



# The Brews Leader

The official newsletter of the James River Homebrewers

Richmond, Virginia

January 2008

Vol. 25 No. 01



## UPCOMING JRHB EVENTS

Wednesday January 9th  
Regular Club Meeting at Legends  
Water & Brewing Discussion

Wednesday January 16th  
Board of Directors Meeting  
7 p.m. Legends

Wednesday February 13th  
Regular Club Meeting at Legends  
Low or No-Hop Beers

Wednesday March 12<sup>th</sup>  
Regular Club Meeting at Legends  
How to Judge a Beer  
Identifying Beer Faults

For updated information and the club forum visit  
<http://www.jrhb.org/>

## DECEMBER MEETING RECAP

Vice President Robert Doucet opened the meeting at 7 p.m. Approximately 36 folks were in attendance including a number of guests. Welcome to our newest member Edmon Duncan.

Keith Shelton led a spirited discussion and tasting of beers in the "Winter Warmer" categories. These beers can be brewed over a variety of base styles, but are generally special seasonal brews, typically higher in alcohol content, and frequently spiced. Selections included Harpoon Winter Warmer in the Spiced Ale category, Brooklyn Winter Ale in the Scottish Style Winter Ale category, Samuel Smith's Winter Welcome Ale in the English Style Winter Strong Ale category, St. Bernardus Christmas Ale in the Belgian Seasonal Ale category, and Mendocino Winter Imperial IPA in the American Winter Seasonal Category. Thanks Keith for a well thought out and tasty selection of seasonal beers.

After a brief break, Robert Doucet launched our annual December Super Raffle. Lots of great prizes were to be had. Judging from the number of carboys, kegs, and pounds of hops and malt distributed, we can all look forward to lots of tasty beers to sample in 2008!

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**LANG'S HOST HOLIDAY BASH : MIKE TAKES 2007**  
**CLUSTER BREW HONORS**

Mike and Bobbi Lang hosted a wonderful holiday celebration at their home on December 8<sup>th</sup>. We fried up a couple of turkeys, and there was lots more great food, good company, and lots of great beer. Beers brewed at the 2007 Ted Warren Cluster Brew Competition in September were sampled while brewers anxiously awaited for Bob Henderson to announce this years winner. The cluster brews were judged by a panel of local brew masters, with the competition and judging coordinated by Bob.

Congratulations to Mike Lang who ended up taking top honors with his Premium American Lager. Mike earns a spot on the cluster brew trophy paddle. Honorable mention goes to the entire rest of the field of tasty beers which included:

- Alt Bier brewed by the team of Keith Shelton and Steve Severtson
- Rye Pale Ale brewed by Eric Hilliard
- Belgian I.P.A. brewed by Robert Doucet
- Cream Ale brewed by the team of Dave Rockafellow Norm England, Mike Separ, and John VanItallie
- Irish Red Ale brewed by Joe Moore and Graham Cecil

Thanks Bobbi and Mike for hosting a super party and Bob for coordinating the Cluster Brew Competition.

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**Here we come a-wassailing?**

Wassail (pronounced wossayl or woss'l) is a hot, spiced punch often associated with winter celebrations of northern Europe, usually those connected with holidays such as Christmas, New Year's and Twelfth Night. Wassail may also be very similar to a Roman winter beverage called calda which, according to the recipes of Apicius, consisted of wine cut with water, then heated, sweetened with honey, and flavored with aromatic spices. (Many Christmas traditions actually derive from those of the Roman festival of Saturnalia, so a connection between the two is possible.) Today, many microbreweries produce a beverage very similar to wassail – spiced beer – during the winter months.

Particularly popular in Germanic countries, the term itself is a contraction of the Old English toast wæs þu hæl, or "be thou hale!" (i.e., "be in good health"). Alternate expressions predating the term, with approximately the same meaning, include both the Old Norse ves heill and Old English wæs hæl.

While the beverage typically served as "wassail" at modern holiday feasts most closely resembles mulled cider, historical wassail was completely different, more likely to be mulled beer. Sugar, ale, ginger, nutmeg, and cinnamon would be placed in a bowl, heated, and topped with slices of toast as sops. Hence the first stanza of the traditional carol the Gloucestershire Wassail dating back to the Middle Ages:

Wassail! wassail! all over the town,  
Our toast it is white and our ale it is brown;  
Our bowl it is made of the white maple tree;  
With the wassailing bowl, we'll drink to thee.

