



# The Brewer's League Journal

Vol. 3, No. 6

July 1998



## Once a King...



### "The Big Bastard Big Three"

Brian Sollenberger (of Knothead infamy) spent the evening with us at *The Pig* during our June meeting. Brian arrived early and unannounced so as to properly (if not discreetly) spy on his old friend and cross-town rival, Tom Muñoz. Tom pretended outrage and appropriate contempt, and in spite of the fact that he didn't know Brian was going to speak to our group (shame on you GEBL), welcomed Brian with full beer stein. I'm pretty sure Tom bought Brian more than one, as our neighborhood knothead arrived at the meeting looking pretty happy.

So just who are "The Big Bastard Big Three?" You may think it to be Chuck and Jack and Jim, or maybe George and Bob and John, or perhaps the three amigos in the picture at right, but those of us who were at *The Pig* know it is actually **gravity**, **aeration** and **pitching rate**.

Brian has been a professional brewer for many years and his successes with *Diamond Knot Brewing Company*, have led him to be frequently pressed into service as a beer judge



Tim Martin, Brian and Chuckles at Herb Farm 98

for many of our local competitions. That experience, coupled with his years as a home brewer, have led him to believe that generally speaking, the most frequent mistakes home brewers make are what he calls; "The Big Bastard Big Three."

According to Brain, the first of the **big three**, is **original gravity**. Specifically, Brian feels that most home brewers try to brew beers with an original gravity that is too high. We all want to get the most "bang for the buck," but we often sacrifice quality in our race for the "buzz." High OG's tend to produce more fusel alcohol and esters in your beers and these are undesirable, to say the least, when you're trying to finesse flavor. Try to stay within the gravity range (even on the low side) for the beer style you are brewing. Remember, this is not a horsepower race.

The second of the **big three** is **aeration** and in Brian's opinion, you simply cannot get enough (read as *too much*)

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and much more



oxygen in your wort. The point was that the more oxygen in the wort, the faster the fermentation kicks off (read as *less lag time*). The shorter the lag time (the time between pitching and fermentation), the less chance for **beasties** to get started in your beer and wreak havoc. The first thing the yeast does in a beer is to take up oxygen like crazy and change the characteristics (pH and such) of the wort to make it suitable for yeast beasts and not bug beasts.

The final **big three**, is **pitching rate**. Brian's analogy of a home brewer pitching only the contents of a "smack pack" (liquid yeast pack) into a five gallon batch of beer would be like sending the boy scouts to do battle with Caesar's army (actually that's my interpretation of his analogy). Brian stressed pitching in large enough quantities to get your fermentation started within an hour or two. He repeated that most of the local breweries will gladly provide you with fresh yeast if you bring a sterile glass container (at least quart-sized), and provide a little advance notice. Brian feels that under-pitching is a serious concern and causes many home-brewers to fare poorly in competitions.

We had a lot of fun with Brian. He has a thick skin (thankfully), and gave as much kidding as he received. We learned a number of new phrases during the course of his discussion. Among them were;

**Miscible** which translates to mixable, as in gas into beer.

**Aqueous solution** which translates into any solution which is primarily water, as in beer.

**Immiscible** which translates into (I'll bet you can figure it out yourself).

My personal favorite was **"I won't talk anymore about beer, other than the beer I'm gonna talk about."** If you can translate this one, be sure and let me know.

We were duly impressed by Brian's knowledge, if not his enthusiasm and sense of humor, but we were totally convinced that he must surely be the undisputed king of something-or-other when one of the **Flying Pig** brewery knaves (no disrespect intended) brought Brian a beer and knelt before him with bowed head, while presenting the beer on high. Brian took the beer while the knave remained kneeling. The knave was knighted with table knife and sent hither and thither to do knightly things. Brian was heard to proclaim the words of his old Pappy; "Once a king always a king, but once a Knight is enough."

