

THE GRAIN MILL

A PUBLICATION OF THE
SCIOTO, OLENTANGY & DARBY ZYMURGISTS, INC

The President's Corner

February 2013
By Ben Siefker

Ah, boring February. Football is over, spring isn't here, and we're stuck with a celebrity diving show on TV. Luckily it is a short month. But we might as well make the most of it while we're waiting, so why not try a new beer? As homebrewers, we usually have plenty of beer on tap/bottle/barrel, so we might not "get out much" when it comes to the commercial world. I can remember a time – when asked – when I couldn't remember drinking anything other than homebrew or Columbus IPA. It pushed me to go break out of kind of a beer rut. When I first got into craft beer, I used to bring home different beer all the time – it was exciting to see what was out there. After brewing for a couple years, I was drinking the same thing all the time. This is not a metaphor for marriage.

So how do you find new beer? Do you go to the bottle shops and stare at the shelves? Do you go to the beer bars and see what's on tap? You might hear about new beers on beer and brewing websites & forums, or maybe you hear about them from your friends. Last week, my brother in California texted me "If you don't have a mouthful of Mongo IPA, spit out whatever you were about to swallow by mistake." I'll take that as a good review, and I suppose I should look around for it (though it's probably local to him). Sometimes people overthink this kind of thing. If "how do you find a new beer" sounded like a stupid question to you, don't worry about it. If you thought, "wait, how DO I find a new beer?" you might be overthinking it. The point, anyway, is to just go try something new.

"But Ben," said no one reading this, "why would I want to try a new beer?" Well no one at all, how about so you don't become a bitter old bastard, eschewing the joys of novelty and adventure for the cold comfort of routine. How about that, huh? Yeah, fine, so no one probably needs pushed too hard to go try a new beer. But think about this: have you ever tried a new beer – commercial or homebrew – and thought, "man, I need to brew this!?" I'm sure you have. So if sometimes trying a new beer moves your brewing up a level, it stands to reason that the more new beers you try, the more often this inspiration is likely to happen. So yes, try a new beer because it caught your eye in the store, or because you read it has "all the hops" on the internet, or whatever, but just remember to do it. This may be the only time anyone tells you, but try more beer; you'll be a better person for it.

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How to build a stir plate

By: Sage Wolfe

As a homebrewer, you probably already know that pitching a sufficient quantity of healthy yeast is key to making good beer. But you may not know that using a stir plate will increase both, as compared to a 'simple starter' made in a growler or similar vessel. When making a big beer, I always use Jamil Zainasheff's online Pitching Rate Calculator, which can be found at www.mrmalty.com.

Let's see an example. The Solera group recently made an English barleywine with an estimated OG of 1.123. For a 5 gal batch, Mr. Malty suggests a 1.5L starter when using a stir plate. A simple starter would require 4L, though this can be brought down to 2.4L if you are attentive about shaking it often. Thus a stir plate is a boon to me, as I hardly ever brew anything below 1.080 and my Erlenmeyer flask is only 2L.

In addition to a stir plate, you'll need a flat bottomed vessel and a stir bar. Erlenmeyer flasks, made of borosilicate glass, work well due to their resistance to temperature shock. You can place it straight on your stove top, and then dunk it in ice water to bring it down to pitching temperature. Stir bars are simply Teflon coated magnetic bars, magnetized in the axial direction. Both are available at homebrew stores or Amazon.

For the stir plate, I'll show you a few options. At a minimum, you'll need a DC power source, computer fan, and some strong magnets. For the power source, you can use an old power cord for a cell phone, router, or other electronic device. Look for the specifications on the power source, you'll typically see something like, "OUTPUT: 12V 400mA." This means its output is 12V DC, and it can supply a maximum of 400 mA (or 0.40 A). Compare this with your computer fan, which will say something like, "DC 12V 0.30A." Principally, you want to make sure that the power supply is not at a higher voltage than what your fan is rated for. It is okay if the power source has a higher current rating than the fan – the fan will only draw what power it needs (as in this example). If the power source voltage is lower (5V is very common for cell phone chargers) than the fan's voltage, this will work, but the fan will be a little weak. A discarded hard drive is a good source for the powerful magnets.

