

**Date:** 02:00 PM CST, 12/29/2023**From:** Urban Knaves of Grain Communications <communications@knaves.org>**To:** Kevin <communications@knaves.org>**Subject:** Knaves Knewsletter - December 2023 Edition

# Knaves Knews

UKG... Because home is where great beer is brewed!

## December 2023

\*\*\* Claim the Urban Knaves of Grain (UKG) as your club when you signup for the AHA (American Homebrewers Association). By using the links in this Knewsletter, your AHA dues payment helps UKG through funding kicked back from the AHA. Click our club link to [Join or Renew with the AHA](#).

Save \$5 with our **Promo code: Urban-Knaves-of-Grain**

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### Board of Directors

*Abbess* - **Eileen Uchima**

*First Lady / Head Penguin* -

**Mike Uchima**

*Master of the Coin* - **Darrell**

### Welcome Address



Hail Knaves!

Happy Holidays and especially Happy New Year to you all! I trust by now that all of the gifts have been unwrapped, the cookies have been eaten, and the winter warmers have been consumed. If not, I hope you can enjoy a little downtime in the midst of all of the New Year's festivities. I hope everyone is healthy, and that you have made some time to relax and reflect on the good parts of the past trip around the sun.

Our annual holiday party was a smash as usual. We gathered on Tuesday, December 19 at Two Brothers Roundhouse in Aurora to enjoy a taco and nacho bar, beer, and socializing. It's always

**Proksa**

*Master of Words - **Kevin***

**Wojdak** ("Woj")

*Chaplain of Education -*

**Ray Nonnie**

*Brother of Events*

*Planning - **Tim Devitt***

*Minister of Tournaments /*

*Head Drunk Monk - **Dan***

**Acheson** ("Friar Dan")

Monk at Large - Tom

Hayosh

Monk at Large - Dave Fetty

Monk at Large - Curt

Czapski

*Retired Abbot - **Chuck Fort***

Contributions

Mike Uchima - Photography

Woj - Photography

Ed Bronson - Photography

**Communications Channels**



ukg.slack.com

**Click here** to request an invite from a Board member.



**https://groups.io/g/ukg**

great to see some of the significant others, as well as some members who can't make it to most of the meetings. We



did have a former member from the Rock Bottom days pop in to say "hi". He and his wife were downstairs having dinner and

noticed the sign directing us upstairs.

Unfortunately, rumors of Chuck Fort showing up turned out to be untrue.



Our Holiday Brew Roulette six-pack exchange had great participation this year with twelve contributors. Mike and I still haven't cracked into ours but, we plan to start tonight. I'm looking forward to more chatter on Slack about these beers as people drink theirs! (See the post below for the brews that made it into the 6-packs.)

A virtual meeting of the Drunk Monk Challenge (DMC) committee was held and the planning progresses. We are thinking about adding

Editor's Note:

*Most images in the newsletter can be enlarged to see further detail. Simply click on the image and it will open into a new window.*



another weeknight session or two (possibly up north) so we could potentially eliminate the third judging session on Saturday. Many of

us tend to be there so long on Saturday that by the end of the best-of-show judging we just want to get home so, the awards and post-competition socializing has suffered. Registration will begin at the end of January; check the calendar for relevant dates. If you are interested in helping out with the 2024 DMC, please speak to Dan Acheson...I'm sure he will find something for you to do!

With the New Year, comes new social events! January 13 will be the annual winter brew-in at Tim's house. Show up with the portable version of your brew rig in tow and make a beer in the company of other club members. Don't have a portable rig? Why not make a mead or cider? No rig required! Not feeling like letting anyone else in on your secret tricks and techniques, then show up just to hang out and socialize!

Another social option for January is to relax with some of your fellow

**MORE**  
BREWING COMPANY

Knaves on Social Sunday. On January 21, we will meet at More Brewing in Bartlett. I have never been to that location, but current food and drink selections look delicious!

As always, keep an eye on the calendar and Slack for updates on meetings, social activities, DMC, etc. If you have anywhere that you would like to suggest for a future social night, or a tech

topic which you would find interesting, please post to Slack or email the Board.

See you all in the New Year!

Sláinte,  
Eileen

P.S. Please remember that this is *YOUR* club. Your suggestions are always welcome! Please consider contributing a short article or photos for the newsletter, a brewery review, a suggestion for a Tech Talk, or a Social Night venue idea. Email Woj at [Knews@Knaves.org](mailto:Knews@Knaves.org) or email Eileen directly at [President@Knaves.org](mailto:President@Knaves.org).

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## Welcome to Our New Members!