By John Boy

## 1998 Style Calendar

### July

**German and American Style Wheat Beer** (AHA Style Category # 19 a, b, c & d)

### August

**Tomahawk Contest**

### September

**Vienna/Märzen/Okttoberfest** (AHA Style Category # 17 a & b)

### October

**Traditional Mead and Braggot** (AHA Style Category # 25 a, b, c & d)

### November

**Scottish Ale and Strong Scotch Ale** (AHA Style Category # 8 a, b & c and # 10 b)

### December

**Barleywine** (AHA Style Category # 1 a & b)

**David Swartos still has a few items left for sale. I know the cooler is gone, as well as the cornies, and some of the 15.5 gallon kegs are gone. If you need anything he may have, call him at (360) 715-3664**

## Bob Baker's Centennial Celebration



**Y**essir, Bobby boy is about to hit the centennial mark. Hard to believe, but the boy is a brewing machine. Bob has brewed about 48 batches of beer since October when I held my centennial celebration. In that same amount of time, I have brewed a whopping 18 batches, but hey, who's counting? Bob has asked that we keep the tradition of brewing centennial batches in my garage alive by hosting a brew-day in honor of his 100th batch. Therefore, Bob would like to invite all you GEBL members to load up your stands, kettles, burners and tools and make it on over to the Fall Creek Brewing Company for a day of brewing, grilling, drinking, dancing and general merriment. We can make this an all-day event and fire up the Barby for some burgers and dogs to go along with the beer and brewing. Let's say we start it about 10:00 to give everybody time to get squared



away at home and make it on over. The date is Saturday, July 18th, so mark your calendars and don't miss this event. Let's keep this centennial tradition alive. I will have my Centennial Dunkel on tap for all to enjoy. I have to admit, waiting for it to properly lager was difficult, but worth it? You be the judge.

Y'all come out and support Bob and his big batch 100.

*By John Boy*

## Consistency in Brewing Part 4



There is an old axiom in business that says "The three most important considerations in business are location, location and location. Applying that same rule to your beer brewing would translate as "The three most important considerations in brewing beer are consistency, consistency and consistency."

We have previously discussed the reasons why you would want consistency in your beers, so we'll not rehash those issues. This time around, I'd like to discuss hop utilization, not in the classic sense, but in the selection of the hops you use.

If you were to poll the various breweries in our area, I'm pretty sure you would discover they only use a few varieties of hops (perhaps 6 at the most). The reasons are simple. The first would be that storage of a large variety of hops is definitely a problem. Few of us have the room required to store extra hops, much less extra hops in a lot of varieties. We need that room for cooling beer. Same issue for the breweries. They need the valuable real estate they have for cold-storing their product. If you buy fresh hops every time you brew, space is obviously not an issue, but economics certainly is. Buying your hops in larger quantities saves you a ton of money.

The second reason is that while using a large variety of hops may add excitement to your life and variety to your palate, you never really get to know the hop characteristics as well as you could if you used fewer varieties, more often. I personally use 5 or 6 varieties for all my beers. I feel like I know the contributions these varieties make to my beers such as bittering, flavor, aroma and in dry hopping. I am not adverse to trying a new hop variety every now and then, but if it is very successful in my brewing, it would probably replace one of my current standards. The moral of the story is: get to know your hops better by using fewer varieties and studying the effect your choice of hops has on your beers. The differences can be quite dramatic.

*By John Boy*

## Tomahawk Contest

According to a motion made and carried during the June meeting, we have dropped California Common as the style of the month for August and replaced it with a Tomahawk Hops contest. I would like to suggest that we have a normal club tasting for the fun of it, but that we ask Tom Muñoz, Brian Sollenberger and possibly Meagan from Skagit River, to judge our entries. The contest winner would be determined by the judges.

There are only two rules in this contest. The first is that there is no set style. Brew any style of beer you think would best demonstrate the use of Tomahawk hops. The second is that you **must** use Tomahawk hops for **bittering** and for **dry hopping** if you choose to dry hop. You may use any other variety of hop for one addition only, but not for bittering or dry hopping. You may have as many hop additions as you like, but only one can be from a variety other than Tomahawk. I hope that is clear enough.

