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DREGS FROM THE KEG

December 2011



**Santa wants to know; have
you been naughtily nice?**

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Foam at the Top

Chris Voisey, Strand President

Happy Holidays! I'd like to start off by saying thank you to all our club members for your support with the club over the past two years! It has been a great experience and it did definitely get me back into brewing and learning some new things. I am looking forward to seeing the club evolve further in 2012 under President Borland! My congratulations go out to him and the rest of the crew for 2012. It looks like you have a fantastic group of Club Officers for 2012!!

On another note, I am going to continue to try and help the website evolve to the next level. There have been many requests to get it updated and we have a lot of plans to address those requirements. Unfortunately we just haven't been able to spend the time needed on it yet. I am committed to helping this through to closure in 2012. Some of the key things we are going to have are an updated look from our new logo to hopefully better communication through email subscriptions and integration with something like Google Calendar. These are definitely some of the top requests that we had from many club members.

Thank you again for all your support in the past 2 years!

I hope to see many of you at our annual Holiday party that is once again being hosted by the Fafard's on Saturday, December 10th! Thanks again go out to Steve and Christie for hosting us one more year!

November Meeting Recap

Rives Borland, Strand Vice-President

If you missed the November meeting, you missed a great one! To get into the holiday spirit, our theme for the meeting was beer and food pairings. We had quite a

few people participate and some wonderful pairings! I brought 3 pairings. The first was prosciutto wrapped melon with my Kölsch homebrew. The second was Aecht Schlenkerla Rauchbier Urbock with pepper jack and croccatini crackers. The third was The Bruery Black Tuesday with chocolate and cappuccino truffles. Jim Wilson brought a German Pils with Doritos and pimento cheese. Steve Fafard brought Jolly Pumpkin Bam Bière (a personal favorite of mine and I currently have a clone fermenting) with organic 3-seed crackers. Rick Wirsing brought an IPA and smoked Gouda. Brian Kellough brought avocado and tropical wildflower mead with dark chocolate. Mike Haisma brought a RIS and a Tripel with "the best parmesan in the world." Alex Schlee brought an IPA with cheddar. Also, Ryan P. brought a Saison, Jay Ankeney brought mead, Tom Drury brought a DIPA, Jeff Sanders brought a club brew Scotch Ale, Kotra Blume brought a Belgian Pale Ale, and Graham Hebson brought a Black IPA. You can see that there was no shortage of great beer and we had some new faces show up that we hope to see again. I'm hoping that we can do some more beer and food pairings at future meetings and maybe even get into some more detailed discussions about why certain foods pair well with certain beer styles.

November also meant elections month. Most of the positions went uncontested, so things went fairly smoothly. Although it was initially hard to get some volunteers for a few of the positions, in the end I feel that we ended up with a great board of officers who want to do the jobs and are more than competent. The results were:

President: Rives Borland

Vice-President: Jeff Sanders

Administrator: Mike Haisma

Treasurer: Brian Kellough

Activities: Bryan Willis

Jim Wilson returns as Dregs Editor next year and Chris will remain in charge of the website. One issue that came up during elections was what the pre-requisites to qualify for a position are. The way I read the current bylaws is that all candidates must be currently in good standing with the club but the president is the only position that has a minimum requirement of 12 months prior good standing. Some members seemed to think there may be some un-written understanding about the requirements for other positions, particularly treasurer. Some members were concerned that there should be a minimum length of prior membership requirement for

someone who will be handling the club's money. This makes sense to me and perhaps this coming year we should have a review of our bylaws.