Wassail-themed songs were sung by winter carolers who went from house to house, singing to the residents in exchange for small gifts of money, food and drink (often wassail).

A Wassailing is also a traditional ceremony carried out to ensure a good crop of cider apples for the coming harvest. The Apple Wassailing is held on the Old Twelfth Night (17 January). Wassailing the apple trees and the barns - Celebrants gather in apple orchards where they will perform ritual acts to ensure that there will be a good apple harvest the following year. The wassail beverage is consumed and bonfires lighted. In the orchards noise is made to chase off evil spirits, guns are fired. Pieces of toast soaked in wassail are placed in the branches of the trees. Orchard visiting wassails are most prevalent in the West Country the most famous of these being held in Carhampton (Somerset) and Whimble (Devon).

Old Apple tree, old apple tree;  
We've come to wassail thee;  
To bear and to bow apples enow;  
Hats full, caps full, three bushel bags full;  
Barn floors full and a little heap under the stairs.

Wassail !

...

- 2 quarts Hard Apple Cider
- 1 cup Orange Juice
- 1 cup Lemon Juice
- 1 cup Pineapple Juice
- 3 sticks Cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons Whole Cloves
- 2/3 cup Sugar

...

- Combine all ingredients.
- Warm gently for 1 hour to combine flavors.

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## BREWING NEWS

### **BumpBumpBump....Another One Bites the Dust**

#### Starr Hill announces Anheuser-Busch distribution deal

By TASHA KATES

MEDIA GENERAL NEWS SERVICE

CHARLOTTESVILLE

Friday, Dec 21, 2007

Adults across America may soon pop the cap off an ice-cold bottle of beer from Starr Hill Brewery.

The Crozet-based brewery took a big step this week toward fulfilling its mission of "bringing the gift of great beer to the world" by announcing a distribution deal with Anheuser-Busch Inc. The deal will eventually allow Starr Hill to peddle its brews from coast to coast in independent and chain stores.

Brewmaster Mark Thompson said the distribution deal is a dream come true.

"We're honored and humbled and thankful to be chosen," Thompson said.

The brewery, which was founded in 1999 on Charlottesville's Main Street, has been working on the deal for more than a year. Details were not disclosed. Dave Peacock, vice president of marketing for Anheuser-Busch, said the company seeks out specialty brews to sell alongside its flagship products.

"Starr Hill has already developed a loyal following among craft beer consumers in Virginia, and together with our wholesaler network, we're looking forward to enhancing the distribution and sales support for these award-winning beers," Peacock said in a statement.

Starr Hill will continue to market and produce its brews at its Three Notch'd Road location. Thompson said the first year of distribution would focus on Virginia. "We will start immediately in Roanoke and Lynchburg," Thompson said. "After those two, we will do Blacksburg and Danville. By mid-2008, we will do [Virginia Beach] and the last remaining areas."

The company's three-year plan is to have its beers available from New York to Atlanta. Thompson hopes the brews go nationwide in five to 10 years.

The company has designed four core beers -- Starr Hill Amber Ale, Starr Hill Jomo Lager, Starr Hill Pale Ale and Starr Hill Starr Stout -- for which it has won 12 awards. The brewery also produces several holiday beers.

Starr Hill had been looking for a way to expand its business before the Anheuser-Busch deal, but

Thompson said it would have involved significant time and energy.

St. Louis-based Anheuser-Busch holds a 48.4 percent share of U.S. beer sales and is a major manufacturer of aluminum cans. The company also owns a 50 percent share in the Mexico brewer Grupo Modelo and a 27 percent share in China-based brewer Tsingtao.

Keeping up production at Starr Hill will require more people. Thompson said the company would need to purchase more fermenters and hire another brewer. The brewery has the capacity to produce up to 60,000 barrels a year.

Tasha Kates is a staff writer at The Daily Progress in Charlottesville.

### **Meanwhile good news just down the road....**

#### A New Brew in Nelson

By Erin McGrath

Nelson County Times

Wednesday, December 12, 2007

Blue Mountain Brewery is hopping.

Five weeks ago Nelson County's first and only brewery, hops farm and tasting room all in one, opened its doors in Afton. Co-founder Taylor Smack called the last month "insane." "Anyone who's tried to come here on a Friday night or a Saturday afternoon can't get a table and can't find a parking space," Smack said.

