



The Barleycorn Press

Monthly Newsletter Published by the Green Mountain Mashers of Vermont



February 2008

Volume 19 Issue 2

The Brewer's Dream By Marty Bonneau

The last four days of November were like a brewer's dream trip for me. I was able to go to Chicago and attend a Siebel Institute course called, "Start Your Own Brewery." Along with about thirty other attendees from across the country, I was able to spend my days in a conference room inside the famous Goose Island Brewpub listening to some of the industries best and brightest discuss the good, the bad, and the ugly of professional brewery operations. The nights were a gathering of people at various local breweries, restaurants, and bars discussing dreams of opening brewpubs, microbreweries, and even some brew on premises locations. The evenings seemed to be especially good since we were shown

around, chauffeured and entertained by those people who had been giving the presentations during the day, such as Ray Daniels, Randy Mosher, John Mallet, and John Hall, to name a few.

The course itself was spread over three days of 9-5 in the classroom with a laid back feel to it. Although it was full of a lot of information and even homework, we were able to go into the Goose Island Brewpub and try any pints of beer that interested us, and bring it back to the seminar throughout the day, as part of our "training," (all inclusive). Topics were very detailed and covered many areas, such as business plan development, site selection and real estate issues, demographics, planning and

construction, and marketing. At times things were also broken into sub topics which pertained to restaurant issues or brewhouse issues.

Each day had a segment called "Entrepreneurial Voices," which brought in speakers from all areas, such as brewery owners, head brewers on a Q&A panel, distributors, yeast manufacturers, tax and trade bureau reps, ... At the end of the day we had a special room at the brewpub we could use for the beginning of happy hour to plan our nighttime strategy. I had the good fortune to be staying at a hotel around the corner from the Rock Bottom

Brewery and Restaurant, and being able to spend the day in the Goose

Island Brewing Co.

The beers were excellent, and the diversity was quite impressive. From fifteen selections on tap at Rock Bottom, including a Kölsch and a Saison which were terrific, to the award winning beers at Goose Island, like the Honkers and Summertime ales, to the hyper-hopped beers at Piece Brewing Co., you could find a high quality beer to match your style.

All in all, I was able to come home feeling much more knowledgeable about the industry, with the information and resources to follow up on what was presented. And a few

souvenirs! (although not as many as I came home from Ireland with this past summer).

For those who are curious, the course fee was around \$1100.00 (hotel & food not included).

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Editor's Note
GO PATS

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Dues are the usual \$20/year from February on. Checks made out to "Green Mountain Mashers" are preferred but cash is accepted.

PAID AS OF 1/11/08:

Nancy Boldt, Jerry Gormley, Andy Ferko, Ruth Miller, Darell Whitaker, Tim Cropley, Andy McMahon, Jerry McMahon, John Leak, "Sweet" Lew Greitzer, Erik Sanblom, Dan Hament, Ernie Kelley, Monk, Dave Clark, Andy & Terry Hunt, Brian Werneke, & Anne & Matt Whyte

Staff Box



The Barleycorn Press is a monthly publication of the Green Mountain Mashers Homebrew Club. The Barleycorn Press appears in the final week of each month. **Contributions are due by the 25th of the month of publication or two Thursdays prior to the next meeting (which ever comes first).** Please send contributions via e-mail (preferable) or send on a CD-Rom (hard copy as a last resort) to:

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Note: The yearly dues of \$20 should be paid by the end of January. Please mail your check or money order made out to the "Green Mountain Mashers" to Treasurer Anne Whyte at the following address:

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<http://www.mashers.org>

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Next Meeting - Feb 4th at Andy Ferko and Mags Bonham's Place in Bolton

The next meeting of the Green Mountain Mashers will take place on Monday, February 4th at the home of Andy Ferko and Mags Bonham. Be there by 7:30pm if at all possible.

The agenda for the meeting is:

- 1) As always reminder for dues.
- 2) GMHB comp updates
 - Confirm the KofC has been booked.
 - Determine Steward & judge coordinators. John Gallagher may have volunteered for one of the coordinators, not sure which or if he wanted to be a co-coordinator.

3) Trub trek. Ask Monk if he's looked into NY. We need someone to be in charge of it.

4) Sap Run & March meeting. Remind 3/3 Sunday (3/10 backup). See if there are any updates from Brian Werneke.

