. Of course, and again without thinking I might add, we hastily agreed. But, by all accounts things went even smoother and better this year than in 2009. Entries were up by about 150, more judges made the journey out to Weasel Boy to take part in the event and the judging was finished up by the end of the Saturday afternoon sessions. Our new table arrangement flowed much better for the judges and stewards moving through the room and Mr. Strong even had upgrades to the ‘Ninkasi Suite’ with the addition of the comfy love seat that now graces that room.

As we understand it, when Frank decided to take over as organizer for this event in mid 2007 his plan was to do it for a couple of years and then let it move on to another organizer in our region. The theory was to move it around and have a fresh pool of judges every couple of years to get fresh input and keep our region healthy. Now Frank can correct us if we’re wrong but it appears that we drew a somewhat different group this year than we did in 2009. And that was different even from 2008 in Columbus. Many faces were the same but there has been a fresh infusion of new judging blood in the pool in the past two years. SODZ has many more recognized and certified judges than it did two years ago and we drew many judges from outside our local area that we know did not see here last year. So in some respects just moving it from Columbus to Zanesville has been in part ‘mission accomplished’.

Again this year during the Saturday festivities we talked of the future of the event and Frank stated that he would continue to volunteer to organize it as long as we continued to care to host it. So, if all works out we will again have judges, stewards, organizers and spouses invading our brewery sometime next spring. We can’t express how much we really, truly enjoy having this event in our brewery. It is a wonderful thing to be able to provide for the hobby that has given us so much. We hope all of you had a great event this year. We are definitely looking forward to doing it all over again in 2011, and this time we’ve even thought it through!

Last but not least we would like to pass along our thanks to everyone for making this such a great event. It has to be one of the best that there is. The hundreds of hours that are put into the organizing by Frank and his team is sometimes a thankless job. We know, as we saw many of the emails leading up to competition week. Scott and Tracy Taylor again did a great job in the ‘booth’ and the cellar crew was again fabulous. Kirk Gaston, Jeff Hornberger and all who helped them out staging the beer did a fabulous job in the cellar. All of you who came out for the unpacking sessions on Saturday mornings, you guys and all of the others that we fail to mention here are the backbone of this event. Without your contribution of time and effort it just doesn’t happen.

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Last but by no means least; congratulations go out to all who placed beer into the second round, especially those of you in SODZ!! Cheers to a job well done and good luck in the finals. As Jeff '60' Lewis likes to preach, SODZ World Domination!! It's getting closer. If we could just get Gordon to join SODZ.....well, who knows!

See you in '11.

## COMPETITION NEWS

By Kyle Bullock and Bill Bopp

Kyle:

Congrats to all those who passed beers on to the final round of the National Homebrew Competition. Just as a reminder, those beers are due 6/07/2010. For those that aren't busy rebrewing their NHC entries, there are plenty of other competitions to enter. Please see below for a few in our region in the up-coming months, and others can be found at:

<http://www.homebrewersassociation.org/pages/competitions/aha-bjcp-sanctioned-competition/calendar?pagenum=1>

Also, the club doesn't meet in the summer but the AHA's Club-only competition category is mead (BJCP categories 24, 25, and 26 styles) this July and entries are due 7/30/2010. If the club has an interest, it wouldn't take much to get an entry together. If you have a good mead, please talk to Kyle Bullock or Bill Bopp at the May meeting and we'll see if we can arrange something.

Bill:

Just because SODZ will take a break from meeting over the summer doesn't mean there will be a break in the competition action. The summer is full of regularly occurring competitions providing lots of opportunities to lend your hand in helping and get some unbiased feedback on your beer.

Helping with competitions is a great way to learn about the process and usually provides an opportunity to sample a wide variety of beers. Competitions always need help in the form of judges and stewards. If you've never judged before and don't feel qualified yet, considering being a steward. A steward assists judges by bringing beer to the judging table and organizing the paperwork. In many cases, the steward can sample the beer along with

the judges.

