



The Greater Everett Brewer's League Journal

The purpose of The Greater Everett Brewers League is to promote and educate homebrewers in the production of craft-style homebrewed beers. As an AHA social club we improve members brewing skills by providing mentoring and networking to fellow brewers, promote BJCP judging, evaluation and competition entry, as well as promoting the local craft beer movement.

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Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!

I hope everyone has great plans for the holidays and more importantly, remembered to brew something to enjoy for New Years. Maybe you will find some new brew equipment under the tree, and even some malts or hops.

With the new year comes changes. We are welcoming the new Club officers. Thanks to the hard work of the members for the last 1 to 2 years, a well deserved break is coming. I hope the new officers have great plans for the new year.



**President – Ray Garcia
Vice President – Vicki Garcia
Treasurer – Pete Stachiowak
Secretary – Jim Trimble
Membership Coordinator – Randy Neumaier
Librarian/Gear Coordinator – Todd Johnson
Newsletter Editor – Will Fredin**

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A Viking Tradition and One-Time Norwegian Law Required Brewing Beer for Christmas

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Along with the Yule log, mistletoe, tree decorating, and wreaths, Christmas ales are among the many winter rituals that originated as pagan traditions. In fact, brewing beer for the winter celebration became such an integral part of Viking society that failing to produce a holiday brew eventually became illegal.

Long before Christianity made its way to the native Germanic peoples, Norwegians celebrated the winter solstice by brewing and drinking beer to honor their Norse gods. To celebrate “Jul,” a Norwegian word that in modern vernacular refers to the Christmas season, Vikings brewed and consumed strong, barley-based beer while in the throes of winter’s coldest and dreariest months. They also used the ale to make offerings in hopes to entice the gods to bring back the summer sun.

According to “The Geography of Beer,” King Haakon the Good, who ruled from 934 to 961, later used the ancient Jul celebration to push a Christian agenda. As part of his efforts to introduce Christianity to the Norwegian people, King Haakon the Good implemented a pagan-meets-Christian mash-up, making it a law to celebrate Christmas with beer. Those who didn’t have beer at their Christmas feast were issued a fine. Norway became Christianized in the 11th century.

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Centuries later, the Norwegian legislative assembly, the Gulating, issued the Gulating Laws, officially formalizing King Haakon’s beer decree. The laws required every household to brew Christmas beer, and outlined penalties to those who failed to do so. Skipping out on brew day became a punishable act.

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A rough translation of a handwritten Gulating manuscript, currently held in Copenhagen's Royal Library, reads as follows:

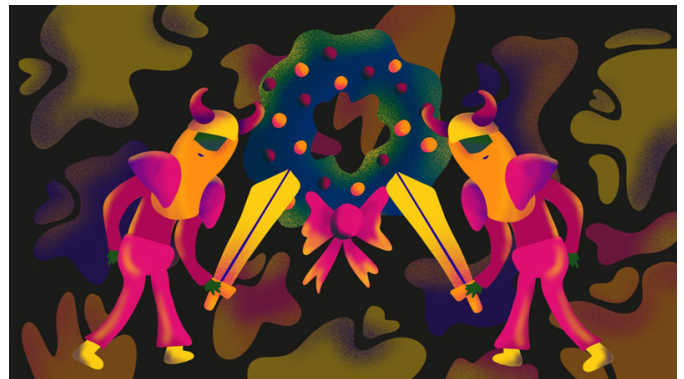
"Yet another beer brew we are required to make, man and wife from equal amounts of malts, and to bless it Christmas night in thanks to Christ and St. Mary, for a good year and peace.

If this is not done, three marks must be paid to the bishop. But if someone sits three winters without doing so, or cannot pay the fees that we have added for our religion, and this can be proven, then he has forfeited every penny of his worth. The king shall have half, and the bishop the other half. But he may confess his sins and make church penance and stay in Norway. If he will not he shall leave the realm of our king."

Although the stipulations were admittedly bleak, the original Christmas beers were somewhat similar in sentiment to today's winter warmers and seasonal spiced ales. Brewers were required to use only the best grain available from the farm. The ability to brew a novel and popular beer was associated with high status, so brewers often experimented with adding new flavors, such as juniper and other herbs. And the stronger the beer, the better, so by using syrup, tobacco, and sugar, brewers could create more intense flavors.

Nearly every Norwegian brewery today follows this tradition, albeit on more modern terms, during the holiday season by producing an annual "Juleøl," which translates to "drink Christmas." The seasonal style continues to be a source of pride among Norwegian brewers large and small.

This holiday season, raise your spiced Christmas ale or favorite nondenominational winter beer in gratitude for those who set holiday beer traditions in motion. Violent the Vikings may have been, but at the very least, they cared a great deal about their winter beer.



