



The RUBBER CHICKEN



NEXT MEETING: Jaden James
4665 Broadmoor Ave SE #135, Grand Rapids
Competition 6:00/Meeting 7:00
January 15, 2020



Into The Future

Happy New Year! Happy New Decade! Here we go again for another trip around the sun.

Last month was our annual PTB Christmas Party and Fundraiser Charity Auction. We tried a new venue with **the generosity of President Emeritus Eric Fouch** and his whole Thornapple Brewing Company crew. Thank you very much to them for a successful event! The space worked well.

Another huge thanks to our club sponsors! They gave tons of great items. Some things like brewdays, mug clubs, grain, brewery swag, tours and tastings, beer pairing dinners, etc. What an awesome spread of good stuff. You can find our sponsor list at the end of this newsletter and on the PTB webpage.

Due to the generosity of our sponsors and all the attendees at the party we managed to raise \$3,494 at our auction this year. That means we made a **\$1,800 donation to Feeding America: West Michigan**. We are happy to give to them again to help feed the hungry in our town. They were even at the party to see what we do and answer questions. The balance of the proceeds will go to fund club events, support other brewing events, and maintain our club institutions.

Time for a little club civics lesson. With this new year comes some leadership elections. We alternate between officer elections every year. On one year it would be the President and the Secretary up for election, and on the next year it is the VP and the Treasurer. This year it is the Vice President, Ric Brown, and the Treasurer Greg Sanial, that are up for re-election. Ric has decided to step down as VP this year. He has served us well through some interesting times. **Ric, we all thank you for your efforts**, especially in better organizing and facilitating our Club Competitions. Thank you Sir! Greg Sanial has the distinction of being the only officer in

recent memory to not be voted into office. He stepped up when his predecessor vacated the position last May. As such, he has faithfully and skillfully fulfilled the remainder of Mr. Moss' term. **Greg has opted to remain in office and seek election this month.** Thank you Greg, and best of luck!

Similarly, the Steering committee also rotates every year. There are 4 spots on the steering committee that are filled by Presidential appointment (NOT AN ELECTED POSITION). The Steering Committee serves the membership as the ones that research, plan, and enact club events and programs as approved by the officers. Every other year 2 positions are eligible for appointment. Currently, the Steering Committee Roster is Paul Curran, Ian Purvis, Kathy Troxell, and Greg Sanial. This year Paul Curran has opted not to remain on the steering Committee as he is now the acting president of little brother club, the Brewsquitos. **Congrats and Good Luck Paul!** Ian is the other member whose term is up. That leaves 2 spots on the steering committee available to any paid member that wants to get more involved in the operation of the club. If this interests you, volunteer with President Thunder. Keep in mind that a higher level of commitment is expected from Steering Committee Members than that of the normal club member.

Be sure to be at our annual Business Meeting this January 15, at 7pm, at Jaden James Brewery (Cascade Winery). Come with your nominations and your votes. If you have any questions or issues with our sacred institution, I refer you to the club Bylaws here: <https://www.primetimebrewers.com/club-bylaws>. Thanks for reading and I hope to see you all there at the meeting!--DT

www.primetimebrewers.com

German residents buy up all of town's beer before white supremacists arrive for 'Shield and Sword Festival.'

<https://www.upworthy.com/german-residents-beer-nazi-festival>

If you're a white supremacist, I imagine drinking beer (or any other alcoholic beverage) is a nice way to relax and tune out the fact that you're a terrible person who's helping set human progress back at a rate the bubonic plague would be proud of. But for some self-

professed white supremacists, it wasn't quite so easy on a June weekend in Germany.

According to Newsweek, the hundreds of neo-nazis who flocked to the "Shield and Sword Festival" in Ostritz found themselves uncomfortably dry when a court imposed a liquor ban at their gathering of hateful bigots who also like to listen to awful music together. The ban's aim was to prevent any violence that might erupt (you know it would...) and the police confiscated more than a thousand gallons of alcohol from those attending the weekend-long event. They even posted pictures on Twitter of the alcohol they'd removed from participants.

But that's only half the story.

Residents of the town of Ostritz, who've had to deal with the bigots before (they threw the same festival last year on Hitler's birthday), knew that the ban wouldn't stop the festival-goers from trying to obtain more alcohol while in town. So the townspeople got together a week before the festival and devised a plan which would truly make the white supremacists focus on how terrible neo-nazi music is: They bought up the entire town's beer supply.

"We wanted to dry the Nazis out," Georg Salditt, a local activist, told reporters. "We thought, if an alcohol ban is coming, we'll empty the shelves at the Penny [supermarket]."

