

Rubber Chicken April 2023/President's Letter

Your club officers met formally on March 22, the first time for a long while - pre-Covid at least! - and bounced around a few ideas. We're not going to have a set schedule but we will meet again on May 9 so if anyone has complaints (nah!), or something they think we should consider or discuss, please mention it to Ian Purvis, Mies Martin, Greg Sanial or Bill Smith.

We're also going to re-establish the 'Steering Committee' of ideally four volunteers and a club officer to meet every few months to suggest and plan club activities outside the regular meetings, for example the annual Michigan Homebrew Festival (beer camp, 3rd weekend in August), and an annual bus trip to breweries a bit further afield. Volunteers are invited; please have a word with me at the next meeting or send me a text.

Thursty Thursdays have been very well-attended this year and we hope that continues. We would just remind members their first beer is on the club, and non-members are asked to pay their own way. Last Thursday's gathering at Fountain Hill Brewery turned into a long and very sociable session with an interesting discussion about different sparging approaches. I learned one can cold-sparge; who knew? It was so sociable that neither of the officers present remembered to cover the first round of beers, but no-one complained, not yet anyway!

A small change in procedure is coming for our monthly competitions when judged by BJCP style: entries submitted in unmarked brown 12 oz bottles will be brought to the judges unopened, as in proper BJCP competitions, so the judges can open and evaluate them at first pour. Entries in other containers - growlers, flasks, whatever - will be poured behind a screen, as previously, and brought to the judges as promptly as feasible. It remains everyone's choice how they want to bring their beers.

Chad Banks has offered to develop a standard format for recording the winning beer recipes more uniformly on our website, so we'll have a go at that at the next meeting. Thanks Chad.

The bi-weekly sensory sessions organized by Matthew Bair and Andrew Perry of Rivertown Homebrewers have been excellent. Last session we judged three wheat beers: 1D American Wheat, 10A German Weissbier (aka Hefeweizen or Weizenbier), and 24A Belgian Witbier, with interesting common elements and marked differences. The sessions are still open to anyone who'd like to join in, just go to BeerCityBJCP.org to register.

A box of assorted club T-shirts and Brew Shirts has surfaced. I'll bring them along to the next meeting. Not a wide selection I'm afraid, but if any of these appeal we have the following:
T-shirts: 9 Small, 6 Medium, 1 each 2XL, 3XL and 5XL.
Brew shirts: 1 Small and 2 Medium.

If you've ever fancied growing your own hops - it's hard to beat a Harvest Ale made with hops picked fresh from the bine and dropped straight into the kettle! - Siciliano's are taking orders up to April 19 for hop plants from Sandy Ridge Farms. They have a list of 40+ varieties, from AlphaAroma to Zeus, which will be delivered to the store the week of May 22. Call or visit the store for details.

If you haven't been to the PTB club website recently please check it out. The 'look' is still pretty much the same - for now - but Bill Smith has added some new links in the menu and really improved the presentation of upcoming events on the home page and in the events calendar. On that point, here are some dates to note. Those in black are fixed and in red are still tentative.

April 16, closing date to drop off entries for the **Siciliano's Cup** competition. Judging is on April 22, and results announced at Big Brew Day, see below.

April 15, Club Brew Day at Mies Martin's house. 8:00 am onwards. Bring your own equipment, ingredients and a chair. He has GR city water (see <https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov>). Mies will fire up a grill so bring something to cook and/or share if you wish.

April 19, monthly meeting, at **Creston Brewery**, Plainfield Ave. 6:00 pm for the competition - Irish Red Ale Ale, 15A (BJCP style judging) - and 7:00 pm for the main meeting where their head brewer Abbie Groff will show us her brewhouse and talk about 'Hitting Your Numbers', getting to grips with new/used equipment and the factors affecting extract efficiency.

April 21, closing date for entries to the **17th Annual Great Lakes International Cider and Perry Competition (GLINTCAP)**, only the world's largest such competition, with serious bragging rights for medal winners - just ask our own Jeff Carlson. Register at glintcap.org/register

May 4, Thursty Thursday at **Harmony Brewing**, Lake Drive SE 6:00 pm with a tour (I hope) of their original, small, brewing operation.

May 6, Big Brew Day in the parking lot of **Trailpoint Brewing**, Lake Michigan Drive. Recipe and ingredients for a **Red Rye IPA** will be provided to each team by Siciliano's. So far it looks as if Bill Smith, Mies Martin, Rick Kruse, Matt Mead, Paul Fitzgerald and I will be brewing. Let me know if I missed anyone! Helpers, hangers-on and drinkers welcome. We also need kegs for the club jockey box, or growlers to pour.

May 17, monthly meeting, hopefully **Adesanya Mead & Microbrewery, 28th St TBC** 6:00 pm for the competition, Fruit Mead, M2 (beauty contest), and 7:00 pm for the main meeting and we'll ask the winners to talk discuss their process.

June 1, Thursty Thursday at **Gravel Bottom Craft Brewing**, Ada. 6:00 pm.

June 21, monthly meeting at **Farmhouse Cider**, Hudsonville. 6:00 pm. This is our annual Beer & Food Pairing competition (beauty contest judging), so bring your best of both.

July 6, Thursty Thursday at **Pink Barrel Cellars**, 6 Mile Rd NW

July 19, Founders Brewing, Grandville Ave, 6:00 pm for the competition and 7:00 pm for a TOUR OF THEIR BREWING OPERATION. Save the date now. As we get closer we'll need a headcount. Our comp. Beer will be Munich Dunkel, 8A (BJCP style judging).

That's it for now members, I hope to see everyone on May 15th and/or 19th. Keep an eye on the website for more updates.

Cheers!
Ian Purvis
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