5) April's Hoops & Hops meeting has changed to Dan Hament's.

6) Ask if anyone is going to Boston mid-Feb to drop off entries for Worts competition. Anne & Matt will have entries (store is drop off site).

7) Reminder of Sierra Clone challenge.

Directions:

RT 2 from Richmond or Waterbury to the Bolton Valley Access Road (road to the ski area). The driveway is up the hill about 3/4 mi. You will pass the ski barn and round a curve. The driveway will then be the next on the left. Go up driveway, plenty of free parking at the top around the circle.

Phone # is 434-6165



Don't forget to bring some snacks & 3 homemade beverages to the meeting. If you don't have any homemade bevs, Please bring 3 good/unique commercial beers.

Green Mountain Masher Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Information
2/4/2008	February Meeting, Andy Ferko's, Bolton	Andy Ferko, 434-6165
3/9/2008 or 3/16/08	March Meeting/Sap Run/Club Brew, Brian Werneke's, Milton	Brian Werneke, bwerneke@gmail.com
4/7/2008	Hoops & Hops/Masher Challenge at Dan Hament's	Dan and Laura Hament 434-5098
5/5/2008	May Mtg at Bob Genter's, Jericho	Bob Genter (h) 899-5160 (email) genterb@together.net
6/?/2008	GMM June Mtg - Friday night BBQ - Grillables and pot luck dishes made with beer. Last meeting until Fall (September?).	Monk & Linda Evans' or Andy & Terry Hunt's

Please contact Tim at 244-1683 or t_cropley@yahoo.com to add items to the Masher Calendar

Minutes of the January Mtg by Erik Sandblom & Todd Metcalf

The January meeting was held at Anne & Matt Whyte's house in Essex Junction.

The meeting started off with reminder for dues. Dues will be going up to \$20 beginning February.

The Green Mountain Mashers Homebrew competition: We have not reserved the Knights of Columbus Hall. There is a need for steward and judge coordinator. John Gallagher will help with being one of the coordinators with

help.

The BJCP exam is scheduled for Jan 20. Deposits were collected. Monk mentioned that BJCP did not honor his tasting scores alone without the rest of the test.

The Trub Trek still needs someone to be in charge. Monk did not have a chance to look into New York. He was too busy digging wells.

The sap run is still planned in March. Sap is available in Milton when it starts running. There was discussion of a possible club brew. The water from making sap is low in minerals, which could be used for a pils. Matt Whyte pointed out that European hops (ie saaz) would be scarce. The tentative data for the March meeting would be 3/3 (Sunday) with a backup of 3/10.

Maybe in conjunction with the sap run.

Andy Ferko will be hosting the Febrewary meeting. He's hoping the luge will be running

A reminder was given to keep lagering your maibocks for the April Masher's Challenge. The April meeting was planned to be at Todd Metcalf's house, but Dan Hament also mentioned he could host. After the meeting, Todd & Dan decided to have it at Dan's house.

Also there was a reminder for this year's clone challenge. Last years winner (Todd) wanted to make sure he wouldn't be the only entrant for this challenge.

The WORT's competition is 3/1/08.

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(Minutes Continued from page 3)

Vermont Homebrew Supply is a drop off site. Anne & Matt are looking for someone that will be going to the Boston area mid Feb that can take down entries.

The masses realized the President's lack

of experience and power so the meeting descended into mayhem and was adjourned.



To my friends who enjoy a glass of wine/beer/or liquorand those who don't.

As Ben Franklin said: In wine there is wisdom, in beer there is freedom, in water there is bacteria. In a number of carefully controlled trials, scientists have demonstrated that if we drink 1 liter of water each day, at the end of the year we would have absorbed more than 1 kilo of Escherichia coli, (E. coli) - bacteria found in feces. In other words, we are consuming 1 kilo of poop.

However, we do NOT run that risk when drinking wine & beer (or tequila, rum, whiskey or other liquor) because alcohol has to go through a purification process of boiling, filtering and/or fermenting.

Remember: Water = Poop, Wine = Health

Therefore, it's better to drink wine and talk stupid, than to drink water and be full of shit.

There is no need to thank me for this valuable information: I'm doing it as a public service.

