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Cheers! From the editor's desk. -ALAN RICE

NEXT MEETING:

Wed. Dec. 12. 7:30pm, Mugs Ale House.

Our guest will be Dan Shelton of the **Shelton Bros.**



BY ALAN RICE

In November, Shane Welch of Sixpoint Craft Ales made his second appearance of 2007 for the MBAS. You can Click HERE to read about Shane and see what was going on at Sixpoint in February. It is a young brewery, having first fired up the tanks just three years ago. Progress is happening quickly, so there was much to discuss. Best for us, they recently found a way to increase ca-

pacity, so they had many new experimental beers to share and talk about.

Last time, Shane neglected to tell us the story of when the brewery almost blew up. Over a year ago, he, Aaron Stumpf and Andrew Powers walked up to the brewery and smelled something burning. The

brewhouse was filled with



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smoke. The low-water shutoff on the boiler failed and it was firing without any water. It warped the metal panels that encased it, melted a plastic bucket next to it, and even cracked the cast iron on the boiler itself! It toasted a waterbug that happened to be walking across the top at the wrong time (posthumously named Bill, the Boiler Beetle). It got so hot that the metal railing 8 feet away was scorching hot.

Since we last saw Shane, cofounder Andrew Bronstein left Sixpoint. He is now in Boulder, CO. Later, Steve Deptula sold the Liberty Heights Taproom to Chris Byrne, who moved Rocky Sullivan's from Manhattan to the Red Hook space. LHT was next to the brewery and all five of their taps were Sixpoint beers. At first, Rocky Sullivan's only sold the Guinness, Harp, etc. that you'd find in any Irish pub in NYC. But pressure from the customers brought back two lines. Also, LHT was the meeting spot for the brewery tours, but RS isn't going along with that. Hopefully, the tours will resume soon. At least you can still get brick oven pizza and hear live music there.

Gran'Dad's Nerve Tonic

The Sixpoint guys met a local hip-hop pair known as **Junk Science**. Baja One is on the mic and DJ Snafu puts out the beats. (I didn't find their given names, but honestly, I didn't look that hard). They are on the Brooklyn-based Embedded Music/Definitive Jux label, which is co-owned by DJ ESE. He is a quality-beer lover, and fostered the idea of promoting the group's second album

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GNT COLLABORATION VIDEOS

Definitely check out these videos. They are worth your time if you want to see the Sixpoint guys, the brewing of Gran'-Dad's Nerve Tonic, and their collaboration with Junk Science. There are quite a few laughs in there, too. Listen on headphones or good computer speakers so that you can hear all of the lyrics, music and interviews.



DJ Snafu (left) and Baje One being filmed on brew day.

In "Brewing Gran' Dad's Nerve Tonic with Junk Science Part 1", the musicians enter the world of hops; Shane improvises the recipe on the fly and stirs the mash in this beer/hip-hop mash-up (6:34): http://www.thenewpop.com/tnt-details.php?cid=155.

In "Brewing GNT with JS Part 2", Shane explains his not-to-style philosophy, Aaron teaches bottling 101, Jeff gets his 15 seconds, and Junk Science "sings" "Jerry McGuire". Also, see JS admire their photo in Ale Street news in front of Bierkraft at the beer and album debut (7:47): http://www.thenewpop.com/tnt-details.php?cid=156.

In the Drop Magazine video interview, meet DJ Snafu and Baje One, and hear their version of the album/beer collaboration (4:09): http://www.drop-magazine.com/junk-science-video-interview/.

Junk Science's friend Cool Calm Pete sells GNT Beer in a web commercial with a Motown sample and lyrics from the "Pedro" (1:18): http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rqxWgf7ne-g&feature=related.

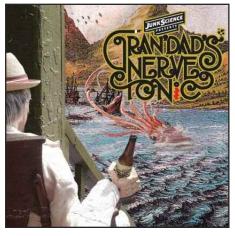
In the second GNT Beer webvertisement, Dyelon promotes beer geekery (2:13):

http://www.youtube.com /watch?v=WIKF5seN9I&feature=related.

Starpower raps for GNT, in promo 3, how to drink for free; this one's for the juvies, not for the elderly, like me:

http://www.youtube.com
/watch?v=BNRuiNfjO-

Q&feature=related.



