

HEART OF THE VALLEY HOMEBREWERS

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THIS MONTH'S MEETING

The Heart of the Valley Homebrew Club meets on the third Wednesday of ALMOST every month, alternating between Corvallis and Albany. There will be no formal HOTV meeting during the month of May. Taking its place, the 21st Annual Oregon Homebrew Festival will be held Saturday, May 17th at the Benton County Fairgrounds. I'm sure you've all been inundated with calls/screams for help. Please do your part to assist.

LAST MONTH'S MEETING

I'm sure everyone who attended the April HOTV meeting will agree it was an action-packed one. Many thanks to Joel Rea and Derek Whiteside who opened their shop(s) to club members and hosted a superb evening. Not only was there homebrew to sample, but a selection of commercial microbrews. Everyone sipped something of their choice and was entertained periodically by our hosts who demonstrated the art of making mozzarella cheese. We crowded into the back room to follow the steps of heating, rennet addition and squeezing the water out. And later came the cheese tasting. Not bad, guys! It was a special treat in addition to the other munchies out for grabs. Most of the formal meeting was filled with festival updates, selection of the commemorative T-shirt logo and call for members to sign up to help with tasks integral to pulling off both beer competition and 'open to the public' festival.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Scott Caul

AHHH...Its festival time again. The moment we've been waiting for is upon us; our trusty Festival Chairpersons are close to panic mode. But RELAX, DON'T WORRY, HAVE A HOMEBREW!! Hats off to Joel Rea and Ron Hall as well as all others who have and will yet put forth the effort to make this a success. I'm sure you have all seen Joel's requests for help, please do what you can to help. This may turn out much larger than we expected, but RELAX, DON'T WORRY, HAVE 3 HOMEBREWS!! After the work is done, that is. On to other things, like THE PICNIC!! Since it's early in the summer yet, and our calendars are not yet full, let's all pencil in August 16th or the 23rd. We can make a decision at the next regular meeting. This years' picnic will extra special to properly celebrate having pulled off our biggest and best festival ever. Cuz I know we're gonna... SEE YOU ALL THERE!!!!

THE CLUB'S BATCH

By Scott Caul If any of you were wondering what's up with the beer we whipped up in my driveway, its all good! Thanks to the help of faithful and trusty member Derek Whiteside, the two batches have been safely racked to secondaries and the lagers are getting the big chill. The ale has a bit of settling to do yet, it's still a tad cloudy. I'll be out of town until June 1st after the festival, and will refrigerate the ale while gone, to help get rid of the chill haze. The lager can finish out and it will all be ready in time to BREW ANOTHER BIG BATCH! Yes, that's right, let's do it again. Mid to late June will be the perfect time to brew up a few batches for the picnic while we enjoy the beer we already made. Keep it in mind, I'll let you all know when.



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The evening was capped off with a trip to the beer/wine cellar for tastes of some oak barrel-aged super-special potables.

WOMEN'S WORK

contributed by Ingeborg Mussche

We were talking about the history of beer at work today and someone mentioned how women were the beer makers. Also known as brewsters. I thought you might enjoy this...

Spontaneously fermented beers (using wild yeast that floats into the brew on its own) occur all over the world, from Africa to the Andes. When Columbus arrived in the "New World" in the 1490s, he found Indians making beer from corn and black birch sap. Other cultures use the grains native to their region, from millet, maize and cassava in Africa to rice and sorghum in Asia.

In almost all of these cultures, brewing was and is women's work.

From Ninkasi, the Babylonian "lady who fills the mouth," to the native Amazon legends about a woman tricked into making the first beer to 18th-century alewives, women have taken on beer brewing along with other food production. Saint Brigid was alleged to have changed bath water into beer for a colony of thirsty lepers (take that, you Greeks).

Cultural anthropologist Alan Eames even postulates that "women have maintained power and status in macho, male-dominated, hunter-gatherer societies by developing their skills as brewsters." Could be.

"In archeological sites in Egypt and the Sudan, in 5000-year-old Sumerian cuneiform manuscripts, among contemporary tribal people and rural farmers from Peru to Norway, you find the exact same thing: women making beer," says Eames. "Same way, same basket, same pot, same rituals. Tibetan beers are very similar to Amazonian manioc beers. The nomads of the Yellow River area of Mongolia have these little portable breweries that go on horseback, and the women take them wherever they go. It's kind of a collective unconscious."

In Medieval Europe, women were brewsters in public taverns, although unless widowed they could only hold a tavern license under a husband's name. Since beer was a key dietary component, bad beer and short measures were punished with flogging and worse -- a church in Ludlow, England features a stone carving of an ale wife being cast into hell, false-bottomed pitcher in hand.

Of course, once brewing moved outside the home and became a commercial enterprise, it moved to the male domain. Home and small commercial brewing as women's work continued through the 17th century, but slowly died out as mass production took over. It was big news when Elise Miller John took over the reigns at Miller Brewing for eight years beginning in 1938 - the first woman ever to run a major brewing company.