First, let's start with a simple stir plate. This is the setup I had for a while, a 5V DC power supply wired directly to a 120mm computer fan. The 'plate' for mine was a Gladware container flipped over the fan. I cannibalized this to make my current stir plate, so I shamelessly stole someone else's photo for Fig. 1, the simple stir plate. The silver pieces on top of the fan are a computer magnet, broken in half. The red cylinder to the right of the fan is a crimp connector, which connects the fan to the DC power supply (top right). A wiring diagram for this stir plate is shown in Fig. 2. First, you'll need to identify the wires on your computer fan. Typically, there will be three wires: red, black, and another color (often white or yellow). The third wire is unnecessary. Cut the connectors off the fan and the power supply, and strip back the wires. Red should be connected to the positive voltage and black should be connected to ground. However, if you get it backwards, the fan will spin the opposite direction and work just fine all the same. Once you've identified which wires should be connected, form a more permanent connection by soldering, crimping, wire nuts, or even just twisting them together and taping well with electrical tape. At this point, you have a wall powered computer fan, ready to be placed in your box, Gladware, etc., and have a magnet glued to it.



Figure 1: Simple Stir Plate

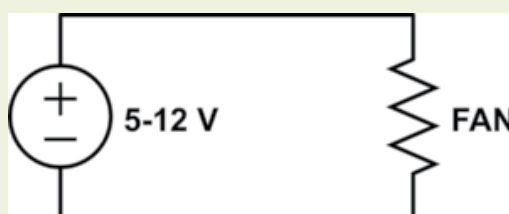


Figure 2: Simple Stir Plate Wiring Diagram

Now let's show a more complicated setup. I mounted mine inside an old Nintendo (shown in Fig. 3), retaining the power LED, power/reset buttons, and the DC power jack. You'll need to wire a suitable resistor inline with the LED to make sure it doesn't draw too much current. Anything in the 330-500 ohm range should be suitable. Additionally, if you repurpose a switch like I did, you may need to use a multimeter and measure the resistance across various terminals as you press or not press the buttons. In my case, the reset button functions like the pulse button on a blender. This can be useful for getting the bar balanced. The size of the potentiometer ('POT' in the diagram) can vary. In my case, I only used a 25 ohm pot, but I should have used a larger pot, because the fan doesn't go as slow as I would like when turned all the way down. Also be aware that pots typically have three legs. Depending on how you wire it, it may offer full resistance when turned clockwise or counterclockwise. The wiring diagram for my stir plate is shown in Fig. 4.



Figure 3: Nerdy Stir Plate

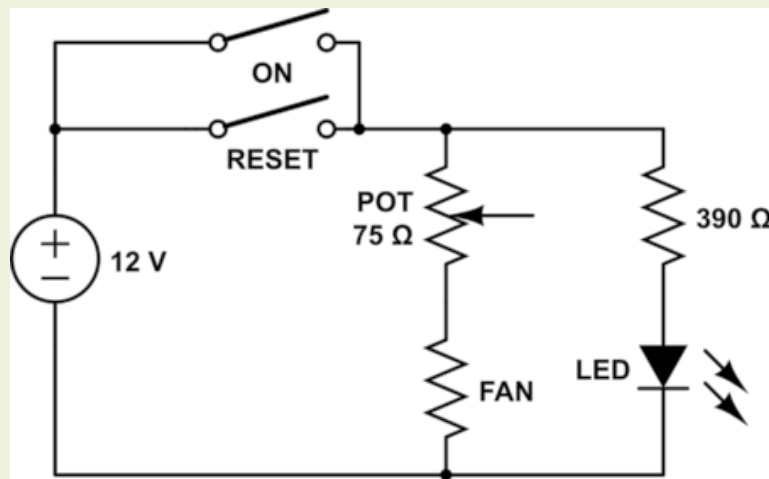


Figure 4: Nerdy Stir Plate Wiring Diagram

One thing that I didn't talk about yet is magnet placement. Initially, I had my magnet mounted in the center and it was difficult to maintain stability of the stir bar. Thinking about the magnetization of the stir bar, I thought that it might be better if the magnets were spread out, i.e. mounted on the fan blades instead of the hub of the fan. Additionally, opposite faces of the magnet should be up on each side. I experimented with a number of different configurations before settling on the one shown in Fig. 5. The top bar is the stir bar. The two magnets below represent two separate magnets (like the pieces in Fig. 1), and the thick black box is the fan. The red represents magnetic field lines. Be aware that your magnets may interfere somewhat with your fan, which is essentially an electromagnet.

