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Worcester Incorporated Zymurgists Advancing Real Draughts



Homebrew Club Worcester, MA

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Highlights from the year that was 2021

The WIZARDs new normal brought on by the pandemic continued in full force for 2021. While we missed out on some of our usual activities in 2021, we kept the club going in full swing thanks to the foundation laid in 2020 and, of course, Zoom.

This year we had some in-person meetings, made some progress on the telephone beer and the barrel project, had a few beer swaps and started an Advent calendar (which I'm sure will become a new tradition). All this on top of weekly Thursday night social call where we're now up to 93 in a row.

And a special welcome to this year's new members - Brandon, Walter, Greg & Tracey.

Home Brew Swap #1 – February 2021



In the heart of winter we met for the first beer swap of 2021 and just like last year we met in the Bed, Bath & Beyond parking lot for a socially distanced beer swap. This swap was twofold. First a traditional home brew swap (beers on the left) that we shared over the next couple meetings. As an added benefit, the swap included Bill M's version of the telephone beer.

Second, the barrel project members shared their beers with each other (check out that beautiful wax cap packaging on the right below) and were generous enough to share some of their leftovers with the rest of us 😊

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WIZARDs swapping beer in the Bed, Bath & Beyond parking lot.

February Club Meeting



February brought us the first 2021 update of the club's telephone beer (what's a telephone beer you say? See down below). Bill M's changes included using WP 4020 Belgian Farmhouse yeast to give the beer more character based on the earthy, tart and oaky yeast profile. He also put the comet hop back in at the original bittering charge (as allowed and now required). This helped the beer a lot. Comments included regular drinker, nice sessionable table farmhouse beer, hints of pineapple, nice job and most character yet. Since he did such a nice job, the club felt Bill should take the next shot at the telephone beer as well. He declined. Colby then volunteered for the next go at it.

The Wizards Telephone Beer History

The telephone beer based on the old childhood game of telephone where kid 1 tells kid 2 who tells kid 3 who tells kid 4 and by the time the game is done, the final message is nothing like the first. Our game plan? Start with a simple beer and then club members get to take turns making just one change with the expectation of ending up with a stellar club beer.

Rob started the telephone brew with 10 pounds of Maris Otter, an ounce of Comet hops for the boil, another ounce of Comet for the dry hop and Safale S-04. Overall impressions were clean and drinkable but lacking in pretty much everything else.

Jay took round 2 and substituted Galaxy for the dry hop for a small improvement.

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Bill N. felt it lacked malt character and body so he substituted 1 pound of carapils for 1 pound of the Marris Otter. It didn't make much difference. The beer was drinkable but unrememberable.

Then came Pat. He changed the yeast to Omega yeast 030 "Wit" and since he couldn't find comet hops he substituted Willamette for them (without prior club authorization). The result – a definite improvement with at least some character.

Brian G made the first update in 2020. He swapped the 60 minute hop from Willamette to Saaz. And since he couldn't find the Omega Yeast 030 "Wit" anywhere, president Craig sanctioned the use of Safale WB06 as an equivalent. The resulting beer was described as tasting like "beer." It was good and drinkable but without a defining character to call its own. As a result of Brian's one ounce for one ounce Saaz substitution and the effect it had on bitterness, we added a new rule – if you change the bittering hop, keep it at the same IBU level not necessarily the weight.

Bill M took the second and final shot of 2020 taking the beer in the farmhouse direction discussed above.

[Bulk Grain Buy – February 2021](#)



Thanks to Zack, the club organized (and pulled off) our first ever bulk grain buy through Stone Path Malting in Wareham. Six or seven of us piled into our cars and headed to the cape to pick up thirty-nine sacks of grain for the club. Covid or no covid, a few of us stayed for a quick drink at the Stone Path Pub and a tour of the malting facility. They are both conveniently located in the same building and the pub features beers made with Stone Path Malts. One of the nice things about Stone Path is there is no minimum order, so you can buy as many or as few bags you like at a very reasonable price. Malts and prices are on their website – just call them if you're interested.

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March Club Meeting



Don't let the picture fool, enthusiasm was really high this month!