I'm certainly looking forward to leading the club in 2012. I have a good relationship with all the new officers and I feel that we will be able to get a lot of great things accomplished next year. One of my first priorities, and this was discussed a bit at the meeting, is finding someone to act as the lead Pacific Brewers Cup competition organizer. 2012 is our year to host the PBC and we have a reputation for putting on a great competition. I intend to meet or exceed the standard set in past years. If you are interested in the competition organizer position, contact me ASAP. I want to fill that position prior to the January meeting, if possible. Also, be on the lookout very soon for a general survey about the club, which I hope as many people as possible will fill out to get us started on the right foot. The meeting wrapped up with a reminder about the Iron Brewer Challenge and then the raffle. We announced that we are shooting for the February meeting for the first Iron Brewer Challenge tasting. The ingredients that were randomly chosen for this first round were Northern Brewer hops, smoked malt of any kind, and bitter orange peel. Again, the idea is that everyone who wants to participate brews a beer using at least (but not limited to) those ingredients. The point is to try to get creative. Then everyone brings in their results to the February meeting and the club samples them. We will have a friendly vote for the best entry and there will be some kind of prize awarded. We had a great raffle, where we raffled off a ticket to the Bruery RS Barrel Tasting (Jim Wilson was the lucky winner) and some interesting beers. A couple of the more notable beers we raffled off were Jolly Pumpkin La Parcela and The Bruery Oude Tart. We hope to keep the raffles interesting next year, so remember to bring some cash to the meetings and support the club.

What's Brewing?

[Esther Tung](#), Strand Events Director

Club Event

Come one; come all to the SBC Holiday Party at the Fafard's. There will of course be food in addition to the club 'bar' that will be pouring any/all homebrew offerings that show up at the door. If you're not partaking of the bar offerings, please bring your preferred libation and we'll be happy to keep it chilled

(or warm) for you. In addition, dessert offerings are welcome.



Club Brew

Saturday, December 17. 10:00 a.m.

South Bay Brewing Supply Company

A brew leader is needed for this one to happen!

Let [Jeff](#) know if you're interested.

Spent Grains

[Rob Proffitt](#), Strand Treasurer

I love this time of year with holidays, music and great seasonal beers. I'm writing this article with a bottle of Celebration from Sierra Nevada, because I'm celebrating my last month as treasurer. In the past two years I've created a procedure to ensure our tax-exempt status remains current with the federal government, converted our membership list to a database format, and updated our membership application. But I'm sure my successor can improve on these changes even further. I look forward to finally being a civilian for a while so I can just enjoy the beer.

The club already has 4 paid members for 2012, including two new members. Welcome to Kotra Blume and Tom Drury for the 2012 year. We ended 2011 with 51 members, including 16 new members. Let's all help out our new treasurer by renewing early next year. We need some seed money for the Pacific Brewers Cup, which we are hosting next year, and a good renewal effort will help significantly. Assuming the Christmas party expenses are in line with estimates, we should end the year with about \$1,300 in the bank.

Thanks to all who helped make my time as treasurer easy and good luck to the new executive board.

Building My Single Tier Brewstand – A “Brutus” Style Build

By Graham Hebson

About a year and a half ago I made the jump into all grain brewing with equipment I already had. The only thing I needed was a mash tun. I got a round 5 gallon Igloo cooler with a false bottom. After a few batches I realized that this mash tun wasn't big enough for high gravity beers in 5 gallon batches or any 10 gallon batches, so I jumped in and made one out of an ice chest that was big enough for 10 gallon batches and high gravity 5 gallon brews.

I got 2 old kegs from a friend of mine who was moving and started off on the path to building my brewstand. I decided to cut the top off one of the kegs and use the other unaltered one as a fermenter for 10 gallon brews. I wanted to make a single tier brew stand using 3 kegs (HLT, mash tun, kettle). But that was very ambitious so I made do with what I could. For now I had 1 keg to use as a keggie so let's start with that. This is how I cut the lid off.

Step 1: Get a cheap angle grinder from Harbor Freight. Mine was about \$25.



Make a jig like this to get a nice round cut.



Make sure you get a cut off wheel; they are thinner than the one that it comes with the grinder. Make a few passes with the grinder; don't cut all the way through on the first pass. You'll notice that the edges will be rough, I took some 60 grit sand paper and smoothed out the edges in a few minutes, both the top and bottom edge.



Step 2:

Now it's time to drill the holes for the bulkhead and sight glass fittings. You can use a weld less bulkhead

fitting available at the homebrew shop or you can weld one in like I did. My neighbor across the street has a small flux core welder which I borrowed add fittings to my keggie. Drill a small pilot hole so you can use a step bit to make larger holes for the bulkhead and sight glass.



