



The Brewer's League Journal

Vol. 3, No. 8

October 1998



Down But Not Dead



Newsletter Changes

What a summer we have enjoyed. I will be the first to say that even as a hard core "cool weather" aficionado, I really enjoyed the long hot summer we had this year. I was able to get in some (read as "lots of") golf, some (read as "not so much") brewing, and generally tried to relax more.

Of course when you relax, some things fall by the wayside, and such was the case with the newsletter. I don't want to come off sounding like I'm whining, but the newsletter takes from 8 hours to as much as 30 hours to produce. That's a big commitment and this summer I guess I just got tired of doing it. Truth is, I needed a break from it. I'm sure you can all understand that.

Additionally, the creative juices were a bit dried up. I do appreciate the contributions made by members like Jim, Shelley, Chuck and Jack, but it just wasn't enough. I want to go on record here as emphasizing that this is not my

newsletter. It is for the club and should reflect the views of the club. If this is to be the case, we need continuous input from the group. I would like to invite you as a group to step up to the plate and make your opinions known. Share your views and your knowledge with all of us. I know you may feel that you may have nothing new to contribute, but that isn't the case. There is always a new or personal slant on things. Your viewpoint may be the one that inspires us into a new area, or moves a brewer to take their brewing to a new plane. There is short article within this issue from Bob Baker that reflects how little it takes to share something important with the group. Bob's experience and frustration can help us all avoid the same situation. I can't emphasize enough how important it is for all of you to take part in the production of this newsletter.

I am the editor, and as such, I will take the liberty of poking fun, correcting spelling and grammar, and generally being a pain-in-the-ass in getting you to contribute, but I'm such a good pain-in-the-ass. I have a lot of fun putting this rag together, and I certainly want to continue with it, but the truth is, I can't do it without all of you. All of you means exactly that; ALL OF YOU need to help with this effort. Enough of that.

I have been thinking of making the newsletter a bi-monthly publication. If we do, I would publish a bulletin on the off months which would not contain articles. The bulletin would remind you of meeting locations, declare the tasting winners and feature pertinent information. Perhaps using a format of "every other month" would ease the burden and allow more time for input from the club.

So, that's it for the soapbox. I hope you will all accept this editorial in the spirit it was intended and get off your down-but-not-dead butts and contribute.

By John Boy

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Irish Moss and Where It Comes From

Our latest trip took us to the Maritime Provinces of Canada and Prince Edward Island, the smallest of the provinces. Getting there and away again is a story in itself. We had been advised not to leave the island by ferry as it was more expensive. Seemed strange in a way but proved to be correct. It seems that it costs nothing to get to P.E.I. whether by ferry or bridge, however a ransom must be paid to leave. The ferry is about C\$53 while the bridge is C\$40.50. The Confederation Bridge to New Brunswick is new, opening in the summer of 1997. It is 9 miles long and takes 12 to 15 minutes to cross. We crossed to P.E.I. by ferry (75 minutes) and returned by the bridge.

A perusal of the visitors guide brought to my attention (actually Jean noticed and did the bringing) that half the world's supply of Irish Moss is harvested along the North and West coasts of P.E.I. As a Homebrewer I felt that it was incumbent upon me to visit the area and learn what I could. We home brewers use Irish Moss (IM) in the kettle to settle proteins and help clarify our beer. That is but a small percentage of its use. Quoting from a Canadian Government publication *Irish Moss*: "When we consume ice cream, chocolate milk, salad dressings, sherbert, shampoos, toothpaste or cosmetics we're almost certain to be using carrageenan, a starch-like non-caloric substance extracted from Irish moss." Canada accounts for three-quarters of the world's supply.



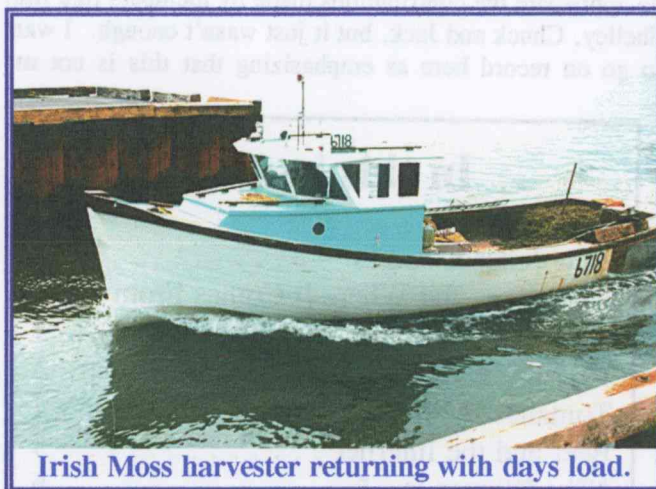
Irish Moss Harvester

The center of most of the harvest activity is the small town of Miminegash on the West coast. There is even a small museum and café. The main feature of the museum was a video showing the harvesting thru old black and white photos. In the early days, most harvesting was done with a horse pulling a

