



# The Cellar

The Official Newsletter of the Colonial Ale Smiths and Keggers

## And the 2007 CASK Homebrewer of the Year is ...

On top of the leader board as he entered his dubbel in the Winter IronBrew, Ken Gillespie should have been pretty confident that this would be his year. Ken started off 2007 by winning the January CASK Club-Only for Low Gravity/Session beers. Ken's points really started to accumulate in May when he entered BURP's "Spirit of Free Beer" competition. A first and second place finish and the "Best of Show" racked up the points and laid a claim for CASK dominance in a second regional competition. July brought twin victories at the *Dominion Cup*, 2 second place finishes, and the *Mountain Brewer Open*, 2 first place finishes and a third. Throughout the year, Ken has been a prolific contributor to the club's newsletter, contributing to five articles. The second place finish in the Winter IronBrew with his dubbel clinched it, raising Ken's point total to 28. Ken Gillespie is the 2007 CASK Homebrewer of the Year! Congratulations, Ken!

This year there was a tie for second place between Harrison Gibbs and Norm Schaeffler with 22 points each. Harrison kept the CASK four year run alive by winning the Best of Show at the *Dominion Cup* with his Duke of Gloucester Cream Ale. Harrison also contributed heavily to the club newsletters, seven articles this year, and meetings, three presentations. Congratulations and thanks, Harrison. Norm took a more traditional route to the top of the leader board. A second place finish in the Summer IronBrew and a first place finish in the Winter IronBrew racked up the points. Lots of newsletter articles and a meeting presentation, along with strong showings in the *Dominion Cup* and the *Beer Blitz*, helped raise Norm's points total. We had 11 members accumulate points this year. As always you can see how everyone finished by clicking on the leader board on the home page of the CASK website.

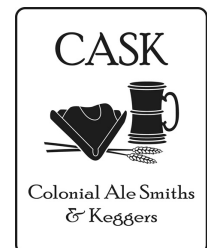
**Winter IronBrew  
Belgium Challenge - Results**

Congratulations to the winners of the Winter Belgium IronBrew! This winter we had 7 entries this year, including 2 Dubbels, 2 Saisons, 2 Goldens and 1 Belgian Specialty.

**1st Place:** Norm Schaeffler - Dubbel  
**2nd Place:** Ken Gillespie - Dubbel  
**3rd Place:** Jeff Stuebben - Belgian Specialty

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# The Gift of the Homebrewer

*By Harrison Gibbs*

It is too late to brew a beer that will be ready for this holiday season, but there are ways to make any bottle of homebrew into a special holiday gift. Taking a cue from our AB neighbor, I recommend that you focus on the packaging. You do not have to present your handcrafted beer in a simple brown bottle. Anything can be a gift if properly packaged for the season. What better gift than one you have made yourself, so bring the gift of homebrew to your holiday parties.

## Labels

Labels are the best way to express your creativity and tailor your holiday homebrew gift. If you have use of a computer, you can easily download free images and clipart that can convey the holiday spirit of your spirits. Laser printers do not run as bad if the bottle is refrigerated. Try using marbled or parchment finished stationary. Color paper also works well. Avoid real sticky adhesives. Glue sticks work the best for me. Do not use printer labels unless you want them never to come completely clean. Be sure to include the name of the beer, who brewed it and the date.

You may also purchase labels through a homebrew supply store. If you cannot or do not want to use a printer, ink stamps work well. All towns have a stamp store, and you can find perfect holiday themed stamps. I did this several years ago, coloring in the stamp with markers. Then write on the label after it has been stamped.

If you do not want to mess with labels and have a good penmanship, a gold paint pen can decorate your beer bottle in a grand style. These are available at most art supply shops and maybe Target.

## Wax Dipping

Wax dipping gives the bottles a look of class and timelessness. More importantly, it is easy to do. One pound of wax will seal about 30 bottles. You can purchase bottle wax in a variety of holiday colors at Weekend Brewer on any of the on-line shops. Generally, wax costs about \$10 a pound. When waxing, you can use either corked or capped bottles. Melt the bottle wax in a melting pot to a temperature between 160°F and 170°F. Use a cooking thermometer to monitor the temperature. Dip the bottle carefully lowering the cork end into the melting wax and hold it in the wax for 10 to 15 seconds. Pull the bottle straight up keeping the corked end down until the excess wax runs off. Then turn the bottle upright to let it cool.

You can impress a ribbon under the wax, gold red or green for the season. You can also use wax seals on either the top or sides of the bottle. Wax seals can be purchased from most stationary stores. I believe Colonial Williamsburg also sells them. If you do not want to dip your bottles but like the look of wax, try putting a thin ribbon over the bottle top and bind it with two drops of wax, sealing the from one with your initial.