After drilling the holes, install the plumbing and you are all set. I bought a false bottom for my mash tun online and it fits perfect.

Step 3:

Once your kegs are modified the fun really begins. It's time to cut, weld, grind and paint. I had never welded anything in my life so I was apprehensive but it actually is pretty easy to do with a flux core welder which is about \$130 at Harbor Freight. First thing to do is hash out how big you want the system to be. Using some graph paper, I sketched out some plans and figured I'd need about 60 feet of 1.5 inch square tubing in 1/8th inch thickness. I already had a compound miter saw so I bought a cutoff wheel/blade from Home Depot for about \$12. This tool is pretty much mandatory to get all the angles correct. Now it's time to get started. I made the top and bottom sections first, then mounted the legs second. I also made the system tall enough to store my 3 kegs under it and out of the way.







I purchased two BG-14 Banjo Burners from www.agrisupply.com for \$29 each along with a high pressure regulator and hose.



I bought the gas manifold from Home Depot and used water heater gas lines from HD as well. Added 2 March pumps to move the liquid around and I'm all set. Painted it with high temp header paint from an auto parts store.

Saved over \$1000 and taught myself a little about welding in the process. All in all it was a great project that just took a few weeks to build after work but it was fun and well worth the effort. There is a ton of info on these systems on www.homebrewtalk.com under the DIY section which really helped me out. If anyone wants to know more I am happy to share or help out with a build if needed.

Secrets of Jay's Mead

By Jay Ankeney

I've always maintained there are no secrets to my mead making technique, but after my Traditional Sweet Mead took a 1st Place (and 2nd Best of Show) at the 2011 Pacific Brewers Cup, several members asked for a demonstration of how it is concocted.

So on Sunday, November 13th, I invited interested Strand Brewers to come by the vast Ankeney estate to witness the process and Tony, Tammy, Rives, Rick and Dan were able to squeeze into my tiny apartment.



Here's my recipe for 5 gallons of Traditional Sweet Mead:

- 15 lbs Buckwheat Honey
- Wyeast Sweet Mead yeast #4184
- 1 Tsp Wyeast yeast nutrient
- 5 gallons unfiltered tap water

That's it! Some meadsters like to add some acid blend to the honey, with the intent of adjusting the pH and balancing the honey's sweetness. But frankly, I like the sweet taste of a good varietal honey so I abandoned the acid blend several years ago. For full disclosure, I have sometimes tempered an overly-sweet mead with a portion from a tarter batch before entering into competitions. The mead that scored so well at the recent PBC had no acid blend at all.

If there is any magic in the process, it may start with selection of the honey. For several years I've been using Buckwheat or Wildflower Honey purchased from the Energy Bee Farm stand at the Manhattan Beach Farmer's Market. It is open Tuesdays 11 AM to 4 or 5 PM and one of their great benefits is that the nice lady in attendance, Lek, is happy to let buyers sample tastes of their varietal honey before buying. I usually purchase one 12 lb tub and another 3 lb jar to make up the needed 15 lbs.

I show up at her stand about once or twice a year and Lek usually has a good selection of honeys on hand in 3 lb jars. But if you want to make sure she has a 12 lb tub of a specific variety for you to pick up, you might want

to call her husband Jeff a day or two ahead of time at 310-670-5760 to pre-order what you need. Jeff is not only a fine apiarist (beekeeper), but also brings his hives to local farms to help pollinate their crops.



BTW, as behooves a premium honey, Energy Bee sells a 12 lb tub for about \$45 these days, with another \$15 for the 3 lb jar. So that's a \$60 investment in ingredients. But since I am embarking on a year-long project, I figure it's well worth the price.

