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DREGS FROM THE KEG

July 2013



**SUMMERTIME IS FOR THE Bs
(BREWING, BEACH, BICYCLES, BBBBBB. . .)**

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Foam at the Top

[Rives Borland](#), Strand President

I'm fresh off the [35th Annual American Homebrewers Association National Homebrewers Conference in Philadelphia](#). It was another incredible experience! I'm already looking forward to next year in Grand Rapids, MI! I highly encourage everyone in the club to try to attend in the future and we'll definitely be sending out reminders as to when tickets are going on sale in February, as they are sure to sell out again fast.

I'm very happy to announce that Jeff Sanders and I brought home a [Bronze medal for the club in category 22: smoke-flavored and wood-aged beers](#). There were 384 entries in this category! Our winning beer was a Russian Imperial Stout (RIS) that we brewed the morning of the 2012 summer party, last July. The recipe can be found [here](#). (Note: this website was just converted from one to Brewtoad and I don't like the new format as much. Some detail was lost). All malt was from [South Bay Brewing Supply Co.](#), so it was whatever brands they carry. I believe we mashed at 154 deg F. We fermented at 67 deg F for 4-5 weeks, and then crash cooled it. We then aged it for 6 months in a 5 gallon [Balcones Distillery Rumble](#) barrel at room temperature. While it's not a standard category of spirit, I thought the flavors were mostly rum-like, so I submitted it as a rum barrel aged RIS in Category 22C. It saw another three months or so of cold conditioning in a keg prior to bottling it for the final round of the competition. Unfortunately, I had to leave the conference a little early this year for a wedding, so I wasn't able to attend the awards Banquet. But I did watch the live feed on my phone, which the Brewing Network broadcast. I only have a few bottles left, but I'll try to bring one

to the next meeting. I think several members already tried some a few meetings ago. I'm currently aging a Belgian Dark Strong Ale (the base recipe for the club Cabernet BA Dark Sour Ale) in the same barrel. I'm really hoping to see more Strand Brewers place in the competition in the future and I encourage everyone to enter the first round next March.

I took a red-eye to Philadelphia Tuesday evening and shared a cab to the conference hotel with Drew Beechum, who was on my flight. From there, I pretty much went right on the pre-conference bus trip to [Dogfish Head Brewings and Eats in Rehoboth Beach, DE](#). We are lucky to have very good distribution of Dogfish Head beers in California, so I had already tried most of their more unique beers that they bottle. But the brewpub offered about a half dozen one-off beers and some beers poured through their famous Randall.



This is the original "Randall the Enamel Animal."

We had a buffet style lunch and I thought the food was awesome, especially their pizza and the pork sandwich. They are actually distilling now at the brewpub, as well, in very small batches and their distiller Alison was running some vodka off while we were there. They had inexpensive flights of their spirits and many some interesting ingredients infused into their vodka and rum. I'm bringing a bottle of their

[Jin](#) made with several botanicals, including whole leaf hops, back to California. Perhaps I'll bring it to the next meeting if people want to sample some.



This flight of Dogfish Head Spirits included a peanut butter infused vodka.

We then went to the [Dogfish Head Craft Brewery in Milton, DE](#). It was also impressive. They are in the middle of expanding their bottling line in a whole new warehouse with state of the art equipment. We had a good tour of the place, where we were handed off to four different “off-centered” tour guides, each specializing in one area of the brewery: hot side wort production, cold side fermentation, wood aging and yeast maintenance, and packaging.



This is the original SABCO brewing system of Sam Calgione, founder of Dogfish Head Craft Brewery.

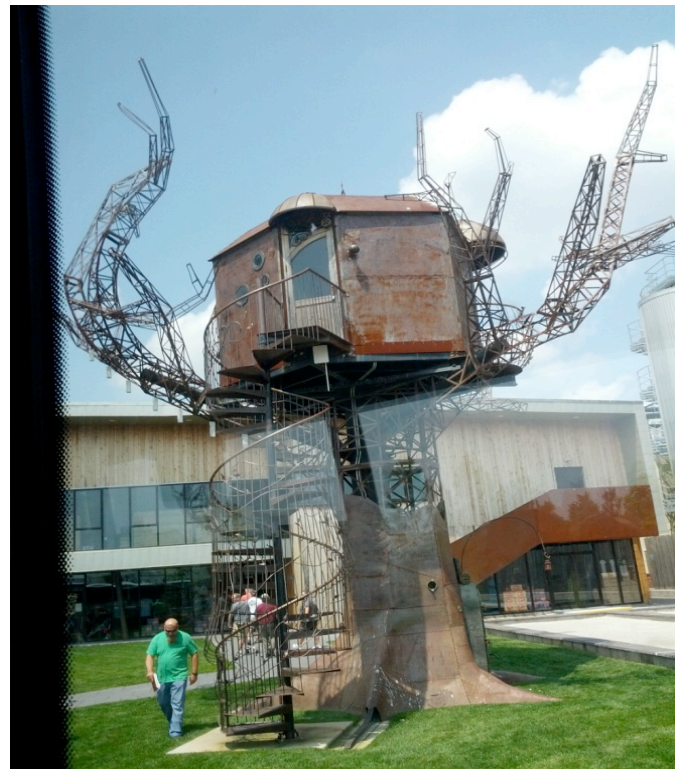
Everything was hard piped, but in a flexible design to move whatever they want wherever,

which created an impressive matrix of stainless pipe.