drag rake thru the surf. There was also harvesting direct from the beach of Irish Moss torn loose from the seabed by wave action. There were displays of old harvesting equipment and of Irish Moss. A full flower was 4-5 inches across and 3 or so high. Plenty for 20 or 30 gallons of beer.

The main feature of the Seaweed Pie Café is, Seaweed Pie! We had opted to eat lunch in the camper while overlooking the harbor activity, but we did get a piece of pie to eat later. Despite the name it was quite good. A lot like cheese cake. Very bland.

We returned to the harbor and were lucky enough to be there when a moss harvester came in. We followed him to the unloading point to watch the unloading and get a few pictures. He was more than willing to talk about the work and its problems. As can be seen in the pictures there are two to three cubic yards of moss from that day's work. He indicated that its value was C\$80 to C\$90. He loaded it onto his flatbed truck to take home where he would spread it out on the lawn to dry. Dried moss brings a better price than wet, tho the buyers will take it either way. His out of pocket expense for two days of harvesting was about C\$15 for diesel fuel for the boat. The harvest is not as great as it has been in the past. Part of the reason is that the Irish moss beds are being overrun with another type of seaweed that grows higher than IM thus depriving it of light and perhaps stunting the growth. While there is probably carrageenan in the interloper its quality is not as high. The harvester also felt that delaying the start of the harvest to later in the spring, as decreed by the government, has allowed the interloper plant to get ahead of the IM. As strange as it may seem there are no processing plants in Canada and the dried moss is sent to Denmark for processing. We still do not know why it is called Irish moss. We did not see or hear of it when in Ireland last year. The brochure on Irish moss is in the GEBL library.



Irish Moss harvester returning with days load.

By Jack Hughes

Bobby's Breakdown

A while back, I had an experience I would like to share with you. I was mashing along, using the same mash temperatures I always had when for no apparent reason, my final gravities were extremely high and getting higher. My original gravities remained the same as always and were well within style guidelines. Alright!, what's going on here? Needless to say, my beers were way too sweet! Not the slightest bit cool!

Let me share with you, some of the things I tried to remedy the problem. My first thought was my re-circulated yeast, so I used fresh yeast and plenty of it...same problem. OK, how about aerating my wort more...nope, that wasn't it either. What was making my beers so dextrinous?

Mash temperature you say? I was mashing at the same temps as I always had, wasn't I? My trusty thermometer said I was, but what if...better check it out. How in the Hell did my most important measuring device get 6° off? I don't know how or why, but there it was, reading 6° low.

Mashes I thought were at 150°, were really at 156° and my 152's were really 158°, etc. Well that's it then...dextrinous beers, high terminal gravities, too many sweet beers...how many ways can I say it? Oh well, at least I discovered the problem. Here is a little test for your trusty thermometer that may help you avoid the same problem; Fill a glass with ice cubes and then top it off with water. Let it sit for a bit and then insert your thermometer. You should get a reading of 32°. If not, you may need to adjust the dial, or buy a new one.

*Happy Brewing
by Bob Baker*

Albright's Party Alright

Those of you who missed the August meeting of the Gerbils at the Albright's (and some who arrived late), may have missed the highlight of the year. I'll tell you what that might have been later. For now let me say that the event was a blast and that Shelley, Gary and Eric were the best of hosts. Shelley had 3 of her beers on tap including her now famous Haller-To-Me ESB, an IPA she had brewed up with Tomahawk hops, and something else that I can't remember.