- Paul Isaacson - Woodridge
- 

## UPCOMING on the Calendar

### January

- **Saturday, January 13th - 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.** - UKG Brew-In at **Tim Devitt's** house, 1675 Whispering Oaks Dr., West Chicago. See the club calendar for further details.
- **Tuesday, January 16th @ 7:30 p.m.** - UKG Monthly Meeting, **Bubblehouse Brewing**, Lisle
- **S unday, January 21st from 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.** - Social Sunday at UKG at the new Bartlett location of **More Brewing**, 121 Railroad Ave, Bartlett

## February

- **Monday, February 5th** - Entry registration begins for Drunk Monk Challenge 2024.
- **Tuesday, February 20th @ 7:30 p.m.** - UKG Monthly Meeting, **Bubblehouse Brewing**, Lisle

## March

- **Sunday, March 3rd @ 9:30 a.m.** - Drunk Monk Challenge Unpacking and Sorting Party. Lot of volunteers needed and fun at the same time.
- **March 5th - 8th** - Weeknight judging sessions for the Drunk Monk Challenge. Judges and Stewards needed.
- **Saturday, March 9th @ 8:00 a.m.** - Main day of Drunk Monk Challenge 2024 judging at Two Brothers Roundhouse, Aurora

More events and happening coming in the next edition leading into the new year.

For more details on any of these events and directions and/or map links, see the **Club Calendar on the UKG website**.

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### Christmas Brew Roulette

The Christmas Brew Roulette at this year's Holiday Party was a success with 12 participants each bringing a 6-pack of one style of their brew (beer, mead, or cider) to the party.

During the party, the 12 different beers were randomized and redistributed to the participants so that each one left with a mixed 6-pack of holiday brews.

This year's 12 brews (in order of secret numbering) were:

Brewer	Brew Name	Brew Description
Eileen Uchima	"Away In The Mango"	Mango Blossom Traditional Mead
Dan Hayosh	"Pale Ale"	American Pale Ale
Kevin Drees	"Lucifer"	American Barleywine
Joe Skiles	"Coffee Stout"	Sweet Stout with Coffee (contains lactose)
Dan Acheson	"Winfieldator"	Dopplebock
Kevin Wojdak – "Woj"	"Getting Toasted By The Fire"	Altbier Braggot Mead
Mica Zaragoza	"Don't Open Until Christmas"	Christmas Ale
Joe Formanek	"Velvet Elvis"	Export Stout
Ray Nonnie	"Christmas Festival"	Winter Seasonal
Mike Uchima	"Holiday Cheer 2023"	Dark Ale with Vanilla & Cinnamon
Zach Belzer	"British Strong Ale"	British Strong Ale
Tim Devitt	"Salted Caramel"	Salted Caramel Porter

Everyone went home with a different combination of 6 of these brews...and none of their own brew, of course.

If this looks like fun, please consider participating in the exchange next year. The more participants we have, the more random the 6-packs get.



## Drunk Monk Challenge

Our annual UKG club competition is coming up in March...the **26th Drunk Monk Challenge!**

We'll need lots of help as always, so if you'd like to be on the Committee, please get in touch with Dan Acheson via Slack or email ( [djacheson@gmail.com](mailto:djacheson@gmail.com) ).

We'll have our first committee meeting in December. We'll also get the [competition website](#) updated soon, but for now, here are a few important dates are below:

**Entry Deadline:** 3/1/2024

**Entry pickup around Chicago:** 3/1 EOD - 3/2

**Entry Sorting:** 3/3, Two Brothers Roundhouse, Aurora, IL

**Judging Dates:** 3/5, 3/6, 3/7, 3/8, 3/9 (main Judging) - Two Brothers Roundhouse

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## Competitions

### Competition Wins

December 9, 2023 - [Nordeast Brewers Alliance \(NBA\) 2023](#), Minneapolis, MN

- **Dan Acheson**

- Best of Show - "Inspired By New Glarus" - 28C: Wild Specialty Beer
- 1st Place - "Inspired By New Glarus" - 28C: Wild Specialty Beer - Fruit 'n' Sour Table
- 2nd Place - "New Fangled Saison" - 25B: Saison - Strong Belgians Table
- Honorable Mention - "Kiwi Juice '23" - LSX5: New Zealand Pilsner - International Bitter Table

December 10, 2023 - [Happy Holidays Homebrew Competition](#), St. Louis, MO

- **Dan Acheson**

- 1st Place - "Kiwi Juice '23" - LSX5: New Zealand Pilsner - Pilsner Table
- 3rd Place - "A Lil' Lactose 'L Do Ya" - 16A: Sweet Stout - Small Stouts Table
- 3rd Place - "Cidurana" - C2F: Specialty Cider/Perry - Specialty Cider and Perry Table

- **Kevin Wojdak - "Woj"**

- 1st Place - "Kishi" Rice Lager - 2A: International Pale Lager - Pale International and German Lagers Table
- 3rd Place - "Getting Toasted By The Fire" - M4A: Braggot - Specialty Mead Table

## Midwest Homebrewer of the Year (MWHBOY)

Top UKG member standings on the 2023 circuit as of December 26, 2023.