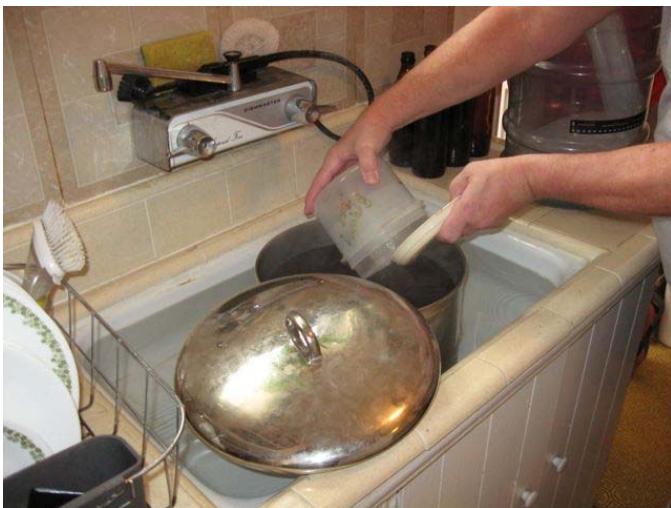


One issue often debated among meadsters is how--or whether to--sterilize the "must" before fermentation. "Must" is to meadsters what "wort" is to brewers. Options range from boiling it (I fear the loss of aromatic overtones) or adding sodium metabisulfite to the water often in the form of Camden tablets like wine makers use (I try to avoid chemicals), to just adding the yeast to water and hoping for the best (I'm concerned there may be some contaminants in the honey residue and don't want to risk off flavors). So I have adopted a halfway approach.

If you have participated in one of my “stovetop brew” sessions, you have seen that I employ multiple pots to heat liquids over the smaller stovetop burners than the high BTU jet propane cookers make possible. So, I put about 3 gallons of water in my main brew pot over one burner and raise it to 170 degrees. Then the fire is turned off and the honey is poured into the pot. It is covered and left at about that temperature for 20 minutes.



Meanwhile, another pot over a separate burner is boiling an additional 1 ½ gallons of water that I will later use to dilute the main batch of must once it is cooled. I then follow my usual stovetop brew procedures which include using a sterile ice cube to cool the must.



Let me truncate the rest of my fermentation regimen since many of you have seen it. Suffice it to say, I practice “closed, single stage fermentation” which means I pour 3 gallons of must through a sterilized funnel into the 5 gallon carboy and increase its volume to about the 4 gallon level with the cooled, pre-boiled

water from the second brew pot. The yeast is added about half way through this process so that it will self mix.



Three or four days later, after the foam has risen and fallen within the carboy, I top the mixture up to a full 5 gallons with more pre-boiled and cooled water. Sharp eyed readers will note that I have lined the carboy with an FDA-approved, low density polyethylene bag. But you have probably heard about those already. I’m convinced that since I’m intending to let the mead sit in the carboy for up to a whole year at room temperature, the sterile, chemical-free fermenting environment these bags provide is crucial to preserving the delicate nuances of a good mead.

Then about a year later or whenever my patience or supply of mead on hand runs out, I siphon the mead into 8 or 9 two-liter PET soft drink bottles. I prefer Diet Vernor’s Ginger Ale bottles since I always have a good supply of them on hand. No, I don’t sterilize these bottles since I count on the fact that diet pop doesn’t have anything organic in it. It seems to work.

To clarify the mead, I cascade it from one set of 2 liter bottles to another on about 2 or 3 week cycle, pouring it from one set of Vernor's bottles into another to progressively leave the trub behind until the liquid is clear, or what meadsters call "brilliant". Altogether it requires about 24 to 32 two liter bottles to fully clarify a 5 gallon batch, but as I said I like Diet Vernor's and have a whole year to collect them. During this process, I've found that if you carefully pour from one bottle to another you can avoid using a racking tube.

The mead is ready to drink after it clears, but does seem to benefit from staying in those PET bottles for some time. It all depends on how patient, or thirsty, you are. So that's the process. I'd like to see the Strand Brewers become a real mead making powerhouse so if any of you have any more questions just throw them my way. Meanwhile, I know we have several accomplished meadsters in the club and I'd very much appreciate comparing our procedures. One great thing about mead making is that it is pretty hard to screw it up.