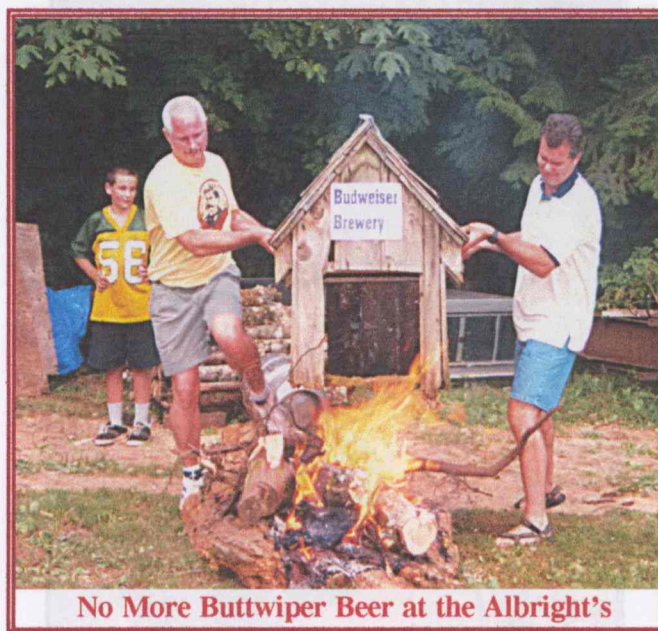
The food was terrific and featured Shelley and Gary's famous turkey sized grilled chicken. Everyone brought something and the tables groaned under the weight of it all... or was that because Gary was leaning on the table?

We played volleyball, frisbee and generally ran around acting much younger than we really are. It was great fun.

Dick and Joyce brought pictures of their boat after sinking it in the Hood Canal. That's what happens when you abandon the helm in a moment of passion (I'm sure it only took a moment...er, uh, you know what I mean). Seriously, they were lucky to have remained cool headed if not fully clothed and managed to get the boat to the shore before the rising tide filled it. It's an interesting story and if you haven't heard it yet ask them about it. You might want to leave the moment-of-passion questions alone though. Dickie is such a sensitive guy (and I made it up anyway).

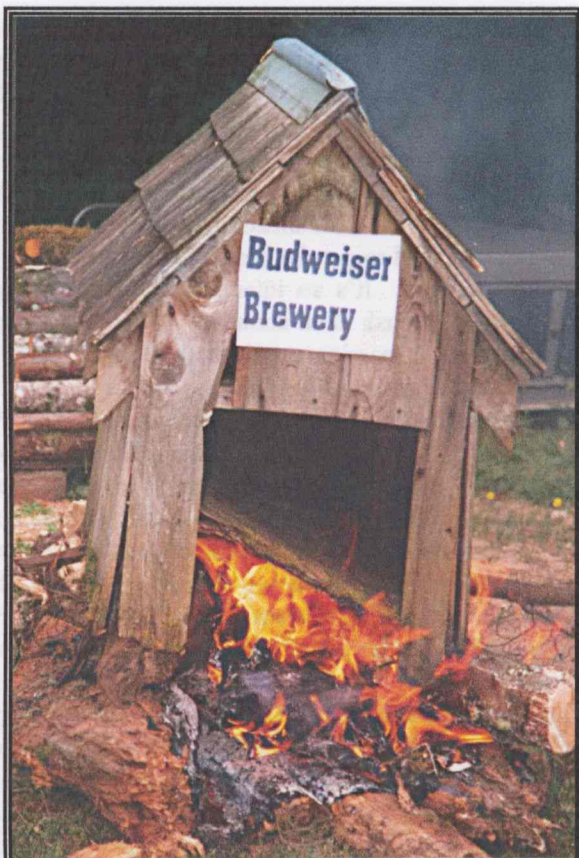
Dennis and Louise brought along their pictures too. Not to be outdone by any x-rated boat sinking, they showed us how the addition to the house is coming along. Seems they're nest building in a big way. Usually people build nests when they need a little more room because of...hmmm, I wonder if there is something we need to ask them. They probably don't always ride tandem...what do you think? Hee Hee Hee, No offense intended, or as Fish would say; "Bygones."

So what was the big event of the day? Well aside from me being there (yeah right!), Gary and Shelley had a surprise for us. Seems they had bought a Budweiser (read as "Buttwiper") brewery for us to burn in effigy...Yeah! Take a look at the following photos for proof that we had our own little Brew Farm Tea Party:



No More Buttwiper Beer at the Albright's

Not so fast...there's more to come. We burned it to the ground and cheered and hoo-rahed the entire time. Glasses held on high (and a few of us buzzing on high for good measure), we toasted the downfall of American Light Lager.



Louie the Lizard would be so proud!



So there you have it. We had a blast with the Albright's. They did us proud and can really throw a party. I think the brewery burning was a pretty cool event. I have photo's of the rest of the event. You will find them in the GEBL photo albums (yep we gottem). I will bring the album to the next meeting for your enjoyment.

If you missed the meeting at the Brew Farm...tough @#%*. I'll bet you won't do it again.