There was some discussion at the Herb Farm about adding a name contest to the mix. This would be for the best name using the Tomahawk theme (could be Native American). We'll discuss this at the next meeting.

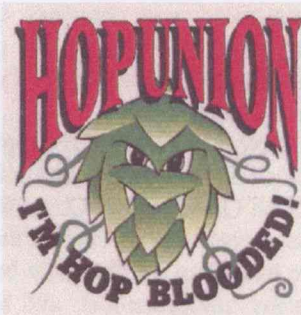
This should be an exciting competition and a good test of our ability to finesse a high alpha hop. Fire up those kettles and your imagination and get brewing. One final note; the beers for the official judging would have to be in two 12 oz. bottles, unmarked, with the standard AHA entry form attached.



*By John Boy*

## Hop Union Ralph Roast

On Friday June 19th, *The Flying Pig*, hosted a roast for Ralph Olson of *Hop Union*. Ralph was celebrating his 20th anniversary with *Hop Union*, and representatives from all aspects of the industry were there to offer up embarrassing stories about



Ralph (most seemed to involve Hopfentroph and some had to do with "naked hop runs") and his long career with Hop Union. Chuck and I were invited to represent the *Gerb's* at the party, and we represented you well. Ann and Jim, happened to be at *The Pig* late in the evening (yeah right), and you can't hide a beer celebration from Jim, so the two of



them crashed the gate and joined the fun (actually, they were welcomed by all). In fact, so much fun was had that a certain Mr Jensen didn't make it to the *Herb Farm* the next day. *The Impaling Ales* were represented by their president (Michelle something), and one other member, whose name I did not get. There were also two members from the oldest homebrew club in Seattle, *The Brews Brothers*. Among the breweries represented were, *Portland Brewing*, *Hales*, *Pyramid*, *Lighthouse* (a new brewery), our favorite *Knotheads*, *Snoqualmie Falls*, *Cirque Brewing*, *Leavenworth*, *Pike Brewing*, *Boundary Bay*, *Skagit River*, *Rogue*, *The Pig*, and a few others that I didn't get the names of. As a brewer and one who appreciates the finer qualities of ales, I was in for a big surprise. As befitting such an occasion, a number of breweries (twelve to be precise) brought out samples of a "brewer's reserve" they may have had lying around. Now the "brewer's reserve" is the one the brewer doesn't want to give away (such as Tom's *Russian Imperial Stout*). As such, they are extraordinary beers, and these were no exception. Being a celebration of the hop business meant that the beers provided were of the "pushing the envelope" for hoppiness variety. There were cask-conditioned beers, barley wines, ESBs, IPAs, and some I didn't get to try (I know I let you down, but hey, I did my best). My personal favorite was the cask-conditioned "*Brutal Bitter*" provided by the folks at *Rogue River Brewing Company*.

It was really interesting to me, from the perspective of one who has only been brewing for a little over three years, to hear the stories of when Ralph Olson was just starting out at *Hop Union*. It seems that he is well known in the industry for hanging around with a bunch of hippies wanting to open breweries, with little or no hope of actually opening breweries. Ralph persevered, and convinced his company to extend credit to these leather-clad, long-haired, hippie dudes, and the rest, as they say, is history. As a brewer, I'm certainly still in diapers, and I couldn't help but be in awe of the talent and experience in the room with us.

I was also completely taken by the fact that this room was filled with brewers from this hugely competitive industry, and these people truly enjoy each other and the history they share. It was like being in the room with Lewis and Clark.

Now, just what is **Hopfentroph**? There is a second Ralph at *Hop Union* who joined the company 5 years after Ralph Olson (Ralph One), who calls himself "Ralph Too." I cornered "Ralph Too" at the *Herb Farm* to ask what poison he had given me the night before. He roared with laughter at my innocence-lost, and told me it is a blend of some 2 dozen herbs (I'll bet), a strong contribution of hop extract, and a clear liquor very high in alcohol (no shit!). He also speculated that there may be a class II narcotic or two in there, similar to the opiates in *Jaeger Meister*. It cannot be legally sold in the US, so *Hop Union* brings it back from their trips to Germany, where it is produced. It isn't illegal

to have here, it just can't be sold. So they give it away at their parties and hop celebrations. I only had one shot of it, and I'm here to testify to its ability for delivering "naked hop run's."