On more than one occasion, the brewery has been drained dry of some of their brews, he said. Smack, a Lynchburg native, has brewed beers for almost a decade. He and his wife Mandi, a Wisconsin native, always had the idea of opening a brewery together. "Since the first day we met, we talked about opening something," Mandi Smack said. "We threw around ideas like a coffee shop or a laundromat with a brewery attached."

The Smack's began talking with Nelson County authorities about opening the brewery almost three years ago. "It seems to people that it just happened overnight, but it has been years in the making," Taylor Smack said. The Smacks brought in Charlottesville resident Matt Nucci who had introduced Smack to homebrewing. "I homebrewed for about 10 years," Nucci said. "I turned Taylor onto it and helped him buy his first kit and brew his first batch. And soon, he was brewing beers way better than I was."

Smack has a certificate of brewing from Chicago's Siebel Institute and spent the last six years as a brewer at Charlottesville's South Street Brewery. The Seibel

Institute is the country's oldest brewing school. "It's a tradition. It's a trade," Smack said. "There's a lot of creativity involved."

The hops Blue Mountain uses are grown right next to the brewery. "We liked the whole idea that our brewery was going to be like a winery and have land and some sort of tangibility with the beer," Smack said. "It's a real touch and feel part of the brewery."

In August, the first batch of brew went into the fermenters. "Probably a month or two before we opened we were starting to get some production out, just for distribution," Smack said. "I remember thinking this is the best beer I've ever tasted. It was the porter, and just being like, 'this is amazing.' And 'Holy crap, I made it.'" Blue Mountain Brewery has six beers on tap, but will always have different and new beers coming out, Smack said. "We want to keep people coming back, because we know next week, some new crazy beer is going to be on draft," Smack said. "It's really to keep that enthusiasm and to convert everyone around this area into loving traditional beer."

And people are coming back. The tasting room, like the brewery, has expanded beyond Blue Mountain's original visions. "We didn't expect it to get as restauranty as it's become," Nucci said. Even if they did expand it wouldn't be enough to handle the business their fielding on the weekends, Mandi Smack said.

Blue Mountain Brewery is even having trouble keeping distributors -- who place the breweries beers in restaurants and stores all over Central Virginia -- satisfied. The brewery has had to pull back on distributing some of their bottled beers in Richmond and Roanoke, because they couldn't keep up with the demand, Taylor Smack said. "We just couldn't do enough. And we built this brewery really big, I think," Smack said. "I just knew that we could grow into it over the years ... and wouldn't you know it, five weeks into operation, we're hitting the wall."

"We just want to dial this in and get it perfect," he said. "And make sure the beer is always amazing."

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Beer, if drunk with moderation, softens the temper, cheers the spirit and promotes health.  
Thomas Jefferson

Beer is proof that God loves us and wants us to be happy.  
Benjamin Franklin  
*(a number of eminent scholars state that there is no historical evidence Franklin ever made this statement....hey but they can't prove he didn't!)*

I am a firm believer in the people. If given the truth, they can be depended upon to meet any national crisis. The great point is to bring them the real facts, and beer.

Abraham Lincoln

Homer no function beer well without.  
Dan Castellaneta as Homer Simpson

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### **AHA – CLUB ONLY COMPETITION**

From time to time, the American Homebrewers Association (AHA) sponsors competitions based on a particular style. These competitions are open only to AHA-affiliated homebrew clubs. Each club holds a competition on the particular style. The winner's brew is sent off to be judged with the winners from other homebrew clubs around the country. Bring in five bottles – two for the local competition and three to send off if you win. Note that all competitions will use the 2004 BJCP Guidelines.

<http://www.beertown.org/homebrewing/schedule.html>

#### **2007 -2008 Competition Schedule:**

January/February 2008 - Dark Lagers  
Prairie Homebrewing Companions of Fargo, ND  
Entries are due 02/09/2008

March/April 2008 - Perfect Porter Challenge  
Foam Blowers of Indiana (FBI) of Indianapolis, IN  
Entries are due on 03/21/2008

May 2008 - Extract Beers  
Urban Knaves of Grain of Naperville, IL  
Entries are due TBD

August 2008 – Mead  
Minnesota Homebrewers Association of Edina, MN  
Entries are due 7/25/2008

September/October 2008 Imperial Anything  
Clinton River Association of Fermenting Trendsetters  
(C.R.A.F.T.) of Macomb Township, MI  
Entries are due TBD

As the entry dates are set, we will include the date that our local competition will be held in the Upcoming JRHB Events listing. Winners earn Homebrew Club of the Year points for their club.