March Meeting Info - Sap, Sugar & Brew

Once again, we will be hosting the March meeting at my in-law's farm in Milton. For those interested, we will also be doing some brewing – a club brew of sorts – so bring your equipment, ingredients, and good brew karma. Since the evaporator usually fires up early in the afternoon, let's gather at noon to conduct the meeting and official business. Of course bring some brew and snacks to share. I'll see if Dave and Willow would like to join us again for beer and cheese pairings. We'll then head out to the sugarhouse for a tour and set up for brewing. Once the evaporator fires up, there will be plenty of pure water from the RO and 190 degree condensate available for mashing, brewing, and clean-up. As well there will be sap, sap concentrate, and syrup available for experimenting.

The target date is Sunday, March 9th, at Noon. If the conditions will not be conducive to sugaring or brewing, we are setting a "rain date" of Sunday, March 16th, again at Noon. The 16th will be "rain or shine", and we will notify folks by e-mail on Friday the 7th of a go or no-go for the 9th.

If you want to take sap or syrup home to brew with, we will make available, at no charge, "raw" maple sap from the bulk tanks to those who want to try a sap beer (limit 10 gallons per person).

You will want to either freeze the sap or brew with it within a day or so, unless you are shooting for a sour mash... That early in the season, the sap should be in the 1.5% to 2% sugar range, and we'll take hydrometer readings when we draw sap to confirm what you'll be starting with.

If you prefer syrup to brew with (or just to take home for pancakes...), it should be available in quarts and half-gallons, \$12 and \$20 respectively. Yes, demand, costs and prices are up substantially from last year – most sugarmakers have already pre-sold their entire 2008 crop. Please e-mail me in advance what you think you might want at bwerneke@gmail.com



Trappist Command: Thou Shalt Not Buy Too Much of Our Beer

Monks at St. Sixtus Battle Resellers of Prized Brew; Brother Joris Plays Hardball
By JOHN W. MILLER
November 29, 2007; Page A1

The Wall Street Journal Online
November 29, 2007



ESTVLETEREN, Belgium --

The Trappist monks at St. Sixtus monastery have taken vows against

riches, sex and eating red meat. They speak only when necessary. But you can call them on their beer phone.

Monks have been brewing Westvleteren beer at this remote spot near the French border since 1839. Their brew, offered in strengths up to 10.2% alcohol by volume, is among the most highly prized in the world. In bars from Brussels to Boston, and online, it sells for more than \$15 for an 11-ounce bottle -- 10 times what the monks ask -- if you can get it.

For the 26 monks at St. Sixtus,

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however, success has brought a spiritual hangover as they fight to keep an insatiable market in tune with their life of contemplation.

The monks are doing their best to resist getting bigger. They don't advertise and don't put labels on their bottles. They haven't increased production since 1946. They sell only from their front gate. You have to make an appointment and there's a limit: two, 24-bottle cases a month. Because scarcity has created a high-priced gray market online, the monks search the net for resellers and try to get them to stop.

"We sell beer to live, and not vice versa," says Brother Joris, the white-robed brewery director. Beer lovers, however, seem to live for Westvleteren.

When Jill Nachtman, an American living in Zurich, wanted a taste recently, she called the hot line everybody calls the beer phone. After an hour of busy signals, she finally got

through and booked a time. She drove 16 hours to pick up her beer. "If you factor in gas, hotel -- and the beer -- I spent \$20 a bottle," she says.

Until the monks installed a new switchboard and set up a system for appointments two years ago, the local phone network would sometimes crash under the weight of calls for Westvleteren. Cars lined up for miles along the flat one-lane country road that leads to the red brick monastery, as people waited to pick up their beer.

"This beer is addictive, like chocolate," said Luc Lannoo, an unemployed, 36-year-old Belgian from Ghent, about an hour away, as he loaded two cases of Westvleteren into his car at the St. Sixtus gate one morning. "I have to come every month."

Two American Web sites, Rate Beer and Beer Advocate, rank the strongest of Westvleteren's three products, a dark creamy beer known as "the 12," best in the world, ahead of beers including

Sweden's Närke Kaggen Stormaktsporter and Minnesota's Surlly Darkness. "No question, it is the holy grail of beers," says Remi Johnson, manager of the Publick House, a Boston bar that has Westvleteren on its menu but rarely in stock.

