



MBAA District Rocky Mountain Press Release
Annual Out of Towner, September 2009

MBAA RMD held the '3-Day Out of Towner' in Grand Junction CO this year, September 18-20th. Good beer, good food and good fun! The word that comes to mind is *'gemütlichkeit'*. *Gemütlichkeit* (German pronunciation: <ge-méet-luh-kite>) connotes the notion of "public festivity" (in the form of a "mixture of friends, music, food, and drink"), which "promotes community solidarity". This meeting was certainly that, one of *Gemütlichkeit*. The weekend began on Friday evening at the Kannah Creek Brewery. Our gracious host Jim Jeffryes (Owner/Head Brewer) treated us to some fine cuisine and suds.

The Technical session started 'promptly' (more or less) at 9:30 am Saturday morning. President Jeff Biegert opened the gathering with a hearty welcome and a quick business meeting. Utah 'Brother' Brewers, Dan Burick, Matt Beamer and Adam Curfew, Utah Brewers Cooperative, gave a lively and informative talk titled '*Brewing Behind the Zion Curtain*'. (See Photo #1). It should not come as a 'New Flash' that brewers have had challenges practicing their art in the state of Utah. Dan and team presented highlights of the colorful and entertaining history of brewing in Utah from 1847 to the present. Utah in 1861 was home to a paucity of breweries (19-21). Following the mining and railroad boom, and the subsequent influx of Irish and German immigrants, the number of breweries soared to as many as 4000 by the late 1890s. Following the nadir of brewing in the U.S. (Prohibition) Utah was home to only 2 breweries. Finally, after the passage of the 1987 Brewpub Law, Utah brewers were given new life and the craft brewing boom ensued. Brewpubs began to spring up in 1989 (e.g. Squatters Pub Brewery) Utah Brewers Cooperative now runs 12 breweries statewide. They have certainly kept things interesting with beer labels such as *Devastator* and *Saint Provo Girl*. Not to mention *Polygamy Porter* – The beer that asks, "Why Have Just One?" (The label *Little Horny* was found to be a bit too controversial and didn't make it to the shelves). There have been over 140 beer medals awarded statewide since 1989. With the passage of HB51, home brewing is now legal in the state. Perhaps we'll see an even greater number of Micros and Brewpubs spring to life in Utah in the near future.

Ali Hamm, Masters in Horticulture at Colorado State University (See Photo #2), gave a timely presentation on '*Hops: A Viable New Crop for Colorado?*' With the demand for hops growing in the state, Ali and associates ask, "Why not grow hops here?" The recent hop shortage of 2007, should serve as due notice for the need to expand cultivation of the spicy cones. Ali discussed the pros and cons of hops as a viable crop in our state. Pros include: lots of sunshine, little fungal activity, 'new' growing area (good from an organic-growing perspective) and support from CSU and the Colorado Department of Agriculture. Cons of cultivation: little expertise, some adverse weather conditions (high winds/hail), clay-like, high pH soil and questionable water availability. In partnership with CSU, farmers and researchers continue to investigate the potential of growing hops in the state to help satisfy the demand for the 'green gold' in the brewing industry.



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Per Ali, one of the key factors to successful hop production in the state is to prevent the spread of disease from other hop farms. Rhizomes, if harboring disease (powdery mildew for example), can easily infect new fields. Growers in this state will need to be vigilant in keeping the disease vectors in check. Outside the Pacific Northwest, the only state presently having full processing capabilities is Michigan. However, growing conditions in the Wolverine State are much less desirable for *Humulus Lupulus* than in our state. In Colorado, there is a total of approximately 30 acres in production at a total of 12 farms. San Juan Hop Farms boasts 14 acres in production. The analysis of Colorado hops is encouraging. Ali's research indicates that resins and oils of Colorado grown hops are well within the norm for commercially available hops. As brewers there certainly is an encouraging start to locally grown cones for locally brewed suds.

Susan Welch, Malt Europe, gave a concise report on this year's malt crop: What to expect and implications. Susan discussed the status of the 2009 malt crop and some of the challenges and issues coming up the next few years. Two key points: A cool early summer impacted growers throughout North America, delaying the growing season substantially. With farmers anticipating an increase in the price of corn due to the higher demand for 'bio-fuels', there has been a downward impetus on growing barley world-wide. Stay tuned from Sue and the maltsters!