"For us it's important to send the message from Ostritz that there are people here who won't tolerate this, who say 'we have different values here, we're setting an example...' an unidentified local woman told ZDF Television.

At the same time the festival was going on, residents also staged two counter-protests and put on a "Peace Festival" to drive home the point that bigotry wasn't welcome. If the festival is held in the same town again next year, ticket-buyers should be aware that Ostritz isn't playing around when it says that white supremacists aren't welcome.

There's some good news, too: Aside from the fact that residents aren't afraid to send the message that they're intolerant of intolerance, attendance to the far-right music festival has drastically decreased in the past year. In 2018, 1,200 people attended, according to the BBC. This year? Approximately 500-600. Here's hoping the festival won't have a return engagement next year.

New law aims to keep small Michigan breweries competitive

<https://www.mlive.com/news/2019/12/new-law-aims-to-keep-small-michigan-breweries-competitive.html>

Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist II last month signed into law a bill that aims to keep Michigan's local breweries competitive by limiting the conditions alcohol manufacturers can put on distributors.

Michigan has a three-tier distribution system, meaning that a company that manufactures alcohol can't sell it directly to a bar, restaurant or liquor store. Instead, it gets to those places through a wholesaler.

But in some cases, said Rep. Beth Griffin, R-Mattawan, a large manufacturer can put biased conditions in its contracts with wholesalers that end up disadvantaging smaller manufacturers.

"It's the larger beer manufacturers that sometimes use their size to force those terms," Griffin said.

One example is not letting distributors with trucks wrapped in a big brand's logo use it to distribute any other kinds of beer.

A bipartisan package of bills -- House Bill 4960, sponsored by Rebekah Warren, D-Ann Arbor, and House Bill 4961, sponsored by Griffin -- don't let manufacturers put restrictions on which products can be in trucks with their logo on them in contracts.

The new laws also don't allow a large manufacturer to request a wholesaler's financial records as a condition for renewing an agreement, intentionally ship the wholesaler more alcohol than requested, or prohibit a wholesaler from using any of its property or equipment to promote or deliver products from other manufacturers.

The new law is welcomed by wholesalers.

"We applaud Lt. Gov. Gilchrist and the Legislature for standing up to large beer and wine producers and sending a strong message that the growth of Michigan's beer and wine industries won't be stymied by foreign producers, regardless how much clout they might have," said Spencer Nevins, president of the Michigan Beer & Wine Wholesalers Association, in a press release.

"Michigan's beer and wine industries have grown by leaps and bounds over the years and this new law will ensure breweries and wineries continue to grow and thrive."

The bills were approved by large margins in the House and Senate.

But one large manufacturer, Anheuser-Busch, opposed the bills as they wound through the legislature.

"We opposed this legislation because it interferes with our longstanding contracts with our wholesaler partners and makes it harder to do business in Michigan," said a spokesperson for the company in a statement.

Griffin said she sees a successful beer and wine market in Michigan, but it was time for the state to step in with regulations kept the playing field level between manufacturers and wholesalers.

"Those small breweries are successful and vibrant and growing," Griffin said. "We don't want them to get pushed out."

The new laws are Public Acts 126 and 127 of 2019.

ಁ(ツ)_/´ — First It Was Exploding Cans, Now 450 North Shrugs Off Miscalculated ABVs

<https://www.goodbeerhunting.com/sightlines/2019/12/30/first-it-was-exploding-cans-now-450-north-shrugs-off-miscalculated-abvs>

THE GIST

"Holy shiiiiit."

So began the text in a provocative screenshot that was circulating on Twitter in mid-December. The image, whose origins and authorship are unknown, claimed to show laboratory test results of a beer from Columbus, Indiana's 450 North Brewing Company.

The beer in question was Slushy XL Elephant Ears, a "smoothie-style" Berliner Weisse flavored with raspberry, blackberry, graham cracker, cinnamon, and vanilla, and which could be visually mistaken for a grape Slurpee. The release was part of the brewery's Slushy XL line, a hype-darling series of kettle-soured beers packaged in 16oz cans and flavored heavily with fruit purees after fermentation. The test results showed the beer's ABV was 2.56%, significantly lower than the 8% ABV listed on the can.

"If they sent this away to another lab the results would be exactly the same," the screenshot read. "Shocking."

Not only had the brewery apparently been wildly incorrect in its ABV calculations, but it was charging customers IPA-level prices—anywhere from \$18-\$25 per four-pack—that some might be reluctant to pay for such a low-strength beer.

450 North responded via a statement on Instagram posted Dec. 24. Signed by owners David and Brenda Simmons, the post breezily acknowledged the disparity, apologized, and stated the brewery would remove the ABV from its Slushy line until early 2020. It also said the brewery has since adjusted its ABV calculation process to "include any additional adjuncts added post-fermentation."