## Foils

Foiling adds sophistication to your holiday homebrew. Foils typically come in the choice of gold and silver. Foils can be placed over corks or caps. They are easy to install, just twisting them around the bottleneck.

A big CASK Cheer to Paul Scott for hosting the  
CASK Holiday Party!

Thanks Paul!



# The Grinch Who Stole Hoppiness

*By Harrison Gibbs*

If you have tried to buy brewing ingredients lately, you have probably learned about the great hop shortage. This shortage is worldwide, affecting hop supplies on both sides of the Atlantic. If you were at the November meeting, you heard a good presentation from Ken Gillespie on growing your own hops. After this year's shortage, I expect more of you to pull out your green thumbs and try your hand at hop farming just to keep costs down.

"It is generally believed that there is insufficient global supply to satisfy demand and that some brewers will be without sufficient hops in 2008," says Ian Ward, president of Brewers Supply Group. Anheuser Busch recently announced an increase in their beer prices due to the increase in ingredients.

Originally announced in October, the crisis has continued to grow. Supply shortages are estimated between 700 and 1,300 metric tons or approximately 8.6% to 15.5% of the annual worldwide demand due to the poor 2006 European crop, according to Shannon Dininny of the Associated Press.



The reasons for the shortage vary. Dininny explains that heavy rains ruined Europe's 2006 crop. Drought reduced Australia's crop. Canada's small crop was "just average." Specifically, Slovenia (grower of Styrians) lost at least 1/3 and possibly as much as 1/2 of their crop to a hailstorm. England is almost out of the hop business. Their acreage of 2,400 in 2006 (down from 17,000 in 1976) represents only 2 percent of the worldwide acreage. The Czech crop was down 25% and estimated alphas on Czech Saaz from the 2007 crop are 2.7 - 2.9. The German crop is average at best with earlier aroma hops coming in below normal.

Although the US hop crop for 2007 was an average crop, a warehouse fire in October 2006 in Yakima, WA destroyed 110 metric tons, worth between \$3.5 million and \$4 million. The fire destroyed the 40,000-square-foot warehouse operated by S.S. Steiner, one of the largest hop growers and merchants in the Yakima Valley. The valley produces about three-quarters of the hops in the U.S., which in turn grows one quarter of the world's hops. Fires have long been a problem for those drying, baling and storing hops. Reports have said that spontaneous combustion is always a danger.

Furthermore, the low price for hops combined with the increased use of crop land for crops used in ethanol production has reduced the acreage used for hops. The low prices and lack of contracts have also caused grower's not to be able to invest in their hop fields and equipment. For 10 years, Northwest farmers grew too many hops. Prices plummeted. Now farmers grew less. There is not enough for the current increased beer production.

Unlike the large brewing companies, most small breweries were not able to bulk purchase and enter into contracts for the limited pool of hops. Contracts require craft-breweries to pay tens of thousands of dollars right now for something that will not be used until the following year. When there is a price increase in raw ingredients it will be passed on to the consumer. The impact will be higher beer prices or your favorite hop-heavy brew might have a slightly different taste. For American craft brewers who rose to prominence with their bigger, hoppier beers, many will have to reformulate their recipes or risk alienating the public with higher beer prices.

For homebrewers, it is not a matter of costs but availability. Favorite varieties are no longer available and it is unknown when they will return.

Already some of larger online homebrew retailers have raised their price and a number of "temporarily out of stock" statements can be found in the "Hops" section. Suppliers have already introduced hop "rationing." Northern Brewer states on its website that although it has contracted enough hops from our suppliers to meet the demands of our customers throughout 2008, they are still waiting on the 2007 crop to be processed and shipped "and many varieties of hops are out of stock." Therefore, "any order which contains too many hops will be put on hold, and reviewed by our staff" who will contact the customer with details. A review of their website shows that they only have Centennial leaf hops and U.K. Kent Goldings, which will only be sold in one-ounce packages.

Beer, Beer & More Beer only offers is out of all leaf hops except, "Aged Whole Hallertauer Hops." In pellets, only the Centennial, Challenger, Cluster, Gallena, Nugget, Sterling and the new hop breed Santiam varieties are



still in stock, and this is just December. Moreover, they are only sold in 2 ounce packages. The 2007 harvest is not expected to be distributed until spring or summer 2008. Other shops will not sell hops without other purchases to prevent hoarding.

Bob Henderson at Weekend Brewer is limiting hop purchases to 3 ounces per variety, if available. Already he is out of East Kent Goldings, Target, and some others. He also has only 8 pounds of Cascade to get him through until next summer.

The good news for homebrewer's is that the cost of hops per five gallon batch is negligible and results in an added cost of pennies per glass of brewed beer. If you can find the hop you want, your cost will not go up to much per bottle. However, creative substitutions will be required to adjust for the shortage. See the chart below.