I am very grateful to Tom, Joel and *The Flying Pig* for hosting this event and for giving me an opportunity to rub shoulders with so many dedicated, talented rabble-rousers.



By John Boy

## Pen Art In Our Midst

Todd Zurik is marketing a selection of turned wooden pens that he and his wife produce.



These look like very nice pen and pencil sets. They normally sell for \$32.50 per set, but the club price is \$22.50. The golf club sets are normally \$49.50 but the club price is \$35.00. If you're interested, you can contact Todd at:

Ph/Fax (425) 535-1068 or Cell (425) 238-0339



## August Meeting at the Brew Farm

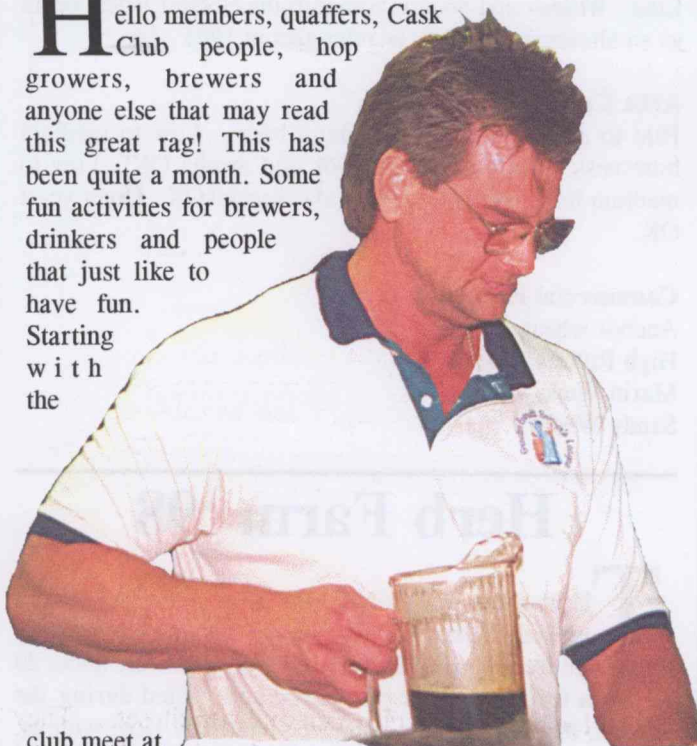
The August *G.E.B.L.* meeting will be held at our place (Shelley and Gary Albright's place, that is) on Saturday, August 15 from Noon time until 5:00 PM or sometime around then. This will be a potluck/picnic/beer fest/game playing/beer judging kind of family meeting. Please bring your favorite potluck dish and brew and plan on eating around 12:30 to 1:00 PM. I will be cooking some chicken on the BBQ so it will be hot if anyone else would like to throw something on. We'll have a volleyball net set up and various yard games. I'm really looking forward to the Tomahawk judging, I hope everyone has been brewing up a bitter batch or two.

This will be a rain or shine event, but everyone please wish for sun!

By Shelley Albright

## Letter from El Jefe

Hello members, quaffers, Cask Club people, hop growers, brewers and anyone else that may read this great rag! This has been quite a month. Some fun activities for brewers, drinkers and people that just like to have fun. Starting with the



club meet at *The Flying Pig Brewery*, Brian Sollenberger (*Diamond Knot*...yum, yum) and Tom Munoz traded a few good natured barbs while Brian gave us a good deal of brewing info. Next, the roast of Ralph Olsen (20 years at *Hop Union*) at "*The Pig*" was a gas. Funny people and great beer, what a combination! Mr. Muñoz sure

