

JULY 2002

Froth

Froth is the publication of the Brewers of Central Kentucky (B.O.C.K.): a non-profit organization dedicated to homebrewing.

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July had a bad reputation in classical times. Because of the heat, and the illnesses the heat caused, the Romans felt they were under the influence of the unfriendly star Canicula, the "little dog." They called the days from July 3 to August 11 which then corresponded to the rising and setting of this star, the "Dog Days."

Three western countries celebrate their national holidays in July: Canada on the first, the United States on the fourth, and France on the fourteenth. Perhaps the July heat makes people dissatisfied enough with their governments to revolt. More likely it just makes them want a holiday. Canada became independent peacefully in 1867. The American Revolution had been going on for more than a year when the Declaration of Independence was signed on July 4th 1776. And the storming of the Bastille in Paris on July 14 1789, was just the beginning of a series of revolutions in France. Since then France has has five republics, four kings, and two emperors!

So much for the choice of July as American Beer month... is this revolt or do we just need a holiday?

What is American Beer Month All About?

Did you know that there are over 7,000 brands of beer brewed in the United States? America has a beer tradition that goes back to the earliest days of American history.

Take timeout this JULY to sample some of America's brewing history. American beer traditions are some of the richest and most diversified in the world.



Next Meeting

Wednesday July 10th
Located at Festival Market on
Main Street Lexington

Bring along your Kentucky Ale "done" for a comparative tasting!
Remember we need firm commitments on who is going to Tennessee

Enjoy the summer and enjoy exploring the world of American beers.

SAWYER'S
DOWNTOWN

REAL ALE: PART I

The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) invented the term "real ale" in 1971 when it began its battle to revive a traditional style (pretty much unique to Britain) of brewing and dispensing that was threatened with extinction. According to CAMRA guidelines, and now the Oxford English Dictionary, real ale is "a name for draft (or bottle) beer brewed from traditional ingredients, matured by secondary fermentation in the container from which it is dispensed, and served without the use of extraneous carbon dioxide."

Sounds pretty simple, but serving a proper pint of real ale is much more of a challenge. English brewers rack beer into casks known as firkins before fermentation is complete, or prime beer in the cask with fresh wort or a sugar solution. No, casks don't have to be wooden -- only a few British brewers still use wood -- but casks don't have the internal workings of American kegs to muck things up, they don't draw beer from the bottom (where yeast will have settled), and they do have two holes vital to the conditioning process.

When the cask is sealed at the brewery, a wooden stopper called a shive is driven into a two-inch bung hole, and a wooden plug is placed in a smaller keystone at the end. In the past, one of a publican's jobs was to add finings to the cask; today, that is usually done at the brewery. Finings, traditionally Isinglass (made from the swim bladders of fish), cause the yeast suspended in the beer to drop to the bottom of the cask. Real ale in Britain is served "bar bright."

After a cask is delivered to a pub, it stands in the cellar for two to three days to allow the yeast to settle. Ideally, the casks will be placed directly in stillage -- that is, tilted at an angle and left undisturbed until the cask is empty. The shive hole is then knocked in and a soft spile inserted. The condition of the beer is affected first by the amount of remaining sugar content, then by the cellarman's skill in venting the beer.

After the beer is conditioned to the cellarman's taste, a hard spile is inserted. When the beer is served, the hard spile is removed so air can be drawn into the cask as beer is pulled through the beer engine. A beer engine, topped by a handpump at the bar, is actually a hydraulic system. The line to the handpump is attached to the tap, which is inserted through the keystone plug.

A properly conditioned pint will be nicely carbonated and should look as "bright" as a (lightly) filtered beer. Of course, the beer must be served at the proper temperature. Cellar temperature is not room temperature -- it's between 55 and 58 degrees F, and cool to the taste -- but it's also far from the 32 to 40 degrees at which most American bar's coolers are set.