Junk Science presents Gran'Dad's Nerve Tonic.



Shane and Aaron choosing the malt for Gran' Dad's Nerve Tonic.

along with a Sixpoint beer of the same name.

According to emcee Baje One, "It's not a record about alcohol or alcoholism per se, as much as the record itself is the drink that me and Snafu needed and couldn't find anywhere on the shelves."

The result of the collaboration is **Gran'Dad's Nerve Tonic**, which brings to mind turn of the 20th century XXX tonics with non-descript labels. The beer had to be big enough to live up to its name.

GNT beer could loosely be called an Imperial Red Ale, with an abv of 7.5-8%, and 84 IBUs of Centennial and Simcoe hops. But really, it does not fit any style. In part, this is because they threw some leftover grains. If you'd like to find out which ones, click on the first link in the GNT box and watch the brew-day video. The band

stuck around all day and even helped a bit. It looks like they had a lot of fun hanging out.

The beer pours reddish-copper with a small off-white head. It has a pleasant strawberry aroma that is very subtle, and I would not have noticed it if it wasn't pointed out to me. (Aaron said that the house yeast produce this ester unpredictably. It can also be detected occasionally in Sweet Action.) Citrus and maybe pine from the hops easily handle the caramel malt sweetness. This beer is dangerously drinkable. For now, it is available only at Bierkraft on 5th Ave. in Park Slope. Eighteen bucks gets you a GNT growler and a GNT CD.

This may have be the first time that a CD debut party was held at a

beer store, and most certainly at the same time as a beer brand debut. It was held in mid-October, and Bierkraft is almost out of their allotment of GNT discs. I'm not sure about their stocks of GNT beer, but don't wait too long. Identical CDs can always be burned, but precisely replicating this batch of beer would be difficult, if they would even want to do so.

More new stuff

The **Belgian Rye Pale Ale** needed a better name than Belgian Rye-PA. So the guys came up with "Brumski," which as you will see, will probably be only a nickname. Brumski may be a common term Wisconsin, but it doesn't seem to have left the state. To illustrate, a recent story goes that when comedian Dave Chappelle was wondering what the hell he was doing in Sheboygan, and what the locals did for fun, a curvaceous young lady came up from the audience and demonstrated the Brumski on him. Little boys enjoy making an annoying "pbbbbt" sound when they blow air out through their closed lips. Big boys really enjoy doing this while shaking their head back and forth inside a lady's cleavage.

As for the beer, brewing with rye can leave you with a sticky mess of a mash. They mitigated the problem by raising the mash temperature a bit and ensuring that the grates on the bottom of the mash tun are sealed up tight. They haven't had too many problems lately. The end result has the dark color, spicy finish and silky mouthfeel that you'd expect with rye malt. In between, there is a subtle

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that a CD debut party was held at a Gorilla Warfare Porter in the mash tun during recirculation.

clove aroma and dark fruit flavors. It clocks in somewhere around 8%, so sip and enjoy this tasty beverage.

The **Tripel** does not have a clever name. It is just "Sixpoint Tripel," spelled with a "pel," because they are highly sophisticated and proper down at the Sixpoint Brewery. This 10% abbey ale had a cloudy, golden color and a frothy

head. But it was still too hot, with a phenolic, bubble gum aroma. Reports are that it is quickly improving with age. I hope some bars sit on it for a few months so that we can try it at peak flavor.

Mugs 15th Anniversary Ale was a

Belgian-style IPA brewed by Sixpoint for the October event. They didn't have to bring us samples, because the bartender was pouring it. (They must have several kegs, because it was still on tap when I was there at the end of November.) I am wary of this style, because sometimes the esters produced by Belgian yeast don't mesh well with the bitterness from copious amounts of American hops. Also, the combination can produce a huge, sticky head that never goes away but just sags like drying shaving cream. However, this version is quite fine, indeed. It pours clear with a peach-orange color and a big head that quickly dissipates leaving a fine, lingering layer of foam. It has a nice citrus aroma. And there is a well-balanced

malt to bitterness taste. It's on the low end of the alcohol scale for the style, at closer to 6% than 8%, and this adds to its drinkability.

