



The Cellar

The Official Newsletter of the Colonial Ale Smiths and Keggers

CASK Takes Home the Dominion Cup...Again!

By Harrison Gibbs, Photos by Ken Gillespie

For the third year in a row, a CASK member has walked away with the Dominion Cup. Brandon Orr came away with the Best of Show and the Dominion Cup for his American Wheat Beer. Although Brandon describes this beer as the only one his wife likes, as one of the judges on the Best of Show panel, I can attest that is a very well crafted beer. This was not a drink for hopheads, big beer lovers, or lovers of the esoteric, but a smooth clean lawnmower beer made perfectly. Other winners included:

Brewer	Place	Beer	Category
Brandon Orr	Best of Show	American Wheat	Style 6: Light Hybrid Beer
Harrison Gibbs	2nd	Premium American Lager	Style 1, 2, 4, 5: Light Lager, Pilsner, Dark Lager, Bock
Brandon Orr	1st	American Wheat	Style 6: Light Hybrid Beer
David Bridges	2nd	American Wheat	Style 6: Light Hybrid Beer
Steven Davis	3rd	Kolsch	Style 6: Light Hybrid Beer
Steven Davis		Northern German Altbier	Style 7, 9, 14 Amber Hybrid, Scottish and Irish Ale, IPA
Brandon Orr	1st	English Pale Ale	Style 8 English Pale Ale
Norm Schaeffler	3rd	English Mild Ale	Style 10, 11 American Ale, English Brown Ale
Ken Gillespie	2nd	Brown Porter	Style 12, 22 Porter, Smoke-flavored/Wood-Aged Beer
Steven Davis	1st	Saison	Style 16 Belgian and French Ale
Harrison Gibbs	2nd	Biere de Garde	Style 16 Belgian and French Ale
Steven Davis	3rd	Belgian Golden Strong Ale	Style 18, 20, 21 Belg. Strong Ale, Fruit, Spice/Herb/Vegetable Beer
Brandon Orr	2nd	Specialty Beer – Honey Pale Ale	Style 23 Specialty Beer



Hosted by the James River Homebrewers, the Dominion Cup moved from its usual digs at Legends Brewer to Billy's BBQ and Brewhouse in Midlothian. There were 78 entries (31 from CASK), a number up from last year. Still it was nothing like the 108 from two years ago. Tony Brock of James River had organized the competition with 12 judges and 4 stewards. Again, there were great prizes, including backs of grain from Weekend Brewer, T-shirts from Abita, hats from White Labs, and lots of coupons for free vials of White Labs yeast.



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CASK



Colonial Ale Smiths
& Keggers



Keg Maintenance

By Dave Bridges

Many of you are thinking, "Man, I am tired of bottling all this beer. I need to start kegging." Many of you probably have some sort of kegging system at your house. Whether it's just a keg in the garage refrigerator, or a dedicated kegerator that holds multiple kegs, the heart of the system is the keg. In this article, I will discuss some of the things you can do to keep your kegs serving you faithfully.

Whenever you buy your kegs, be sure to give them a good inspection, if you can, before taking them home. Damaged posts, dented bodies, rubber tops or bottom pieces coming off, missing parts such as poppets or relief valves, are all reasons to pick another keg.

When you get your new kegs home, they will probably need a good cleaning. There are places where you can buy reconditioned, cleaned kegs, but many times their prices are several times what you would pay for a used keg that needs a little bit of help.

Disassemble your kegs entirely for their first cleaning. This involves the use of a wrench or a deep socket to remove the posts, removing the relieve valve from the lid (there are kegs out there that don't have a provision for a relief valve in the lid, stay away from these) and removing the gas and liquid dip tubes.

Note that the gas-in post is different from the liquid-out post. Either there will be a notch in the corners of the flats on the gas-in post, or instead of six sides on the post, there are multiple notches requiring a 12 point socket or wrench to remove it.

Remove all the o-rings from the lid, tubes and posts and replace them with new o-rings. The stock numbers for replacement o-rings from McMaster-Carr are at the end of this article. Fill the keg with hot water and some sort of cleaner such as PBW or Oxyclean and let soak for a bit. Put the liquid dip tube into the keg and let it soak as well. Soak the posts, the gas-in tube, the poppets (removed from the posts), the relief valve and the lid in a bowl of the same solution. A carboy brush is an excellent way to get all the way down to the bottom of the keg. Scrub the inside of the keg until all the residue from its previous contents have been removed. A small, narrow brush will help clean out the dip tubes. Don't forget to clean the outside of the keg as well as the inside. Goo-B-Gone and a single-edged razor blade will make short work of the stickers on the outside of the keg. Use a nylon brush to clean the posts, especially the inside of them, as they might have some residue there as well.