Starting the summer off will be Afternoon with the Brewers on June 10<sup>th</sup> at Barleys Ale House. This is the event where the winner of their annual homebrew competition is announced. The winner gets to have their recipe brewed at Barelys and served the following year. On tap this year is a beer brewed by a current SODZ member, Lloyd Cicetti. He won last years competition with a Blood Orange Wheat. Entries for the competition are due at the Winemakers Shop in Clintonville during the last two weeks in May.

Later in June is the final round of the National Homebrew Competition. SODZ has eleven entries advancing this year. I believe this is the most ever. Hopefully we'll get a chance to hear a SODZ member called out during the awards banquet. If you can't attend this great event, you may still be able to listen in. The past couple of years the Brewing Network has broadcast the awards ceremony live over the Internet. If you have an entry, and can't go to the conference, listen in at <http://www.thebrewingnetwork.com/>.

In July the Ohio Brew Week festival down in Athens gets kicked off with a homebrew competition on the Saturday (July 10<sup>th</sup>) before the week-long celebration of beer starts. See <http://www.ohiobrewweek.com/homebrew.html> for details on the competition.

Also in July is the Ohio State Fair competition. Although the judging will be held on July 17<sup>th</sup>, entry forms and fees must be postmarked by June 20<sup>th</sup>. Check the Yahoo! Group archive (message # 5968) for all the details to enter. Also, watch this group for updates regarding helping at this competition.

August is the start of next season's Club Only Competition series. The first style will be mead. The club picnic is usually when we select this entry, so again, watch for updates on the Yahoo! Group. This competition covers BJCP style categories 24, 25, and 26.

On August 21<sup>st</sup> is Beer and Sweat. This is the largest keg-only homebrew competition in the country and it's just a short drive from Columbus. This is a unique competition in that entries are in kegs, so there's lots of leftover beer for people to sample afterwards. Usually in a competition, only a few judges are privileged enough to sample the best of show beer. At Beer and Sweat, anyone can try the best of show (while supplies last of course...hint...hint...hit the winners first). Watch <http://www.beerandsweat.org/> for more information.

Finally, before we meet again in September, Dayton's club DRAFT will hold their competition, the Dayton DRAFT Beerfest. This is also one of the legs of the Midwest Home Brewer of the Year circuit, which I talked about a few issues back. More information should be available on the clubs website (<http://www.daytondraft.org/>) later in the summer.

This is just a local sampling of what's going on this summer. For a more complete list of competitions check out the BJCP competition website at [http://www.bjcp.org/apps/comp\\_schedule/competition\\_schedule.php](http://www.bjcp.org/apps/comp_schedule/competition_schedule.php).

Have a great Summer and brew up some winners!

### **Bloat Open**

Entry Deadline: 05/12/2010

Phone Number: (314) 440-6850

Location: Cincinnati, OH, US

Contact Email: [treasurer@bloatarian.org](mailto:treasurer@bloatarian.org)

Organizer: Michael Carver

### **ABC Brews Crews Homebrew Competition**

Entry Fee: \$7 first entry, 5\$ all others

Entry Deadline: 05/15/2010

Phone Number: (734) 395-6274

Location: Ypsilanti, MI, US

Contact Email: [bob.barrett@gmail.com](mailto:bob.barrett@gmail.com)

Organizer: Bob Barrett

### **Ohio Brew Week Competition**

Entry Fee: \$7 first entry, \$5 each additional entry

Entry Deadline: 06/25/2010

Phone Number: (765) 404-7446

Location: Athens, OH, US

Contact Email: [kleinjc40@hotmail.com](mailto:kleinjc40@hotmail.com)

Organizer: Jason Klein

### **Ohio State Fair Homebrew Competition**

Entry Fee: \$5 (Ohio Residents Only Competition)

Entry Deadline: 06/20/2010

Phone Number: (614) 644-4126

Location: Columbus, OH, US

Contact Email: [b.chance@expo.state.oh.us](mailto:b.chance@expo.state.oh.us)