Another recent addition to the Sixpoint portfolio is **Eight Days O' Wheat**. It is an American wheat beer in the low 5% range with plenty of hops. Whereas Apollo was a pale wheat ale for the summer, EDO'W tweaks the recipe



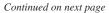
with Carawheat from Weyerman Malting and additional hops. It is the house beer and exclusive to Whole Foods on Houston at Chrystie, and for only \$7/growler, it is well worth the trip.

A couple of oneoff beers are coming soon. **Scotch Ale** was brewed with Golden Promise and peat smoked malts. **Gorilla Warfare Coffee Porter** was brewed with fresh

roasted Ethiopian Yirgacheffe beans from Gorilla Coffee on 5th Ave. and Park Pl., a few blocks north of Bierkraft. They are an independent shop that roasts their own, fair trade beans. The fresh ground coffee was steeped in the fermenter like a giant French press. Tasting the wort gave them a caffeine buzz. Even the yeast "exploded like on crack." The Scotch ale is coming soon, but one place to try the new porter is at **South 4th Bar & Cafe** in Williamsburg. They are celebrating their 1st anniversary by turning over their taps to Sixpoint Craft Ales as the old kegs kick. If you are reading this in the second week of December, it should be available, but click on the link for the number and call ahead.

Speaking of 5th Ave. in Brooklyn, that is where you will find the home of Wheelhouse Pickles. (LINK TO http://wheelhousepickles.com/) Why mention them here? Well, they do have a lot in common with Sixpoint

Craft Ales, as they create small batch, original products on a "whim." And they've only been around a couple years. But more to the point, somehow, someone came up with another original collaboration. Out right now is a relish in their **Wheelhouse Whims** line. It has finely chopped cucumbers, carrots, onions, celery, and some other ingredients that I couldn't discern. The base liquid holding the veggies together is reduced Sixpoint Brownstone wort, so this is a sweet product. It is aggressively flavored with holiday spices such as cinnamon, nutmeg, and clove. This is probably a coincidence, but the color is very





close to the brown used on the Sixpoint logo. With flecks of orange and white, it could not be closer to their team colors if they tried. The flavor is perfect for the current season, so if you are considering trying it, get one now. It is available at the usual gourmet shops (which are listed on their website), or you can purchase it from Wheelhouse through the site. As I write this, there are jars stacked on the counter in front of the Eight Days O'Wheat tap at Whole Foods on Houston.

Another Badger

Aaron Stumpf manages brewing operations at Sixpoint. He met Shane in the dorm when they were freshman at the University of Wisconsin. They roomed together the following two years. Aaron enjoyed many of Shane's creations when he got into homebrewing junior year. And they really got to appreciate good beer at the U of W's Student Union, which was the first in the country. The Rathskellar is a place for students to grab a meal all day and hear live music at night. Oh yeah, they also sell good quality beer. What a place to go to school!

The Rathskellar is in a beautiful arched space reminiscent of a German beer hall. with several large fireplaces and vintage bier steins lining the ceilings. It is covered with old paintings depicting German coat-of-arms and Germans drinking. I doubt there is anything like it at any other university. Aaron felt right at home there given his German heritage. He doubts that they've ever painted the place since his grandmother attended the University in the twenties.

Perhaps even better, the Student Union has a huge terrace overlooking Lake Mendota. You can watch the crew teams practice while you work on your biceps with multiple sets of beer-to-lips arm curls. When the weather is warm enough (for thick skinned Midwesterners) it is packed on weekends, and sometimes during the week. The bands move outside, too.

Shane let Aaron create a beer of his

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Shane Welch, Mary Izett, Jeff Gorlechen, and Aaron Stumpf.





choosing. He wanted to explore his German heritage, so he decided on a **doppelbock**. The beer will be brewed in the beginning of January with a planned release by mid-Lent, as doppelbocks were originally brewed for this period. As for the specs, you can bet on Munich malt in the mash bill. This will be only the second lager brewed by Sixpoint Craft Ales, so they won't have to change their name just yet.

Jeff Gorlechen also showed his support for Sixpoint at our meeting. He has been the sales manager ever since the founders realized that they couldn't brew all day then sell at night. Getting lines in better beer bars was relatively easy. But neighborhood pubs proved to be a harder sell. Jeff started out selling close to the brewery in Red Hook, Carroll Gardens and Park Slope. Also, he has moved around the city several times, so he hit on his former regular bars in his old neighborhoods. It helps when you've got the goodwill built up. When he gets one or two taps on several bars in close proximity, sales really take off. Sweet Action is their biggest seller, and it gets people to try their other beers.

