



The Cellar

The Official Newsletter of the Colonial Ale Smiths and Keggers

January Club News

By Steven Davis

T-Shirts are in!

T-Shirts are now available for purchase. They are available in two sayings (our original Ben Franklin quote and the new "Who Needs a Born-On Date" quote) in sizes from L to XXL (sorry, only had one request for smaller). Colors are Dark Blue, Dark Green, Black and Chocolate. Short sleeve shirts sell for \$10 and long sleeve shirts sell for \$13. Bring your money and stock up before your size and color are gone.

It's time to pay your dues!

CASK has gone to a formal January renewal policy for club memberships. All club members must pay their dues by the February meeting to maintain good status and be eligible for discounts available to club members (currently offered by Homebrew USA, Wine & Cake, Coastal Wine & Bon Vivant). The club will be providing rosters to participating establishments of eligible members. If you plan on attending the meeting, please bring \$20 with you. If you are unable to attend, please send your membership check made payable to CASK to:

CASK
P.O. Box 5224
Williamsburg, VA 23188

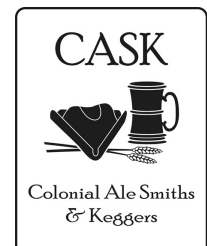
Please do not send cash through the mail. Members who joined CASK after January 31st of last year may prorate their check for a partial year (using the honor system). The intent is for all members to be renewing in January from now on.

These hop prices are insane!

God help us all. Northern Brewer finally got hops in stock (they are about the only one), but the prices are out the roof. They sincerely apologize for how high they are but state that it is just supply & demand. They also state that prices should go down a little soon. I've compared their prices to the few other sites that also have hops available, and they are all raising their prices this high. At these prices, an IPA is definitely out of everyone's budget. In case you haven't looked lately, most hops are now going for \$3.50 to \$6.00 an OUNCE.

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Bad news / Good news / Bad news / Good news ...

By Ken Gillespie

As many of you know, I recently found myself out of a job, along with many of my colleagues at Pliant in Newport News. I have been aggressively job searching, including both local and non-local employment.

My old boss from Pliant also lost his job. He used to live in central Delaware, and has been keeping track of the Career Builder jobs there. He sent me a link (as a joke) for a job as an "Off Center" Plant Engineer for Dogfish Head Brewing. I quickly applied, and had a phone interview a week or two later. In my attempt to fit the "off center" job description, I got on the 9:00 AM call in my robe with my feet up on the table sipping on an oatmeal stout. It must have worked, because the day after the CASK Christmas party, I interviewed at the brewery.

I received an expense paid grand tour of the Dogfish Head brewery, with Andy Tveekrem the brewmaster. Dogfish has grown about ten fold since 2001, and are projecting about 60,000 barrels for 2008. They just completed the installation of a new 100 barrel brewing system, with a tank farm of about thirty 200 barrel aging tanks. They have sophisticated computer controls custom designed by their electronics technician. The mash-in, sparging, transferring, etc is all controlled from a computer console. I was like a kid in a candy store. I wanted to take pictures, but that didn't seem like the right thing to do.

In spite of what seemed like a great interview, I still haven't heard back. It appears they are still looking, probably for a young engineer who will work cheap.

While I was there, I casually mentioned to the brewmaster that I would like to get a collection of a few of their specialty beers to share with the CASK folks. He promptly put together an impressive package of samples, and wouldn't let me pay for them. Based on the high prices of their specialty beers, it is a valuable assortment.

Latest news is I will be missing the January meeting for another interview, so I can't share the beers this month. In fact, I seem to be getting more out of town job leads. I hope I get a chance to bring them in. I may have to call an emergency meeting.