Organizer: Brett Chance



### **Sam Adams Long Shot**

Entry Fee: Free

Entry Deadline: May 28, 2010

Category 23

More details at: <http://www.samueladams.com/promotions/LongShot/>

### **Beer and Sweat 2010**

Entry Fee: \$5 first keg, \$4 second keg, \$3 third through tenth kegs, \$0 each keg over ten

Entry Deadline: 08/09/2010

Phone Number: (513) 515-6672

Location: Fort Mitchell, KY, US

Contact Email: [scott@beerandsweat.org](mailto:scott@beerandsweat.org)

Organizer: Scott LaFollette

## **Financial Report**

By Steven Huckaby

SODZ's balance is \$3772

# Old Ales

By Stephen Klump

I wanted to add to the comments on Old Ale that were made at the SODZ April meeting in the hopes of inspiring enthusiasm for the Strong Old Ale style. I have been a fan of Thomas Hardy's Strong Old Ale, brewed by Eldridge Pope in Dorchester England, ever since I tasted a 1991 vintage. Complex ester profile, sweet but not cloying, bitter but not assertively so. The one thing that did dominate the flavor profile was the malt, malt and more malt. "Wow, this is a beer I want to brew!" was the thought running through my head. So, some research was in order.

What I discovered is that the standard interpretation of Old Ale style is the Theakson's Old Peculiar. A very nice winter warmer with many similar characteristics shared by Thomas Hardy ....except alcohol strength, OG, etc. Michael Jackson may have been the source of dismissing Thomas Hardy's and Gale's Prize Old Ale as closer to English Barleywine. In his *The New World Guide to Beer* (1988), Mr. Jackson questions: "should they be regarded as Old Ales or Barley Wines?...Eldridge Pope...in style has more in common with the Barley Wines."

Many years later, Ray Daniels did a most extensive job of explaining the Old Ale style in *Designing Great Beers* (1996). Mr. Daniels asserts that there should be several sub-categories for Old Ale to include the Old Peculiar/winter warmer interpretation as well as one for Strong Old Ale, where the Thomas Hardy and Gales examples belong.

The AHA homebrew judging style guidelines (until 1999) had Old Ale with a top gravity of 1.075. The BJCP2004 style guidelines have a top gravity of "1.090+". Oddly, in the BJCP2008 guidelines, there is no "+" after the top gravity of 1.090 for Old Ale.

In 1993, I set out to make a clone of Thomas Hardy where I could only go on my taste buds. Information was limited, but I learned that Thomas Hardy only used Pale Ale malt. For my first stab, I used 15# of Pale Ale malt and a variety of hops to bitter. After a full sparge, the wort was boiled down from 10 gallons to 3.5 gallons. It took nearly 6 hours because I only had an electric stove! I was only one year into brewing and hadn't bothered with things such as hydrometers, so the OG and FG are unknown. The beer placed 1st in strong beer category of Wine's Inc Beerfest 1993 with a 40! It had all the Thomas Hardy characteristics except it was flat as a board!

Following this, my Old Ale was brewed each year afterwards. Emphasis was placed on learning how to consistently carbonate without blowing-up bottles. What came out of this

was a base recipe (below) which has won more awards than any other of my favorite styles which I brew. Some of these Old Ales have advanced to the second round of the AHA nationals with nothing to show in the second round. Second round judge comments included the all too familiar "better as an English Barleywine". In the 1996 NHC, I entered my vintage 1995 in both English Barleywine and Old Ale. The First round results: English Barleywine 31, Old Ale 45. This was repeated with my 1996 vintage ringing in at English Barleywine 30, Old Ale 42.

In 1997, I had a discussion with Charlie Papazian at the National Homebrew Conference in Cleveland. At his request, I then sent him an email discussion of why Old Ale needed to include Thomas Hardy examples. It was a short 3-page dissertation. However, it was not until 1999 that the AHA style guidelines were updated to include 1.125 as the OG for Old Ale.