Some beer lovers say the excitement over Westvleteren is hype born of scarcity. "It's a very good beer," says Jef van den Steen, a brewer and author of a book on Trappist monks and their beer published in French and Dutch. "But it reminds me of the movie star you want to sleep with because she's inaccessible, even if your wife looks just as good."

Thanks to the beer phone, there are no more lines of cars outside the monastery now. But production remains just 60,000 cases per year, while demand is as high as ever. Westvleteren has become almost impossible to find, even in the

specialist beer bars of Brussels and local joints around the monastery.

"I keep on asking for beer," says Christophe Colpaert, manager of "Café De Sportsfriend," a bar down the road from the monks. "They barely want to talk to me." On a recent day, a recorded message on the beer phone said St. Sixtus wasn't currently making appointments; the monks were fresh out of beer.

Increasing production is not an option, according to the 47-year-old Brother Joris, who says he abandoned a stressful career in Brussels for St. Sixtus 14 years ago. "It would interfere with our job of being a monk," he says.

Belgian monasteries like St. Sixtus started making beer in the aftermath of the French Revolution, which ended in 1799. The revolt's anti-Catholic purge had destroyed churches and abbeys in France and Belgium. The monks needed cash to rebuild, and beer was lucrative.

Trappist is a nickname for the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance, who set up their own order in La Trappe, France, in the 1660s because they thought Cistercian monasteries were becoming too lax. The monks at St. Sixtus sleep in a dormitory and stay silent in the cloisters, though they speak if they need to. Today, though, Trappists are increasingly famous for making good beer.

Seven monasteries (six are Belgian, one, La Trappe, is Dutch) are allowed to label their beer as Trappist. In 1996, they set up an alliance to protect their brand. They retain lawyers in Washington and Brussels ready to sue brewers who try use the word Trappist. Every few months, Brother Joris puts on street clothes and takes the train to Brussels to meet with fellow monks to share sales and business data, and plot strategy.

The monks know their beer has become big business. That's fine with the brothers at Scourmont, the monastery in southern Belgium that makes the

Chimay brand found in stores and bars in Europe and the U.S. They've endorsed advertising and exports, and have sales exceeding \$50 million a year. They say the jobs they create locally make the business worthy. Other monasteries, which brew names familiar to beer lovers such as Orval, Westmalle and Rochefort, also are happy their businesses are growing to meet demand.

Not so at St. Sixtus. Brother Joris and his fellow monks brew only a few days a month, using a recipe they've kept to themselves for around 170 years.

Two monks handle the brewing. After morning prayer, they mix hot water with malt. They add hops and sugar at noon. After boiling, the mix, sufficient to fill roughly 21,000 bottles, is fermented for up to seven days in a sterilized room. From there the beer is pumped to closed tanks in the basement where it rests for between five weeks and three months. Finally, it is bottled

(Trappist Command Continued on page 6)

(Trappist Command Continued from page 5)
and moved along a conveyor belt into waiting cases. Monks at St. Sixtus used to brew by hand, but nothing in the rules of the order discourages technology, so they've plowed profits into productivity-enhancing equipment. St. Sixtus built its current brewhouse in 1989 with expert advice from the company then known as Artois Breweries.

In the 1980s, the monks even debated whether they should continue making something from which people can get drunk. "There is no dishonor in brewing beer for a living. We are monks of the West: moderation is a key word in our asceticism," says Brother Joris in a separate, email interview. "We decided to stick to our traditional skills instead of breeding rabbits."

The result is a brew with a slightly sweet, heavily alcoholic, fruity aftertaste.

One day recently, the wiry, sandy-haired Brother Joris returned to his office in the monastery after evening prayers. He flipped on his computer and went online to hunt for resellers and ask them to desist. "Most of the time, they agree to withdraw their offer," he says. Last year, St. Sixtus filed a complaint with the government against two companies that refused -- BelgianFood.com, a Web site that sells beer, cheese, chocolate and other niche products, and Beermania, a Brussels beer shop that also sells online. Both offer Westvleteren at around \$18 a bottle.

"I'm not making a lot of money and I pay my taxes," says BelgianFood.com owner Bruno Dourcy. "You can only buy two cases at once, you know." Mr. Dourcy makes monthly two-hour car trips from his home in eastern Belgium. "Seek the Kingdom of God first, and all these things will be given to you," counters Brother Joris, quoting from the Bible, adding that it refers only to

things you really need. "So if you can't have it, possibly you do not really need it."

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