That is a lot of stainless steel piping.

Dogfish Head is a little unique.



The [Steampunk Tree House](#) debuted at the Burning Man and now resides at the Dogfish Head Craft Brewery.

We saw the famous Oak and Palo Santo wood foeder and Sam Calgione's private cellar.

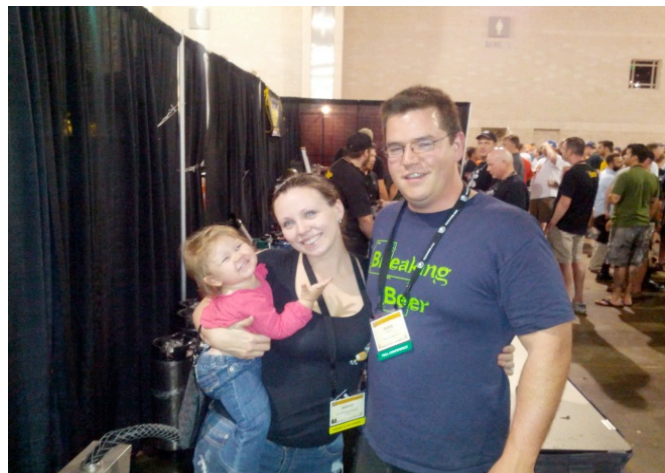


Oak Foeders at Dogfish Head Craft Brewery



Sam Calgione's Private Cellar

After we got back to Philly, I headed right over to the World Café Live for the Brewing Network's 8th Anniversary Party. There were two levels of beer and music, with a lineup of probably 50 different beers and meads from all over the country. Several different bands played, including the teenagers from the School of Rock, who were the inspiration for the movie.



Beevo Moore of the Brewing Network

After the party, I met Greg Bishop of the [YTM Homebrew Club](#) and he took me to a few good beer spots. One of which was [The Devils Den](#) where they had a lot of local beers on draft and Cantillon available in the bottle. Philly has quite the craft beer and drinking culture, with 125 craft beer bars and 625 liquor licenses, according to Bishop.

On Thursday morning I judged Category 11 English Brown Ales at the final round of the NHC, which was an interesting experience. There were three groups of judges in our category. I was in a group that had a range of every rank of judge from Recognized to Master. That made for an interesting range of perspectives with everyone having something to offer. The Master judge in our group was Randy Scorby, 2011 Homebrewer of the Year. In order to speed up the judging, we used the [checklist version of the BJCP score sheet](#). I think this really did cut the judging time by two-thirds to one-half the normal time compared to the regular score sheet.

In the afternoon I met up with Tammy Minion and Tony Hale. Tammy and I checked out some of the seminars. I saw one on maintaining mixed wild yeast and lactic bacteria cultures, which inspired me to commit to brewing a lot more sour beer this year. I also saw a good presentation on malting science and selecting malt, from John Mallet, Head of Operations at [Bell's Brewery](#). All of the presentations, including audio, will once again be available at [the AHA conference website](#) at some point soon for AHA member's access.

After that, I went to check out the [Nodding Head Pub](#) during the dinner break. They had a 7 barrel brew system. I liked their Berliner Weiss. Then it was back to the convention center for the pro-brewers night. Pro brewers night was fun as always, but I thought maybe not quite as good as the past two years, just in terms of beer selection. I think some of the breweries that I know are awesome held back a little from bringing their really good stuff. Allagash did bring a one-off of their Triple fermented with the Gulden Draak yeast and Bells had some great beers.



Sam Calgione!

I think my highlight was actually Moonlight Meadery. I had an iced (freeze concentrated/ice distilled) mead that was amazing. I'm actually in Massachusetts right now and I'm going to head up to NH today to visit the meadery.



Michael Fairbrother of Moonlight Meadery

On Friday Tammy, Tony and I visited the famous [Monk's Café](#), with their beer bible. You may have seen their [Flemish Sour Ale](#) that is brewed for them by Brouwerij Van Steenberge on the shelf in California. They did have a really great draft and bottle lineup. I got a bottle of [Stoudt's 50/25 anniversary ale](#) to share with the group.

July Meeting

July 10th at 7 pm



Monkish Brewing Co.