knows how to throw a party. The *Herb Fest* was packed with all the great breweries, food, and good company in this pristine setting, spells a good time. Someone did say though, they saw someone that looked just like me toasting a glass of *Diamond Knot IPA* with this very nice looking llama. DON'T believe it. I didn't even know her name! Honest! Last but not least, those Cask Club guys (and gals), drinking all those wonderful beers, yakkin' (not to be confused with that cute llama) and even getting around to judging these brews with Jay, George and Amy at *Fred's Rivertown Alehouse*. Good times! Anyway, gotta go, I'm going to be late for my *Betty Ford Institute* club meeting!

Cheers! Chuck.

## "Diggin' It" at Diamond Knot

I totally enjoyed our last meeting! In fact, I've enjoyed all the meetings we've had at *The Pig*. It's a great location and we are actually made to feel welcome there. Thanks Tom, Joel and *The Pig* crew.

One thing that has really made the meetings special (to me) has been the featured speakers. Tom Muñoz and Brian Sollenberger (do I dare mention them in the same breath?), are a wealth of knowledge and experience in the field of craft-brewing. Upon hearing Brian speak, I resolved to get a closer look at what these guys are doing, or should I say Brewing?

After the meeting I went over to speak to Brian and I have to admit to being somewhat intimidated. I was pleasantly surprised to find him very approachable and a lot of fun to talk to. When I mentioned that I'd like to see their brewery sometime, his eyes lit up and he said "Anytime! We're brewing this Saturday, bring your work clothes and wear rubber boots." Little did I know what I was in for, but it didn't matter. I wanted to take a run with the big dogs!

When I arrived at the brewery Saturday at 9:30 AM, the mash was already underway. I was greeted by Brian and introduced to their new brewer, Eric Bean. Eric was recruited from down south. Eric has recently completed the brewer's program at *U.C. Davis*. I offered to help out any way I could and was told "Make yourself at home and I'll let you know." Strange thing, I noticed that twinkle in Brian's eye again. I marveled at all the equipment and considered all the work it must have taken to assemble and customize it. All of my questions were answered without hesitation, if somewhat gruffly. I was told later by Brian that he wasn't intentionally being rude, but was concentrating on bringing Eric up to speed on their brewing equipment and processes. I understood completely, and told him as much. Trying to watch and stay out of the way at *Diamond Knot* is like being a prairie dog in a buffalo stampede! I was constantly trying



to get out of the way. If you've never been there, they have a 7.5 bbl brewing system jammed into about a 20' by 15' space. It's incredible! It looked to me like a homebrew system on steroids!!

About this time, the sparging of the grains was complete. Eric was watching the boil kettle while Brian was busy sanitizing the fermentor and assembling the hoses and connections for the chiller and aeration. With that complete there was a slight break in the action. Brian nonchalantly walked over to the mash-tun, held up this huge shovel, and with that glint in his eye, said; "You were asking if you could help?"

Well somehow I knew this was coming and to tell you the truth, I really didn't mind. In fact, I was proud to shovel out a knothead mash-tun. We all have to start somewhere, and besides, shoveling 400 plus pounds of wet grain provides a nice cardio-vascular workout.

Unfortunately, this is where I have to cut my story and my trip to *Diamond Knot* short. It was Ann's birthday, and we had made plans. I look forward to returning and staying for the whole brew day because as Brian says; "You're a knothead now!"

To be continued.....

By Jim Jensen

## Style for July

**W**eizenbier is the southern Germany version of wheat beer. It is less acidic than the northern Berliner Weisse due to the lack of a lactic acid addition in the fermentation process. Slightly stronger and just subtly darker, this beer must contain at least 50% malted wheat in the grist.

### AHA Category Description:

Pale to golden. Light to medium body. About 50 percent wheat malt. Clove and slight banana character. Fruity/estery. Clove, vanilla, nutmeg, smoke and cinnamon like phenolics permissible. Mild sourness OK. Highly effervescent. Cloudiness OK. Low bitterness. Low hop flavor and aroma OK. No diacetyl.

