



MARCH
CROWN
EDITION
A.S. XXVI

From the Chronicler

I'd like to thank everyone who contributed to this issue. And, of course, I'd like to encourage the rest of you to contribute. As you might notice by perusing these pages, what I could *really* use is artwork. Don't think your artwork isn't good enough to be published—it's certainly better than nothing, which is what I've been getting. I even stooped to publishing my own artwork. I showed my artist friend my picture of a stalk of barley, and she said, "This looks fine, anybody can tell that it's hops." Needless to say, I've been hesitant to try again. But don't you be! Remember that service is part of the guild rankings, and submitting art or articles counts. So help me out please, good gentles. I can't do this without your input.

Opening Words – pffftt

by Master Ceolgar of Amberglen

Ah, oh yes, now where were we. Right, the Brewers' Guild roster list. I wish it were possible for me to know each and every one of the seventy or so of you who receive this newsletter. The only way this will be possible is if you come and talk to me. I want to know what you've been brewing, what aspects of brewing you're interested in, and what you'd like to help the guild accomplish. I now have a binder full of roster list forms. These forms will show your progress as a brewer and your status in the Brewers' Guild. Guild ranking procedure was ratified at October Crown. This March Crown will be your first opportunity to pay your taxes (hint, hint), or present a brew to the guild for proficiency in a style, or inform me of a public service you have provided.

Although this is the start of the rostering process, I realize that some of you have been active in the guild for quite some time. In order for you to receive credit for these past accomplishments on the roster forms, you'll have to come talk to me. As a matter of fact, all current roster forms are blank. If you want your name on one . . . come talk to me.

When I'm not at home in northern Cynagua (my address and phone number are in the back of the newsletter), I can usually be found at the Amberglen encampment. I would like to hold the March Crown Guild meeting at the start of the fifth round (hopefully within view of the eric). Listen to the heralds for exact time and place.

As always, I'm open to your thoughts and suggestions as to how we can make the most of this guild.

Canning Beer

by Master Ceolgar of Amberglenn

So you've brewed it, it's fermented, and now it's time to . . . bottle?

If you're brewing beer in any quantity, you might want to question how you "bottle."

In period, most brews were dispensed from casks, as glassware was much too expensive, and crimp caps were unheard of. Now, glass bottles can be had for a song, and capping systems are readily available, but there is still something to be said for putting all your beer in one keg.

You can use wooden casks (see last newsletter for sources and prices). You can get paraffined and unparaffined casks. The paraffined casks would probably be easily sterilized. India Pale Ale got its taste from being shipped in unparaffined oaken casks.

Although I have a cask, I haven't yet tried this system—especially since I have a modern shortcut that can achieve much the same effect with less expense and effort. While I relish the thought of broaching a wooden cask on the table at Twelfth Night, in the meantime . . .

The Cornelius Company makes stainless steel canisters that are commonly used to dispense sodas. More and more these are becoming available to brewers. One of the chief advantages of this system for ale brewers is that these canisters hold five gallons—just the size of your carboy. Although slightly more complicated to sterilize, it's only one bottle instead of thirty.

Priming can be done either with the traditional krausening technique (earlier newsletter) or with the more modern way using corn sugar. Cornelius cans, like bottles, will form a yeast cake on the bottom. I know some brewers who shorten the outflow tube of the Cornelius cans by about an inch, so that they do not disturb the yeast cake.

Another way to eliminate excess sediment in these canisters is to use your CO₂ to pressurize (force CO₂ into your brew). This latter technique, and most certainly your delivery system, will require that you have a CO₂ tank and regulator. Tanks start at about \$20 and regulators at about \$50. I have seen prices on the Cornelius cans from \$70 to \$80 new, down to \$25 to \$45 used. You may have some luck checking in scrap metal yards that still sell scrap stainless steel by the pound, however you will have to clean and pressure check everything you find.