20311 S. Western Ave, Torrance, CA

Tammy and I attended most of the AHA governing committee meeting. The numbers they showed relating to how AHA membership and the conference have grown were pretty staggering. This year there were 3,400 attendees at the conference compared to 1,800 last year. This made it the largest gathering of homebrewers ever! The most interesting topic to me that they touched on was the [Research and Education Fund](#). They will fund research projects submitted by homebrewers with the results to be presented at a future National Homebrewers Conference, in the form of a poster presentation or seminar. The selection committee includes a wide array of highly qualified people from the brewing industry, PhDs, microbiologists, engineers, etc. It got me thinking that maybe we could also take our educational initiative for each meeting in the club one step further and do a similar thing on a smaller scale. Members could submit proposals for experiments or research they want to perform, which would be reviewed by the officer's board or a separate committee. We could set aside a portion of our budget to fund these activities with the condition that the results are presented to the club in some form: a presentation at a meeting, a Dregs article, a website blog/post, or all of the above. We already talked at the last meeting about

dedicating some of our club brews to experiments, rather than just straight brews. This would formalize the process.



Randy Mosher, author of numerous articles and books about beer and brewing.

Once again, the highlight of the conference for me was club night. It was interesting to see what the East Coast clubs were up to. There was everything from flights of a dozen single hop IPAs, to experimental sours, to wheat wines aged in Sam Adams Utopias barrels. The hospitality suites raged on late into the evening every night, so I can't say that I got a lot of sleep. I did have a couple late night cheesesteaks at Pat's and Geno's. I give Philly a big thumbs up, overall, for hosting a great conference!



Rives and Philly Locals talking beer. He might be dreaming this part of the conference.



Jeff Claudill of Wyeast. This is the guy that gave Rives lots of advice for selecting and propagating the Brettanomyces and Lactic Bacteria for the Club Cabernet Sour Barrel beer.

On to club business. As mentioned at the June meeting, we have decided not to have a summer party this year. The past few years the turnout has not been great and there are so many other events going on during the summer. Instead, we are going to focus efforts on a great Oktoberfest party to occur sometime in September.

Immediately coming up this month, we have our July Club meeting at [Monkish Brewing](#) on Wednesday, July 10th from 7 to 9PM. That's right; there have been several requests to mix up the meeting location, so we are going to try to do that a few times a year. We have tried meeting at a bar when they are open for normal business but it is just too noisy and crowded. There are now several new local breweries, however, where we can meet in a quieter setting and also get to check out what they have going on. Henry will give a tour, talk about his brewing process, and take questions. We may also be getting The [Phantom Carriage](#) guys there to talk about their project. Please plan to buy some beers from the taproom and support Monkish, since they are opening on a special night for us.

On Saturday, July 13th, the annual club brew on The Strand is taking place at Alex Schlee's place beginning at 9AM. Alex's address is 3904 The Strand, Manhattan Beach. This is a not-to-be-missed event! We will be brewing and people watching on Alex's patio, which is right on the Manhattan Beach Strand. Alex's wife, Bernadette, is an amazing cook and will

be preparing a lunch buffet of traditional German food. Please make every effort to attend. You won't regret it! See the flyer at the end of The Dregs, look for a reminder email and check the Strand [facebook group](#) for more details.

Upcoming events in August include the BBBBB, our craft beer bike crawl. We changed the date to the 17th to avoid a conflict for our members that want to judge or steward for the [LA County Fair Homebrew Competition judging, which is on the 3rd and is being supervised by the Maltose Falcons Home Brewing Society.](#)

Looking to September, the Long Beach Homebrewers have set the date for the 2013 [Pacific Brewers Cup](#) for Saturday, September 14th at [Smog City Brewing](#). Registration for entries, judging and stewarding is now open and the drop off window will be August 23rd through August 31th. [South Bay Brewing Supply](#) will be one of the drop off locations. This year the Best of Show winner will have the opportunity to brew their beer at [Ohana Brewing Co.](#) I highly encourage everyone to enter and participate in judging or stewarding. For other local beer-related events, don't forget to check Tammy's [Calendar](#). Also, don't forget to start planning for the October Iron Brewer. The ingredients are El Dorado Hops, Crystal Malt and Sour Cherries. Since El Dorado hops are hard to come by, I'll be placing an online order very soon. I'll order more than I need but, if you haven't already, let me know if you want some so I can make sure I order enough. Last month I had the only entry for the Iron Brewer and it was lame! Prior to that, we had been on a good streak with a lot of entries at each round. Please let's get a good turnout of entries for Round 6. Don't let the ingredients scare you. If you need advice, don't hesitate to contact me or one of the Mentors listed at the back of the Dregs. Well, that's it from me for this month. Now read the rest of the Dregs and get brewing!

Strand and Education

By Jim Wilson

In a nutshell, I'm all for it.



Jim Wilson, BJCP Grand Master II

Backing up a bit, Rives had an excellent idea last year when he proposed we have an educational moment at every meeting. This might be a tasting, technical presentation, or DIY discussion just as examples. I agreed to jump start the process by presenting four times this year with the hope that others would keep the ball rolling. We're off to a good start so far. Last meeting, Rives encouraged members to participate, regardless of their brewing experience. No problem there.

Then, he identified that a discussion with experimental results has a high educational value. I agree, but do think we'll get more out of smaller discussions every month rather than a few widely spaced mega projects. Including test results can be a big effort and seems to work against the whole every month thing.

