



# The Brewer's League Journal



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July 2004

*July is  
American Beer  
Month*



## American Beer Month

by AOB

For the fifth year this summer, July is American Beer Month, a time to learn about, seek out and enjoy great American brews. This year's celebration offers consumers new opportunities to discover and enjoy the treasures of American brewing.

For many people, the phrase "American beer" conjures up images of big breweries in Colorado, St. Louis and Milwaukee. While American Beer Month celebrates these popular beers, it also seeks to lead consumers into the diverse beers produced by the other 1400 breweries in this country.

"Americans are the envy of the world when it comes to beer flavor and diversity," said Ray Daniels, Director of Craft Beer Marketing for the Association of Brewers. "We want every American to understand how varied and interesting American beers really are today so that they don't miss out on this fantastic aspect of America's culinary culture."

This year's American Beer Month celebrates a different style of beer each week, including Pilsner, American Pale Ale, Brown Ale and American Amber Ale. And to get things started off right, the "month" stretches for an extra two weeks to cover Wheat beers and India Pale Ales starting on June 21.

The focal point for American Beer Month activities for consumers is the website at [www.AmericanBeerMonth.com](http://www.AmericanBeerMonth.com). Here they will find informative stories about the beers made in America and they can also tap into local events celebrating American beer via the calendar while learning about the designated Beer of the Day.

"The content on the website will change daily," says Daniels, "and each week we'll focus on a different beer style in order to help people better understand the flavors of beer."

For those already in the know about beer, the site will also offer polls and quizzes that give consumers a chance to win prizes from American brewers including brewery logo shirts, hats and other merchandise.

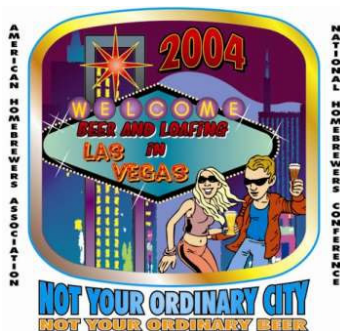
Check with your local brewery for their American Beer Month activities during July and visit the website at [www.AmericanBeerMonth.com](http://www.AmericanBeerMonth.com) to learn more about beer and your chances to win great beer gear.

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**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE July 8  
at THE FLYING PIG 7:00PM**



# Beer and Learning...

Wow...what an experience! That's how to totally immerse yourself in homebrew for three days and I do mean plunge-in head-first. There were seminars, meetings, travelogues, exhibits, food tastings, festivals, competition judging, a luncheon, and a grand banquet – all dedicated to homebrewing. Not to mention that the homebrew starts flowing in the hospitality suite at noon on the first day and doesn't quit until the wee hours of the day after the official schedule ends. But it could get started well before that (or last well after you get home), you're handed four bottles of commemorative homebrew upon registration.

If you are not sure what I am talking about I am describing the National Homebrew Conference (NHC) put on by the American Homebrewers Association (AHA) and several local homebrew clubs [SNAFU (Southern Nevada Ale Fermenters Union), QUAFF (Quality Ale and Fermentation Fraternity, greater San Diego) and the Maltose Falcons (greater Las Angeles)] from and around the host location. This year it was held in Las Vegas, Nevada. No town is better suited to host this event. This year's theme – "Beer and Loafing in Las Vegas: Not your ordinary city, not your ordinary beer." Not your ordinary event either.

When I found out where the conference would be located (in recent years it has mostly been in the middle part of the country) I thought that this would be a good opportunity to go without a lot of time spent traveling, and being in Las Vegas, it should be easy to find cheaper airfare. Having never gone to a National Homebrew Conference before I didn't know how I would like it, but I thought I should try it once so I would know what it is all about. I had to talk Scot into going. Through his work he has gone to plenty of conferences and he wasn't looking forward to going to another one. It didn't take too much persuading to get him to agree to go, but he didn't seem realize that conferences for your hobby (particularly homebrewing) would be totally different than what he was use to. Besides if he got totally



GEBLs at the National Homebrew Conference and Competition



Scot watching the mini-BOS of the beer style he judged

bored there would be plenty of other things to do in the rest of Vegas.