"The findings were unexpected," they wrote. "The independent testing of multiple Slushys has determined that our calculation process was critically flawed."

According to Instagram, the brewery has released seven Slushy beers since then, but did not disclose any of their ABVs, or assumed ABVs. The Simmons haven't addressed the issue since their lone response on Christmas Eve.

WHY IT MATTERS

This isn't 450 North's first quality control stumble related to its super-fruited beers. In August 2018, its brewers acknowledged some of its fruited, kettle-soured beer cans might explode if not refrigerated immediately after purchase, because yeast present in the cans could continue to ferment thanks to the the hummingbird

-nectar levels of sugar added post-fermentation. Can conditioning isn't new, but it is a delicate process that takes nuanced attention to allow a beer to finish gracefully—let alone safely. 450 North, however, opted to add levels of fruit that could have been a can's kryptonite.

"If you want something super fruity, that's the risk you've got to take, it seems like," 450 North's assistant brewer Brian Pine told the ABV Chicago podcast at the time. The brewery charges as much as \$25 for 16oz four-packs of these beers, noting on Instagram that "the amount of fruit added to our Slushys has always dictated the price." It's unclear if that's specific to actual fruit puree, or fruit juice, which caused the latest problem for the brewery.

But these ABV errors, which the brewery's Instagram post calls "critically flawed," raise additional red flags and beg even more questions. Namely, how did the brewery miscalculate its ABVs so drastically? Did it really not know its beers would be less alcoholic following significant additions of fruit? Did it just not care? Do its customers care?

The controversy also raises questions around the Simmons' two other beverage alcohol companies: Simmons Winery and Gnarly Grove Hard Cider. The couple clearly has an understanding of fermentation when it comes to a variety of alcohol categories, so what happened with 450 North?

Those questions can't be answered here, however, as 450 North did not return messages left with taproom staff, or direct messages on social media. The email address listed on 450 North's Instagram account is invalid. Additional follow-up calls to the brewery went unanswered; the brewery's voicemail was also full.

In its statement, the brewery—which opened in 2012 as an offshoot of the family's winemaking business—writes: "Over the past 7 years, many things have changed. Through the changes, our focus has shifted from simply making good quality beer to pushing the boundaries of what beer can be."

Those boundaries, it would seem, may come at the expense of drinkers' safety and the brewers' integrity.

In an interview with Craft Beer & Brewing Magazine published in early 2019, assistant brewer Brian Pine admitted to some difficulties transitioning from homebrewing to his job at 450 North, his first professional brewing job: "In terms of recipe development, that's really been the biggest shock. Things don't scale up linearly when you use the brewing software that's out there."

Not only do quality-assurance missteps pose a problem for customers, but some brewers worry these types of public mistakes will draw the undesired attention of regulators.

"One of the pillars of Brewers of Indiana Guild's mission statement is related to quality, and we certainly appreciate that 450 North has taken this issue seriously and are dealing with it promptly and directly," Rob Caputo, executive director of the Brewers of

Indiana Guild, tells GBH. He also notes that the guild has a subsidy program in place with Indianapolis' Sun King Brewing that defrays the cost of lab tests for small member breweries.

"We take product quality very seriously and have tried to facilitate options to help our brewery members in this area," Caputo says.

Some posts on social media and beer forums have asked why the ABV disparity matters so much, speculating that customers are angry just because they can't get as drunk as they thought off the Slushy beers. Whether evidenced via sales data or anecdotes from brewers, ABV clearly makes a difference to consumers, however.

So why does a correct ABV matter?

"First and foremost, it's the law," says Jason Perkins, brewmaster at Portland, Maine's Allagash Brewing Company and chair of the Brewers Association's Quality Subcommittee. The Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB), which approves beer labels for interstate sale, requires a beer's stated ABV to be within a .3% range of its actual, measurable ABV. The TTB can enforce this with periodic brewery audits.

But because 450 North's beers aren't sold across state lines, they don't require TTB approval, which is why it's perfectly legal for the brewery to remove the ABV listing on its Slushy beers. That scenario creates an additional series of ethical considerations for a business that sells beverages that impact decision-making and motor function.

Perkins says it's not realistic to expect every small brewery to purchase an Alcolyzer, a multi-thousand-dollar machine that's the industry standard for measuring alcohol in a beer. Many small breweries instead ship their beer to an outside lab or a larger brewery for testing, or estimate their ABV based on calculations of original and final gravity.

Given the lack of detail from 450 North, the beer community is left in the dark about any standard operating procedures in place at the brewery.