Having said all that, here's my flip flop de jour. At the August meeting, I'll discuss wort oxygenation. While researching the topic, I found that oxygenation data is inconsistent. To overcome this, I asked Rives if he could support a test of various oxygenation methods since he has a virgin dissolved oxygen (DO) meter. He said he would and we're trying to pull something together for the second half of July or early August depending on travel schedules.

If any member has test design experience, your ideas are most welcome. Please [email](#) them to me. Also, if any member has a pure oxygen injection setup they could bring or loan, that would be wonderful. I imagine we have some budget to support this test. Initially, the thought is small, maybe one quart samples of tap and boiled water, 40, 60 and 80 SG worts made with sucrose and variations on six methods of aeration and oxygenation. Obvious variables to be defined are headspace and test duration. I imagine the experts can add more. I can think of 40+ combinations of samples and methods off the top which will make for a full day. When we pull this off, I'll discuss the results at a meeting and write up them up for The Dregs and perhaps a wider audience. Whether that's August or later is TBD.

Competition Calendar

[Jeff Sanders](#), Strand Vice-President

Iron Brewer Challenge Ingredients

Round 6

October 9, 2013 Club Meeting
El Dorado Hops, Crystal Malt and Sour
Cherries

Local Competitions: in order of entry deadline

Antelope Valley Fair Homebrew Competition
Lancaster, CA **Entries due July 19th**.
Judging July 23rd. Entry fee: \$7.
Contact: Becky McRoberts.
Phone (661) 948-6060.
Email: corey@braverybrewing.com

Ventura County Fair Amateur Beer Contest
Ventura, CA **Entries due July 27th**.
Judging July 28th. Entry fee: \$5.
Contact: Charlotte Crocker.
Phone (805) 532-9973.
Email: agriculture@venturacountyfair.org

BrewFest Encinitas Homebrew Competition
Cardiff, CA **Entries due July 31st**.
Judging August 3rd. Entry fee: \$7.
Contact: Jenny DuRose.
Phone (831) 419-3650.
Email: jdrose@gmail.com

Pacific Brewers Cup
Long Beach, CA **Entries due August 31st**.
Judging September 14th. Entry fee: \$TBD.
Contact: Enrique Piceno.
Phone (626) 497-8390.
Website: <http://www.pacificbrewerscup.com>
Email: coordinator@pacificbrewerscup.com

OC Fest of Ales Home Brew Challenge
Anaheim, CA **Entries due September 10th**.
Judging September 14th. Entry fee: \$5.
Contact: Shelley Reeves.
Phone (714) 956-3586.
Email: downtownshell@yahoo.com

University City Home Brew Contest
San Diego, CA **Entries due September 27th**.
Judging October 5th. Entry fee: \$10 for first entry; \$5 for each additional entry.
Contact: Michelle Lolly
Phone (858) 922-3302.
Email: mflolly@wilsonlolly.com

Many more competitions are going on around the country and around the world so.....
Go to www.homebrewersassociation.org for a complete list.

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

Spent Grains

[Brian Kellough](#), Strand Treasurer

We enter June with about \$3,500 in the bank. Inflows included \$118 in dues and \$55 in raffle money from the last meeting. We have some

great prizes coming up at the raffles, so get your tickets at the meetings and let's have a great year for the raffle!



Raffle Prizes at the June Meeting.

We have 48 paid memberships, including four new members: Kevin Jones, Jessica Wayman, Robert Alexovich and Jimmy Galenbach. Welcome to the club! I still need applications from Christian Simms, Kelly Simms, Eddie Martinez, Eddie's Wife and Rudy Inauen. You can fill it out electronically and just email it now! [Click here](#). Let's keep up the good work, and spread the word about our club and the benefits it provides! We are now only 12 from our goal of 60 members.

To get reimbursed for club expenses please bring receipts to the meetings and I'll write you a check or scan your receipts and email them to treasurer@strandbrewersclub.com and I'll send you a check through online billpay.

Membership Renewal Time!

We have 23 members from 2012 who have not renewed yet. Don't forget that dues for 2013 are due. Dues are \$35 (\$37 through paypal) for individual membership and \$45 (\$48 through paypal) including a spouse. TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR YOU, WE HAVE AN ONLINE PAYMENT OPTION THROUGH PAYPAL! [Click here](#) for information. It is nominally more expensive, but infinitely more convenient for all involved! If you don't like paying online, still fill out the application form electronically and email it, then just mail a check made out to "Strand Brewers Club" to me at 10890 Whitburn St, Culver City, CA 90230. You can also hand me a check or cash at the next club meeting

(however, all applications should still be submitted electronically).

Attention returning and current members: If you think your contact information is different than what we have on file, please fill out the online membership application at the link above. It is a fillable pdf you can save and keep for your records. Annually we'll ask renewing members to check their forms and make sure the information is current.