By John Boy

Tomahawk Results

T rue to our words, we did brew up a bunch-o-batches of beer featuring Tomahawk high-alpha hops. While at the Brew Farm, we had our little informal tasting event and name contest. We had a lot of beers (eight) to sample but we had a good time doin' it (not *that* it) and Louise was pretty pooped after serving all of the samples. Here are the results of the tasting:

- 1st Big John and *Redman's Revenge* with 35.58.
- 2nd Bobby's *Oh Shit Stout* with 34.83
- 3rd Chuck's *Tomachuck Pale Ale* with 34.20
- 4th Shelley's *Scalped Pale Ale* with 33.75
- 5th Dick's *Dickie's ESB* with 33.00
- 6th Shelley's *Acid Trip Porter* with 32.67
- 7th Dick's *Dickie's Pale Ale* with 30.58
- 8th Todd's *Tomahawk IPA* with 26.33

The name that received the most votes was Shelley's Acid Trip Porter. Apparently a few even experienced flashbacks. It wasn't a pretty sight.

After the meeting I took the beers down to *The Flying Pig* for the professional tasting. Tom got together with Don Roberts, Brian Sollenberger and Eric to judge our beers. The results are as follows:

- 1st My own *Redman's Revenge* with 41.37
- 2nd Dick Hayden's *Dickie's ESB* with 37.13
- 3rd Shelley's *Acid Trip Porter* with 33.38
- 4th Dick Hayden's *Dickie's Pale Ale* with 33.25
- 5th Bobby's *Oh Shit Stout* with 31.13
- 6th *Pete's Wicked Ale* (Commercial) with 30.87

Many thanks to Tom, Don, Brian and Eric for doing this for us. We really appreciate it. You guys are great to us. The tasting results are posted in the GebL Library in the 1998 GEBL Journal if you want to take a look at the comments on the various beers. Congratulations to you all on your fine efforts with this fun event. The scores indicate that you can indeed finesse a high-alpha hop. Keep up the good work and get those beers into more competitions.

Beer and the Internet

I talked to John a while back about writing a series of articles on Internet sites that would be of interest to home brewers. He thought it would be a great idea for me to do. OK. That wasn't exactly what I had in mind, but I guess I backed myself into this. The Internet is a tremendous source of information with a lot of stuff that the home brewer can find interesting and useful.

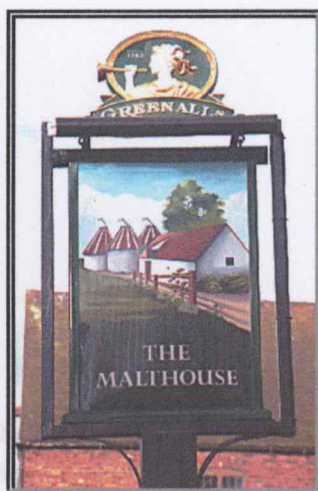
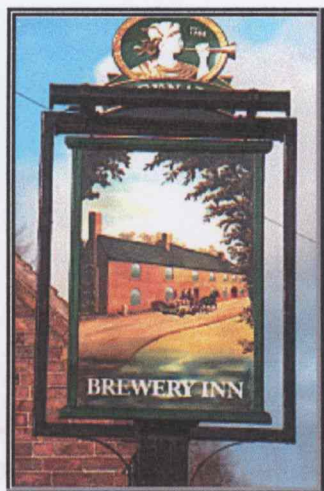
What I would like to do with this series of articles is to have them become a place for sharing Internet sites that are of interest to home brewers. So, if anyone has a favorite site(s), if you can get me the address and perhaps a few words about what you think is cool about the site, (E-mail me at salbrigh@eskimo.com, or call me at 360-691-7042), we'll try to get them into future articles.

The first site I would mention to any homebrewer is Cat's Meow 3. It is a giant recipe book with over 1000 beer recipes. There is something for every brewer, from stouts to pale ales, to meads, to historical beers. You can get the recipe for Benjamin Franklin's spruce beer, or a Guinness Stout clone and the index tells you if the recipe is for extract, partial mash, or all-grain. The address is <http://hbd.org/brewery/cm3/recs/00contents.html>, this address will take you to the table of contents based upon style.

Many of the recipes don't go into the detail you might like to have, but if you're looking for a pale-ale or thinking of changing your stout and are looking for ideas, this is a great place to look around. Cat's Meow is just part of the web site at HomeBrew Digest, (<http://hbd.org>), an interesting collection of stuff directed at those that brew.