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NINE NEW HOMEBREWING GADGETS AND APPLIANCES ELEVATING HOMEBREW

With the recent Homebrew Con and homebrewing Expo held in Portland, we were able to get hands-on time with some of the best new homebrewing equipment, tech and gadgets for the homebrewer. These are the latest must have equipment and technology for those seeking a professional level of control on their homebrews or just to step up their game. With homebrewing bigger than ever, more companies and startups are launching products to do things like monitor your beer gravity, pH, or temperature digitally from long distances or even to ferment your own hard cider using whole leftover apples.

The PLAATO Airlock

Founded by two Norwegian buddies and successfully funded on Kickstarter in 2017, the PLAATO Airlock is one of the slicker devices out to the homebrew market. This is a wi-fi connected airlock that monitors your homebrews fermentation in real-time and can update you on the numbers to wherever your cell signal or wi-fi connected device is located. This includes a reading on your estimated specific gravity, live temperature readings to calculate the beers alcohol content. PLAATO is just about as easy to use as a regular airlock, you plug it into the bung or cap of your fermentation vessel just like a regular airlock and fill it with a liquid sanitizer or high proof alcohol and turn it on. You just need to download and setup the special app on your phone or tablet to get the readings in real time broadcast. The PLAATO airlock works by optically measuring the bubbles/gas released through the hydrometer to calculate the gravity and temperature without ever touching your beer, there are no parts that need to touch the inside of your carboy, an ideal setup for homebrewers concerned with sanitization and ease of use. Also, after your project is finished PLAATO returns a full report on the fermentation, from the changes in gravity to temperature fluctuations throughout the process. A great way to monitor the effects of different yeast, mashing techniques and temperatures effects on the fermentation. PLAATO Airlock is available for \$135 and comes with a USB cable for charging or downloading of data. <https://www.plaato.io/buy>

Alchemia - Home Cidermaking

Try your hand at home cidermaking in this incredibly simple to use, all-in-one device that can turn your whole or discarded apple parts into hard cider. Many professional cidermakers don't even process apples themselves, Alchemia will process, juice and ferment the cider all in one countertop system. You can also use it to make mead, or a hybrid of the two. If your an advanced homebrewer you may be wondering how the apples are sanitized from the natural yeast often found on their skins. Alchemia is equipped with a medical grade UV-C LED sanitizer that processes the whole apple parts you add to it and monitors the fermentation, updating your mobile device on the progress. Alchemia was a successful kickstarter project

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and is now available for order through the companies website but is not yet mass produced. I predict this could be a major brand available in major retailers soon if they can figure out to mass produce it. Right now it's an expensive, (but I think worth it) \$499.99 on their website.

BrewSSSiphon™

I always despised the typical, cheaply made plastic auto siphons with the quarter inch tubing that would often get kinked or even the inner plastic pump come slightly misformed in production. There is nothing worse than a bad siphon blowing air into your uncarbonated beer and oxidizing it before it's even bottled or kegged. If you are still hand bottling or using a siphon to keg, the BrewSSSiphon may be the answer to your prayers. BrewSSSiphon is billed as "the worlds' first fully de-constructable, manually cleanable, and totally sanitizable silicone & stainless steel auto siphon." It ain't cheap but it's worth it for high quality, fresh beer and ease of use. Get one at <https://www.brewssential.com/products/brewsssiphon>

Catalyst Fermentation System

The next best thing to spending upwards of 1K on a homebrewing stainless steel conical fermenter is the Catalyst Fermentation System. This system makes it easy to collect and remove yeast or trub via a sanitized jar attached to the bottom of the cone shaped bottom. I love how easy this makes it to clean up your beer without a filter and save and repitch yeast slurry. The lid comes with a port to pitch the yeast and seal it with a bung and hydrometer. Through the same bottom port that you use to remove yeast or slurry you can hook on a bottling or kegging hose to package your homebrew without the use of any pumps and worry about sanitization or oxidation.

300 Micron Filter Stainless Steel Mesh Cornelius Keg Dry Hopper

For anyone who likes aromatic hopped beer, whether it be a dry-hopped sour ale, farmhouse ale or double-triple IPA this 300 Micron Steel Mesh basket for a corny keg will make the process much easier. Now you can throw away your inefficient, unsanitary and limited repeat use cheese cloths or dry hopping bags. Not only is stainless steel equipment like this ideal for cleaning and sanitizing but the extremely fine holes will keep a clean beer from getting too much hop matter into it. You can also dry-hop directly in the keg for the finest hoppy aroma right from the keg and to your glass. Multiple sizes available \$16.99 - \$45.99 on amazon.com.