What's On Tap

[Tammy Minion](#), Strand Activities Director

July 6th through 14th

First Annual Sweet & Sour Festival at Lucky Balwins. More information at: <http://www.luckybaldwins.com/>

July 11th

Drake's Aroma Coma & Aroma Prieta Release Party at Select Beer – 5 PM to 10 PM. <http://www.selectbeerstore.com>

July 9th

The Med & Hanger 24 Beer Dinner at Mediterraneo. The event features a 4-course beer inspired menu from Chef Amber Caudle. Cost is \$50/person (tax and gratuity not included). The menu includes four beers and four courses. Call 310.318.2666 to reserve your spot.

July 11th

Figueroa Mountain Brewing Meet the Brewer Night at Beachwood BBQ, Seal Beach. More details at <http://beachwoodbbq.com/events.html>

July 13th

5th Annual Pechanga Microbrew & Chilli Cook-off at Pechanga Resort and Casino – 1 PM to 5 PM. Tickets are \$45 each and include admission, logo sample pilsner glass for tasting, chili samples and tastings from over 30 Microbreweries. Tickets can be purchased at www.pechanga.com or at the event.

July 13th

Club Brew on the Strand – 9 AM. Join us for a beautiful day at the beach. Brewing starts at 9am at Alex Schlee's home. A buffet lunch will be provided. Bring your brewing gear. For more info see the flyer at the end of The Dregs.

July 14th

Beer Fest for Beer Geeks at Stout Burgers and Beers, Studio City – 1 PM to 8 PM. There will be 18 breweries with 2 beers per brewery. All beers involved will be either barrel aged, sours, or unique one-offs. Essentially, beers that are hard or impossible to get otherwise. The event is \$60 in advance or \$70 at the door. For a list of breweries and to purchase tickets: <http://www.stoutburgersandbeers.com/beerfest>.

July 25th

Lagers and Ales Beyond Pilsners and Pales: Big, Bold, Bodacious Beers at Total Wine & More, Redondo Beach – 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM. Cost is \$15 per person. Call 310-542-1460 to reserve a seat. More details at: <http://www.totalwine.com/eng/event/18687>

July 27th

Maltose Falcons San Diego Bus Trip. The cost is \$85 and includes Breakwater, Societe, Whitelabs, Ballast Point, Alesmith breweries. More details at: <http://www.maltosefalcons.com/events/2013-07-27-san-diego-bus-trip-2013>

For more news about upcoming events check the [Strand Brewers Club Facebook Page](#) and [Tammy's Calendar](#).



Rives won the Iron Brewer contest at the June meeting. The required ingredients were saaz hops, lactose and peppercorns.

Strand Brewer of the Year Points Standings

[Mike Haisma](#), Strand Communications

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Rives and Jeff on their bronze medal in this year's National Homebrew Competition, which somewhat shuffles around the #2 through #4 ranks compared to last month.

Once again, a friendly reminder: these standings are only as accurate as the information they are based upon. So I need everyone's help to keep them up-to-date. If you or someone you know has participated in a points-earning activity (see the full list in the January 2013 edition of the Dregs), please send me an email and I will update accordingly.

Name	Points
Jim Hilbing	129
Rives Borland	77
Jim Wilson	42
Jeff Sanders	41
Mike Haisma	39



Brewing the Best Damn Beer

Name	Points
Hunter Thacker	19
Steve Fafard	18
Bob Wilson	13
Tom Kulzak	11
Rick Wirsing	10
Ryan Ferrasci Nate Federman Dave Peterson	9
Ryan Penrod	8
Jared Carson	7
Rich Thornton Jim Webster Jay Ankeney Eddie Martinez	6
Adam Pike	5
Donna Boyce David Eaves	4
Tammy Minion Steve Gardner Steve Dehart Micheal Litsey Janet Fukumoto	3
Victor Pyter Lisa Cooper Lee Richardson Charlie Thacker	2
Wally Senff Rory Dewan Ron Cooper Robert Hernandez Graham Hebson Ethan Allen Doug Toperzer Dan Bottoms Christian Sims Charlie Wallace Brian Basye Brendan Binns	1

The Ambrosia of Olympus

Jay Ankeney

Many refer to it as “The Ambrosia of Olympus” or “The Nectar of the Gods” but we homebrewers simply call it “Mead”—or fermented honey. Although its origins are lost to history with the earliest record dating back to 2000 B.C., mead is usually considered the first fermented beverage since all you need to make mead is honey, water and yeast and the ancients in Europe, Asia and Africa discovered that all of those can occur naturally.

I’ve had a lot of fun researching and developing my mead recipe with a gratifying modicum of success, earning 1st Place (and Runner-Up Best of Show) at repeated Pacific Brewers Cups as well as firsts at the NHC Regional and Los Angeles County Fair homebrew competitions.



Evidence of Jay’s Success

But as I announced at the January meeting of the Strand Brewers, I will no longer be entering my mead into the Pacific Brewers Cup, our most significant competition. That’s mostly because I want to encourage other Strand Brewers to put their best meads up for prizes, but also partially to enable me to serve as a mead judge in future competitions.