The Kettle

[Jim Wilson](#), Dregs Editor

Aperitifs

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the Dregs this year. If you didn't give it a try, I encourage you to jump in the pool. It's an easy process and we can all learn a lot more together than by ourselves. I do have one small request. If you are able to format your draft in an 11 point font (Dregs is currently published in Calibri) and 2 columns, the process of assembling the Dregs is simplified. This reduces the workload on current and future Editors a bit and would be much appreciated.

As Rives mentioned, I was the lucky winner of a raffle prize he contributed at the Nov meeting. This was a ticket to go to the Bruery's RS Barrel Tasting on the 19th where five bars poured more than 30 creative cask conditioned beers. We were given wristbands with pull off tabs to limit consumption to 10 tastes. Rives and I scored big when we saw that we knew the bartenders and managed to get tastes of all 30 beers. WooHoo! My favs were 2 Turtle Doves with chocolate and nuts, 2011 Black Tuesday, Pinotlambicus and Rugbrød regardless of how it's pronounced.

As I write this, today's the sixth judging class in a series of eight to prepare for a BJCP exam on Jan 28. About 15 out of the original 20 students have hung in there and they're a good group who've done their studying and

ask insightful questions. I think everyone who elects to take the exam will do fine.

[Pink Boots!](#)

[Westvleteren news](#) and wait, there's [more](#)

[18 Drinking Songs to Toast the End of Prohibition](#)

[Not just your average beer cellar](#)

Digestifs

Brewing Better Beer, by Gordon Strong

Report by Jim Wilson

In May I mentioned a new brewing book and thought that June's Dregs would feature a report on it. Events overcame me and that didn't work out. Usually, book reports are easy to write. It's not a pretty process, but I keep editing until I vomit and then there's a chance the piece is readable.

BBB is an extraordinary book that didn't give up its story easily. It's an introspective discussion about brewing that's not a recipe, how to or text book. It borrows from each genre but mostly suggests ways to think about brewing to help you reach your own goals. It has no instant answers for brewing better beer but will appeal to all-grain brewers who want to improve their beer with a pinch of individuality. This can mean brewing closer to classic Styles, venturing out with new flavors or whatever spins your prayer wheel. BBB will be a different book for each reader, depending on what you bring to the party and where you want to go with it.

In Gordon's words on p. 26: "...I will try to lead you through the decision process and discuss some of the choices I have made in developing a personal brewing style. The goal isn't to have you emulate how I brew, but to use how I brew to help you develop your own way of brewing."

The author is well qualified to make this approach work. He's a three time Ninkasi winner (National homebrewer of the year) and current President of the BJCP. As a Grand Master Level V, Gordon is also the highest ranked Judge in the program. Over 6300 wannabees have taken the BJCP exam. Only 34 have scored 90 or more, accumulated 100 experience points and the GM Service Requirement to earn the entry level rank of GM 1. To make GM 5, Gordon earned more than 500 experience

points. Putting his accomplishment into perspective, it took me 4 ½ years to reach GM 1. You can do the math.

This is an easy to read book that blends the author's experience with information from current sources. At the same time it's a complex read that treats many topics from a unique point of view. I've read it three times and each reread has highlighted something that didn't resonate earlier. It's the most useful reference book now on my shelf.

BBB has three sections: Philosophy, Mastering Your Craft, and Applying Your Knowledge. Philosophy introduces Strong's approach to brewing and points you toward devising your own. Mastering Your Craft covers process, equipment and ingredients. His approach is insightful. On base malt for instance, he doesn't teach what it is, but how to taste, evaluate and think about using it. You're not taught how to make dark beers, but how to think about different ways of using ingredients and process to affect the end product. The last and most important section deals with structured beer evaluation that will allow you to add feedback to your practice.

Currently, my favorite parts of the book discuss the compromises between ingredients and process that are required to brew the best damn beer. To get there, Strong encourages that we:

- Blend art and science
- Channel non beer influences
- Use intuition to reach effortless elegance
- Create our own brewing style

You might fancy his take on equipment (there's no perfect set of tools), process (why do you mash roasted grains anyway?) or his personal taste preferences (nothing harsh and a dry finish for all but strong, sipping beers). There is also a wonderful discussion of water chemistry where he downplays chemical additions and makes it clear that Alka-Seltzer is not his favorite beer flavor.