My old ale vintage 1997 was flat as a board. I saved the beer hoping that there would one day be bubbles. In 2002, I used an idea that Ray Daniels described in the chapter on Old Ale for a winning brew. In the mid-1800's, it was important to have Old Ale with aged characteristics to sell well at the pubs. What was done to "instantly season" young Old Ale was to blend it with a portion of aged Old Ale. Remembering my flat 1997, I blended 10% of it with a portion of my 2002 vintage. In 2003, this mixture won a silver medal in the AHA NHC as a historical interpretation of Old Ale á la Mr. Daniels' book. Every year after this has a portion blended with the '97. My 2004+97 won first place at the SODZ BBF2010.

Is Thomas Hardy any good after 25 years? I can say definitely yes. My good friend in Worcester England's mother passed away in 2002. When cleaning up her home, he found two bottles of Thomas Hardy vintage 1978 which must have been left from when his father had died - 22 years earlier. He sent me one of these! Sitting on my hands until early 2004 (to make sure it was fully 25 years old), I had a tasting which featured this beer. It was as smooth as black velvet cloth gliding across the tongue, it had characteristics like a fine tawny port (Graham's 20 year), flat as a board (judges take note!) and delicious. Later that year, I visited my friend while in England to thank him for the tasting. He pulled out the other bottle and we had another tasting!

Here is the recipe which scored 45 in the AHA National Homebrew Competition in 1996. It was 12 months old when judged.

Recipe: vintage 1995 "Toxic Brew"

15# Pale Ale Malt

1.5# Light Brown Sugar

Hops:

Boil 60 mins: 1oz Northern Brewer  $\alpha$ 8.2%, 0

1oz Tetnager  $\alpha$ 4.5,

1.5oz Fuggles  $\alpha$ 4.0%,

1oz East Kent Goldings  $\alpha$ 5.0%

Finish 3 mins: 2 oz Fuggles  $\alpha$ 4.0%

Dry hop: 2 oz East Kent Goldings  $\alpha$ 5.0%

Irish Moss: 1 tsp

Yeast: 1028 London ale

SG: 1.124

FG: 1.039

IBU: 98 (estimate)

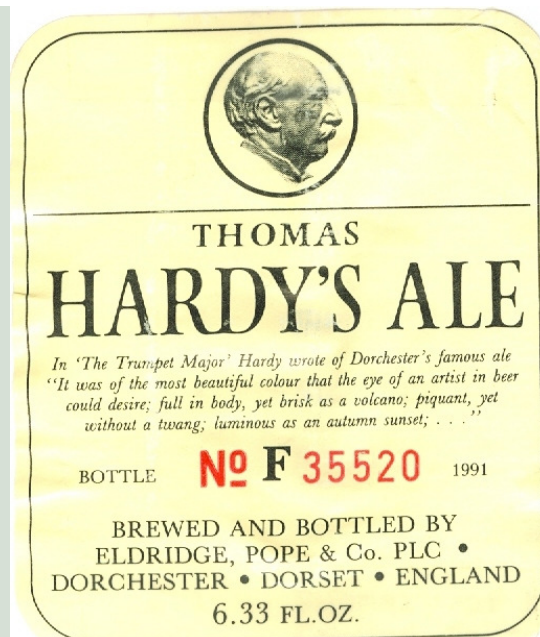
Volume: 3.75 gallons as pitching

Fermentation: primary 8 days, pitch 1028 yeast  
and dry hops into secondary,  
secondary fermentation 14 days,  
tertiary fermentation 28 days

Prime 1/4 cup table sugar plus 1028 yeast



Silver medal from 2003  
AHA NHC for Historical Interpretation of Seasoned  
Old Ale



Above: Label from 1991 TH which  
started it all! The TH bottles were all  
marked with serial numbers in red.

Below: Bottles of Thomas Hardy's  
vintage 1978!