According to the BJCP/AHA, mead can be entered in categories of “Traditional Mead” (straight honey, often called “varietal” depending on style), “Melomel” (honey with fruit), “Cyser” (honey with apples) “Pyment” (honey with grapes) and

“Metheglin” (honey with spices). Each can be sweet or dry, still or sparkling. There is also “Braggot” which is a combination of mead and beer around Christmas time you might serve carolers “mulled mead” which combines fruit and spice adjuncts and is sometimes referred to as “Wassail”. But for simplicity we’ll focus on traditional mead for now.

So I’m inviting all of our club members to copy my recipe and procedures and make The Strand Brewers a mead powerhouse in upcoming competitions.

On Saturday, June 22nd, three of our members, Jim Webster, Doug Toperzer and Dan Bottoms came by my pad for a mead brewing session and to help provide a visual explanation of the process.



Dan, Jim, Jay and Doug getting ready for a brewing session.

My recipe for a 5 gallon batch is simple: 15 lbs. of premium honey (I like the Buckwheat variety), a tablespoon of Wyeast Yeast Nutrient, and a smack pack of Wyeast Sweet Mead yeast # 4184. Then leave in a cool place to ferment for up to a full year at about room temperature. OK, beach room temperature.

Just so you know, I follow a “closed, single stage fermentation” regimen in my stovetop process for making both mead and beer. This involves filling the 5 gallon fermenting carboy about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way for initial fermentation, leaving a 3” to 4” head space in which the foaming kräusen head can rise and fall back

into the wort. When that has settled down after a few days, I top the batch up to the full 5 gallons with water that has been pre-boiled to sterilize and then left overnight on the stove to cool before adding to the wort.

Getting the best honey is the first challenge. I’ve had great success with the Buckwheat variety honey I purchase from Energy Bee Farms at the Manhattan Beach Farmers Market.



Manhattan Beach Farmer's Market

It’s made by Jeff Erb and their booth is run by his wife, Let, a very friendly lady who lets you taste samples of their various honeys before buying.



The Energy Bee Farms Booth

They usually have plenty on hand during the 11AM to 4 PM market on Tuesdays next to the Manhattan Beach City Hall, but it can’t hurt to

call ahead to make sure they have what you need (310-670-5760). Or you can send an email to jeff.erb.energybee@gmail.com.

I get one 12 lb. tub (\$48) and another 3 lb. jar (\$15) for a total of 15 lbs.

During our mead session we Strand Brewers began by raising 3 gallons of water in my 4 gallon stovetop brew kettle to 170 degrees before pouring in the honey.



Doug pouring the honey.

Then it was left at that temperature for 20 minutes. This is partially to help sterilize the water/honey mixture (now called “must”, the mead maker’s equivalent of a beer brewer’s “wort”), and partially to totally liquefy the honey. It is questionable whether sterilization is needed at all since honey is one of the few foods that does not spoil. Some other meadsters use Sodium Metabisulfite but I prefer not to use chemicals whenever possible, and many actually boil the honey but to me that seems to deteriorate the subtle flavors. I’ve found that 170 degrees for 20 minutes insures a clean result while preserving the delicate aromatic overtones of the honey—most importantly the pollen impression crucial to fine meads.

Meanwhile, a smaller Dutch oven pot, or “brew kettle #2”, is on a separate stovetop burner heating up another couple of gallons of additional water. Once cooled, this will supplement the 3 gallons of must from the brewpot raising the volume in the 5 gallon

carboy to the desired 4 gallons for initial fermentation. A few days later, once kräusening has finished and activity in the fermenter is quiet, the brew pot will be used to pre-sterilize another gallon of “topping off” water to accomplish the full 5 gallon batch of mead.

After the 20 minute pseudo-boil, we cooled the must by putting the brew kettle into a sink of cool water and plopping in a sterile ice cube. This is made a day ahead of time by pouring boiling water into a Tupperware container and, after it after it cools down a bit, putting it into the freezer to solidify. Floating the Tupperware pot in the cooling water releases the sterile ice cube from the plastic and then you can simply slide the ice cube carefully into the must. Since I know I’ll be adding additional pre-boiled water from brew kettle #2 to fulfill the desired 4 gallon level for initial fermentation, I’m not too concerned about the total volume of liquid at this point, so the additional water contributed by the sterile ice cube doesn’t matter much.



Summon the Sterile Ice Cube!



Release the Sterile Ice Cube!

If there is anything truly special about my mead making technique, it's that I give it a very clean environment in which to ferment. After all, I'll be leaving it in the carboy for a full year to let those aggressive yeasts contribute even the lowest level of complex sugars into the mead's multifaceted flavor profile. BTW, don't expect to see a lot of activity during the year. You have to live on trust that the yeast is still doing its thing.

I find glass carboys far too dangerous to use, having seen a friend sent to the emergency room after one was dropped and almost took off his foot when it exploded.

So I recommend lining a plastic carboy with an FDA-approved, 2 mil, low density polyethylene bag.



... into the carboy.