The process is simple, but it is also an art. There has always been a shortage of qualified people in the cellar. When it leaves the brewery gate, only 60% of the job is done.

Humour

Two Texans were seated at the end of a bar when a young lady seated a few stools up began to choke on a piece of hamburger. She was turning blue and obviously in serious respiratory distress. One said to the other, "That there gal is having a bad time!"

The other agreed and said, "Think we should go help?"

"You bet," said the first, and with that he ran over and said, "Can you breathe?" She shook her head no.

He said, "Can you speak?" She again shook her head no. With that, he pulled up her skirt and licked her on the butt. So shocked was the young woman that she coughed up the obstruction and began to breathe, with great relief.

Back to his friend, he said, "Funny how that hind lick maneuver always works."

Witches brew?

You leave your job interview in Liar and Truthteller Town with two other candidates, who seem to know each other. The interviewer told you that one is a Liar and one is a truthteller, but you were so nervous you didn't ask him which was which.

Out on the sidewalk the three of you find the local Witch selling long cool pints of your favorite beer from a little booth. Wicked witches are notorious for making beer that will put you to sleep for one hundred years, and you have a train to catch. But that beer looks so good. So you turn to the other candidates and randomly ask one for advice. Her answer tells you all you need to know about the local Witch's brew. What was your question?

Health

Study finds alcohol may help prevent Alzheimer's

A study by Dutch scientists has found that daily moderate consumption of alcohol may ward off Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia.

The study published in The Lancet medical journal reported that it doesn't seem to matter what people drink -- the effect is the same. The finding adds to a growing body of evidence for the health benefits of moderate drinking.

As always, experts emphasized that moderation -- between one and three drinks a day -- is the key. Besides destroying the liver, several studies have shown that excessive drinking can be toxic to the brain. Alcoholics can end up with a shrunken brain, which is linked to dementia. There is even a medical condition called alcoholic dementia.

"For people who drink moderately, this is another indication that they are not doing any harm. And for those who don't, if they don't simply opt out of health concerns, they might want to rethink that position," said Meir Stampfer, professor of nutrition and epidemiology at Harvard School of Public Health, who was not involved in the study.

Researchers suggested the blood-thinning and cholesterol-lowering properties of ethanol in alcohol may ward off dementia, which is often caused by a blood vessel problem. Another possibility, the study speculated, is that low levels of alcohol could stimulate the release of acetylcholine, a brain chemical believed to facilitate learning and memory.

No 'cure' yet, but scientists find enzyme linked to causing paunch

Boston scientists have found information that could lead to a way to reduce the tendency of fat cells to cluster around the abdomen and form a beer belly

Reserachers at Beth Israel Deconess Medical Center identified a specific enzyme that trigger such activity, and mice that have excessive amounts of the enzyme develop beer bellies. If drug companies can create medication to turn off the enzyme then it would help men reduce their paunch.

The benefits go beyond making men look better. The kind of fat that sticks around the abdomen, creating a beer belly, is the kind most associated with a higher risk of diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and certain forms of cancer, researchers say.

"Hundreds of studies have led to the conclusion that any fat can be problematic, but it's much, much more dangerous when it's accumulated in the abdomen," said Dr. Jeffrey Flier. Flier is the chief author of the study that appears in Science magazine.

More Humour

A young punker gets on the cross-town bus. He's got spiked multicolored hair that's green, purple, and orange. His clothes are a tattered mix of leather rags. His legs are bare and he's without shoes. His entire face and body are riddled with pierced jewelry and his earrings are big, bright feathers. He sits down in the only vacant seat, directly across from an old man who just glares at him for the next ten minutes.

Finally, the punk gets self-conscious and barks at the old man,

"What are you looking at, you old fart? Didn't you ever do anything wild when you were young?"

Without missing a beat, the old man replies,

"Yeah. Back when I was in young and in the Navy, I got really drunk one night in Singapore and had sex with a parrot... I thought maybe you were my son."



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