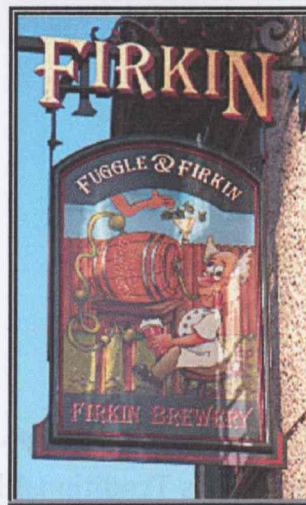
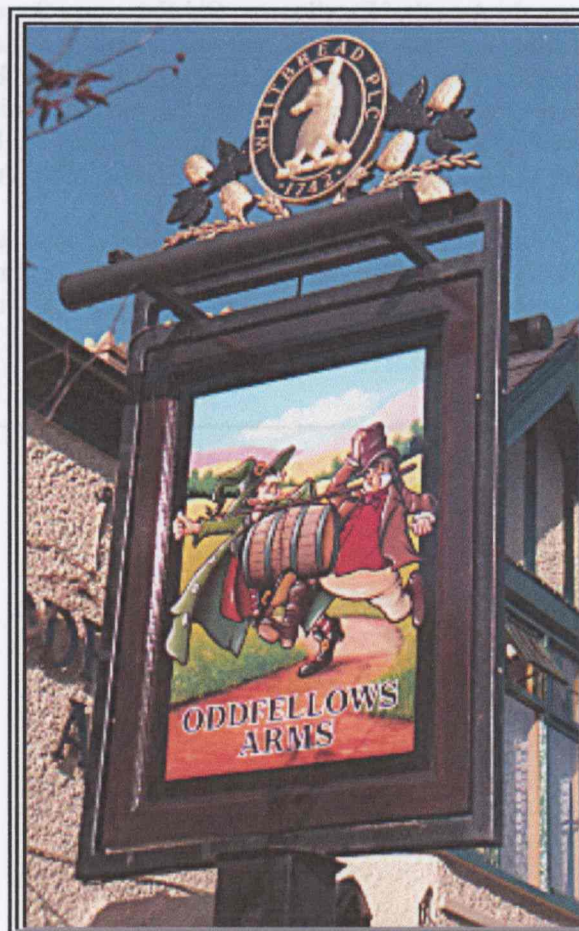
There is way too much at this site for me to tell you everything about it, so go on-line and check it out!

By Gary Albright



Tavern Signs

During Jack's recent travels, he snapped photo's of the tavern signs at all of the watering holes where he stopped. Since there aren't enough trees left on earth to supply the paper necessary to publish photo's of all the taverns he stopped at, we'll have to satisfy ourselves with a sample. Here are some for your enjoyment.



“The Winner Is...”

Not many GEBL's entered the Evergreen State Fair but those that did, made us proud. Bob Baker won Second Place for his *Lic.-My Porter*. John entered 9 beers and won 6 ribbons. His *Bearded Nun* (made famous by Ralph Bacon's alter ego), *Centennial Dunkel* and *Big Bluff Brown*, all took Third Place. Chuck Walker's favorite, *Logger's Lament ESB*, got the Award of Excellence. *Old Griz* won a Second Place ribbon. *Rimrock Red* got the award for Best Presentation. Bob and John were carrying on the legacy that the Fugiers started last year. John says that the information provided by the judges was better than any of the ribbons. He learned of two key flaws in his beers. You can bet they won't be in his beers anymore.

Seems remodeling the house has kept Louise and Dennis so busy that they haven't brewed since Springtime. How about Andrew? Couldn't he have brewed a little

something for the Fair? There were several brew clubs whose membership entered items en masse.

We need to plan ahead next year and get a lot more participation from everyone. We don't want to be outdone, right? Thanks to those of you who took a shift at the Fair and helped out: Bob Dokka, Dennis and Louise, Shelley and Gary, and John.

The Darkship Homebrew club did a nice job of hosting the fair again this year, but they really need our help and support. We need to make a concerted effort to be more involved in next year's fair. If we don't participate, we can't complain about it being lousy. Let's begin talking to Steve and Kim about how we can help out next year to make the event really stand out.

Congratulations to all who hosted, participated and won some recognition.

By Annie

Greater Everett Brewer's League
6709 - 44th Street NE
Marysville, WA 98270-6900

The next meeting will be October 8th, at The Flying Pig Brewpub, 2929 Colby Avenue, (425) 339-1393
The style for the meeting is Traditional Mead and Braggot and we may have a speaker from Snoqualmie Falls Brewery. Come early if you plan on eating and visiting.