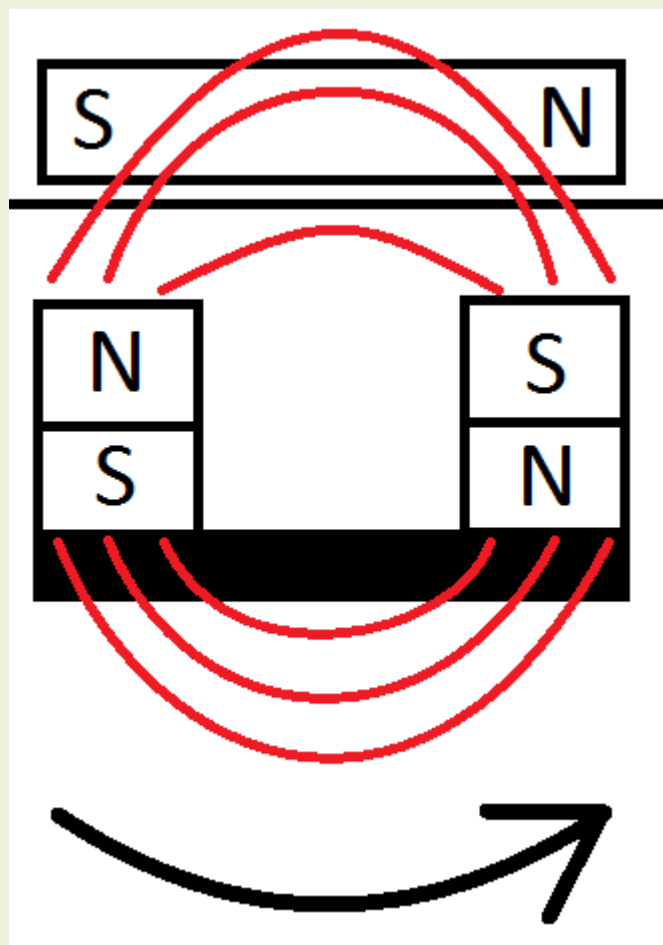


Figure 5: Magnet Configuration

Oktoberfest

By: Tom Rees



This is the second in a short series of articles that documents our latest vacation to Europe. In the first article, I talked about our first stop – Prague, in the Czech Republic and our exploration of the wonderful history of Czech Pilsner Lager, specifically Pilsner Urquell, Kozel and Staropramen.

Now, I would like to shift gears and move along to our next stop – Germany.

I would have to say that, in my opinion, tops on the list of any beer vacation would be to attend the Oktoberfest held annually in Munchen – that's the German name for the city of what we call Munich. I've never figured out why we don't call locations by the name the locals use for their own city (another example is Vienna – known as Wein throughout Europe). My wife and I have been fortunate to have been there three times now, each time just as wonderful as you could imagine. Our friend, one of my wife's college classmates has travelled extensively but she had not previously been to Germany, so this trip to Oktoberfest was her first. As a beer lover, she was really looking forward to it. My wife enjoys the atmosphere more than the beer, but she always gets a stein – I mean hey, it is the world famous Oktoberfest.

After leaving Prague, we took the train into Germany, and eventually arrived in the city of Nördlingen, a famous city along the Romantische Straße, or Romantic Road. This beautiful city's history extends back more than 1100 years. It is the one of the last cities in Germany with a walled fortification that extends completely around the city, with the other two being Rothenburg ob der Tauber and Dinkelsbühl. There are only five "Tors" or gates that provide the only entrance or exit from the town.



Nördlingen lies in the Donau-Ries area of Bavaria, a very large depression caused by the impact of a large meteor creating the Nördlinger Ries (or crater) about 14.5 million years ago. While driving near the outer rim, it's possible to see the vastness of the impact area.