# How to Make Your Old Ale Older

There's an Italian proverb that old wine and friends improve with age. I think a lot of things improve with age, which is contrary to the typical effects of time. How about Clint Eastwood's career? I love *High Plains Drifter*, but *Unforgiven* won 4 Oscars. Time can add depth and complexity, as you can see eating a slice of fresh gouda next to a slice of aged Rembrandt. But I think that when most people think of something that ages well, they think of wine. It's true, some wines get better with age, but so do some beers! Like many other beer geeks, I have a few bottles of Barleywine and Russian Imperial Stout stashed in my basement, but some people take it a bit more seriously. I asked three known cellarmasters to share their thoughts on aging and storing beer.

## Why did you start cellaring beer?

Steve Huckaby: I started cellaring beer as I started to learn more about the styles that would benefit from age. I wanted to have them after they had a chance to develop into what the guidelines said they should be. I also started aging just out of curiosity for how the beer changed over time.

Kurt Heidtman: It started by accident—I had a beer fridge that I normally kept stocked and sometimes the beers in the back would get pretty old. Then, in 2005 I also went into training—I had a beer trip to Belgium planned and didn't really like many Belgian beers. So I started buying a lot of Belgians and pushed the beer fridge to its limit! I eventually outgrew the original beer fridge and started storing beers in the basement where the beers see relatively little turn over (some beers have been down there now for about 6 years).

Shawn Page: Not sure, really, but one event did bring to light how much beer changes/improves over time. In 2005 I went on a beer journey with an old friend in PA, during which we consumed many tasty and special brews, including Rogue Imperial Stout. It was delicious, but drinking much of it was difficult due to the high alcohol and huge body of the beer. Several weeks later I received a call from him, and I had apparently left a bottle of it at his house. A full year later we met up and drank that bottle - the alcohol heat had faded significantly, and it was much more drinkable. At that time I didn't know much about the science behind beer, but this experience brought to light the positive changes that can occur in beer over time. 6-pack shops in East PA will often have craft brews that have been in



*A rare look into Kurt Heidtman's cellar...*

their shop for years, so much of the aged beer that I have now was already old at the time of purchase.

### **Do you have a dedicated space or do you just keep it with the rest of your beer?**

SH: I have two places where I age beer. One is some shelves down in the basement where it stays relatively cool and consistent temperature. The other is a wine fridge we bought specifically for aging beer in. It's kept in the low 50s. Beers that are rare, that I've deemed "special" for some reason, or that I plan to age for a very long time go in the fridge. The others go in the basement.

The beer in my fridge are most likely to be had for some occasion. But they tend to be things like Thomas Hardy, Samiclaus, etc. so they will be in there for a really long time usually. The ones down stairs aren't as special usually, so I might have them just because I feel like it. I'll pay attention to the beer style vs. how old it is and try not to keep things for too long and past their prime. That's most likely with some of the funk beers that need some time for the full character to develop but then may start to taper off or with styles you wouldn't traditionally age for a long time like a big IPA or an IIPA

KH: Yes. After I outgrew the original beer fridge I kept excess supply in a dark corner of the basement. However, the temperature there ranged from about 63 to 68 degrees which was too warm and I had some bottles go south. That was when I bought a second beer fridge. About a year and half ago, I started talking to Frank and he mentioned a walk in cooler he was trying to procure and that triggered an idea!! I was in the process of finishing my basement anyway, so my son and I built a cold room! We framed out a nice 8' x 10' area, insulated all the walls and ceiling. Then, with a little creativity and support from my friends (special thanks to Shawn for helping me solve my cooling unit dilemma!), I now have 76 square feet of beer storage at a comfortable 49 degrees!

SP: There's an area under my stairs that has a concrete floor, and I store anything meant for aging under these stairs. Sitting the beers directly on the concrete floor keeps them at a relatively cool, constant temperature. I keep the ones that I really want to age in the back (near the bottom stair) behind some brewing equipment, where they are difficult to get at due to the slope of the ceiling. This way if I'm too buzzed to appreciate an old beer, I'm likely too buzzed to get at it!