Brew Perfect™ WiFi Digital Hydrometer

Similar to the previous product the PLAATO Airlock, Brew Perfect is also a Wifi Digital Hydrometer with temperature and gravity monitoring gadget that broadcasts it's readings live to your mobile device. Unlike the PLAATO, Brew Perfect has more pieces and parts that actually do drop into your fermenter to monitor your wort. This could be good or bad, it does add another level of equipment to the process and parts that must be well kept and sanitized but the addition of a probe that enters your wort to monitor the temp is an extra level of control that's appreciated. The Brew Perfect device monitors the fermentation activity by gauging the buoyancy of the torpedo that hangs down in the beer for a theoretically quite accurate digital

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report. \$169.99 at <https://www.brewperfect.com/order/>

HALO Wireless Beer pH Meter

This is truly a gadget for the advanced homebrewer/winemaker/distiller/cidermaker for those really dedicated to dialing in their brews and have a few coin to spare. pH is something that most homebrewers don't pay much attention to unless making a kettle sour, and even then I think it's not often actually measured. Probrewers know the value of this sort of info to the beers flavor profile and affect on hops, malt and yeast flavor. The HALO pH meter is a laboratory grade measurement system that works with your smart phone or tablet. The specialized titanium body electrode has a high temepature glass sensor to take readings from a mash, wort or even finished beer and transmit the readings directly to your Apple or Android device. The HALO also knows when it's electrode needs cleaning or re-calibration. It's very easy to use and can help take your home beverage making to the next level for \$235 plus shipping at <https://hannainst.com/halo-ph-electrode-for-beer-analysis-fc2142.html>

PicoStill

I was moderately interested when PicoBrew launched their automated, computer controlled homebrewing device and slightly more so when they updated it to allow more customization of recipes with malt and hops. The new PicoStill is their coolest product yet, even though I am more of a beer guy than a spirits guy this home distilling system makes making your own whiskey, tequila or gin quite easy. But it's even better, you can even distill essential oils yourself from herbs, spices, hops etc. The only catch is you need the regular PicoBrew setup before you can use a PicoStill. Luckily, the new advanced PicoBrew is also worth your money. More info at <https://www.picobrew.com/Store/products/picostill.cshtml>

SS BrewTech Glycol Chiller

Not for those without a few bucks to spare and a real commitment to the hobby. SS BrewTech makes super high end brewing equipment for the homebrewer and nano brewery. SS BrewTech has introduced a glycol chilling unit for the hardcore homebrewer that will maintain temps or allow you to crash up t the Ss Glycol Chiller, which will maintain lager temps and enable crash cooling for 4 vessels. Each kit includes a dedicated temperature controller, pump, and tubing, each vessel can be connected to the glycol chiller with its own independent loop. The parallel design of this set up offers the ability to ferment at ale temps in one vessel, and maintain precise serve or crash cooling temps in another vessel. The Glycol Chiller can also be paired with our line of Ss Brite Tanks to hold beer at serving temperatures. This system offers both flexibility and expandability for your home brewery. The only problem is the price tag and that this unit is meant to work with a SS BrewTech homebrewing system. \$999 at <https://www.ssbrewtech.com/products/glycol>

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Brewer Rankings, Events, Tasting Calendar and Club Presentations

Club Calendar and Information

CLUB SCHEDULE

December 9: Jamil Zainasheff jzainasheff@hereticbrewing.com Recipe formulation; Brewing classic styles book

January 1: National Hangover Day

GEBL IPA Challenge - HELP NEEDED!

We need a devoted group of 3-4 folks to take on the GEBL IPA Challenge! There is still time to plan, coordinate and conduct the event in 2022! Many clubs are asking us to perform the event again, but this needs to be a team effort! It is also the only form of income for the club, besides club dues, which will contribute to meeting location & activities again when safely available

Membership Drive: We are always looking for new members. Please let us know if you have anyone interested. As suggested by one of our members, wearing your GEBL gear helps start a conversation. If you have any ideas please let us know.

If you would like to be added to the GEBL email list send your request to: ed_andresen@hotmail.com:

The GEBL Elected Club Officers for 2121 are:

- President: Jesse Free (president@gebl.org)
- Vice President: Todd Johnson (vicepresident@gebl.org)
- Treasurer: Pete Stachowiak (treasurer@gebl.org)
- Secretary: Will Fredin (secretary@gebl.org)
- Librarian: Robin Sparks (library@gebl.org)
- Newsletter: Bryan Collazo (editor@gebl.org)
- Membership Coordinator: Randy Neumaier (membership@gebl.org)

Our website is at <http://www.gebl.org/>

Our correspondence address is: GEBL PO Box 13392 Everett, WA 98206

If you would like to be added to the GEBL email list send your request to: ed_andresen@hotmail.com