Another of the interesting details of the area is the amount of stone called Suevite, locally known as "Reis Suevit – Schwabenstein". Suevite is a very hard stone caused by the immediate melting of earthly materials upon impact of a huge meteor. The only places on Earth where Suevite is found is within craters formed by meteors. It's full of incredibly small diamonds formed by carbon melted into the stone. The exterior of the huge Cathedral of St. George in Nördlingen is made from Suevite.

Nördlingen is also known for the famous Battle of Nördlingen in 1634, during the Thirty-Years War. I'm sure everyone reading this remembers the details of this epic battle from middle school history so I won't bore you with the details. While standing on top of the wall, it's easy to imagine soldiers standing there, bows and arrows at the ready, facing enemy troops marching towards the city across the open areas and the moat leading up to the city walls.

We were met at the train station by my friend Ossi, a police officer in Nördlingen. We've known each other for many years, and my wife and I had the pleasure of staying with him and his family the last time we were in Germany. Although it had been some time since our last visit, we had just had the pleasure of hosting him and his wife and daughter at our house two months earlier, during their third vacation to the US. Since there were three of us travelling together – too many for him to accommodate at his house, we rented an upstairs flat at a house 3 doors down from his house. After dropping our bags off, we went out to dinner with our friends at a traditional German restaurant where the food and beer was exceptional.

Saturday morning, we were up early and over at our friend's house for breakfast. Jutta, his wife had prepared weisswurst (white Bavarian sausage) and large pretzels, served with sweet stone-ground mustard and hefeweizen. You heard me right, wheat beer for breakfast! I loved it! It seems Germans really consider wheat beer as liquid bread. It was the first time I had the opportunity to eat weisswurst. It is very fresh, bought early in the morning and heated in hot, but not boiling water. Boiling will split them. When they are served, you make a small cut near the end and peel the skin down, somewhat like eating a banana. You dip the sausage in the sweet mustard. Absolutely incredible.

We soon left for the train ride to Munich. We left Nördlingen with our friends Ossi and Jutta, and three other couples. There were probably eight or nine stops along the way and more and more folks got on the train, most dressed in traditional German clothes. Most of the men were wearing leather lederhosen and a checkered shirt, the women generally had white blouses with the tightly cinched up dirndl. Lots of alcohol was being consumed on the train, some purchased onboard, much of it brought on by the travellers.

From the main train station, the Munchen Hauptbahnhof, it's a short 15-minute walk to the Oktoberfest grounds, called the Theresienwiese. You enter through a big arch, welcoming you to the greatest beer festival in the world. Admission is free. It's a large area, 42 hectare (approximately 104 acres) in the Munich quarter Ludwigsvorstadt-Isarvorstadt. There was an estimated 6.4 million visitors during the 16 days of Oktoberfest in 2012, who consumed an estimated 116 oxen, 57 calves more than 200,000 pairs of pork sausage, and 480,000 spit-roasted chickens, and 6.9 million liters of beer (1,822,790 gallons). By comparison, The Ohio State Fair had 833,000 in attendance in 2011, over 11 days and covers 360 acres.



The origins of the Oktoberfest go back to 1810 to celebrate the October 12th marriage of Bavarian Crown Prince Ludwig to the Saxon-Hildburghausen Princess Therese. The citizens of Munich were invited to join in the festivities which were held over five days on the fields in front of the city gates. The main event of the original Oktoberfest was a horse race. Anniversary celebrations were held annually thereafter that eventually became larger and more elaborate. An agricultural show was added during the second year. In 1818, a carousel and two swings were set up for the revelers. Such amusements were few in the first decades of the festival, but party-goers were amply entertained by the tree climbing competitions, wheel barrow and sack races, mush eating contests, barrel rolling races, and goose chases. By 1870s, mechanical rides were an expanding feature of the festival and in 1908, the festival boasted Germany's first roller coaster. When the city began allowing beer on the fairgrounds, makeshift beer stands began cropping up, and their number increased steadily until they were eventually replaced by beer halls in 1896. The beer halls, like the beer tents of today, were sponsored by the local breweries.