### **How do you know when it's time to enjoy a particular bottle?**

SH: One really important aspect of aging beer for me is that I try not to age anything blindly. Meaning, I hate to buy a beer that I'm going to just put on a shelf and not get back to for some undetermined amount of time. So we have a saying "One to drink and one to keep." I'll try to buy at least two of something I know I'm going to age so I can enjoy one of them



now. Or, I'll buy one to drink now to make the decision if it's worth buying more to age. Certainly that can be expensive, so cost and availability weigh into how much I do that. But I feel like I gotta have one now even if it is before when it's supposed to be really good.

KH: It is really trial and error. Some beers are known to last for a long time and others for less. I usually buy several bottles of a beer at once. I will have one right away and based on that, speculate if it may get better with age. If it is hot, boozy, or one particular flavor dominates the others, then I may try to age some of it. I try to taste the beer over time to assess if it is getting better or has reached its peak. In the end, if you wait too long, the beer will decline and then you know (too late!) the optimal age. However, this is good information for later batches of the beer.

SP: It's a lot of guesswork, but as a general rule higher alcohol = wait longer. A lot of the bigger beers available in Ohio (less than 12%ABV) hit their peak in only a year or two, while the Sam Adams Triple Bock is 13 to 16 years old now and doesn't seem to have hit its peak yet (at 17%ABV, will it ever?).

### **Which styles do you like to age?**

SH: I age the "big" styles that most people probably age e.g. RIS, Old Ales, the bigger Belgians etc. I also keep beers that are anniversary ales and/or intentionally brewed to be vertical. So the obvious example there is Vertical Epic, but I also have verticals of the Weyerbacher, Avery, and Stone anniversary series. I also will age beers that are seasonally brewed so I can compare them from year to year. Examples of that might be Hopslam, Blackout Stout, etc.

KH: I have experimented with many styles, including some that you may not expect. I prefer to age barley wines, imperial stouts, old ales (duh!), scotch ales, spice/holiday ales and Belgians. However, I have also aged IPAs, wheat ales, lagers, bocks/dopplebocks, and fruit beer. I almost always age at least a little of every home brew batch too, just to see what will happen over time.

SP: Imperial stouts and English barleywines age especially well. It tends to mellow the heat and allow the individual, separate aspects of the beer meld a little bit. And of course anything brewed with Brettanomyces will go from excellent to divine with a few years of funkification. When it comes to big IPAs and small Weizens, drink them now! Age doesn't seem to do these styles any favors.

### **Do particular foods pair well with aged beer?**

SH: I usually don't have food with aged beer in terms of a full meal. I'll have them with either a dessert or some cheese, but the majority are had on their own. I know food pairings

can be/is a big deal to a lot of people and I do pair quite often. However, for the aged ones I usually just want to have the beer in and of itself.

KH: Absolutely. I love big, hoppy IPAs with pizza! (OK, I like IPAs with about anything!) Big stouts go well with chocolate. I like Trappist ales and barley wines with good cheeses too.

SP: 50 cent burritos pair very well with an aged \$15 beer. Not that it brings out any special aspects of the beer, but it shows that I have my priorities in order. If you want something better than burritos, try pairing an old barleywine with an acidic cheese such as a sharp cheddar or even a stilton. The acidity will help cut through the residual sugar in the barleywine and bring out flavors you didn't know were there.

### **Does any particular bottle stand out in your memory?**

SH: For my 30th birthday I had a 15 year old Thomas Hardy that was just sublime. It went down so smoothly and with such rich flavor that it was over before I knew it. I also particularly remember one RIS that I had kept for about 5 years. It was the first I had ever brewed and saved some for aging and I was very happy with the results. The most memorable is the vertical series of Bigfoot we did at the Super Bowl party in 2009. We covered just about every year for more than a decade and it was fantastic to go through them all with some of the other club members.

KH: Many people laugh at this, but Unibroue made the holiday ale for Trader Joes. The 2005 holiday ale was good young, and I bought about a case. However, after a few months, it got better (but no more was available for sale). I still have a couple bottles of that 2005 batch, and it is still getting better. Unfortunately, the 2006 and 2007 batches were a different recipe—not as good—but I am hopeful that with a little more time, it may yet get to the 2005 batch!

