



The RUBBER CHICKEN



NEWSLETTER OF THE PRIMETIME BREWERS

March 2002

March's meeting to be held @Robert Thomas Brewery Thursday the 21st

March Meeting

March 21st, 2002

7:00pm Social half hour and prep
7:30pm Club Business
Extract Beer Evaluation

This month's meeting is at:
Robert Thomas Brewing
2600 Patterson SE
Grand Rapids, MI

Take I-96 to the 28th Street West(Airport) Exit. Take 28th west to Patterson St. (Hilton Hotel). Turn right/north. About half a mile, max., turn right on Starr, then immediately left into RTB parking lot. RTB is the suite closest to Patterson.



February meeting recap

- In attendance: 26 people, 4 guests.
- Review of previous meeting's minutes
- There are still PTB's hats and shirts available
- Nate is doing all sorts of new things with their small system down at Founders. Including a barley wine that is aging for 1 year.
- The club is changing the monthly styles. August is now club only American Lager from May, October is a Brown Ale or darker extract beer and December is a holiday ale that won't be judged.
- Jim Verlinde found mention that there is going to be a reprint of the 1852 edition of the Complete Practical Brewers. Copies are being sold at \$25 each.
- Mike handed out copies from Lee's Priceless Recipes.
- Porters were collected in between the February and March meeting for the club only competition.
- Mike Wilson donated some kegs.
- Adjourned for the competition where everyone took a few minutes to describe their beer and how it was brewed.

Remember the 2002 PTB Club dues are being collected.

Sponsor Discounts!

Many of our sponsors offer a 10% discount on brewing supplies, when you show them a Prime Time Brewers Membership Card, during a purchase. Look for this symbol on their advertisement:



February's Extract competition results

1	Dan Humphrey	Cream Ale	309.5
2	Chris Sheridan	CAP	309
3	Jeff Carlson	APA	296
4	John A./Larry S.	Amber	286
5	Todd Weston	Barley Wine	264
6	Eric Fouch	American Wheat	262
7	Brian Rice	IPA	260
8	Paul Bierlein	Black Berry Wheat	257
9	Doc Mayne	Bitter	240
10	Dave Kilgore	American Wheat	230

2002 Club Results

Todd Weston	12
Dan Humphrey	7
Paul Bierlein	6
Chris Sheriden	4
Jeff Carlson	1

PTB Brewer of the Year

2000: Eric Fouch
2001: Jeff Carlson

Porter Results as judged by Nate and Jeremy at Founders

1. Todd Weston
2. Paul Bierlein
3. Dan Humphrey

Congratulations to the following club members for placing in competitions:

Jeff Carlson at Best of Brooklyn V Homebrew Competition

- 1st Place Cider
- 2nd Place American Pale Ale
- 2nd Place Dry Stout

John Applegarth took two thirds with his Saison

Dan Humphrey took 3rd in Kansas City with his Pale Ale



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Other Notables

- Things Beer will honor the PTB membership card and take 10% off of your bill.
- The club will judge this months IPA. In addition John and Bruce from Grand Rapids Brewing Company will judge them. The winner they choose will brew their beer at GRBC.
- It's back. Samichlaus Bier has returned. The 2000 version is in stores now.
- It's rhizome time! Bring some in and swap with other members.
- ****Bring your Porters for the club meeting Thursday****

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Hair Of The Frog

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Founders

Pale Ale, Breakfast Stout, Porter, Imperial Stout, Amber, Weizen Bier, Honey Rye Ale. Coming soon: Raspberry Wheat & Blueberry Ale

Grand Rapids Brewing Company

Silver Foam, River City Red, Lumberman Dark, Pale Ale. Seasonals: Imperial Stout & Chocolate Rye Stout

Big Buck

Red Bird Ale, Doc's ESB, Black River Stout, Buck Naked, Black 'N Berry, Big Buck Beer, Raspberry Wheat, Cherry Shandy, Antler Ale. Seasonals: Porter, Hazel Nut Porter & Winter Warmer.

Robert Thomas Brewery

King's Cross Porter, Par 5 Pale Ale, 4 Seasons Amber, Pandora, Forecaster Pale Ale. Coming soon: Eclipse and Roffey's Wheat Wave

BOB's House of Brews

Festive Amber, Vanderbob's Wheat, Pale Ale, Porter & B.O.B. Light. Seasonals: Scotch Ale

PTB 2002 Club Competition Styles

January- Scottish Ale
February- Pale Extract Competition
March- Porter
April- IPA
May- American Lager
June- Best of the Cellar
July
August- American Lager from May
September- Belgian Strong Ale
October- Brown Ale (extract brew)
November- Fruit and Spiced Beer
December- American CAP




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Growing Hops

Hops for beer making grow from the rhizomes of female hop plants. Hops grow vertically as one or more vines that spiral up a twine or anything else convenient. Depending on latitude, location, and variety, they sprout from about mid-March or April and grow through the summer and early fall. A single plant can easily grow 40 feet tall when it is mature but growth in the first year is usually much less. In most instances by the second or third year the plants will exhibit full growth. Height is very closely linked to the amount of sunshine the plant gets.

Hops grow best in full sun and you should pick a spot with the best possible southern exposure. Hops grow best in loose, well drained soil. Blended peat moss and sand make a good hops growing environment. In cases of poor soil drainage, it can be helpful to create a mound of soil a foot or so tall which will aid drainage.

Hops need lots of water. As they grow be sure to give them a very good soaking at least once a week. Mulch in the summer helps with weed control and also holds additional water. Composted cow manure has been reported to be an excellent well balanced fertilizer.

