



March 2002

Home Imbrewment

The Official Newsletter of the Hampton Roads Brewing and Tasting Society

Newsletter Editor: Pat Dabbs <mailto:dabbsp@cox.net>

The President's Corner – *Mike Pensinger*

Well my first month as president has been uneventful on the brewing scene. Revamping my brewing setup has left me unable to brew so I am now in a time crunch to complete my beers for the upcoming competition. Guess I will have to get on the stick and get brewing!

We accomplished some things during the general meeting that I was going to bring up so I will recap them for those of you that did not make it to the meeting.

- We voted to change the bylaws to specify that club elections will be held in December with nominations due in November. We will not close out nominations but will encourage anyone that wants to run to step forward. Hopefully we can have an actual election. This will also allow the incoming board to hash out a Beer of the Month schedule early enough to have beers completed in time.
- We voted to adjust the Beer of the Month schedule to include Brown Ales and Wheat beers. August will also include American Lagers to facilitate a club entry into the AHA Club only Competition. The agreement was made that the club would provide an avenue for an entry into the Club Only Competition at all times. This means that there will be two styles judged in August.

I encourage each and every one of you to get involved in the clubs group brews and competitions. I personally interpret the name of our club to imply that we brew and then taste the beers we brewed. Sign up with the brewing coordinator for the beers of the month and you even can get paid to brew for the club. The focus of our meetings should include brewing, evaluating fellow brewers' beers, styles, and techniques.

I look forward to a brewing year with the club and hope that we can produce some more of the outstanding beers we tasted last year.



The Meeting Place - Diane Catanzaro

The March 6 meeting of the HRB&TS will be at G. F. Keagan's, a new Irish pub-style restaurant and bar at Hilltop, thanks to a tip to your friendly meeting coordinator from Rob Sisson. G. F. Keagan's has an authentic Irish pub feel, with much of the interior and furnishings crafted in Ireland. Similarities to Jack Quinn's in downtown Norfolk are not coincidental; owner Geoff Fout developed both restaurants. On tap you will find Bass, Harp, Guinness, New Castle Brown, and a Sam Adams seasonal. Bottled selections include Young's Double Chocolate Stout, Harpoon IPA, Woodpecker cider, and a few others. So what's for dinner? Geoff says menu favorites include jumbo fried shrimp (he said they are as good or better than Steinhilbers'...), a drunken ribeye steak made with Irish whisky, a huge double-cut pork chop, and chicken spring rolls. You can choose from 5 fish (tuna, mahi, salmon, etc), several sauces, and two side dishes for \$12.95. They also have a lot of appetizers to choose from in case you are saving room for beer. The prices are for the most part great (unless you simply *have to* order the aged prime rib). The meeting starts at 7:30, but join us around 7:00 for a head start on dinner, a cool one, and a round of "Danny Boy."

Where: 1550 Laskin Road in Virginia Beach. 422-9545. Hilltop West. Location where First Colony used to be...right by our friends at Hilltop Brewing.

How: Take 264 East and exit at First Colonial Road North. At major intersection with Laskin, turn right on Laskin Road and get in left lane. Turn left at the second light to enter Hilltop shopping center. Note: Keagan's is taking reservations for a single-malt scotch party on March 5, with 4 highfalutin single malt scotches, a 4 course meal, and guest speakers. Cost is \$45 but HRB&TS members who are interested should ask Geoff about a club discount.

Important Reminder

Please bring homebrew only to all restaurant meetings. DO NOT bring commercial beers to restaurant meetings so that the club and the restaurant are in compliance with Virginia ABC laws. Commercial beers may be purchased at the restaurant. Commercial beers may be brought to home-based meetings only. The March meeting is a restaurant meeting.



Competition Connection - Tom Byrnes

Our Porter contest was a raging success featuring 9 entries. Thanks to Mike Allain for hosting this judging. We were very pleased with the number of members entering this contest. Hopefully future contests will benefit from this level of participation as we begin to emphasize brewing. This judging also featured a visit by our founder Lyle Brown. A certified beer judge Lyle offered unique insights on this style as well as valuable feedback to the brewers. I would suggest that all entrants review his comments as you strive to improve the quality of your beers. It is not often that we get a judge of his caliber at our local competitions.