SP: Many do, in both good and bad ways. An interesting and completely unexpected transformation was found in a 1984 Thomas Hardy's Ale. It still retained some of the original barleywine characteristics, but developed this huge acidic, sour-cherry, Flanders red character on top. It sounds odd, but it was delicious. I had the opportunity to try 10 year old Alaskan Smoked Porter last year at the rare beer festival, and 10 years did not do good things to that beer. Fishtank comes to mind.

A favorite aging beer of mine is the Stone RIS. Every year I buy two bottles of this. One is put back to age, and the other is enjoyed in a head-to-head tasting with last year's release. It is incredible what just one year will do to this beer. All the harshness from the roasted grains and high alcohol disappears, and a nice chocolate note comes through.

# Confessions of a Commercial Brewer

By Rick Seemueller

My wife is a passionate Genealogist. She has spent countless hours tramping through graveyards in search of that one headstone that will unequivocally confirm the date of some ancestor's death. Watching her work has long-since convinced me that genealogists are the real historians of the world. No fanfare, no accolades, just pure personal satisfaction.

Likewise, I confess that Home Brewers are the real Brewers of the world. They brew whatever they want. They experiment however they want, all just to share their latest creation. No fanfare, no accolades, just pure personal satisfaction.

I am the senior Brewer at the Anheuser-Busch Columbus Brewery. Working in this industry for 37 years has been a source of great joy. As a commercial Brewer, I work in the *business* of brewing. At Budweiser, we brew the beers that most people want. And we brew in tremendous, mind-boggling magnitude; about 200,000 bbls per week in Columbus alone. We brew with cutting-edge consistency, as it is no easy task ensuring that Budweiser tastes the same from all 12 breweries. *We even count yeast cells for crissake! And...only the live ones!...targeting about 16,000,000 cells per ml of wort.*



*My "brew sculpture". I have two of these at work.*

I know that many SODZ members are not fans of the light lagers we produce, and I understand that. It's what we do, and we do it very well. But if you don't like sea food, the best pan-seared scallops will not impress you.

*(Continued on page 18)*

On first meeting some of the SODZ folks, I confess that I was a tad jealous. First, I quickly realized that many of their home brewed batches were nothing short of remarkable! Second, I learned that they talk a lot about...well...beer! The more they talk about beer, the more their blood pressure rises with excitement. They talk about the latest beer they *really* enjoyed and *where* they enjoyed it. They talk beer styles. They talk malt and malt varieties, hops and hop varieties, and yeast possibilities. And they really like to talk about craft brewers, as if craft brewers had rock-star status!

By comparison, I also confess that when many of my “mega brewer” buddies got together, they would talk about their golf game, or about their new wide-screen TV, the latest episode of “Desperate Housewives”, or who’s been promoted...or worse yet, who’s been fired.

The American Craft Beer Movement has changed that. I venture to say that the single most impactful and enjoyable aspect of working for over 3 ½ decades in the brewing industry has been the inception, growth, and continuing evolution of the Craft Beer Movement. At work, it is much easier for me to find colleagues who talk about the latest beer they *really* enjoyed and *where* they enjoyed it. We talk beer styles, malt varieties, and hop varieties. And we envy and admire the craft brewers, as if they had rock-star status! Best yet, we brew a growing variety of both ale and lager styles. Ten years ago, I never would have imagined a *Michelob Rye PA* !

Which gets me back to Home Brewers as the real Brewers of the world. Their dedication to their craft is awe-inspiring....

... a Vic Gonzales...growing his own hop plants, in his own backyard, training them up supports of his own construction.

...a Frank Barrickman...spending countless hours dedicated to BJCP classes, administering exams, and facilitating competitions.

...a Bill Bopp...Facebooking...excited that he was able to brew twice in one week. Or about how his wife came home from a garage sale with a kegerator in tow.