Jeff is also in charge of promotions, like the Big Ten Block Party, held downtown in front of Ulysses this summer (see photo, below).

Beer prices foaming up

Most beer aficionados know by now that there is a

hop shortage. There was a glut in the late nineties. Farmers were losing money so many acres were turned over to other crops. The recent popularity of hoppy beers was covered by the overhanging surplus. But that was exhausted at the same time that bad weather reduced many harvests worldwide. Even a warehouse full of hops burned down. Already, hops are selling on eBay for \$25/lb. It takes hop vines three years to mature, so expect this to continue.

And to add insult to injury, there is a **malted barley shortage** as well. There was some impact from the weather, but the reduction in acreage to placate the demand for corn for use in ethanol production is a bigger factor. Overall, ingredient costs have nearly doubled. Soaring energy prices have also increased the cost of production, and for shipping as well. The dollar is tanking against all currencies, so imports will be even higher. We'll all be paying more, so "Drink Local" is more than just slogan now.

Shane said that the hop shortage is a much bigger problem than malt shortage for the cost, and more importantly, the ability to brew at all. Sixpoint Craft Ales is a small and young brewery. They do not have many core brands with a specific recipe, so they can scrounge up whatever malt or hops that they need and improvise. The macro breweries have contracts and even control some farms. But some micros and brewpubs may be have trouble sourcing ingredients.



2007 BEERS IN REVIEW

This was a great year for beer lovers in NYC, especially in Brooklyn. It's always nice to find a new place to have a quality beer, and all of these are worth a try. For more information on many of these fine establishments, and for recent draft lists, do a quick search on Bill Coleman's Beer Alert page at http://hbd.org/mbas/beer.html

Alex Hall's Beer Demystifier guide to NYC at http://www.gotham-imbiber.com/demystifier.pdf is an exhaustive reference, and the primary source for the bars' descriptions:

NEW BARS, COBBLE HILL AND PARK SLOPE

Bar Great Harry - 280 Smith St. (at Sackett) 718-222-1103. A new corner beer bar with 12 craft drafts. They have about 70 bottles, from a wide range of styles.

4th Avenue Pub - 76 4th Ave. (at Bergen) 718-643-2273. 24 mostly good taps and a cask engine. Free BBQ in the beer garden Fridays through Sundays in summer.

Pacific Standard - 82 4th Ave. (between Bergen and St. Marks) 718-858-1951. A comfortable beer bar with a West Coast slant to the 16 tap lines and 2 cask lines. California sporting events and movie nights are shown in the library in the back.

4th Avenue Pub, Pacific Standard, and **Cherry Tree** across the street are three cask outlets on the same block.

NEW BARS, WILLIAMSBURG AND GREENPOINT

Black Rabbit - 91 Greenpoint Ave. (at Franklin) 718-349-1595. The impressive interior looks like a European hunting lodge from the early 20th Century. There are enclosed booths with table service via a bell. The beer range is not voluminous, but includes a selection of craft beers on the 10 taps and in bottles. **The Diamond** - 43 Franklin St. (at Calyer) 718-383-5030. International beer bar with eight well chosen beers on tap and an admirable selection of craft bottles. Tabletop shuffleboard is played opposite the semi-circular bar counter. There is a bright and pleasant beer garden.

The Gutter - 200 North 14th St. (between Wythe and Berry) 718-387-3585. The gamesters at Barcade



The Diamond Bar at night. Owners Alex and Dave Pollack, below.



brought the first new bowling alley to Brooklyn in decades. Watch the action on 8 lanes through the window in the lodge-like bar. They have 12 craft drafts, and about half a dozen gourmet bottles.

Legion - 790 Metropolitan Ave. (at Humbolt) This hip and friendly bar is now the home of the two casks engines from the original Blind Tiger. They have eight craft taps, too.

Wells Ales and Lagers - 303 Bedford Ave. (at S. 2nd) 718-963-3435. This cozy cafe bar on the Bedford Ave. strip features several good taps and a large craft bottle selection.

NEW BARS, MANHATTAN

The Half Pint - 76 W. 3rd St. (at Thompson St.) 212-260-1088. The people behind Maggie's Place, St. Andrew's and Stout NYC brought us a comfortable pub near Washington Square Park with a cask engine and several good taps.