The winners for the Porter Contest were:

First Place: Pat Dabbs Robust Porter

Second Place: Tom Byrnes Brown Porter

Third Place CJ & Diane Robust Porter

Congratulations to Pat Dabbs, our contest winner. His beer will be sent to New York in March to represent our club in the AHA Club only contest. This is Pat's second contest. Previously he took 2nd place in the Pale Ale contest.

Remember any member is welcome to come to the judging's. This is a way to learn about the styles and help your brewing. Besides you get to drink good homebrew two days per month. We do, however, ask members to be sure their entries conform to the BCJP guidelines. These can be accessed at www.beertown.org. If you would like to hold a judging meeting at your house, please let me know.

The 2002 Briess Cup competition is under way. Want to be the winner of this year's cup just starting entering club contest and accumulate points. The cup could be in your home by January.

BREISS CUP 2002 STANDINGS

BREWER	CUMULATIVE POINTS
Tom Byrnes	9
CJ/Diane	6
Doug Boyd	5
Victor Perotti	4
Pat Dabbs	4
Mike Marshburn	2
Sammy Samoluk	2
Mike Pensinger	1
Jennings Lyon	1
Mike Allain	1
Your Name Could Be Here	Start Brewing

Here are the current Briess Cup rules. If you have any feedback or suggested changes, please let me know and I will bring these suggestions to the next officers meeting. The Briess Cup will run from January through December of a given year. Members will accrue points from entering and winning the contests sponsored by the club. The only criterion is that multiple entries in the same contest must be different recipes. Points are as follows: 4 points for 1st place, 3 for 2nd, 2 for 3rd and 1 point for entry. The entry point is not awarded if the beer places in the contest. It is intended to encourage entries. The club officers may also award Briess points for members brewing for special events. The Competition Coordinator will keep the points. The club president will be the final arbiter of any disputes.

Briess Malting has been kind enough to sponsor this award, so please look for their products at your local homebrew retailer.

<http://www.briess.com/>

News from the Brewing Coordinator - C.J. Jones

As you are well aware, the Club will help subsidize your efforts in order to inspire you to bring homebrew to a club meeting. Here's the deal, Neal. You promise on a stack of "The New Complete Guide to Homebrewing" to bring six bottles of one of our beer of the month (BOTM) selections to a future meeting, and the Club helps take some of the sting out of giving up a six pack by picking up grain (for you all grainers) or extract (for my fellow extractors) or triple Lincolns for your efforts. We have volunteers for March through June already, but I'm soliciting brewers to fire the following BOTMs: mead; wheat beer; Belgian strong ale; a fruit/spice beer; a stout; or a bitter or pale ale. If you are interested in stepping up to the plate, see me at the next meeting. There will be some sort of group brewing sessions during 2002, but the dates/times etc. are not etched in stone at press time. Maybe next month, you just never know

Upcoming Beers of the Month

Month	BOTM	AHA Style Category	Judging Date	AHA Club Only Date
March	Porter *	15	February 20	March
April	Extract		March 20	
May	India Pale Ale *	7	April 17	May
June	Brown Ale		May 22	
July	Mead		June 19	
August	American Lager * Wheat Beer **	1	July 24	August
September	Strong Belgian Ale *		August 21	September/October
October	Club Recipe	18	September 25	
November	Fruit/Spice Beer *	21/22	October 23	November/December
December	Stout		November 20	
January	Bitter & English Pale Ale *	4	December 18	January/February

* Winner goes to AHA Club Only Contest

** Wheat Beer Club only Competition

The AHA's National homebrew Competition 2002 is gearing up. First Round entries are due between April 3 to 12. Our region sends all entries but cider to New York for judging. Those making the cut will be judged at the national convention in Dallas this June. Please consult the March/April 2002 issue of Zymurgy or www.Beertown.org for further information and entry forms



Brewing Automation

A Guide to Automating the Mashing Process

By Mike Pensinger

There are many ways to mash grain. Single step infusions, Multi-Step Infusions, Direct fired mash tuns, RIMS and HERMS systems to name a few. This article will focus on the Recirculating Infusion Mash System (RIMS) and its cousin the Heat Exchange Recirculating Mash System (HERMS).

The basic idea of these systems is a constant recirculation of the wort during the mashing process. The idea is that you can maintain an even temperature gradient throughout the mash and speed conversion of starches to sugars. Additionally the constant recirculation will set the grain bed into a very efficient filter and allow clear wort to be put in the boil pot.