For Big Brew 2021 we came up with a new plan to try and reinvigorate the telephone beer dubbed the reboot. The idea was

for everyone who could/wanted to brew a new version of the telephone beer to do so on Big Brew Day 2021. Then we could try all the different versions and pick a new and improved starting point for the telephone beer. Bill M. provided a yeast sample to anyone who wanted one at the April Barrel Project Tasting. To make it a little more interesting, this time everyone was given two changes instead of the usual one. All agreed we would try the new brews at the July club meeting.

Home Brew Swap #2 – April 2021

April brought the second home brew swap of the year, again in the Bed, Bath & Beyond parking lot for another socially distanced beer swap. It was like Halloween, walking between cars to pick up a treat. Imagine what the other people in the plaza must have thought?



And once everyone was safely back home? We spent the next month drinking them "together" on the Zoom call.

April Club Meeting

Annual elections were held. Craig was re-elected president, Eli vice-president and Bill treasurer.

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Barrel Project Tasting - April 2021



The club met on a sunny Saturday afternoon in April at Bill M's house for our first in-person get together since the pandemic began. Bill had a fire going in the pit and brisket waiting on the table. Besides getting to see everyone face to face (or would that be mask to mask?), highlights included

the first group tasting from the barrel project (what's barrel project you say? See down below) and at least another 15 beers to try. Clearly a good day all around!

Barrel project beers tasted included the untreated base beer, passion fruit, blueberry, dry hopped (Galaxy, Vic Secret & Ellos), apricot, rhubarb, chili, raspberry, plum, blackberry and peach.

Other beers sampled included Headshots (Monkish), 2019 Good Migrations (Creature Comforts), The future is unwritten (Small Change), More Pours (Vitamin Sega), Session IPA (Craig), Quadruple Stout (Treehouse), Malloy's solera blend (Bill M), Bagged Lunch (S&S Farm), Endless Night & Day (Trillium), Gravity Hammer (Modern Times), 2016 El Lechedor (Night Shift), Darkness (Surrey), Dark Lord (3 Floyds), Black is Back (Joey) and Star Metal Ultra (Modern Times).



And the participants: Bill N, Bill G, Bill M, Rob, Joey, Jon, Brian G, Brian W, Zack, Colby, Craig and Pat.

The Wizards Barrel Project History

The barrel project started in 2019 when ten club members went out and got a barrel inoculated with Cantillon dregs from Mystic Brewing. Their plan? Fill it with a Golden Sour formulated by Zak that he based on a beer by The Rare Barrel. After two days at Deja Brew, one for brewing (all six kettles) and one for transferring to the barrel at Zak's house, the barrel was full and the fermenting and ageing began.

A sunny fall day in September 2020 started off with brewing another forty gallons (four kettles) of the Golden Sour at Deja Brew and ended with each of the barrel project participants taking home 3 gallons of the first batch. Once at home, everyone started the secondary treatment of their beers, mostly with fruits but

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one with chili peppers and one with hops. At the end of the day, the barrel was full again to begin another round of fermentation and ageing.

Then Zack decided to move closer to the city. The club met at Zack's house and about 8 of us filled around 11 kegs to drain it as empty as possible. Then Bill M took the barrel for a ride in his wife's Yukon to its new home in Shrewsbury where it was refilled it to let to referment.

The next step is to give all project stakeholders another share that they will take home and age on a variety of different woods in anticipation of another club tasting event. Presumably another trip to Deja Brew will be required to top up the barrel for the next round. Plans are still being worked out.



July Club Meeting - Summer Swill-Off

This month we celebrated our first in-person meeting at Deja Brew since the pandemic started. July is usually our annual swill-off but given the circumstances that just didn't seem right. We rechristened the swill-off as the SWELL-OFF, with the idea of having some good beers instead of the usual swill. Sure, we had a few good commercial beers but the highlight was tasting the telephone beers that were made on Big Brew Day 2021. We had beers from Jon, Rob (3 versions), Bill M, Brendan and possibly a few others.

Maybe the telephone beer reboot didn't work out quite as planned. Details and tasting notes from the night are a bit thin so we're not sure where we stand with the project. Only time will tell. Stay tuned in 2022.