I could go on, and on.

Apparently, this is quite contagious. I am in constant contact with...are you ready?... *the “Anheuser-Busch Home Brewers Group”* in St. Louis. They brew beer all day at work, then their own beer at night and on weekends! They sponsor on-site events. They have their own competitions. They did a formal presentation to the St. Louis Master Brewers Association of America. They even have their own company logo!

(Continued on page 19)



I am now “eyeballing” retirement, and reflecting upon many memorable moments. One keeper: the AB owned Saint Louis Cardinals made it to the World Series in, (I think) 1982. In our lunchroom, AB set up the best TVs available at that time, rolled in kegs of cold Budweiser, carried in...a canoe...full of iced-down shrimp. We ate, we drank, and we cheered, watching the World Series...at work! For 37 years, I worked around such industry icons as Budweiser, the A & Eagle, the Clydesdales, and three generations of Busch leaders: August Busch Jr. (Gussie), August Busch III (Auggie), August Busch IV. My future will be embellished by tapping into the gift that is the Craft Beer Movement and the cornucopia of opportunities that await me starting over as a Home Brewer. One of my favorite quotes:

*“You can learn new things at any time in your life if you’re willing to be a beginner. If you actually learn to like being a beginner, the whole world opens up to you.”*



## Sodz Info

The Scioto, Olentangy and Darby Zymurgists, Inc. (SODZ) meets on the third Monday of the month at various locations in Central Ohio.

Meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. Membership dues are \$15 per year and are renewable during the member's anniversary month of joining SODZ.

Members receive *The Grain Mill*, the club's monthly newsletter. Articles submitted for the newsletter should be received no later than 10 days prior to the next meeting date.

Articles should be submitted by email, preferably in MS Word with graphics in jpg format to [ben.siefker@gmail.com](mailto:ben.siefker@gmail.com)

## Club Officers

*President*

**Vic Gonzales**

[vicgonzales@sbcglobal.net](mailto:vicgonzales@sbcglobal.net)

*Vice President*

**Scott Taylor**

[estaylor3304@yahoo.com](mailto:estaylor3304@yahoo.com)

*Secretary/Newsletter Editor*

**Ben Siefker**

[ben.siefker@gmail.com](mailto:ben.siefker@gmail.com)

*Treasurer*

**Steve Huckaby**

[huckabrew@gmail.com](mailto:huckabrew@gmail.com)

*Membership Director*

**Kris Huckaby**

[kristen.huckaby@gmail.com](mailto:kristen.huckaby@gmail.com)

## Treasurer Information

Dues may be mailed to:  
Steve Huckaby, Treasurer  
3190 St. Bernard Circle  
Columbus, Ohio 43232

## Membership Director

Membership Application  
may be mailed to:  
Kris Huckaby,  
Membership Director  
3190 St. Bernard Circle  
Columbus, Ohio 43232

## Membership Application

### SODZ Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Homebrewer yes/no \_\_\_\_\_ How Long \_\_\_\_\_

**Make Checks payable to: SODZ**

Bring this application to the meeting or send it to:

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3190 St. Bernard Circle

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<input type="checkbox"/> MAR - Imperial Witbier	201
<input type="checkbox"/> APR - BBL-Aged Barleywine	220
<input type="checkbox"/> MAY - Verano Mexicano Cerveza	300
<input type="checkbox"/> JUN - Blackberry Wheat	321
<input type="checkbox"/> JUL - Icebox Eisbock	401
<input type="checkbox"/> AUG - Over & Back Double IPA	420
<input type="checkbox"/> SEP - Oktoberfest	500
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<input type="checkbox"/> JUN Mark's Hard Cranberry	900
<input type="checkbox"/> JUL Homebrew Winner	925
<input type="checkbox"/> AUG Froch w/Honey Ale	975
<input type="checkbox"/> SEP Smoked Porter	1000
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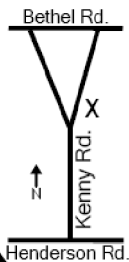
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