We arrived Wednesday night and got to the hotel around 10 o'clock. We were staying at the hotel where the conference was being held (Riviera), which made life much easier – highly suggested. The conference began the next day, but they had a pre-conference event of beer and food pairing at UNLV that night. Due to our schedule we were not able to make it, but I did talk to a few people who did go and they gave it rave reviews. We just had time for a quick walk around the hotel (and casino) to get our bearings because though the conference didn't officially start until 1 pm the next day we had an early wake-up call the next morning – registration and then judging.

We had judged at the regional first round of the National Homebrew Competition in Seattle and decided to judge at the second round held in conjunction with the conference. This

## Continued from page 2 -

year's competition with 4,443 entries was the largest homebrew competition in the world, ever. It had over a thousand more entries than last year. 740 entries advanced to the second round. The main judging sessions started at 9 am Thursday and ran for two days. Best of Show judging being Friday afternoon and the results were to be announced at the Grand Banquet Saturday night. This being our first trip to the NHC we volunteered to judge only the one session Thursday morning before the conference festivities began.



Gordon hard at work at the competition

Thursday morning came early. We headed to registration shortly before 8am after getting a quick bite at a famous Vegas buffet (I cannot recommend the Riviera's buffet). We were about sixth in line to register for the conference. We met Trevor from Fresno in line and started up a conversation. He was also a first-timer. We ran into Trevor several times during the conference and compared notes of what we had seen since our last update. At the conference we met many people from all over the country with varying degrees of homebrew experience. We were able to share our passion with people with a similar passion; this just added to the overall experience of the conference.

Registration was painless as we had pre-registered online. Give them your name and they give you a bag of goodies. Included in addition to the previously mentioned commemorative brews was a commemorative small nonik tasting glass, a handy sized booklet with the conference schedule and other pertinent details to help get you where you want to be, and a

name badge with tickets to the various events. We had registered for the full conference so we could get into everything. If you were an AHA member then there was a 15% discount and if you registered early (a month before the event) there was an additional savings of about 15%. Each member could bring one other person (i.e. spouse) at the member price. There was a price for guest that would not attend the seminars, but would attend the food and hospitality events. Also individual pricing was available for many of the activities.

After depositing our brews into the hotel room fridge we went down for judging which started at 9 am. Almost immediately we ran into familiar faces - from GEBL Gordon Legg was helping with stewarding and Dennis Fugier judged at another table. We also saw Tom Schmidlin and Alan Hord of CBG judging. Ironically, Dennis flew a thousand miles to judge with Alan. The competition organizers sent us the judging schedule and assignments by email so we could review our beer styles before hand. Coincidentally, I judged Light Ales, the same I had done at the first round. Each style category had three panels and each panel had two or three judges and about ten homebrews to evaluate. The lead judges from each category panel did a mini-BOS to determine the style category's top three beers. These were the beers that medaled. As a group we completed twelve styles that morning, the largest number of judging panels for obvious reason. I judged with Susan Ruud from North Dakota. She is BJCP National ranked and on the AHA board of advisors. For the first five beers we were within one or two points in our scoring; it made the morning fly by.

Reading through the schedule for judging before I left home gave me an idea of who else would be attending the activities of the next few days. It was a who's who of homebrewing and judging. If you read the magazines and books, if you subscribed to the listserves you knew these names. Of course, I had recognized some names on the conference schedule of events. That you would expect, but seeing these names here highlighted just how accessible most of these people would be throughout the conference.

At 1 pm the conference began with an opening toast by Paul Gatza, the director of the AHA. Then Fred Eckhardt started a sing-a-long of an old drinking song. The conference was official started, hang on to your tasting glass!

Be sure to read next month's issue to learn more about the adventures in Vegas...