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**BJCP – BEER STYLE OF THE MONTH**

Each month the BrewsLeader will feature one beer style from the BJCP style guidelines.

**1C. Premium American Lager**

**Aroma:** Low to medium-low malt aroma, which can be grainy, sweet or corn-like. Hop aroma may range from very low to a medium-low, spicy or floral hop presence. Low levels of yeast character (green apples, DMS, or fruitiness) are optional but acceptable. No diacetyl.

**Appearance:** Pale straw to gold color. White, frothy head may not be long lasting. Very clear.

**Flavor:** Crisp and dry flavor with some low levels of sweetness. Hop flavor ranges from none to low levels. Hop bitterness at low to medium level. Balance may vary from slightly malty to slightly bitter, but is relatively close to even. High levels of carbonation may provide a slight acidity or dry "sting." No diacetyl. No fruitiness.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-light body from use of adjuncts such as rice or corn. Highly carbonated with slight carbonic bite on the tongue.  
Overall Impression: Refreshing and thirst quenching, although generally more filling than standard/lite versions.

**Comments:** Premium beers tend to have fewer adjuncts than standard/lite lagers, and can be all-malt. Strong flavors are a fault, but premium lagers have more flavor than standard/lite lagers. A broad category of international mass-market lagers ranging from up-scale American lagers to the typical "import" or "green bottle" international beers found in America.

**Ingredients:** Two- or six-row barley with up to 25% rice or corn as adjuncts.

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.046 – 1.056  
IBUs: 15 – 25 FG: 1.008 – 1.012  
SRM: 2 – 6 ABV: 4.7 – 6%

**Commercial Examples:** Miller Genuine Draft, Michelob, Coors Extra Gold, Heineken, Beck's, Stella Artois, Singha

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**Mike Lang's Cluster Brew Winner !**

**Simple Show Off Premium American Lager**

Batch Size (Gal): 5.00  
Total Grain (Lbs): 9.75  
Anticipated OG: 1.052  
Anticipated SRM: 4.3  
Anticipated IBU: 21.4  
Wort Boil Time: 65 Minutes

Grain Bill  
Qty. Name Potential SRM  
9.00 lbs. Pale Malt (2-row) America 1.036 2  
0.75 lbs. Crystal 10L America 1.035 10

Hops  
Amount Name Form Alpha IBU Boil Time  
0.50 oz. Hallertauer Whole 4.00 8.9 60 min.  
0.50 oz. Hallertauer Whole 4.00 8.0 45 min.  
0.50 oz. Hallertauer Whole 4.00 4.5 30 min.

Yeast  
DCL Yeast S-23 SafLager W. Euro Lager

Mash Schedule  
Mash Water Gal: 2.44  
Step Time Temp  
Strike 15 93  
Protein Rest 30 116  
Sacc Rest 45 152  
Mash out 30 166  
Sparge 30 168

Fermentation  
Days In Primary: 21  
Primary Temperature: 46 degrees F

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<http://www.richbrau.com/>  
Beers On Tap:

Belgian-Style White Ale  
We brewed this pleasantly aromatic wheat beer with the addition of bitter orange peel, coriander and a fruity Belgian yeast strain. This beer is unfiltered and its flavor is tart but sweet and perfumey. 5.5 abv

The Ampaler - The American hop varieties come through in the aroma of this American Pale Ale. A light caramel body balances its pronounced hop character. Alcohol: 5.6 abv

Raspberry Wheat Ale - This unfiltered wheat beer is loaded with raspberry flavor and aroma. We used more than a half pound of pureed raspberries per gallon. The color is an opaque rosy amber. This brew is a sweet treat with a light sugary body. Alcohol: 5.2 abv

Vanilla Bean Stout- We used our oatmeal stout as the base for this brew and added ground Mexican vanilla beans to impart a subtle vanilla character. Dark, roasty with some vanilla notes. Served on a nitro tap. 5 abv

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

Beers On Tap:

Imperial Oatmeal Stout

Complexity abounds in this beer, the latest in the Legend Imperial line of heavy hitters. The mash consists of pale ale malt as the base with very generous amounts of flaked oats, roasted barley, chocolate malt, and black barley. Hopping is straight Magnum. Fermented on a Scottish ale yeast stain.