Hop Variety	Possible Substitutes
Amarillo	Cascade, Centennial
Brewers Gold	Bullion, Chinook, Galena, Nugget
Bullion	Columbus, N. Brewer
Cascade	Amarillo, Centennial
Centennial	Amarillo, Cascade, Columbus
Challenger	Perle
Chinook	Brewers Gold, Columbus, Galena, Nugget, N. Brewer,
Cluster	Galena
Columbus	Magnum, Chinook, N. Brewer, Warrior, Bullion
Crystal	Mt. Hood, Liberty, Hallertauer, Tettnanger, Strisselspalt
E.K. Goldings	Fuggie
Fuggie	Willamette, Styrian Golding, Tettnanger
Galena	Brewers Gold, Nugget, Cluster, Chinook
Glacier	Willamette, Fuggie, Tettnanger, Styrian Goldings
Hallertau	Liberty, Tettnanger, Mt. Hood, Vangaurd, Tradition
Liberty	Hallertau, Tettnanger, Mt. Hood, Crystal, Ultra
Mt. Hood	Hallertauer, Liberty, Crystal, Strisselspalt
Northern Brewer	Nugget, Chinook, Columbus, Bullion, Perle
Northdown	Admiral, Challenger
Nugget	Cluster, Galena, Brewers Gold, Warrior, Target
Perle	Challenger, N. Brewer
Saaz	Sterling, Ultra
Santiam	Tettnanger, Spalt, Liberty, Hallertau
Strisselspalt	Mt. Hood, Crystal
Styrian Goldings	Fuggie, Willamette
Target	Nugget, Fuggie, Willamette
Tettnanger	Hallertau, Liberty, Fuggie
Ultra	Liberty, Hallertau, Saaz
Warrior	Nugget, Columbus
Willamette	Styrian Golding, Target, Fuggie, Tettnanger, Glacier



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# The CASK Calendar of Club Events and Competitions

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

<b>January</b>	Dark Lagers ( <b>Club-Only</b> )
<b>February</b>	Porters ( <b>Club-Only</b> )
<b>March</b>	TBD
<b>April</b>	TBD
<b>May</b>	Extract Beers ( <b>Club-Only</b> )
<b>June</b>	TBD
<b>July</b>	Mead ( <b>Club-Only</b> )
<b>August</b>	TBD
<b>September</b>	Imperial Anything ( <b>Club-Only</b> )
<b>October</b>	TBD
<b>November</b>	TBD
<b>December</b>	TBD

**January 17, 2008:** CASK January Meeting 7:30 PM

**February 16, 2008: Dark Lagers Club-Only Competition (CASK Judging at January Meeting):** Entries are due on February 9 and the judging will be held on February 16 2008. Hosted by Susan Ruud and the Prairie Homebrewing Companions of Fargo, ND, this competition covers BJCP Category 4 beer styles.

**February 21, 2008:** CASK February Meeting 7:30 PM

**March 20, 2008:** CASK March Meeting 7:30 PM

**March 29, 2008: Porter Club-Only Competition (CASK Judging at February Meeting)** Entries are due on March 21, 2008 and the judging will be held on March 29, 2008. Hosted by Ron Smith and the Foam Blowers of Indiana (FBI) of Indianapolis, IN, this competition covers BJCP Category 12 beer styles.

**April 17, 2008:** CASK April Meeting 7:30 PM

**May 15, 2008:** CASK May Meeting 7:30 PM

**May 30, 2008: Extract Beers Club-Only Competition (CASK Judging TBD):** The entry due date and judging date are to be determined. Hosted by Jim Burzynski and the Urban Knives of Grain of Naperville, IL, this competition covers all BJCP 2004 beer styles (Categories 1-23). Extract must make up more than 50% of the fermentables.

**June 19, 2008:** CASK June Meeting 7:30 PM

**August 2, 2008: Mead Club-Only Competition (CASK Judging in July):** Entries are due 7/25/08 and judging will be held 8/2/08. Hosted by Al Boyce and the Minnesota Homebrewers Association of Edina, MN, this competition covers BJCP Categories 24, 25, 26 mead styles.

**September 15, 2008: "Imperial Anything" Club-Only Competition (CASK Judging TBD):** The entry due date and judging date are to be determined. (Sometime September - October) Hosted by Fred Bonjour and the Clinton River Association of Fermenting Trendsetters (C.R.A.F.T.) of Macomb Township, MI, this competition covers imperialized versions of all BJCP categories. The imperialization of the beer (ABV, IBU, etc.) must be stated on the entry form.

**You can add items to the CASK calendar and keep your fellow club members informed about beer-related happenings in the area. Logon to the CASK Message Board to find out how!**