Continued on next page

Louis 649 - 649 E. 9th St. (at Ave B) 212-673-1190. This East Village jazz bar has about 30 beers to choose from.

The Rook - 85 Ave. A (between 5th and 6th Streets) 212-673-1775. A basement beer bar featuring 7 changing taps, 50 bottles, and a cask engine on the way.

Spitzer's Corner - 101 Rivington St. (at Ludlow) 212-228-0027. This addition to the LES beer scene is an airy gastropub with 40 taps (mostly craft) and a wide range of bottles.

CB Six Bar - 252 E. 51st St. (west of 2nd Ave). 212-888-2453. And honorable mention for the Dec. '06 opening of this excellent bar offering over about a dozen good taps and over 80 bottles.

New Bar, Astoria

Sunswick 35/35 - 35-02 35th St. (at 35th Ave). 718-752-0620. Breaking the boredom of sameold-swill everywhere-Queens, Sunswick has 25 taps - a number of which are ever-changing craft beers. This enterprising bar stands alone in Queens as a multi-tap craft beer outlet.

NEW RESTAURANTS, WILLIAMSBURG, BROOKLYN (Thanks, Bill)

Radegast Hall & Biergarten - 113 N. 3rd St. (at Berry) 718-963-3973. The folks from the Bohemian Beer Hall in Queens jumped on the Williamsburg bandwagon with this wonderfully atmospheric European-style beer hall and restaurant. Excellent food, drafts include some good choices from German, the Czech Republic Austria, with one beer from Belgium. The bottle list is a little more venturesome,



with multiple beers from the same countries. Another fine edition to the neighborhood.

Fette Sau - 354 Metropolitan Ave. (at Havemeyer)

718-963-3404. Sister to Spuyten Duyvil (across the street), a barbecue place for pork lovers with a few interesting draft-only microbrews. Not really a beer destination per se, but if you're at Spuyten and getting hungry for some solids....

NEW BEER STORES

Spuyten Duyvil Grocery - 132 North 5th Street

#1M (entrance on Bedford). 718-384-1520. It was a good year for the S.D. folks and their patrons. Their cozy shop inside a tiny mall features the eclectic range of beers and specialty foods that you'd expect. Whole Foods "Bowery" - 95 E. Houston Street (at Chrystie) 212-420-1320. Believe it or not, The Bowery is now a chic address. But the dedicated beer store entrance is at the other end of the long block. Similar to the excellent selection found at the Chelsea location, but they also have six inexpensive growler lines and a much shorter checkout line.

GOOD NEWS FROM OLD FRIENDS

The Blind Tiger Ale House finally got their beer and wine license this spring. The first hour's take exceeded several months' coffee shop receipts.

Zum Schneider avoided the Blind Tiger's fate by beating the landlord's attempt to remove them and getting a lease extension.



Photos this page by Alan Rice

Helmer's Cafe in Hoboken re-opened nearly two years after a fire gutted the apartments above. It was re-modeled with a beautiful new bar. They kept the menu, dropped the bottle list, and improved the tap selection with 16 mostly German craft drafts.

SOME BAD NEWS, TOO

The Collins Bar was closed for another Times Square apartment tower.

Chumley's, the venerable former speakeasy closed when the chimney collapsed. Instead of repairing this landmark, the landlord has allowed two walls to go as well. If it ever reopens, it will never be the same.



MBAS PHILADELPHIA PUB CRAWL, NOVEMBER 17, 2007

Photos by Mary, Mike, and Alan





















Here's a sampling of the new New York beers of 2007:

Front row: Ommegang Ommegeddon, Kelso Flemish Red, Schmaltz Coney Island Lager, Chelsea Fritzkrieg Hop, and Brooklyn Local 1.

Back row: Blue Point No Apologies, Captain Lawrence Cuvee de Castleton, Southern Tier Hoppe, Ithaca Old Habit, and Sixpoint GrandDad's Nerve Tonic.

PHOTO STYLING BY ALAN RICE

Calendar... Click on event titles for a hot link to their website.