Next up to speak was our Kannah Creek Brewery host Jim Jeffryes, Owner/Head Brewer. Kannah Creek Brewing Company was established by Jim and his partner Eric Ross in 2005. The bar features eight beers on tap from a variety of English ale styles, American ale styles, a German Hefewiezen and seasonal German Lagers. Jim discussed how his brewery and the restaurant came to fruition. Jim purchased his equipment at a great price in Charleston, S.C. He got a good deal on the restaurant at a good location (near the college -- Mesa State). Working in concert with local government officials and business partners including a helpful and resourceful landlord, he has cleared a number hurdles and recently has been able to turn a profit. Jim's philosophy has been, "Quality is your friend. Smile, don't panic, focus on the customer and on the budget. 'Fun' is possible. Talk about your beer, pace yourself and finally, host a beer party". Speaking for MBAA-RMD, it certainly was a pleasure to have Kannah Creek host our group! (See Group Photo #3).

Next on the agenda was a jaunt up Interstate 70 to Palisades, CO and Peach Street Distillers. Inaugurated in 2004, Peach Street was Colorado's first distillery that distilled, bottled, and sold their spirits in Colorado. This location was chosen because of the synergistic opportunities available working with local wineries and farmers. Peach Street produces various award winning products (vodkas, brandies, grappas, bourbon and gin). The emphasis is placed on the use of local ingredients. From the Peach Street's own web page:



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“We're what you'd call an artisanal distillery, which of course makes us artists, serious craftsmen, if you will. Manufacturing tasteless, odorless vodka from potatoes doesn't interest us, it's just not fun. We use a custom-made, copper, German pot still to create The Goat. Our secret behind the Goat's character, you ask? Olathe Sweet Corn. Olathe Sweet Corn, and our Head Distiller, Davy Lindig”.

Rory Donovan and Davy Lindig made an informal presentation on the history of Peach Street. This was followed by a tour of the operations utilizing a compactly arranged layout and design (See Group Photos 4 and 5). We ended up the visit by tasting a variety of the marvelous concoctions that were ‘*still-made*’ available – pun intended. One of the most unusual and delectable treats was the pear brandy. A full size pear in each bottle. This is done by choosing the *king* pear on the tree (the biggest and baddest on the selected branch) and pruning back all other foliage (leaves, etc) and securing a new, clean clear bottle to the branch around the pear; then let nature take its course. Once the pear is full grown, remove the bottle and fill it with brandy. See <http://www.howcast.com/videos/143141-How-To-Grow-a-Pear-in-a-Bottle>

The afternoon found the group at a local park on the scenic, south side of Grand Junction, overlooking a wide meander of the Colorado River. A delicious dinner of beef tips and all the fixings was provided compliments of Entertainment Chairman Steve Woodward, Fort Collins Feed, with the help and assistance from his gracious wife Marty. We enjoyed a fine meal, a variety of cold beers and a lively competition of horseshoes. The ‘Rulers of the Pits’, four years standing have been Steve Presley (AB InBev - Retired) and Gary Dick (New Belgium Brewing). A few comers succeeded in giving Steve and Gary a stiff challenge to their title of ‘perennial champions’. But in the end, they defended their title and now have “One for the Thumb” – horseshoe champions for the 5th year running at the ‘Annual Out of Towner’. (See Photo 6).

In conclusion, the weekend certainly lived up to its billing. A festive occasion in the form of a “mixture of friends, music, food, and drink”. We indeed “promoted community solidarity” and “public festivity” was the undertone. To all those who attended and to those who are thinking about doing so perhaps next year, as the opening paragraph stated, “*Gemütlichkeit!*”.

One final note: The next function sponsored by District Rocky Mountain is the joint meeting with MBAA-RMD and IBPA on November 5th, 2009 at the Coors Brewery in Golden, CO. The subject of the technical presentation that evening is ‘*Packaging – Focus on QC/QA Issues*’.

James (Jim) Canary
Publicity Chairman & Treasurer
Master Brewers Association of the Americas District Rocky Mountain
September 27, 2009



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Accompanying photos: MBAA–RMD ‘Out of Towner’; Grand Junction, CO; Sept 18-20, 2009



Photo 1: Technical Chairman Finn Knudsen, Adam Curfew, Matt Beamer, Dan Burck and President Jeff Biegert. Following the Utah Brewers Cooperative discussion ‘Brewing Behind the Zion Curtain’.



Photo 2: Technical Chairman Finn Knudsen, Ali Hamm (CSU Masters in Horticulture) and President Jeff Biegert. Gift presentation following Ali’s talk on ‘Hops: A Viable Crop for Colorado?’



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Photo 3: MBAA RMD Attendees in front of Kannah Creek Brewing Co.



Photo 4: Steve Presley, Gary Dick, Adam Curfew, Dan Burick and Mark Fischer check out what's 'brewing' with the 'Peach Street Still'!



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Photo 5: Davy Lindig 'still' making his point to Mark Fischer and Jeff Biegert.



Photo 6: Steve Presley and Gary Dick win the horseshoe competition again!
Champions 5 years running! One for the Thumb! Who will win in 2010? ... You perhaps?