Scot talks to homebrew guru Charlie Papazian



## Struggling with Flat or Gassy Kegs? Get Dialed In to Perfect Carbonation

By Lori Brown

If you have ever struggled to get the pressure just right in your keg, this little gadget is perfect for you. I used to guess at the keg pressure in my kegs. Inevitably I would end up with an under or over carbonated keg. From there I would add pressure or bleed pressure until I got the dispense pressure to my liking. While this worked for a while, leaving the gas hooked up or pulling off too many pints would change the pressure and I would have to start tweaking everything again.

From Williams Brewing on-line catalog: "Our Ball-Lock Keg Pressure Tester fits on the gas side of any ball-lock keg, and can monitor pressure of a keg that is not hooked up to a CO2 line. This can be very useful in monitoring the progress of natural conditioning. 0-60 PSI range, fits ball-lock kegs only." Item S99 \$19.90 ([www.williamsbrewing.com](http://www.williamsbrewing.com))



I came across this gadget one day and decided to give it a try. You simply attach it to the gas fitting on your keg and you can easily check the exact pressure in your keg. Armed with a carbonation chart and knowing the temperature of your beer, you can dial in the exact amount of carbonation very easily. Since I started using this gage, I have not had any more problems with carbonation in my kegs, or even when I counter pressure fill bottles.

I am including a carbonation chart (found in most homebrewing textbooks) [page 6] along with guidelines for carbonating your beer to match the traditional style. Simply match the temperature of your keg (the blue numbers along the left hand side) with the desired volumes of CO<sub>2</sub> you want in your beer in the body of the chart, and you know what pressure you want the dial to read (the red numbers).

You still have the variable of the length and diameter of your dispense line, but that is a constant for your system, not a variable each time you carbonate beer. I recommend using the same diameter and length of tubing for all of your kegs if you have more than one.

Once you can get consistent keg pressures, you eliminate the big variable in your beer dispensing system.

Life is too short to drink flat or gassy beer.

(Disclaimer: I do not have any affiliation with Williams Brewing, I just happen to really like this product.)

[Editors Note: If you like to tinker you can build your own Pressure Tester often for a few dollars less. All the hardware needed can be found at your local home improvement/hardware store. I was given a 0-30 psi pressure gauge (I suggest this range for easier reading) and was able to find everything else I needed with the help of the knowledgeable staff at Arlington Hardware. My tester also has a valve for bleeding excess pressure. A list of the parts required and instructions can be found here: <http://www.hbd.org/carboy/kegpresstester.htm> -Val]

## GEBL JUNE TASTING RESULTS

Style: Brown Ales

6/10/04

### Averages

Brewer	Brew	Aroma	Appearance	Flavor	Mouthfeel	Overall	Total
Newcastle Brown	North. English Brown Ale	7.21	2.20	12.50	3.50	6.33	31.75
Gordon Legg	Mild	7.75	2.44	13.94	3.56	6.75	34.44
Scott Nordahl	American Brown Ale	6.87	2.00	10.93	3.07	5.47	28.33
Lori Brown	American Brown Ale	7.67	2.40	12.73	3.27	6.87	32.93

Total points possible:

12

3

20

5

10

50



# Upcoming Beer Events

**Anacortes Brewery 10th Anniversary Celebration July 15:** See <http://www.anacortesrockfish.com/> for more details.

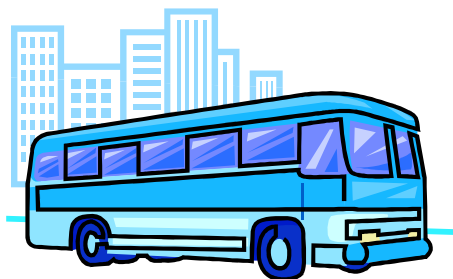
**Seattle International Beerfestival July 30 - Aug 1:** Seattle Center Mural Amphitheater. What can I say...are you up for another beer festival? Yep, I thought so. See <http://www.seattlebeerfest.com/> for more details.