BBB isn't your ordinary homebrewing book. We've come a long way since Charlie's stumbling, bumbling Joy of Brewing series and it's a good thing we have.

Competition Calendar

[Rives Borland](#), Strand Vice-President

Club-Only Competitions

Best entry at the club meeting will be sent to the judging location.

For more info on club-only competitions, go to <http://www.homebrewersassociation.org/pages/competitions/club-only-competitions>

January/February 2012

Dark Lagers

Entries are due February 10, 2012 and judging will be held February 18, 2012.

Hosted by the [Silverado Homebrew Club of St. Charles, IL](#), this competition covers BJCP category 4.

For more information, contact Robert Keck at keckbobb@netscape.net.

March/April 2012

Stout it Out Loud!

Entries are due March 17, 2012 and judging will be held March 24, 2012.

Hosted by Kelly Kruegel and the [Rock Hoppers club of Parker, CO](#), this competition covers BJCP category 13.

For more information, contact Kelly Kruegel at kruegel.kelly@gmail.com.

May 2012

Scottish and Irish Ale

Entries are due May 10, 2012 and judging will be held May 19, 2012.

Hosted by Mike Porter and [the Knights of the Brown Bottle club](#) of Arlington, TX, this competition covers BJCP category 9.

For more information, contact Mike Porter at msrwl5@sbcglobal.net.

Local Competitions: *in order of entry deadline*

01/21/2012 Doug King Memorial Homebrew Competition (no web site)

Woodland Hills, CA

Contact: [Ed Kochanowski](#) Phone: (818) 917-2467

Entry Fee: \$6.00 Entry Deadline: **01/12/2012**

05/27/2012 [California Festival of Beers Home Brewer Competition](#)

San Luis Obispo, CA

Contact: [Holly Todd](#) Phone: (805) 544-2266

Entry Deadline: **05/01/2012**

For a complete list of BJCP competitions, go to http://www.bjcp.org/apps/comp_schedule/competition_schedule.php

2012 Heads Up

January	COC – Dark Lagers
February	Doug King Memorial
March	COC – Stout
May	COC - Scottish and Irish Ale

Your stories are welcome in the *Dregs*. Upgrade your brewery? Fine tune your practice? Take a road trip? Do well in a competition? Have recipes to share? Read a good beer book? Have club related pictures, especially for the *Dregs* cover? Send all those, or anything else you think would be interesting to [Jim Wilson](#). Thanks!



The objectives of the Strand Brewers Club are to brew beer and share information about brewing, presentation, consumption, judging and history of beer. We promote and encourage homebrewing competition and hope to foster general goodwill through the making and consuming of this noble and most excellent beverage. We aim to brew the best damn beer.

It is our policy to brew and consume beer strictly for fun. Under no circumstances does Strand support or condone in any manner the sale or barter of homebrewed beer, the operation of a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol by a member or participant in any club event or the provision of alcohol to minors.

Strand Brewers Mentor Pool

These members have volunteered to answer brewing questions and to help beginning brewers learn the craft.

Name	Phone	Email	Location
Bill Krouss	310-831-6352	bkrouss (at) cox dot net	Rancho Palos Verdes
Dave Peterson	310-530-3168	diablo390 (at) aol dot com	Torrance
Jay Ankeney	310-545-3983	jayankeney (at) mac dot com	Manhattan Beach
Jim Hilbing	310-798-0911	james (at) hilbing dot us	Redondo Beach
Jim Wilson	310-316-2374	editor (at) strandbrewersclub dot com	Redondo Beach
Steve Fafard	310-373-1724	sfafard (at) cox dot net	Rolling Hills Estates

2011 Club Officers

President:	Chris Voisey	310-941-4810	president (at) strandbrewersclub dot com
Vice-President:	Rives Borland	310-469-3634	vp (at) strandbrewersclub dot com
Treasurer:	Rob Proffitt	310-787-9511	treasurer (at) strandbrewersclub dot com
Activities:	Esther Tung	310-227-1063	activities (at) strandbrewersclub dot com
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