"I don't know the backstory [with 450 North], but there are plenty of people calculating ABV, just measuring density at the beginning and end of fermentation and using a handful of online calculators. There's a lot of reasons those can be inaccurate," Perkins says. "Those calculations are theoretical ... They're great for a homebrewer; they're great for getting a hypothetical. We use those for our early batches of pilot beers. To get real official alcohol analysis you really need an instrument to do it."

But you don't need an expensive instrument—just logic—to understand that adding copious amounts of fruit juices or purees to a beer post-fermentation will dilute its ABV. Still, Perkins says, such a wide ABV disparity—2.65% vs. 8%—likely can't be attributed solely to the puree's diluting effects.

For a brewery churning out eight new Slushy can releases on a Friday like 450 North, sending each one to be tested is cumbersome. In addition, the label art that can be important to these styles of beer must be designed and printed weeks in advance of brewers even finishing the beer.

CODO Design, the company that produces 450 North's can art, says it's created hundreds of "fun, weird" cans for the brewery over the past eight years. (CODO also lists voluntary disclosure of ABV on beer cans as one of its design best practices.)

450 North's statement re-commits the brewery to its grueling pace of fruit-slush releases, noting that it will continue its "pursuit to push the limits of beer in an effort to bring you the most innovative products possible." It also doubled down on phrasing used by the Brewers Association to define and market members like 450 North: "The beauty of independent craft beer is that we are a community bound by our passion for the craft."

To top it all off, the brewery seems to think that if its products come with a risk of explosion or inconsistent ABV, so be it: "We have made some mistakes in the past, and we'll probably make some mistakes in the future. However, we have always dealt with adversity in stride and we will do the same now."

The question is whether customers' craving for sweet, puree-heavy beers will trump any QA doubts. Comments on 450 North's Instagram statement show a mix of disappointment ("They definitely knew, they just got caught. Especially for what they charge per beer, they should've been miles ahead of stuff like this. They really need to make it up to customers, there is people that drive hours for it and they've been duped") and apathy ("Moving on!!! Drop the 9th can and post allotments").

Having built its popularity by embracing demand for sought-after and traded New England-style IPA and "slushy" beers, 450 North has conditioned fans not to expect any transparency from its beers.

But will they expect it of the brewery?

December Meeting Notes:

If you weren't there, you missed a great spread of food, beer, & most importantly, swag. A huge thank you to all the sponsors that donated!

If you're not aware, you can subscribe to our website (<https://www.primetimebrewers.com/>) to get email notifications when new content is added. From the home page, scroll to the bottom, & enter your email. It's really that easy.

Send PayPal payments to: primetimebrewersmi@gmail.com

PRIMETIME BREWERS COMPETITION PAGE

2020 Competition Schedule

Jan – American Strong Ale. Category 22B
Feb – Irish Stout. Category 15B
Mar – SMASH (single malt and single hop)
Apr – Best of cellar cider.
May – Belgian Pale Ale. Category 24B
Jun – Beer and Food Pairing. No need to cook with the beer.
Jul – New England IPA. Category 21B specialty
Must use Kveik yeast
Aug – Munich Helles. Category 4A
Sep – Pale American Ale. Category 18B
Oct – Specialty Smoked Beer. Category 32B
Nov – Bell's Two Hearted Clone
Dec – Christmas Party

Non-PTB Competitions can be found at:
www.homebrewersassociation.org

2019 Brewer of the Year Final Standings

Ian Purvis	88
Greg Sanial	36
Tom Malkewitz	32
Jeff Carlson	24
Matt Moss	20
Paul Curran	16
Jeremy Gavin	16
George Lawlor	12
Chad Zomerlei	12
Joel Bierling	8
Paul Fitzgerald	4
Mies Martin	4
Kathy Troxell	4

2020 First Thursday Destinations

Jan	Broad Leaf
Feb	Alebird
Mar	Railtown
Apr	Atwater
May	Rockford Brewing
Jun	Harmony Brewing
Jul	Founders
Aug	Gravel Bottom
Sep	Wise Men Distillery
Oct	TwoGuys Brewing
Nov	Mitten Brewing Co
Dec	Brewery Vivant

Club Officers

President: Jeremy Gavin	(jabrews@gmail.com)
V. P.: Ric Brown	(ricbrown67@gmail.com)
Treasurer: Greg Sanial	(gregory.sanial@gmail.com)
Sec & RC Editor: Chad Zomerlei	(zomerlcp@gmail.com)

SAVE THE DATE(S)

Jan 18 Club Brew Day
Feb 22 15th Annual Winter Beer Fest

Other events at: <http://primetimebrewers.com>

November American Porter & Stout Club Competition Results:

1st	Greg Sanial
2nd	Tom Malkewitz
3rd	Ian Purvis

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