After the keg is cleaned, rinse it a few times with clean water. Rinse off the posts, poppets, relief valve, and lid and reassemble the keg. Because there are various kinds of kegs (Cornelius, Firestone, Challenger) either clean one keg at a time, or keep the various parts separated from one another to prevent mixing the parts together. Be sure to reinstall new o-rings on the dip tubes, posts, and cap. A small amount of Keg-Lube on the o-rings will ensure a good seal, and prevent losing CO₂ or, worse, beer to a leak. When reinstalling the posts, ensure that the gas-in and liquid-out posts are installed in the correct positions. All kegs should have the "In" position marked, and many have both marked as to which post goes where.

Now that the keg is re-assembled, put it aside until all your other kegs are cleaned. When all the kegs you intend to clean are done, put 2 gallons of a sanitizing solution into your first keg. Following the instructions on the sanitizer, roll the keg around to ensure you sanitize the entire inner surface of the keg. Then pressurize the keg with CO₂ and transfer some of the sanitizer to the next keg, which has the lid removed. This will sanitize the liquid-out dip tube. You can either transfer all the sanitizer this way, or remove the lid and pour the rest of the sanitizer into the next keg.

After all your kegs are sanitized, adjust your CO₂ pressure to 30 psig, and press them all up to check for leakage, and to purge any air out of the kegs. Pull the relief valve a few times to do this. Sometimes you can hear the leaks, but sanitizing solution sprayed on the lid and posts will help find the smaller leaks.

After your kegs are cleaned, sanitized, and purged, go ahead and put some kind of label on them to prevent them from getting mixed up with kegs that haven't been cleaned.

While some people disassemble their kegs after every use, a good scrubbing with cleaner, sanitizer, and purging it will maintain your kegs ready for use. Personally, I disassemble my kegs after every other use. The post and dip tube o-rings from McMaster-Carr come in bags of 100, so I change those out more frequently. Lid o-rings come in bags of 10, and aren't replaced as frequently.



Here are some links to companies that sell replacement parts to kegs.

<http://www.simgo.com/replacem.htm>

<http://www.northernbrewer.com/keg-repair-parts.html>

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

McMaster-Carr part numbers for keg O-rings

Dip tube o-rings	9452K172	BunaN#109	\$2.24/100 o-rings
Post o-rings	9452K23	BunaN#111	\$2.77/100 o-rings
Lid o-rings	9452K218	BunaN#417	\$12.50/10 o-rings

Changes at HomeBrewUSA: No More Club Discount

By Harrison Gibbs.

As of June 1, 2006, HomeBrewUSA will no longer honor individual discounts to club members. The homebrew shop found keeping track of which members have paid dues, which ones are no longer members too difficult. Not having dated club cards has been a problem. The shop is now offering a Frequent Brewers Card. This will be the only discount program they will recognize. When you purchase 4 brewing kits, one each month, i.e. one of their kits or the ingredients to make a batch of beer (has to include grain and or malt extract, hops and yeast) you will receive your next kit 1/2 off (up to \$30). When you purchase 6 brewing kits, one each month, (same rules apply) you will receive your next kit FREE (up to \$30). You may not use your 4 month 1/2 price kit then come in 2 months later and receive a FREE kit for the six month. You must choose one or the other and when that card is complete you will receive a new card. HomebrewUSA says to ask if you are not sure how this works.

If you are like me, I find this new program a little confusing. It appears to exclude brewers who make single item purchases (one tube of fresh yeast), brewers who purchase equipment and supplies (such as bottles and caps), and brewers who purchase large quantities of ingredients at a pop. This latter situation is more likely to happen with those of use on the Peninsula who can only get to the shop every few months. It is not clear if HomebrewUSA is requiring brewers to buy a kit a month to get the discount. I can't brew that much.

While I assume the Frequent Brewers Card is better than nothing, I would still encourage brewers on the Peninsula to still avail themselves of Mike Pensinger's offer to take orders over the phone (757- 459-BREW) and deliver them to the Williamsburg AleWerks once a week. This offer is a convenient service. The drop-off day has not been established, but I assume that it will be a day late in the week.

Mike and HomebrewUSA also offer free shipping to your home for purchases over \$50, which may be worth the savings in gas when compared to the loss of the discount.