The festival was eventually prolonged and moved ahead to September to allow for better weather conditions. Today, the last day of the festival is the first Sunday in October. There have been 24 cancellations due to cholera epidemics and war. (vistawide.com)

Just six Munich breweries - Augustiner, Hacker-Pschorr, Hofbräu, Löwenbräu, Paulaner, and Spaten - are permitted to serve beer at the festival. Fourteen larger and several smaller beer tents and beer gardens provide enough seating for 98,000 visitors at a time. Beer is served by the Maß, a one-liter mug, and costs about 8-9 euros (\$10.50 - \$12.50). Beer maids and waiters must be able to carry 10 of these beer-filled mugs at a time. I've seen as many as 14 carried at a time. You don't want to mess with these girls, trust me. Collectible mugs with the current Oktoberfest logo are offered for sale everywhere on the grounds, and on the Internet. Previous years' mugs are easily found as well.

We made our way through the growing crowd and went into the Hacker-Pschorr beer hall. These halls are incredibly huge, but you often find it very difficult to find an table during Oktoberfest because they are so crowded. We had connections who had made reservations, and we got a table for all of us on the upper level. Within minutes, we had our liter mugs or steins of beer and were toasting to our friendship.

Pretzels – the size of the steering wheel of your car – are an Oktoberfest staple. The insides are soft bread while the outside is hard and chewy. It's a perfect compliment to the incredible beer served.

In most of the beer halls you can find traditional Bavarian bands playing Bavarian music. Occasionally, folks stand up on the benches and sing while swaying back and forth with their beer. It's OK to stand up on the benches, but don't step up on the table or the security will quickly escort you outside and not let you back in. The German toast "Prost" is frequently heard throughout the beer hall.

The Oktoberfest beer is called Marzen, but it is a straw colored lager similar in appearance to a helles or pilsner. It traditionally was brewed in March, thus it's name, and allowed to lager over the summer. It is reported to be slightly stronger than beer sold throughout the rest of the year, but I didn't detect much difference from what I consider "regular" beer, or beer we tried throughout this trip. My wife, ever the trooper while on vacation, worked her way through her liter of beer. Our friend had no problem getting through a couple of liters and was ready to explore the rest of the grounds.

After a few of liters of beer, pretzels and some food, we headed out to explore the rest of the Oktoberfest grounds. It didn't take long to work our way over to the Olympic roller-coaster, one of the signature rides of the Oktoberfest. It's quite a ride, it's not a monorail, but it does turn upside-down through all five rings. Some members of our group, emboldened by the beer, decided to take a ride on this coaster. Considering how much beer I had consumed, I decided this time it was going to be a spectator sport for me. I rode it without incident during our first trip to Oktoberfest in 1996, and I was fine with just watching this time around. Our friend and several others climbed onboard and went for a ride. All went well, and I'm glad to report no beer was wasted as a result of this ride.

Along the west side of the grounds, is the large bronze 19th century statue of Bavaria. It was cast at the Munich foundry of J.B. Stiglmaier between 1844 and 1850. It's large enough that you can climb the stairs inside (with a purchased ticket) all the way to the top of the head and look out of the small windows. It's quite small at the top, and very hot if the sun is shining since the bronze absorbs lots of heat.

Since we visited Oktoberfest on the next to last day and the weather was good, the crowds quickly grew to the point it was very difficult for our group to walk around together. We made an attempt to get back into several of the beer halls as we walked around the grounds, but couldn't get into any of them due to the number of people present. Finally, we left to return to Nördlingen.





The next day, we toured the city of Nördlingen and learned more about the history of this amazing area. Our German friend had contacted an English speaking tour guide who took us around the city describing the history and details of the city. We later stopped at the history museum for some additional information and to see the collection of paintings and artifacts there.

The following day, we drove to Nürnberg with our German friends and toured this very old and historically significant city. It is the capital of the region known as Middle Franconia. The earliest references to Nürnberg come from the year 1050. Much of the ancient wall that surrounded Nürnberg has been rebuilt and restored. As with any German city, beer is easy to find, plentiful and absolutely wonderful.

One of the most recognized roles of Nürnberg in recent history was the site of the Nürnberg trials of the Nazi war leaders. The Judiciary Building where the trials took place is open to the public and there is a lot of information about the trials and the process, however much of it is in German, although there are excellent English guides. The actual courtroom is also open to the public and to me it was quite a moving experience to stand in such a historical place.