September Club Meeting and Octoberfest Beer Swap

This month we went back to the great outdoors and met at Bill's house once again for our monthly meeting. While there we also did an Octoberfest beer.



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Octoberfest



We all know Octoberfest happens in late September. But we are the WIZARDs and we're ok messing with a couple hundred years of tradition so we enjoyed the Octoberfest beers from the last beer swap in October!

We're still waiting for the usual witty write-up from Pat.

New England Homebrew Jamboree, Tamworth Camping Area, Tamworth, NH



Yes, the jamboree was back in 2021! But before we talk about that, let's go all the way back to the 2019 jamboree and remember who won the best of show in the homebrew competition. Late this summer, Duane went up to Hobb's Tavern & Brewery Company in Tamworth to help brew his award-winning beer. It was on tap at their tavern and at the jamboree's Friday night Brewer's Dinner where it quickly became a crowd favorite.

The Wizards made a strong showing for the return of the New England Homebrew Jamboree in Tamworth, NH. The crowd was a little smaller than in previous years but for the first year back after the pandemic pause, it was a pretty solid showing. It was great to see old friends and make new ones while sharing and sampling more home brews than you could ever imagine. All in all, a good time with FOAM, M4 and the other clubs and a decent sum of money raised for Make-A-Wish.

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Besides the good times, here's what you missed at this year's jamboree, clockwise from our tent, listed by club and number of beverages on offer:

- WIZARDS 9
- CBS 18
- RIBS 7
- FOAM 10
- Knights of the Mashing Fork 11
- Seacoast 31
- Northshore 23
- CAHB 6
- MVHBC 22
- Southern Maine 15
- WORTS 10
- Mash Holes 11
- Southshore 43



October Club Meeting

It was Brian's house and the great outdoors for this month's club meeting. The highlight for this month had to be Jeremy's big give-away. Sadly, long time club member from way back when Jeremy is getting out of brewing. He made the ultimate gesture by giving away a whole bunch of stuff including equipment, ingredients and even a few beers. Everyone seemed happy and grateful for something!



WIZARDs Advent Calendar



Brian G started us an Advent beer calendar this year. Twelve members kicked in two sets of twelve home brewed or commercial beers so everyone got 24 days' worth of beer. Some were wrapped better than others (homebrews didn't need to be wrapped) but tasty all the same. Some of us managed to keep up with a beer a day and others of us fell behind here and there but in the end we all enjoyed it.

Here's the final list of beers in opening order: Mad Elf, Robs' Quark's Nephew, Jon's Old and New, Maynard's Extra Special Bitter, Joey's Tripel Try, Duane's Strong Bitter, Winter Cru, Holiday Stout, Mad Elf Grand Cru, Troegenator, Bill M's Wicked Brown, Coopers Pale Ale, Duane's Altbier, Hold the Reins, Bill M's Jonny Apple Seed, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, Destination: Japan, Bill N's Garage Floor Barleywine, Rob's Mystery No More, Troegenator, A Tout Le Monde, Long Jaws, Everything Nice and Christmas Ale.

December Club Meeting – Ground Effect Brewing

Another old tradition returned for the December meeting and we met at Ground Effect Brewing in Hudson. Omicron held a few people back but those who braved it all reported having a good time.

Clarity Ferm Experiment

The club did an experiment using White Lab's Clarity Firm in brewing. Clarity Ferm is (from White Lab's website):

A highly specific endoprotease that prevents chill haze in beer by hydrolyzing haze-active polypeptides where the hydrogen bonding that causes chill haze occurs. For use at the beginning of fermentation; made with DSM Brewers Clarex®. As a side effect, Clarity-Ferm has been also found to reduce gluten in beer made with barley.

Feedback was universally the same across everyone who used. It clears up the beer really well and seems to have no noticeable impact on flavor and taste. Perhaps the best data point comes from Jon's wife's friend who has a problem with gluten but reports no problems with drinking Jon's beer made with Clarity Ferm.

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If you're interested, there is still some left.

WIZARDs Tasting Glasses



Good news - we still have plenty of them.

Any member in good standing (ie, dues paying) gets two for free and additional glasses can be bought at the bargain rate of 2 for \$5.

Till next year, see you at the monthly club meeting, always held on the third Tuesday of the month.