Thus as of this month, no area homebrew supply stores offer a club discount. However, you can still get a 10% discount at Coastal Wine Connection in Newport News' Port Warwick and at Bon Vivant in Smithfield. Both of these great beer and wine retailers have brought great beers to the area and they deserve your support. I am particularly pleased that I can find Cantillon Lambics at both shops.



Flavor Profile – Phenolic

By Harrison Gibbs

Phenolic is a medicinal taste caused by volatile phenol compounds, which are common in most brews. These flavors are often described as mediciney, Band-Aid like, or can be spicy like cloves. In some cases, a slight touch of this flavor can add complexity such as with some German style Wheat Beers and a few Belgians Ales. But anything over a touch and this flavor is a bad thing. To provide a frame of reference as to what a phenolic flavor and aroma is, many oral medications such as Ambusol and Chloraseptic are phenol based.

Several things can make a beer taste phenolic. A reaction between chlorine sanitizers and phenolic compounds found in normal beer may result in chlorophenols. Chlorophenols have a very low flavor threshold (they can be tasted even when they're present only in small quantities) and taste bad. Certain malts can also impart phenolic flavors to beer. The most notable example is peated malt. Some highly roasted malts also have a phenolic flavor, but the intensity of the flavor is nowhere near that of peated malt.

The most common source of phenolic flavors in beer comes from yeast. Some yeast strains produce phenolic flavors as a normal part of their metabolism. These strains have enzymes that other brewing yeast lack. The phenolic flavors originate from phenolic acids naturally found in malt, especially ferrulic acid. Strains of yeast with the right enzymes transform these phenolic acids through a decarboxylation reaction into aromatic phenols, such as 4-vinyl guaiacol. These compounds are often described as possessing clove-like and vanilla aromas. Yeast used to brew Bavarian weizen beer is supposed to produce these aromas, and weizen beer is the best beer to buy if you want a standard for the phenolic flavor. Some Belgian and English ale yeast also produce detectable levels of phenols in beer. Phenolic aromas are not associated with most lager yeast.

Generally, brewing yeast strains rarely produce enough phenolic aromas to be detectable. However, phenolic beers may also be a sign of wild yeast contamination. Dry yeast contains wild yeast more often than liquid yeast, but both forms are capable of being contaminated.

The best way to reduce the level of phenolic taste is to first limit the use of chlorine in your water both in your sanitizer and water source. Next, alter your yeast strain. Warmer fermentations tend to produce more phenolic compounds. So changing the temperature of your primary fermentation helps.

Beer Style of the Month: Saison and Biere de Garde

By Norman W. Schaeffler

Belgium has been called by Charlie Papazian, "the Disneyland of beers." A wide variety of beer is brewed in Belgium, a variety of beers for every occasion. There is a section of Belgium called Wallonia, where they speak French. In Wallonia, the farmers have traditionally brewed a pale ale of modest strength that was brewed late in the brewing year, late winter or spring, and then laid-down or cellared until the fall harvest time. The farmhands would drink this beer to quench their thirsts during long days harvesting in the fields. This farmhouse style ale, as it is called today, are known as saison, the French word for season. A saison is a moderately strong beer from 5 to 8.5% ABV. The BJCP Style Guidelines describe a saison as "A medium to strong ale with a distinctive yellow-orange color, highly carbonated, well hopped, fruity and dry with a quenching acidity. Fruity esters dominate the aroma and are often reminiscent of citrus fruits such as oranges or lemons. A moderate spice aroma (from actual spice additions and/or yeast-derived phenols) complements the other aromatics. When phenolics are present they tend to be peppery rather than clove-like."

Bière de Garde is another beer with a French name, this time actually brewed in France, Northern France to be specific. Bière de Garde means "beer which has been kept or lagered." The BJCP Style Guidelines describe a Bière de Garde as "Related to the Belgian Saison style, the main difference is that the Bière de Garde is rounder, richer, sweeter, malt-focused, often has a "cellar" character, and lacks the spicing and tartness of a Saison". Bière de Garde are seen in three styles: the brown (brune), the blond (blonde), and the amber (ambre). While the lighter versions feature more hops, but all styles remain malt-centric.



