

Hank Speaks... So Listen

by Hank Bienert

When I joined CCH in 2000, I was struck by the chaos and comments of the meetings and the members but in time learned that many of them had interesting ideas and experiences concerning brewing. I also learned how most of them were very generous with advice but that few would volunteer wisdom.

Below are some communications between 2 CCH members (Mike R. and Hank B.) about the CCH Hopline and its role as a source of information for the club and we both seem to feel the same way and I suspect many of you do too.

BOTTOM line-if you have some thoughts/experiences/successes + failures to share, there is an outlet and an audience.

GO AHEAD!! ANSWER THE QUESTIONS I SENT OUT YEARS AGO (see below) IF YOU'RE BRAVE ENOUGH!!

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Hank,

I had suspected that reading of the articles in the Hoplines was not a regular activity of CCH members and was recently convinced. I had submitted a translation of the Reinheitsgebot back in August and found the identical translation in the January issue. Perhaps whoever submitted it again wanted to emphasize the lack of yeast as a component in the early decree. I, too, had some commentary. As I went through the issues I had saved on disk and added to them the ones in the old Hoplines I borrowed from Carol Rice, I was truly impressed with the quality of many of these articles and the wisdom available to anyone who bothered to read them. That's why I suggested that these articles should be available on the CCH web site. I volunteered to glean them and convert them to pdf format for inclusion. Rick is the pro tem webmaster and has inserted them under the "ARTICLES" banner. If we can only get the membership to start reading. BTW, my picture appears on the ARTICLES page but not at my request. I told him that it makes me feel uncomfortable as I'm pretty much the new kid on the block. I asked Rick to include anyone who has submitted a few articles to be included in that gallery. It hasn't happened yet. Perhaps your picture standing in front of the top half of the popcorn popper! I was also impressed with the sheer volume of articles which you have authored. You had pled for others to step up and start submitting articles. Greg H. did so and I figured I had some thoughts to share also. There are some younger members (in point of age and/or brewing experience) who surely have something of value to share but they are probably a bit wary of jumping in. We need to encourage them to share their experience or simply ask a question. I did notice that at some time in the past, there was a small section of the Hopline dedicated to answering questions. It didn't last long but we might start that again. What do you think?

Thanks again,

Mike Retzlaff

Mike,

Thanks for the compilation you are doing.

The questions idea fizzled as did a plan to write a series about the early days (I began brewing solo in 1995 and joined CCH 2000) based on some simple questions I sent to the 50 longest in the club members asking such things as - how did U get started?, what was it like "back in the day"? worst beer U ever made? most important 3 things U think a new brewer should know?

I got 4 responses - all of which were excellent but not enough material to make it worth catching a goose and pulling a quill to write it up.

At this point one ordinarily would be reminded of an old truism about leading horses to water and drinking but CCH members have no trouble drinking!!

I submitted articles in the early 2000s in response to subjects that had been discussed at brewoffs and then stopped as U can see when U follow my "scat" trail. About 2006 Monk approached me at a Christmas party and asked if I would write something of an educational nature and both of us being slightly jolly/juiced, I agreed.

I am glad when others step up which makes it more of a community effort.

Look, let's be honest - I do it for the MONEY. They pay me a grand a YEAR but with MY dues being \$1030 annually (since I have been granted a SPECIAL rate) I am not quite ready to retire and write full time.

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THNX Hank

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