Two-and-a-half-pound CO₂ tanks are great for taking to events. These are small, light, and easily hidden. One tankful should last for several weekends, however when you do have them refilled you will notice that the minimum fill charge (in my case \$10) is most of the bill. I fill my tanks at the fire extinguisher supply store.

There are two "standard" systems of connectors. There is the pin lock system, and the ball lock system. It is best to standardize on one type if only to minimize the amount of connectors and tubing you will have to assemble. Look for your best source for canisters and buy connectors to match. I can find canisters, connectors, "O" rings, etc. at my local homebrew shop. Other sources are soft drink distributors, homebrew supply catalogs, and restaurant supply catalogs. I have purchased supplies through:

Superior Products, 255 Parr Circle, Reno, NV 89512, (800) 328-9800

If you have any questions regarding how to get started or where to get parts for this system let me know. I do answer my phone (if I'm home), will answer letters (if you send me one), and will usually respond if spoken to.

"Canning" one's homebrew has several advantages. You can finish "bottling" in one transfer, you only have to store and transport one container, and with a few quick connections you can serve draft homebrew on site!

Note from Runwynn:

At a tourney, canned beer is simple, effective, and more in a period style. You don't have to worry about glass bottles breaking on the way to the event, and you don't have to rinse them and try to get them all home again. And a jockey box, if you have one, uses ice very efficiently, since it only chills the beer when it is delivered, and the top isn't always being opened like an ice chest would. And this system doesn't take up much more room in your car than the same amount of beer in bottles would.

Unto the West Kingdom Brewer's Guild

Greetings from Sir Thomas Logan

My first contact with the Guild was at last October Crown. A brief discussion with Morgan has resulted in this note to you. As a new brewer (less than a year) I have been eager for sources to purchase my equipment, supplies, and ingredients. I am also a shameless pack rat and catalog hound. As such, I have called or written for catalogs from homebrew suppliers from all over the country. I would like to share some of my findings with you.

Within California alone, there are five suppliers that I can comment on:

Great Fermentations of Santa Rosa

Excellent, slick catalog, good beginner's kits but limited ingredients. Better than average book prices. Catalog included a recipe (haven't tried it).

Great Fermentations of Santa Rosa, P.O. Box 428, Fulton, CA 95439
advice: (707) 544-2520, orders: (800) 544-1867

Fun Fermentations (Orange)

Simpler, newsletter-style catalog, better selection of products but their kits are too basic for most.

Fun Fermentations, 640 E. Katella Ave., Orange, CA 92667
(714) 532-6831

Williams Brewing (San Leandro)

Beautiful magazine-style catalog full of advice and explanations for products. Excellent kits (denotes sophisticated styles and quality ingredients) but like GFSR above, has a limited product line. Prices are high, but for a \$30 minimum they will pay the shipping.

Williams Brewing, P.O. Box 2195, San Leandro, CA 94577
advice: (510) 895-2744 orders: (510) 895-2739

Beer Makers of America (Colfax)

Perhaps the most extensive product line around—they do not sell their own kits but they do list about 80 different canned extracts alone! Catalog is photocopied and can be difficult to read. Prices are average.

Beer Makers of America, P.O. Box 777, Colfax CA 95713
orders: (800) 655-5682

R&R Home Fermentation Supplies (Sacramento)

What can I say—these folks are my number-one suppliers. The catalog is primitive and the ingredient list is only average, but their prices on everything but books beat most of the rest of the California competition hands down. Also since they are close, I go to the store and save the shipping.

R&R Home Fermentation Supplies, 8385 Jackson Rd., Sacramento, CA 95826; orders: (916) 383-7702

These are just a few examples; the sources I have cited were found in *Zymurgy* magazine almost exclusively. If you feel that information such as this is useful, let me know and I will write additional installments (I can generally be

contacted at major events through Sir Eirik or Mistress Lucrezia, or at wars with the Company).

I am interested in beer and brewing practices from the British Isles but I have not found any brewing magazines from Britain nor have I discovered any British homebrew suppliers—if anyone out there has, I would like to talk to you.