Some of you may have heard of the Punkin Chunkin competition. It's a bunch of eccentric folks that bring their homemade catapults and air cannons to Slower Delaware, to see how far they can throw a pumpkin. The holy grail is a mile, and the last few years have been around 4400 feet. Frank Payton, the maintenance supervisor at Dogfish, is one of the founding fathers of Punkin Chunkin. He was pullin' hard for me to get the job, so he can recruit me to be their team engineer. He took me out to his place after the interview to show me his toys. These guys are definitely on a first name basis with the junkyards, but they still put some big bucks into these toys. Frank's cannon is mounted on a 48 foot flatbed trailer, with a semi tractor to haul it. If you're curious, log on to punkinchunkin.com and check it out.



Stay tuned for the next chapter!





In the Dark about Dunkels?

By Harrison Gibbs

The Beer Style

My favorite Dark Lager (BJCP Category 4) is the Munich Dunkel (4b). The other styles are fine, but they lack that rich session beer character that I have always associated with my Dunkel. Although I remember hoisting a few in Munich back in the eighties, my clearest impression of this style was a decade later when I enjoyed the beer at a Gordon Biersch Brewpub in Burbank California. The rich malty character was sweet but not cloying and had a clean lager taste that demanded another one - "Nach ein, bitte."

The Dunkel (or Dunkles) is a dark German beer. The name is German for "dark," and Dunkles typically range in color from amber to dark reddish brown. The aroma contains a rich Munich malt sweetness, like bread crusts, with some possible hints of chocolate, nuts, caramel, and/or toffee. There should be no fruity esters or diacetyl detected, but a slight noble hop aroma is acceptable.

Malt characterizes the flavor. A Dunkel can be moderately sweet, but should not be overwhelming or cloying. Taste for hints of caramel, chocolate, toast or nuttiness in the background. There should be no burnt or bitter flavors from roasted malts, pronounced caramel flavors from crystal malt, fruity esters or diacetyl. Keep hop bitterness moderately low but perceptible, with the balance tipped firmly towards the malt.

In addition to helles, Dunkel is a traditional style brewed in Munich and popular throughout Bavaria. Weaker than fest beers and bocks, the other traditional dark Bavarian beers, Dunkels have an original gravity around 1.048 to 1.056 and an alcohol range of 4.5% to 6% by volume.

The primary malt are German Munich malt (up to 100% in some cases), which give the Dunkel its color and malty flavor, with the remainder German Pilsner malt. Only a very small amount of crystal malt may be used to add dextrins and color, but try to avoid too much sweetness. You can use 1-2 oz of roasted malts (such as Carafa or chocolate) to darken the beer. Only noble German hop varieties and German lager yeast strains should be used. Moderately carbonate water. The Dunkel's maltiness may be more pronounced due to the special brewing technique called triple decoction.

Origin of the Style

Dunkels are the common man's beer, originating in the Bavarian countryside. The darker color was common due to the malting process before malting techniques producing lighter colored malts were introduced to Bavaria from Bohemia in the mid 19th century.

Early on beer or ale was any locally brewed beverage based on grain. Because early malting of barely had little control over color, most brews were dark and turbid in appearance, and rather sketchy in consistency, given the poor understanding and control of the brewing process. However, some local brewers excelled and gain great reputations, especially in the monasteries located throughout Europe, which developed localized stylistic beers. In Bavaria, the monks become known for their reddish-brown, malty lagers, which were often referred to as rotbier.

On the continent, if there were two recognized styles they were weissbier (white beer) made from wheat and rotbier (red beer) made from barley. These two names are still associated with German Weissbier, Belgian Witbier and Flanders Red. I would also include the original brown beers in the rotbeir category, as seen with Aude Bruins and the brown malt based brown ales and porters.

This was before the pale beer craze swept through Europe in the early part of the 19th century and before many cities in this period developed their signature pale beers. including London, Vienna, Dortmund, Pilsen, and Munich.



The CASK Calendar of Club Events and Competitions

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

January	Dark Lagers (Club-Only)
February	Porters (Club-Only)
March	Stouts
April	TBD
May	Extract Beers (Club-Only)
June	TBD
July	Mead (Club-Only)
August	TBD
September	Imperial Anything (Club-Only)
October	TBD
November	TBD
December	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 Knaves 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!