The food, culture, and of course the beer of Germany is something that should not be missed in life. I highly recommend this region of Europe to all of our members.

Some recommendations for travelling to Germany for Oktoberfest:

Book ahead. With almost 6.5 million visitors, it's crowded.

Make room reservations in a neighboring town with regular train connections to Munich.

Check out websites that talk about and give tips for visiting Oktoberfest, especially if you don't have any connections through friends living in Bavaria.

Talk to friends who have been there before to gain firsthand knowledge of the tricks and tips for attending.

Plan on visiting other cities throughout Germany if possible. Eurail train passes are available (purchase before your trip) that can give you great savings on train travel.

Next year's Oktoberfest dates are September 21, 2013 – October 6, 2013.

Prost!!!!

Tom Rees

vistawide.com - <http://www.vistawide.com/german/oktoberfest/oktoberfest.htm>

Suds County, USA: Video Review

By: Mike Byrne

A few weeks ago the Brewing Network had Sheldon Kaplan as a guest. Sheldon is the director of a new documentary on the history of the San Diego beer scene, called *Suds County, USA*. I am a big fan of most documentaries, so when I heard about this one I ordered it right away.

Suds County was really appealing to me, since Columbus is going through a craft beer revolution and I am very fortunate to be part of it.

The documentary includes many of the breweries that we are all very fond of. Stone, AleSmith and Green Flash are just a few of the many breweries that are included. But it's not just a history of the individual breweries. *Suds County, USA* includes interviews from current and former brewers, brewmasters, homebrewers, and founders of the San Diego breweries.

I'm sure most of you are familiar with many of the breweries in this film. But that is no reason to ignore this documentary. It's not just about how individual businesses were started. It's about the community that was created. Right from the start of this film you notice how important it was/is for the breweries to help each other and not to work against each other. It is about building relationships, spreading knowledge and of course making great beer.

The film also doesn't try to hide the fact that many breweries didn't make it. Some of the breweries went out of business despite winning awards and making great beer. We even get to see interviews from the people who started those breweries, and we learn how they have continued to be part of the brewing community.

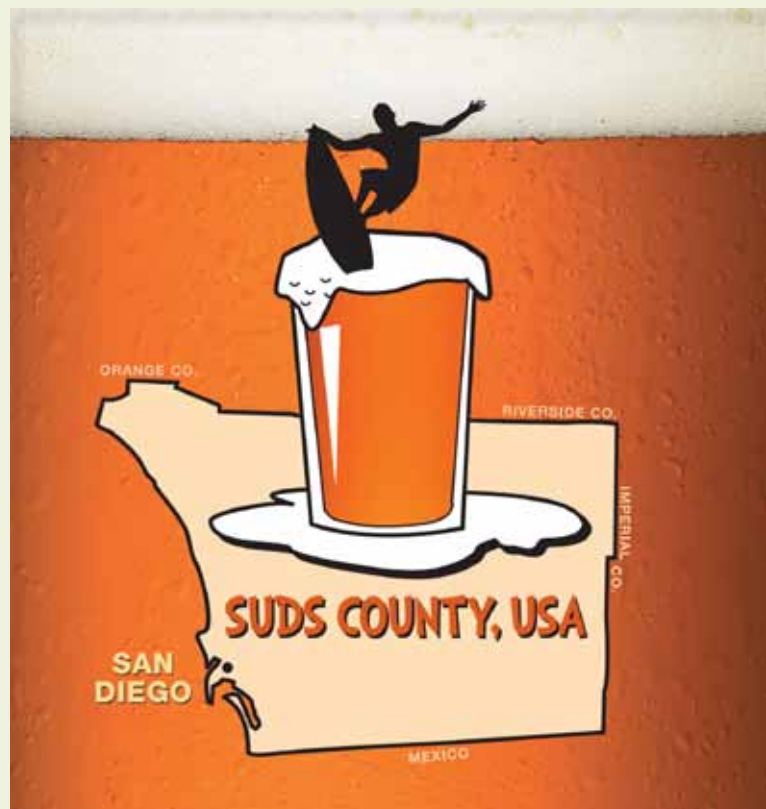
Suds County, USA really puts into perspective how influential that brewing scene was for the rest of county's craft brewers and homebrewers. From fresh, pitchable yeast to double IPA, it all started there.