Please note these "liners" are not just home-use plastic bags. They are specifically authorized for food storage by the FDA, purchased from authorized vendors, and designed to help sterilize medical equipment in gamma radiation baths. Years ago I contacted the FDA about them and was assured they would be appropriate for fermentation purposes. The down side is that since they are not usually sold commercially, you have to get them from a plastic supply source in batches of 1,000 or so. A few years ago several Strand Brewers split an order, and if there is interest we can try doing that again.

The ice cube cooled the must to below skin temperature by about 15–20 minutes in a sink of cool water with the water in brew kettle #2 in the same bath. Then we sterilized a funnel and a saucepan with boiling water, and used the saucepan to ladle the must into the carboy.



Doug demonstrating how to insert ...



... the low density polyethylene liner ...



Dan pouring the must into the lined carboy.

A Wyeast #4184 Sweet Mead Yeast pack had been smacked 4 hours previously and was ready to pitch.



Jay pitching the yeast.

This was then washed down with the remaining must and some of the water from brew kettle #2 to reach about 4 gallons.



Jim pouring the rest of the must.

Then the carboy was set aside to kräusen for a few days after which I will top it up to 5 gallons with pre-boiled and cooled water.



Doug, Jim and Dan encouraging fermentation.

Then comes the hard part—waiting up to a year to taste the results. You can sample the mead earlier if you like because this is homebrewing and we should mess around with it and have fun. But I've found that patience has its rewards.

That's why I try to brew at least one batch of mead per annum to keep the supply available. Often these days, with demand increasing, two batches. Hey, it's a cheap hobby which lets you drink the results and share with friends.



Doug and Jim tasting some mead.

During the Saturday session, our intrepid Strand Brewers also helped start the bottling—and most importantly the clearing process—of last year's batch.

My technique for clearing the mead does not involve the traditional “fining” strategy of adding various substances like isinglass, bentonite or gelatin to the mead since you may have noticed I shy away from chemical additives, but simply transferring the mead into multiple generations of 2 liter PET (Polyethylene terephthalate) bottles, the kind soft drinks come in.

Although I have a personal preference for Vernor's Diet Ginger Ale, any 2 liter bottles will do, I first give them a quick rinse with a splash of pre-boiled/cooled water to remove any soda pop residue, and then syphon the mead into them.



Jim syphoning mead into bottles.

It usually takes 8 - 10 bottles to handle a 5 gallon batch, recognizing that a little spillage is expected to honor the spirit of Ninkasi, the ancient Sumerian goddess of brewing

I let these bottles sit for a couple of weeks, during which the “lees” (what barley brewers call “trub”) will precipitate out to form a layer of mud on the bottom.

That's when this clearing process becomes multi-generational. I carefully decant the mead off that mud layer in the first set of 2 liter containers into a fresh set of PET bottles. I

collect an arsenal of Diet Vernor's bottle throughout the year specifically for this purpose.

After the third or fourth generation of decanting the mead from one set of bottles to the next, the mead has clarified to the level of “brilliance” which judges seem to appreciate. As a practical matter, I transfer the mead from the 2 liter plastic bottles into something more visually pleasing to dispense to thirsty fans.



And the result . . . Ambrosia of Olympus.

So there it is. Please copy and enjoy. Sitting around the campfire late at night telling tales I try to make this ancient art of mead making something complex and magical. But in reality, it's so darned simple I hope every Strand Brewer tries it. Then, for the glory of the club, you can take home the ribbons in the future.



Happy Mead Makers

References

By [Rick Wirsing](#), Dregs Editor

The issue of which craft breweries will fill whose growlers continues to develop. [The Bruery](#) has published its [new policy regarding growlers](#). According to this policy, they will fill 2-liter Palla-style swing top growlers that either have The Bruery™ brand, or that are blank (have no brand at all). They are now selling empty blank growlers in addition to the growlers that have The Bruery™ brand for the same price, \$10. So no, you cannot take a growler branded by another craft brewery to The Bruery to have it filled. Likewise, [Russian River Brewing Company](#) has also issued a [new growler filling policy](#). Russian River will only fill its own growlers.



You need this – a bike that is designed to carry a growler.

And speaking of growlers, ever had one explode? There apparently have been a few reports of exploding growlers from [Mystery Brewing, Hillsborough, NC](#). [The brewery has responded](#) that its growlers are safe, but suggests the problem has to do with refrigeration. Mystery Brewing does not filter or pasteurize its beer so perhaps the explosions were the result of fermentation occurring in the growlers.

Enough about growlers. How about the [BeerPouch](#)? It's like a giant "Capri Sun bag" for beer. One of the first brewers to sell beer in the BeerPouch was [Altamont Beer Works](#), Livermore, CA. Altamont began using the BeerPouch because no glass containers are allowed at the [Two Day Town](#) music festival,

which is apparently a big event in Livermore. So the BeerPouch was the perfect alternative to bottles and growlers. Altamont thinks that the BeerPouch may be popular with hikers and bikers too.

Oregon has designated *Saccharomyces cerevisia* as the [official state microbe](#). You have got to love the State of Oregon for that.