Once a bed has been prepared the rhizomes are planted about four inches below the soil surface with any obvious buds coming from the rhizome oriented to point upward toward the soil surface. After several inches or so the new vines should be thinned such that just the most healthy and vigorous three or four vines are left to continue growing. This will be an ongoing process as new shoots may show up later but the initial thinning is an important one.

As the vines grow over a foot tall they should be trained to grow up a twine. This can be done by twisting the vine around the line. You may have to repeat this for a few days before the vine gets the idea. Remember, like most plants, hops will "follow" the sun, and so have a natural tendency to wrap from east to west, or counter-clockwise looking up for a south facing plant. Expect the string or twine to hold a lot of weight as the vines grow tall. A 25+ foot plant may weigh 20+ pounds.

The hop cones are fully mature and ready for picking when two changes take place. First, immature hops have a damp, soft feel and when squeezed slightly tend to stay compressed. Mature hops feel more like paper, spring back when squeezed and feel noticeably lighter. The second key test is to pick an average example hop and cut it lengthwise down the center with a knife. When ready to pick the yellow powder will be a dark shade of yellow, like the stripes on a highway, and it will be pungent. If it's a light shade of yellow then chances are the hops are immature.


When ready to pick it is best to snip the stems of the cones with scissors or a knife to avoid jarring the hops and knocking lupulin powder out or worse, pulling the center of the cone out with the stem, causing a great loss of lupulin. Touching hops plants can cause skin irritation in some people. Gloves and long sleeves can help in this matter.

Just picked hops are roughly 80 percent water; if left alone they spoil rapidly. For proper storage most of the water is removed by drying. A good drying method is to lie the hops on a card or screen in an attic. Just a few hours during the heat of summer or a few hours more in cooler weather is enough to dry the hops. Use a before and after weighing and trial and error to try to achieve about 7-10 percent residual moisture after drying.

After drying, hops keep best at low temperatures and away from oxygen. Purging the canning jar of oxygen by blowing in carbon dioxide from a kegging system will also help prolong freshness. It's common to get 4 or 5 harvests per year by picking the biggest, most mature hops every two weeks or so as the flowers ripen. Patience and judgment are important since cones left on the vine too long turn brown and are obviously oxidized and spoiled, while immature hops have little lupulin in them.

At the end of the growing season when the leaves have fallen or turned brown, cut the vines at the surface of the ground. After cutting back the vines a layer of three or four inches of mulch and composted manure can be put over the exposed vines for insulation and nutrition during the winter.

Excerpts from Russ Gelinas & Peter Soper



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Brewing at Disney- Notes on his trip to Florida

My wife Julie and I went to Florida for a week in the sun. The weather could have been better but the beer was great. We found a great brewery at Disney - Big River Grille & Brewing Works. We knew it would have great beer, former G.R. brewer Rich Michaels had recently took over as brewer. We made three trips to the brewery and had great food and beer each time. They had 6 beers on tap and we tried 3, all were very good. We both liked the brown ale the best- their darkest beer. Rich is doing great and loves Florida and the brewery. He would like to have more room but what brewer wouldn't. If you find your self in Orlando be sure and stop in and say Hi to Rich. – **Dan H.**



Up and Coming Competitions

Chicago Beer Cup

<http://www.uswebaccess.net/boss/>
www.megsinet.net/~bethke/boss/index.html

Hurricane Blowoff 2002

<http://www.fotunecity.com/littleitaly/giotto/175>

5th Annual Slurp & Burp Open

<http://www.members.aol.com/slurpnburpor>

Knickerbocker Battle of the Brews 2002

<http://www.moonbrew.com/kbotb/>

TRASH XII

<http://www.trashhomebrewers.org/>

Crescent City Competition and Crawfish Boil

<http://hbd.org/crescent>

MCAB IV

<http://hdb.org/mcab>

AHA National Homebrew Competition

www.beertown.org

Best of Philly & Suburbs 2002

www.netaxs.com/~shady/hops/

D.E.A. Challenge

stinkeeee@yahoo.com

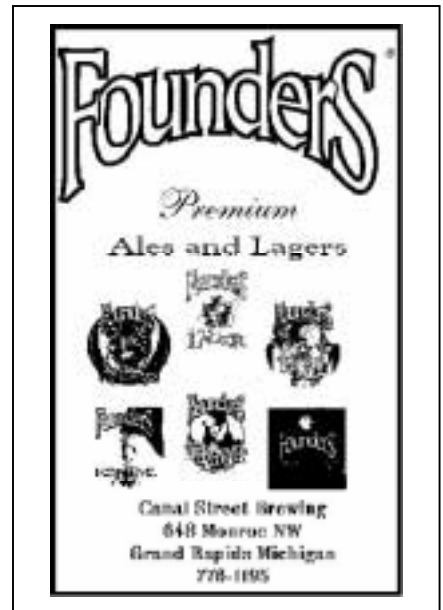
Upper Mississippi Mash-Out

www.mnbrewers.com/mashout

U.S. Open

<http://hbd.org/cbm/usopen/index.html>

For more competitions visit the AHA website at www.beertown.org



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MAY 4, 2002

<http://beertown.org/AHA/BIGBREW/>

This year there are two recipes to choose from, a Maibock provided by George Fix and an Old Ale provided by 2001 AHA Homebrewer of the Year Steve Jones.



Club Officers:

President: Jeff Carlson

Vice Pres: Charlie Cope

Treasurer: John Applegarth

Secretary & Newsletter:

Jason Gorman

3337 Newcastle Dr. SE

Grand Rapids, MI 49508

jgorman@steelcase.com

Ad Coordinators:

Cyril & Robert Mayne

Food Meisters:

Jim Verlinde (odd mos.)

Art McLaughlin (even mos.)

Yeast Rancher: Eric Fouch

Past President: Larry Simonson

Prime Time Brewers Website:

<http://www.primetimebrewers.com>

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