### Commercial Examples:

Samuel Adams Wheat Beer  
Paulaner Hefe-Weisse  
Spaten Club-Weisse

**Berliner Weisse** is the northern Germany wheat beer. It is very pale, lightly hopped, and has a low alcohol content. The beer is fermented using a lactic acid infected yeast, which contributes to its sour taste. Only wheat beer lactic yeast should be used when duplicating this style. The genuine article is krausened.

### AHA Category Description:

Pale. Light body. Dry. Sharp lactic sourness. Fruity/estery. Between 60 and 70 percent malted wheat. Very low bitterness. No hop flavor or aroma. Effervescent. No diacetyl.

### Commercial Examples:

Berliner Kindl Weisse  
Schultheiss Berliner Weisse

**American Wheat** is a relatively new style, and is the US interpretation of the classic wheat style. It has been "Americanized" by minimizing the pungent clove/phenolic character usually associated with wheat beers. This is done by using a standard ale yeast, in lieu of an authentic Bavarian wheat beer yeast strain, to cut the clove and phenolic flavor. Anchor uses 70% wheat in their grist, which is probably the highest in the world, and their beer is the inspiration for the American category. Hop profile is almost imperceptible, so choice of hops is completely up to the brewer. This beer style has its roots in the desire of American ale brewers to produce a refreshment beer, while maintaining their ale fermentation. Wheat is to ale brewers what corn or rice is to American lager brewers, quote Roger Lind. *Widmer* and *Anchor* both introduced their wheat beers as an alternative to their heavier ales in 1985 - 86.

### AHA Category Description:

Pale to amber. Light to medium body. Low to medium bitterness. Malt and hop flavor and aroma OK. Low to medium fruitiness and esters. Low diacetyl OK. Lager yeast OK.

### Commercial Examples:

Anchor wheat  
High Rollers Wheat  
Marin Weiss  
Sandy Wheat

## Herb Farm '98

**T**he bus trip was more on the quiet side this year (as we didn't have any beer on the bus) but we made up for it once we got to the festival. I think there were about 20 of us on the bus and we just talked and visited during the drive to the *Herb Farm*. We even had Patty Koto with us. Some of you will remember her from my Centennial brew day celebration. Patty has led something of a sheltered life, and we are doing our part to help her make up for lost time. We are exposing her to the finer sins in life.

Last year there were about 75 breweries at the festival.



This year there were 120. That's a lot of sampling to be done, but we did our level best to make it happen. As last year, we kinda all went our separate ways, once in the gate. It took a couple of hours to check out all the different booths and find out where the old favorites were located. The folks at the *Herb Farm* had cleared out more ground under the



**Tim, Lynn and Howard at Herb Farm '98**

trees so there were quite a few more booths in the shade this year. It's a good thing too, because we had another unusually beautiful and hot day for the festival.

After wandering around the grounds for a while, we managed to find ourselves congregating near the neighborhood *Knotheads*, and even found a table close by. This led to an impromptu meeting of the *Gerb's* and many a lifted glass for the remainder of the day. The conversation was lively, and more than a few of us tried to drink all the beer the *Knotheads* had brought. We visited their booth so



**Fellow Knothead's Eric and Bob take a break from serving thirsty Gerb's**

often that it left Bob and Eric exhausted...but ever willing to keep us well watered. The nice thing about our spot was the

plethora of booths within easy walking distance. We would make occasional probing forages out to find something a bit interesting to drink. We were close enough to *Rogue River's* booth to enjoy more than a few of their "*Brutal Bitter*" IPA's. I was still burping hops from the *Hop Union* celebration, but it didn't stop me from enjoying this wonderful IPA.

*The Snoqualmie Falls Brewery* has opened this past year and they also had a nice booth near us. I have to admit to feeling that they had the best logo at the Farm. I personally think they have a ways to go before their beers are on par with most of the others at the festival, but they are certainly in there plugging away at it.

