

Quality, not quantity Brewfest II puts home- brewed beer to the test

Katharine Deaton
THE BATTALION

Anyone passing by Carney's Pub this weekend may look twice at what is going on — people exchanging recipes, live bands performing and, of course, beer drinking. Brewfest II will be held tomorrow at Carney's Pub at 2 p.m.

Jerald Smith, owner of Home Brewers Supply, said Brewfest II is like "a big festival." Bands such as Sneaky Pete, Kenneth S. Tramm and the Maps and the Boxcar Poets will perform. A dart tournament and a "Name that Beer" contest will be held.

The main focus of Brewfest II is home-brewed beer. People who brew their own beer can enter their brew in a variety of categories to be judged by three "well-known, world-renowned" judges, Smith said.

Smith said a winning beer is "something that is very drinkable and true to its style." He said that a lot of the time, the recipe plays a big role in whether a beer is good or not.

Keith Klemta, a home brewer and Class of '88, said Brewfest is a great place to meet and talk to fellow beer brewers.

"It's a way to be around a lot of people who enjoy a common hobby," Klemta said. "Everyone talks about beer. Everyone has their own tricks or secrets, and it's a way to see how your beer stacks up against everyone's. It's kind of social and kind of competitive."

Klemta said the challenge of brewing beer is what attracted him to it.

"It's also hard to find [German and Scotch Ale] in stores," Klemta said. "You can make beers you can't find and impress your friends."

Gary Halter, an associate professor of political science, said he began brewing beer for the same reason.

"I didn't like what you could buy," Halter said. "Most American beers are pretty awful. But there's getting to be better commercial beers on the market."

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— Keith Klemta
home brewer, Class of '88

Klemta said brewing beer is easy and inexpensive.

"It's not as hard as everyone thinks it is," Klemta said. "You need a few things. It's pretty basic. You don't need a big Budweiser brewery to make it."

The four main ingredients in beer are barley grains, hops, water and yeast. The ingredients are mixed, boiled and put in a five-to-six gallon container. It is then fermented for four to seven days, conditioned and bottled.

A good competition beer takes about one month from start to finish, Klemta said. For standard, "around the house" beer, start to finish takes about two weeks.

Home brewers often follow recipes to brew beer with their desired characteristics, Smith said.

"Home Brewers Supply has a recipe sheet available with about 10,000 recipes," Smith said. "There are about 47 different styles of beer. Some brew right off the sheet, and some make changes."

Klemta said the beer most brewers make is a darker, richer European style.

"Everyone associates beer with Coors and Budweiser, and that's really light," Klemta said. "In Europe, they call that water. We've gotten used to it. It's generic beer. Making Budweiser is just one style. European beers are darker. It's a challenge to make one like Budweiser, but it depends on if you want to experiment or stick to what you know."

Klemta said he enjoys brewing beer for the relaxation.

"You create something, and that's enjoyable," he said. "It's personal satisfaction just being able to do it."

But Klemta said people's views of beer brewers are "beer-bust kind guys," and he said those views are wrong.

"People who brew don't brew for quantity," he said. "They brew for quality."

Challenging stereotypes



Shane Elkins, THE BATTALION

Becky Penderson, a sophomore business major, and Amy Magness, a junior civil engineering major, work on Bonfire.

WBC strives for equal opportunity at Bonfire

By Katharine Deaton
THE BATTALION

Thirty years ago, the voices of women could not be heard at Bonfire or cut site. But today, men and women work together to keep the tradition alive, without the exclusion of women.

"Basically, everything guys do, women do," Kathryn Noser, Women's Bonfire Committee senior assistant coordinator and a senior speech communications major said. "They cut, load and stack."

Noser said women were only recently allowed to participate in all aspects of Bonfire. Women were not allowed to stack until 1974 and were allowed to go to cut site for the first time in 1979. Noser said women were motivated to participate by "the same thing that motivates the guys in Bonfire. It's the Aggie spirit, the tradition and it's fun."

Many women are involved in Bonfire through the Women's Bonfire Committee.

The committee began as a subcommittee of the Aggie Bonfire Committee to provide water, lunches and tobacco products to men. In 1991, WBC was recognized as a separate organization.

WBC and Bonfire Reload Crew provide an option for women who want to be involved with Bonfire but do not want to be involved in manual labor.

Although women are now allowed to cut and stack, the WBC still maintains its original purpose.

"As far as the WBC is concerned, we're responsible for providing food and water at cut site," Noser said. "WBC has a shack at the Bonfire field that provides water and lunches for people at stack. Whenever stack is open, the shack is open."

Noser said there are mixed reactions

from men about women participating in Bonfire.

"A lot [of guys] are motivated by girls working as hard as they are," Noser said. "There are still some who feel like girls shouldn't be in the woods and that Bonfire is for guys. Girls should be on trucks like good little water wench."

But Noser said most of that attitude is gone and women are accepted as a part of Bonfire.

"At the beginning, as when anything starts new, everyone resists change, especially at this university," Noser said. "Everyone is satisfied with the status quo. But most of that is gone, and it's turned more into, 'Gee, glad you're here' than, 'Go home.'"

Paul Young, a junior redpot and business administration major, said the men generally do not mind the women at cut site.

"The girls on the water trucks do a great job keeping the water and food coming to people," Young said. "The girls who cut do a great job, too. Most guys don't mind as long as they come to work. But it's the same for guys."

Noser said that sometimes, motivation plays a bigger part for the women than the men.

"Sometimes I think the girls do a better job, not because they can cut down more trees or lift more, but because they're motivated to prove they can do it," Noser said. "If you've been told you can't do something, you strive more to prove you can do it. It's like telling a guy, 'You're cutting like a girl.' It makes him cut harder."

Noser said sexism does exist at Bonfire but it is not as severe as some people make it out to be.

"Sexism is everywhere, and you do what you can to deal with it," Noser said. "Before

we go to the woods, we prepare the girls. The guys say what they do because they're guys. It's not personal. Nothing is directed at anybody — nothing to be intentionally cruel. I can't think of a time when things got so bad girls would yell, 'Harassment.'"

Micki Helm, a Moshers Bonfire co-chair and sophomore business administration major, said sexism does not appear much during Bonfire.

"It doesn't bother me when guys call me water wench," Helm said. "It's all in fun. They're not doing it to hurt you. They would die if it weren't for us. It's gotten a lot better than in previous years. It's not as bad as some people think it is."

Young said the men are surprised when there are accusations of sexism or harassment because their intentions are good.

"Most guys are shocked because they don't mean to harass the girls," Young said. "They push the limits but don't mean to go too far. It's not something they try to do."

Noser said most of the women know how to handle offensive comments.

"Most just say, 'Ha, yeah right,'" Noser said. "They respond like you must in everyday life. On the truck, there's no cussing, — nothing to reflect badly on WBC. Crudeness and Bonfire don't go hand in hand. It's a matter of courtesy."

Heather Perrine, a sophomore business administration major, said although she is not involved in Bonfire, she's glad she has the opportunity.

"I think it's good if [women] feel comfortable to be out there," Perrine said. "It's cool that there's a place for women and it is not restricted to men."

Young said as long as Bonfire gets built, it doesn't matter who builds it.

"It's going to be built one way or the other," he said.

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