- Wed. Dec. 12, MBAS Holiday Party at Mugs Ale House, 7:30pm. Dan Shelton will once again be pouring us samples from the Shelton Brothers' winter seasonal portfolio while he regales us with tales of his latest travails.
- Wed. Dec. 12, Stone 12-12-12 at
 Blind Tiger. 12 Stone beers tapping
 on 12/12 at 12 Noon. Stone 10th and
 11th Anniversary, '05, '06, and '07
 Double Bastard, RIS, '04 and '07
 Old Guardian Barleywine, Double
 Dry Hopped IPA with Columbus and
 Amarillos, Oak-aged Arrogant Bastard, Ruination, and Pale Ale. And to
 make it an "Epic" event, bottles of
 Stone 070707 Vertical Epic Ale.
- Wed. Dec. 12, Ithaca at The Gate.
 White Gold, Finger Lakes Nut
 Brown, Gorges Smoked Porter, Winterizer, Cascazilla, NY State DIPA.
 Kaffinator and IPAbbey in bottles.
- Thu. Dec. 13, First Anniversary
 Party at Stanton Public, 8pm.
 Great drink specials, DJ, and Burlesque dancers.
- Thu. Dec. 13, Blue Point at Hop
 Devil, 7pm. Share a pint with the
 brewers. Oatmeal Stout (cask),
 Toasted Lager, Sour Cherry Stout,
 Hoptical Illusion, Old Howling Bastard, Winter Ale.
- Sun. Dec. 16, He'Brew at Spuyten
 Duyvil. Jewbelation Eleven, '06
 Monumental Jewbelation, Lenny on
 Rye (barrel aged), Bittersweet
 Lenny's RIPA, Origin Pomegranate
 Strong Ale, Messiah Bold, Genesis
 Ale and Coney Island Lager.
- Wed. Dec. 19, Magic Hat at Spring Lounge. \$4 pints, list TBD.

- Wed. Dec 19, Ghosts of Christmas at The Gate. List TBD.
- Thu. Dec. 20, Winter Beer Night at Barcade, 6pm. Allagash Fluxus, Avery the Czar, Captain Lawrence Nor'Easter '06 and '07, Chelsea Frosty's Winter Wheat Wine, Climax Hoffmann Doppelbock, Dogfish Head Black and Blue, Dogfish Head Raison D'Extra, Fisherman's Tea Party Smoked Barleywine (cask), Flying Dog Gonzo Imperial Porter '05, Harpoon Weizenbock, Middle Ages Druid Fluid '05 (cask), Sixpoint Global Warmer '05, Southampton French Country Christmas.
- Wed. Dec. 26, Boxing Day at dba.

 Annual coat drive donate a coat and get a free pint. And enjoy Christmas Crackers, Shepard's Pie, Sausage Rolls and Granny Jones' Flamin' Pegan Puddin' while they last.
- Mon. Dec. 31, New Year's Eve at the Blind Tiger, 9pm–2am, \$150. Open bar (drafts and wine), gourmet hors d'ouvres, and only 65 people in the room. RSVP by Dec. 21 at 212-462-4682.
- Mon. Dec. 31, Fancy New Year's Dance Party at The Diamond.

- You will not be admitted to our basement "VIP" room on this night unless you look fabulous. DJ and Midnight Champagne Toast.
- Mon. Dec. 31, New Year's Eve at Loreley, 10pm-1am. Free admission, optional \$75 for open bar including all beers, wines, and top shelf liquors. Tasty German food. DJ and Midnight Champagne Toast.
- Mon. Dec. 31, Southampton at Hop Devil Grill. And as many other NY beers as they can round up. Midnight Champagne Toast.
- Sat. Jan. 19-Sun Jan. 20, Daze of the Devil II, Hop Devil Grill.

 Noon-6pm on Sat., and Noon until they're gone on Sun. At least 20 beers on tap with at least 8% abv, some rare to NYC, 4 oz samples available.

For **up-to-the-minute event info**, go to:
http://hbd.org/mbas/calendar.html
For the **latest draft lists**, go to:
http://hbd.org/mbas/new.html

For **area beer bars**, go to: http://hbd.org/mbas/beer.html

Homebrew Competition

All entries welcome · Judges and stewards wanted

FEBRUARY 10, 2008

Homebrew Alley 2

At Chelsea Brewing Co.

Presented by the New York City Homebrewers Guild For details, http://hbd.org/nychg/.