Our friends at *Scuttlebutt* were there too and we discovered why we haven't seen much of Maggie at the brewery...it seems she is expecting a little brewer in August. Their booth was quite a ways away from us so we didn't see



**Two of our favorite Gerb's enjoying the shade**

too much of them, but it was good to see them represented.

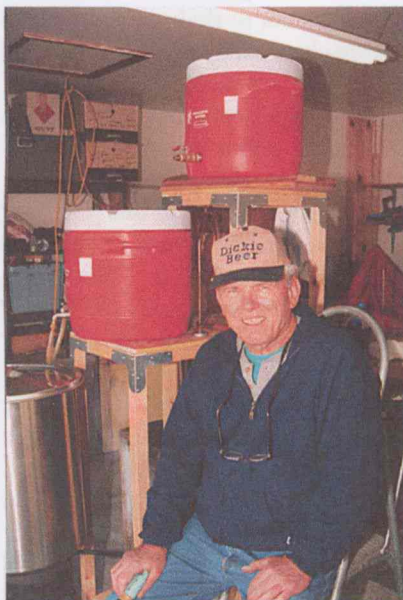
Don't know what happened to the folks at *The Pig*...but I'd bet Tom was in no shape to pour beer after the *Hop Union* celebration the night before. Perhaps we'll see them at next year's festival.

During the bus trip back we raffled off a bunch of goodies and everybody got something. I even managed to win the *Hop Union* hat that I wanted so badly last year. Only problem was that Patty wanted it too and I couldn't resist that sweet face looking at me so expectantly...what's a guy to do?

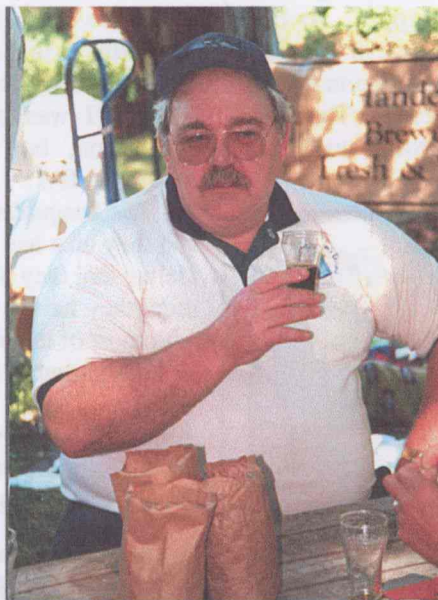
If you didn't make the trip this year, don't miss the next one.

*By John Boy*

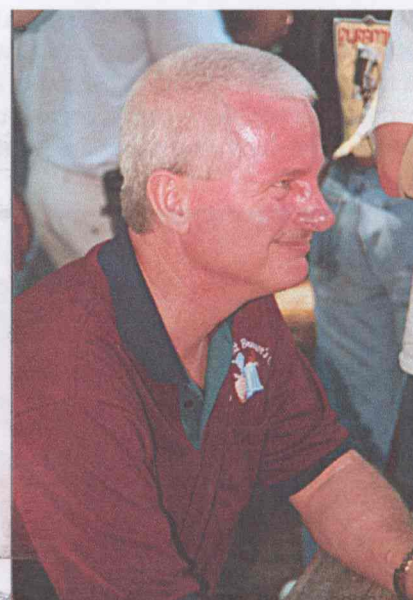




Dick Hayden and the Dickie Brewery



Big George holdin' down the fort at Herb Farm 98



Looks like Gary has had just the right number of brewski's

**The Greater Everett Brewer's League**  
**6709 - 44<sup>th</sup> Street N.E.**  
**Marysville, WA 98270**



|||||  
**GEBL Library**  
17630 - 160th St. S.E.  
Monroe, WA 98272

**The next club meeting will be 7/9, at the "Flying Pig" Brewpub, 2929 Colby Ave., (425)339-1393. The Style for the meeting is American and German Wheat Beers. Guest speaker is Brian Sollenberger on Dry Hopping.**