The heart of all versions of the recirculating mash system is the pump. Pump selection can be difficult as there are many choices ranging from very inexpensive to very expensive. On the low end of the spectrum are 12V food grade pumps. These pumps are coupled to the motor by a shaft so a consideration is that wort will contact the shaft and possibly any foreign substances on it. Selecting a food grade pump will minimize these risks. Next are the more common pumps, the magnetically coupled pump. Magnetic drive design eliminates the multitude of problems related to shaft seals, including leakage and power draining friction. The drive magnet attached to the motor is magnetically coupled to a driven magnet/impeller which is housed in a fully enclosed/sealed, separate and sanitary pump housing. The lack of a through shaft means no leakage or friction loss at a shaft seal. The magnetic drive coupling provides built-in overload protection. Under adverse conditions the magnetic drive acts as a clutch to eliminate overloading and motor burnouts. This also allows flow control by throttling the output of the pump.

The next vital part is the heating system. This is where RIMS and HERMS differ. A RIMS system traditionally uses a heater element in a chamber that the wort passes through. Some considerations for the heater include wattage and surface area. If the wattage is too high the wort will scorch and caramelize on the element. The larger the surface area the less the watt density of the element. The most common way to get the optimum balance is to use a 240V water heater element that is folded over to increase the surface area. Usually these are 4500-5000 watts. In the RIMS system the element is run on 120V so the wattage is roughly $\frac{1}{4}$ of the rating to 1125-1250 watts. The result is about 10 watts per square inch. This reduces the possibility of scorching. An alternative to placing the element in the wort flow is to use a flexible heater pad wrapped around the housing to impart heat into the circulating wort. See the diagram to see how the element and chamber are constructed.

HERMS system differ from RIMS in that the heat is produce from a heat exchanger setup. Most commonly the heat exchanger consists of a coil immersed in the Hot Liquor Tank. The HLT is set at the desired mash temperature and the wort is circulated through the coil to pick up heat. This has the advantage of not overheating the wort and affecting the conversion process. The disadvantage is that heating the mass of water in the HLT can affect the speed of the ramp from rest to rest. One way to reduce this lag time is to reduce the amount of water that needs to be heated. Using a heater element in a small pot or chamber and placing the coil inside will allow faster ramps from rest to rest. This allows the same advantage of the traditional HERMS with out the time required to step the mash.

Control of all these heater elements can be accomplished by a number of means. Most simply a switch can be used to control the heater element. This will work best for a HERMS system as the wort will not be in contact with the hot element. A high wattage dimmer switch can be used and with a little practice and trial and error can be calibrated to different temperature settings. The ultimate control is achieved by a device called a Proportional, Integral and Differential (PID) controller. This device uses the input from a thermocouple to “learn” the heating characteristics of your system. They allow you to set a temperature and not over shoot it. It will also maintain that temperature until you set a new one.

In summary there are many variations of these systems. I have included a few web links to sites you may find useful.

<http://hbd.org/hollen/RIMS.html>
http://hbd.org/cdp/rims_inf.htm
<http://members.bellatlantic.net/~beermkr>
<http://hbd.org/kroyster/>
<http://hbd.org/rlaborde/rig.htm>
<http://hbd.org/mmills paw/>

Surf the pages and check the references listed on them. I think you will find that automation and brewing can co-exist well.

Editor's Notes – *Pat Dabbs*

We welcome all news items, original articles, business notices, and letters to the editor. Submittals for publication in the Home Imbrewment must be send to us as an e-mail or an e-mail attachment in any version of MS-Word or WordPerfect. Mail to dabbsp@cox.net.

Deadline for April's Newsletter is Saturday, March 21



About the HRB&TS

The Hampton Roads Brewing and Tasting Society is dedicated to promoting the enjoyment of homebrewing. The annual dues are \$15 per individual and \$20 per family. Members are encouraged to support the responsible enjoyment of beer and observe the beverage laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Persons attending HRB&TS meetings and events are solely liable for actions attendant to their participation. HRB&TS Maintains a NO SMOKING policy at all meetings so that members may better enjoy fine beers. Smoking is permitted during restaurant meetings in designated smoking areas.

Visit the HRB&TS on-line at: <http://groups.hamptonroads.com/hrbts>