- Dan Acheson - **1st**
- Joe Formanek - 9th
- Dave Fetty - 35th
- Joe Skiles - 46th
- Jim Silverstein - 63rd
- Kevin "Woj" Wojdak - 129th
- Jay Kash - 147th
- Greg Ellwanger - 150th
- Ray Nonnie - 261st
- Mark Niemczewski - 261st

## Master Homebrewer Program

### *Circuit of America 2023 Standings*

(As of December 26, 2023 - **BOLD** indicates rank in top 10. Top 10 in Circuit of America win awards.)

- Dan Acheson - **3rd**
- Joe Skiles - 182nd
- Kevin Wojdak - 386th
- Jay Kash - 556th
- Ray Nonnie - 563rd
- Kevin Wojdak / Noah Wojdak - 721st
- Kevin "Woj" Wojdak / Jeff Knepper - 724th
- Mark Niemczewski - 724th



### *Master Homebrewer Program Lifetime Rankings*

- **Dan Acheson** - Grand Master V Brewer plus 4 x Silver Stars, 12 x Bronze Stars, LORD OF LAGERS, CIDERMASTER, JACK OF ALL TRADES



- **Kevin "Woj" Wojdak** - Master Brewer plus 1 x Silver Star, 2 x Bronze Stars, JACK OF ALL TRADES



- **Joe Skiles** - Recognized Brewer plus 2 x Bronze Star



- **Greg Ellwanger** - Novice Brewer



### **Upcoming Competitions of Note**

- **Happy Holidays Homebrew Competition** (MWHBOY)  
 Judge Registration: Opens 11/13/2023  
 Entry Registration: Opens 11/13/2023  
 Judging Dates: 12/7-12/10/2023
- **Winterbrew**  
 Judge Registration: TBD  
 Entry Registration: TBD  
 Judging: 01/20/2024
- **Midwinter Homebrew Competition** (MWHBOY)  
 Judge Registration: TBD  
 Entry Registration: TBD  
 Judging Dates: 2/2/2024
- **KCBM 41st Annual Homebrew Competition** (MWHBOY)  
 Judge Registration: Opens 12/2/2023  
 Entry Registration: Opens 12/2/2023  
 Judging Dates: 2/17/2024

See the **AHA Homebrew Competition Calendar** to find upcoming competitions to possibly enter.

- **Midwest Homebrewer of the Year Circuit Competitions**
- **Master Homebrewer Program — Circuit of America Competition** - Drunk Monk Challenge represents Illinois on the Circuit. Top 10 winners recognized on the circuit.

- Circuit Competitions List

- American Homebrew Association Competition Calendar

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## Social Events

### UKG 2023 National Learn To Brew Day

By Ray Nonnie

This year's National Learn To Brew Day, November 4, 2023, was attended by Mike Urchima, Mike Kimble and hosted by Ray Nonnie. The low turnout may have been due to the **FOBAB (Festival of Wood and Barrel-Aged Beers)** competition and festival landing on the same day.

- Mike Urchima brewed a Winter Warmer on his **Delta Brewing Systems AIO brewing rig**,
- Ray brewed an Irish Stout on his 2 vessel RIMS brewing rig.
- Mike Kimble supervised and was in charge of pouring and sampling various commercial and homebrewed beers.

The weather was very corporative this year letting the garage door be open with the sun shining.

Mike and Ray started brewing around the same time and also finished around the same time which I found interesting since the two brewing rigs are quite different, no sparge on Mike's AIO system. Ray's cleanup day was a bit longer since he had a bit more equipment to clean compared to Mike.

Ray did learn something about brewing in that he initially forgot to shut off his burner when cooling the wort down during transferring to the fermenter. This caused the plate chiller to initially cool down to 85° F and it stalled. Once the burner was shut off, the wort chilled down to 65° F.

I am looking forward to sampling Mike's Winter Warmer beer. The spices were added post fermentation so, we missed out on the aroma during the brew-in.



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## Financials



### ***Annual Dues***

Annual membership renewal dues are **\$20**.  
New members pay just **\$10** to join through the rest of the year.

Click the PayPal link below or mail a check payable to "**UKG**" to:

Darrell Proksa  
128 Sherwood Ct  
Downers Grove 60516

Click this link to pay your dues:

**[Click here to Pay Now.](#)**

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Questions about dues? Please contact Darrell at  
**[treasurer@knaves.org](mailto:treasurer@knaves.org)**.