Hops: Magnum for bittering, flavor, and aroma  
Starting gravity 20.0 Balling  
Finishing Gravity 6.1 Balling  
International bitterness units: Somewhere between 80 and 105, plenty to carry this beer.

Chocolate Porter

We were generous in our additions of dark malts for this brew. These include Caramel and Chocolate malts, as well as our standard "Porter malts". The addition of natural cocoa extract at filtering time gives this brew a strong choco-nose and a deep lingering Wonkaesque finish. German Tettenang hops are used for a clean balancing bitterness.

Legend Barlywine

Legend Barleywine is generously hopped to balance the huge malty sweetness. Hops account for the bitter and spicy flavors in a beer. We also "Dry Hopped" this one, giving it a nice spiced-floral aroma. Look for a very rich, ruby colored, robust strong beer with an attitude. Tastes reminiscent of caramel, chocolate, dried fruit (prunes, raisins) are evident at first, followed by hints of licorice and pine flavors. Expect a lingering finish with plenty of warming alcohol. Malts include 2-row malt, 6-row malt, various medium roast malts, and chocolate malt.  
Hopped with Fuggles, dry hopped with Goldings  
Aged six months.

Belgian Triple

Legend Tripel is fermented on a Belgian abbey-style yeast strain which imparts interesting combinations including banana, clove, apple, pear, and even bubble gum in the flavor. These are perhaps even more evident in the aroma.

The malt bill consists of pilsner malt as the base for light color, yet a little more grain flavor than standard two-row malt. Flavor and aroma benefit from additions

of aromatic malts. High enzyme six row barley, flaked corn, and corn sugar contribute by providing all of the necessary ingredients for an extensive fermentation. Hallertau hops offer a balance to the sweetness, as well as a little spice quality.

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### OUR COMPLIMENTS TO....

#### **The WeekEnd Brewer Homebrew & Wine Supplies**

4205 West Hundred Road  
Chester, VA 23831  
(804) 796-9760  
<http://www.weekendbrewer.com/>

#### **River City Cellars Beer, Wine and Gourmet Foods**

2931 West Cary Street  
Richmond, VA 23221  
(804) 355-1375  
[www.rivercitycellars.com](http://www.rivercitycellars.com)  
**(10% Discount for JRHB Members with JRHB  
Membership Card Only)**

**The *BrewsLeader* is the official e-publication of the James River Homebrewers**

**Monthly Meetings**

All regular club meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month at The Legend Brewery, 321 West 7th Street, Richmond, Virginia. Homebrew tasting at 6:30, meeting at 7:00. We are grateful to Tom Martin and the rest of the Legend staff for their gracious hospitality.

**Officers and Board of Directors**

Officers

President: Mike Lang - [president@jrhb.org](mailto:president@jrhb.org)

Vice President: Robert Doucet

Treasurer: Mike Hinkle

Secretary: Graham Cecil – [secretary@jrhb.org](mailto:secretary@jrhb.org)

Member at Large: Denise Pierce

Competition Coordinator: William Speisberger – [competitioncoordinator@jrhb.org](mailto:competitioncoordinator@jrhb.org)

Assistant Competition Coordinator: John VanItallie

Web Master: Joe Moore - [webmaster@jrhb.org](mailto:webmaster@jrhb.org)

Directors

Tim Moran

Bob Henderson

Keith Shelton

Steve Severtson

**Web Site**

<http://www.jrhb.org/>

**Submit Articles**

Articles or other items of interest from the membership are welcome (encouraged) and should be submitted to the Secretary. Email to [secretary@jrhb.org](mailto:secretary@jrhb.org).

**Dues**

Membership dues are \$20 per calendar year. Dues will be prorated on a quarterly basis.

**Inclement Weather Policy**

If the Richmond city Schools are closed due to inclement weather on the day of a regularly scheduled Club meeting, the meeting will be cancelled, and re-scheduled for the following Wednesday – this will be confirmed by e-mail.

**Remember**

**Drink Responsibly -**

**Don't Drink and Drive!**

***Members and guests at James River Homebrewers meetings and events are individually and solely liable for any and all actions attendant to or resulting from their participation.***