Maybe our club's 2013 SCHF "Breaking Beer" shirts gave someone an idea. [Marble Brewery](#), a craft brewery in Albuquerque, will be making an India Pale Ale called "[Heisenberg's Dark](#)" to commemorate the final season of the television series, "Breaking Bad."

Some of our members may remember attending the 2013 American Homebrewers Association Rally at Stone Brewing Co. in March. They may also remember that the winner of the tasting contest was a Coconut IPA made by Robert Masterson and Ryan Reschan. Stone has [announced](#) that in late July it will be releasing [R&R Coconut IPA](#). This beer is the result of a collaboration among Stone, Rip Current Brewing, Robert and Ryan. Look for it in kegs and 22 oz. bottles. Congratulations to R&R!

Tell Us What Are You Doing

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 [Rick Wirsing](#). Thanks!

What We Stand For

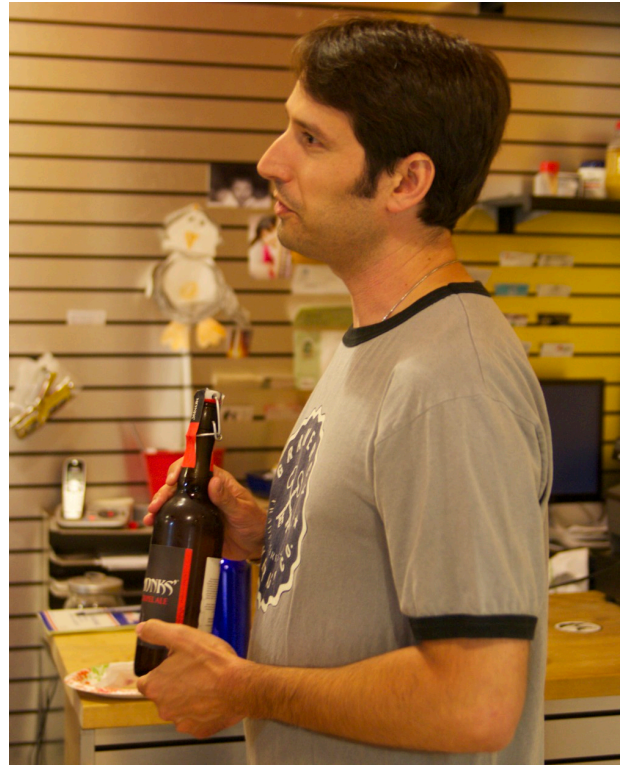
The objectives of the Strand Brewers Club are to brew beer and share information about the brewing, presentation, consumption, judging and history of beer. We promote and encourage homebrewing competition and hope to foster general goodwill through the making and consuming of this noble and most

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, or the operation of a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol by a member or a participant in any club event or the provision of alcohol to minors.



Thinking about making mead? Consider a local source of honey – [Riviera Organic Honey Co.](#)



Jeremy Pevar of the recently established [Gramercy Beverage Co.](#) at our June meeting.



Gramercy Beverage Co. provided beers for tasting at our June meeting, including these from the [Abbey Beverage Company, Abiquiu, NM.](#)

2013 Club Officers

President	Rives Borland	310-469-3634	president (at) strandbrewersclub dot com
Vice-President	Jeff Sanders	310-292-9301	vp (at) strandbrewersclub dot com
Treasurer	Brian Kellough	310-947-1855	treasurer (at) strandbrewersclub dot com
Activities	Tammy Minion	310-406-8057	activities (at) strandbrewersclub dot com
Communications	Mike Haisma	310-808-3614	communications (at) strandbrewersclub dot com
Editor	Rick Wirsing	310-872-9915	editor (at) strandbrewersclub dot com

Mentors

The following members have volunteered to answer your brewing questions and to help beginning brewers learn the craft. You should take advantage of their expertise.

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	jim 7258 (at) gmail dot com	Redondo Beach
Steve Fafard	310-373-1724	sfafard (at) cox dot net	Rolling Hills Estates

TRUCE

WHAT AM I
GOING TO
BREW NEXT?

I NEED
INSPIRATION . . .
THINK . . . THINK . . .



MEAD!

Brew Day on the Beach

Saturday, July 13, 2013

We're invited to an all day brew session at the home of Alex Schlee and his wife Bernadette right on the Strand in Manhattan Beach.
(3904 the Strand. at the bottom of 39th St.)



Let's get started by 9:00 AM. Bring your brewing gear. There is room for at least three 5-10 gallon set-ups.



And look forward to a great lunch of excellent German food prepared by Bernadette!



You can drive to the bottom of 39th St to offload your equipment, then park either on Rosecrans or Highland. There is a parking lot on the beach and at the top of 39th St., but limited to 2 hours.

Or, the South Bay Bike Path runs right by the Schlee condo.

Since Alex will be traveling until just before the Brew Day, Jay Ankeney will serve as liaison. For more info call 310-545-3983 or jayankeney@mac.com.

Final updates at the July Strand Brewers meeting on July 10th.