Homebrew Legalities

by Lord Alberic Haak

Everyone knows the laws for drinking homebrew, but the laws covering brewing may be less well known. I'll explain some of the legalities of homebrewing in California.

The first point we will look at is how much homebrew is allowed in a household. If there is only one adult living in the house, California law allows 100 gallons of homebrew. In a household with two or more adults, 200 gallons a year are allowed. When I talked to the ABC agent, he wasn't sure whether this was beer in fermentation or the finished product, but he assumed this was the finished product. To be on the safe side, you probably shouldn't bottle more than the limit. Most homebrewers probably wouldn't go over this legal limit.

While most brewers know that it is illegal to sell the fruits of their labors, most don't know that it is also illegal to barter their homebrew. Batering falls under a legal exchange of goods and counts as selling in the state of California. You can't legally trade some homebrew for a tunic. But if you gave a friend some homebrew and they gave you a tunic, both would be acts of friendship and not bartering.

Canning Beer Continued

The can of beer, the CO₂ canister, and the various tubes can be stashed under a covered tourney table. We made a very simple burlap cover for the jockey box, with holes cut out for the taps to come through. I've thought it would be fun to make a jockey-box cover painted to look like casks, or you could decorate the cover with your device or other symbols. We carved wooden tap pulls to replace the modern-looking plastic ones.

The whole setup pops together quickly (a real plus on Friday night, when, after all the driving and setup, you're really ready to relax and enjoy a homebrew). You can make your beer dispensing system look reasonably period (or at least reasonably disguised). You don't end up with beer bottles strewn all over your camp the next morning (although you may end up with friends strewn all over your camp!). And if you're going to be away from camp for a while, you can simply turn off (or disconnect) the CO₂ to prevent unauthorized drinking. My personal favorite benefit is that you don't have to rearrange the cover over the ice chest every time someone gets a beer.

Canning is not only easier at bottling time, it's easier at tourney time too. Although you have to spend some money on equipment to get this system up and running, you'll save quite a bit on ice. But most of all, you'll have plenty of good beer on tap at your camp with a minimum of effort.

Caricatures

by Ciombady Huato Nobedar

You Brewers' Guilders are growing wiser. Many of you rank above Amateur as drinkers and many of you profess that brewing is a major part of your life. And although I don't see any of you who *are* these characters, I will warn you of them.

The overeager it's-gotta-be-done-by-now brewer. This fellow presses his/her beer upon you when it's quite green. S/he cheerfully admits that this brew was bottled last week so that it would be ready for this event. Your best revenge is to steal a bottle, let it age for a couple of months, then let them try to guess who brewed it.

The non-sanitizer. This culprit is a serious hazard. Although nothing in beer can truly poison you, contaminated brews taste as if they could. The innocent taster must decide between politely swallowing or spewing imprecations. The enlightened brewer offers polite and non-judgmental advice. The smart brewer remains cautious about tasting further efforts.

The experimenter. Beware the lord or lady who says, "I want you to be the first to taste this." It's possible that neither you, nor anybody, can truly appreciate an apricot-kiwi-banana-coffee-peppermint cordial.

The braggart. This fellow has always done something that s/he is talking about, but never seems to do anything when you're watching. Don't make the mistake of counting on them—they'll volunteer readily, but rarely follow through. Braggarts should be "called," for if properly shamed, their own ego will force them into usefulness.

The brew bimbo. This character is the brewers' groupie. They hang out with brewers whenever possible. Like the braggart, they contribute little—but they're more honest and more modest about it. The brew bimbo should be gently instructed as to how they can contribute. Although they have more potential than the braggart, unless firmly taken in hand they will remain parasitic.

The wide-eyed youngster. Although at first they seem somewhat annoying, they have the best potential. Take the time to work with them—it will be time well spent.

The crusty know-it-all. Don't listen to them. Ha ha.

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