CASK Member Profile: Dave Bridges

Full Name: David W. Bridges

Hometown: Franklin, IN (raised mostly in Jeffersonville/Clarksville in southern Indiana)

Town of Residence: Hampton

Occupation: Non-licensed Control Room Operator at Surry Power Station

Years Brewing: about 4

Favorite Beers to brew: English Bitters and American Pale Ales

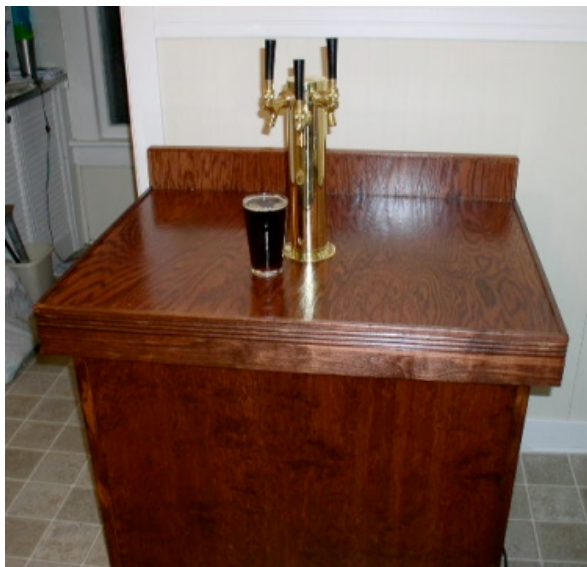
Favorite Commercial Brew: probably Yuengling Lager (or Keith's IPA when I can get it from Canada)

Favorite Brew Pub or Beer Bar: no favorites, still searching for it (but I'm impressed with Keegans and Baileys in NN, Keegan's for the Guinness, and Baileys for Boddington's Pub Ale on draught.)

How did you started brewing?: Co-worker introduced me to extract w/ specialty grains brews

Level of Brewing: All-grain almost all the time, 10-gallon batches, but a few 5-gallon extracts now and then.

Why do you brew?: I like brewing beers that I couldn't find in the area, and the fact that other people are fascinated that you can brew a beer just as good (or better) than what you can buy in the store. Awards, Beer Related Associations, etc: AHA member (new this year), so far this year I've come in 2nd place in 4 different contests with 4 different beers.



"I've been married to Connie for almost 13 years, and we have a 10-year old daughter, Rebecca, who loves to help me bottle. (The picture above is from a family trip when we went to Memphis, TN a few years ago.) I've been an amateur radio operator for over 5 years, callsign KG4OIJ, and have talked to people in over 40 countries, most noticeably a guy in Australia, from my truck in Huntington Park at the foot of the James River Bridge."

"It's always amazing when I tell people I make beer, how many people have known people who used to brew. I always tell them, "If you can cook, you can make good beer." This year I concentrated on entering more contests, I think next year I will concentrate on just a few styles, brewing more, smaller batches to "tweak them in." I'm very proud of my kegerator, (pictured to the left) which was my first real wood-working project, and which I think came out real nice."



The CASK Calendar of Club Events and Competitions

Plan your brewing year now and hit as many club-only and other competitions as possible.

June	Saison and Biere de Garde
July	Summer Party Iron Brew
August	Stout
September	TBD
October	TBD
November	Light Hybrid
December	Free for All

November 4, 2006: The Wizard of SAAZ Homebrew Competition, Akron, OH, Entry Fee: \$8.00 per entry, Entries accepted 10/28/06

November/December 2006 Light Hybrid Beer Hosted by Bill Gornicki & Kevin Kutskill of the Clinton River Association of Fermenting Trendsetter CRAFT of Macomb Twp, MI Category 6* covering Cream Ale, Blonde ale, Kölsch, and American Wheat or Rye Beer. For more information, contact Bill Gornicki at gornicwm@earthlink.net.

July 29, 2006: Mountain Brewer Open, Huntington, WV, Entry Fee: \$5.00 per entry Entries accepted 7/22/06

August 2006: Mead Hosted by John Tull and the Washoe Zephyr Zymurgists of Reno, NV, Categories 24-26* Entries due by 8/12/2006 and judging will be held 8/19/2006. Shipping Address: WZZ AHA COC, 2335 Dickerson Road, Reno, NV 89503. For more information, contact John Tull at jctull@biodiversity.unr.edu.

September 23, 2006: FOAM Cup, Tulsa, OK, Entries accepted 9/15/06

September 28-30, 2006: Great American Beer Festival, Denver, CO

September/October 2006: Stout Hosted by Steve Fletty and the St. Paul Homebrewers of St. Paul, MN. For more information, contact Steve Fletty at fletty@UMN.EDU.