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## Join the AHA and Help UKG

(American Homebrewers Association)



**Join the AHA Now**

Every year, the UKG purchases club insurance through the AHA (American Homebrewers Association) to protect our club and its members from incidents that may happen during club events and activities.

One of the ways we lower the cost of the insurance is by having a certain percentage of UKG club members also be AHA members. Your support of the AHA lowers the cost of insurance for the UKG.

If you are already an AHA member but aren't sure whether you've claimed UKG as your club, then click the following link to learn how you can [\*\*Add Homebrew Club Affiliation\*\*](#) to your AHA membership.

[\*\*Click here for our Club's AHA Membership Referral Link\*\*](#)

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## Repurposed Fermenter

By Ray Nonnie



I acquired a stainless steel vessel several years ago from a co-worker. It turns out my co-worker's neighbor was retired from Tri-Clover and had this stainless steel vessel that was also collecting dust and he gave it to me. It has numerous Tri-Clover fittings including the legs.

My first thought was to make a fermenter out of it but the problem was that it had no lid. A proper 12" Tri-Clover lid with a way to retrofit an airlock would cost me more than a new fermenter with a lid.

As this project sat in my basement collecting dust, I noticed that Blichmann Engineering was selling a replacement lid for their Anvil line which had a hole for an airlock but no clamp. After looking at several options at the hardware store, I brought home a small assortment of clamps. With the new replacement lid not fitting exactly, I had to make a few adjustments to get it to seal. What I ended up using were clamps intended for I-beams. I trimmed them down with an angle grinder and fabricated a gasket out of silicone hose.



Before using it as a fermenter, I pressurized it with compressed air. It held pressure but only under 5 PSI.

After a good cleaning, I am currently fermenting 5 gallons of blueberry cider. I decided to take on this project not only to save a chunk of stainless steel from the scrap yard but, I also wanted a way to ferment hard cider with fruit in one vessel instead of the glass carboy (primary fermenter) and converted corny keg (secondary fermenter) I currently use. I could have used my Spike CF10 fermenter but, when I make hard ciders with fruit, it ties up my beer fermenter since I tend to keep my ciders on fruit for weeks.

## Club Schwag

### *Club Work Shirts*

UKG Club Work Shirts are charcoal gray Dickies brand work shirts with the club logo over the left chest pocket and the full Drunk Monk vinyl transfer on the back. Names and/or Home Brewery names may be customized onto the shirts as well. The shirts run roughly \$45-\$50 each.



In order for club work shirts to be ordered, we need to have a minimum order of 4-6 shirts. If you have interest in ordering a club workshirt, please drop Woj a line so he can add you to the list.

Drop Woj a line at [marketing@knaves.org](mailto:marketing@knaves.org) to let him know you need a shirt.

### *LogoUp.com Merchandise*

We have an account at [LogoUp.com](https://www.logo-up.com) for making UKG club logo embroidered shirts, hats, bags, and a whole lot of other cool products. The merchandise is top quality and you can even get a

club logo on name brand products such as Nike, Izod, or Under Armor. There are no minimums for orders and we can place an order anytime. Go to [LogoUp.com](http://LogoUp.com) and pick out items you want. Then, email Woj at [marketing@knaves.org](mailto:marketing@knaves.org) with your item numbers and colors and he'll coordinate placing the order with you.



### Available for Immediate Purchase

#### UKG Woodcut Graphic T-Shirts

- UKG Woodcut Graphic T-Shirt  
(Charcoal Gray T-shirt with white and black vinyl design on Front)  
Size: Medium  
Only 1 left... just ask.  
\$12 each



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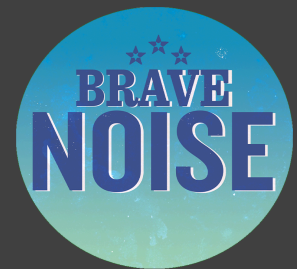
Questions about Club Schwag or interest to buy anything?  
Please talk to Woj or email him at [marketing@knaves.org](mailto:marketing@knaves.org).

*All items are sold at cost to club members except items which go through the LogoUp.com website which has their markup.*

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### Brave Noise Movement

We have all heard about sexual harassment issues in the local (and not so local) brewing industry, and this group, the Brave Noise Movement, is trying to do something about the problem. This is a collaboration with a goal: A safe and discrimination-free industry. Pro-brewers and homebrewers alike can register on the website to pledge their support for this movement. After registering, you will receive a copy of the Brave Noise recipe to brew in support. Check out the Brave Noise Movement at [bravenoisebeer.com](http://bravenoisebeer.com). UKG supports the movement.



## Contact us.

If you have any ideas for content for this newsletter, please send them to  
[Knews@Knaves.org](mailto:Knews@Knaves.org).



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Urban Knaves of Grain  
128 Sherwood Ct  
Downers Grove, IL 60516

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