**GEBL BBQ August 7:** At the Albright's, more details to follow. Please go to the GEGL website and let us know what dish/beer you are bringing to share with the crowd. Bring camping gear so you don't have to drive home that night.

**GEGL Same Recipe Competition August 7:** Bring your entries to the GEGL BBQ. Judging starts around 1pm.

**Evergreen State Fair Homebrew Competition August 7 - 8:** Entries due at fairground building 500 in Monroe. See <http://www.evergreenfair.org/> & <http://esfcompetition.homestead.com/home.html> for more details.

**Evergreen State Fair Homebrew Competition Judging August 14:** 11am at fairground building 500 in Monroe. Judges and Stewards needed. See <http://esfcompetition.homestead.com/home.html> for more details.



**Western Washington Fair (The Puyallup) Beer Competition August 21:** Entries due between 10am and 5pm at the Agriculture building on the fairgrounds in Puyallup. See [www.thefair.com](http://www.thefair.com) for more details.

**GEGL Pubcrawl September 25(?):** Please visit the poll on the GEGL website to vote for your preferred date and the establishments you would like to visit.

## Style Calendar

### GEGL

July-	Speaker— <b>Arlen Harris,</b> <b>La Conner Brewing Co.</b>
August-	IPA
September-	Speaker
October-	English Bitters
November-	Speaker
December-	Winter Warmers (Big Beers)
January-	Porters
February-	Speaker
March-	Open Lagers
April-	Speaker
May-	Belgians

### AHA

August-	Wheat Beer
September/October-	Smoked Beer
November/December-	IPA

Wheat Beer  
Smoked Beer  
IPA



# Carbonation Chart

Degrees	PSI												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
30	1.82	1.92	2.03	2.14	2.23	2.36	2.48	2.60	2.70	2.82	2.93	3.02	
31	1.78	1.88	2.00	2.10	2.20	2.31	2.42	2.54	2.65	2.76	2.86	2.96	
32	1.75	1.85	1.95	2.05	2.16	2.27	2.38	2.48	2.59	2.70	2.80	2.90	3.01
33		1.81	1.91	2.01	2.12	2.23	2.33	2.43	2.53	2.63	2.74	2.84	2.96
34		1.78	1.86	1.97	2.07	2.18	2.28	2.38	2.48	2.58	2.68	2.79	2.89
35			1.83	1.93	2.03	2.14	2.24	2.34	2.43	2.52	2.62	2.73	2.83
36			1.79	1.88	1.99	2.09	2.20	2.29	2.39	2.47	2.57	2.67	2.77
37				1.84	1.94	2.04	2.15	2.24	2.34	2.42	2.52	2.62	2.72
38				1.80	1.90	2.00	2.10	2.20	2.29	2.38	2.47	2.57	2.67
39					1.86	1.96	2.05	2.15	2.25	2.34	2.43	2.52	2.61
40					1.82	1.92	2.01	2.10	2.20	2.30	2.39	2.47	2.56
41						1.87	1.97	2.06	2.16	2.25	2.35	2.43	2.52
42						1.83	1.93	2.02	2.12	2.21	2.30	2.39	2.47
43						1.80	1.90	1.99	2.08	2.17	2.25	2.34	2.43
44							1.86	1.95	2.04	2.13	2.21	2.30	2.39
45							1.82	1.91	2.00	2.08	2.17	2.26	2.34
46								1.88	1.96	2.04	2.13	2.22	2.30
47								1.84	1.92	2.00	2.09	2.18	2.25
48								1.80	1.88	1.96	2.05	2.14	2.21
49									1.85	1.93	2.01	2.10	2.18
50									1.82	1.90	1.98	2.06	2.14

Dispense guidelines based on style (volumes):  
[One volume = one liter of CO<sub>2</sub> in one liter of beer]

- |                    |         |
|--------------------|---------|
| Cask conditioned   | 1.5-2.0 |
| Porters and Stouts | 1.5-2.2 |
| European lagers    | 2.4-2.6 |
| North American     | 2.5-2.6 |
| Wheat beers        | 3.0-5.0 |