I recommend this film for any craft beer fan, but especially to homebrewers and pro-brewers alike. So grab a freshly brewed American IPA from your keezer, and press play.

sudscountyusa.com/

\$9.99 DVD

\$5.99 Download





meet the BREWER

Bill Bopp

Years Brewing: 10

Years in SODZ: 6

What is your favorite beer to brew/drink?

It changes constantly. Sometimes it depends on the season. Other times it depends on a flight I may have judged at a recent competition.

How did you get into brewing?

I've just always liked beer. I enjoy cooking. The two merged.

What is your favorite hop?

Amarillo

Do you have a favorite piece of equipment that you couldn't live without?

My Blichmann burner. It heats up so much faster than my old turkey fryer and it will easily handle a 10 gallon batch when I upgrade.

What is your dream brewing set-up?

Being able to brew in my basement.

What is the most important thing you have learned that improved your beer?

You need to pitch enough healthy yeast. A yeast starter is a must.

Who or what is your biggest influence in brewing?

I don't think I could pinpoint one particular person or thing that influences me. I have a lot of respect for a lot of brewers. There's a lot to be learned from people who are willing to share their knowledge. But, I can't say I'm influenced by one particular source.

What is the best/worse beer you have ever made?

I haven't made my best beer yet. :-) I've made a few good ones though. And I've had a couple go bad with an infection. I think I've had to dump two kegs so far out of about 90 batches.

UPCOMING CLUB ONLY COMPETITIONS

March/April 2013
Barleywine Ales

May 2013
Extract Beers

You must be an AHA and current SODZ member to enter

UPCOMING COMPETITIONS

SOURCE: [HTTP://WWW.HOMEBREWERSASSOCIATION.ORG](http://www.homebrewersassociation.org)

Bockfest Cincinnati 2013

Cincinnati, OH
03/02/2013
Contact: Ray Snyder
Phone: (513) 759-2573

AHA National Homebrew Competition: Regionals 1st Round,
Zanesville, OH (Weasel Boy Brewing)
Entry Fee: \$12 for AHA Members; \$17 for non-members
Entry Deadline: 03/27/2013

SODZ British Beerfest Columbus, OH

Entry Fee: \$7 for the first entry; \$5 for additional entries
Entry Deadline: 03/15/2013

Drunk Monk Challenge

Aurora, IL
03/09/2013
Contact: Matt Klausner
Phone: (773) 203-4059
Entry Fee: \$7
Entry Deadline: 03/01/2013

SODZ
MEMBERSHIP REPORT
VIC GONZALEZ: MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR

New Members/Renewals

Number of members about to expire

20

Number of renewals or new

7

Total Current Members

134

SODZ
TREASURER REPORT
DAN FRANCE TREASURER

4,317.93 - Fifth Third balance
2,389.09 - Paypal Balance

SODZ INFO

The Scioto, Olentangy and Darby Zymurgists, Inc. (SODZ) meets on the third Monday of the month at various locations in Central Ohio.

Meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. Membership dues are \$15 per year and are renewable during the member's anniversary month of joining SODZ. Members receive The Grain Mill, the club's monthly newsletter. Articles submitted for the newsletter should be received no later than 10 days prior to the next meeting date.

Articles should be submitted by email, preferably in MS Word, MAC PAGES or Google DOCS, with graphics in jpg format to **mgbyrne80@gmail.com**



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

SODZ Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Age _____

Email _____

Homebrewer yes/no _____ How Long _____



Make Checks payable to: SODZ

Bring this application to the meeting. Credit Card Payment also available at meetings.

Bring this application to the meeting.



SODZ PAYPALL INFO

The paypal account is ****sodz.treasurer@gmail.com****

To pay, please follow these instructions carefully to avoid paypal fees.

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- Put in sodz.treasurer@gmail.com
- Put in the amount to send (\$15 is the cost of yearly dues).

Here’s the important part...

- Under the amount box, click the “Personal” tab.
- Select “Gift”.
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