

THE ART OF HOBBY: BEER-RELATED CRAFTS

INTRODUCTION

My name is Peter Zien, and I am a hobbyist. Most of you know me as an award-winning homebrewer and professional brewer as the owner of the AleSmith Brewing Company. However, my roots go way back regarding my love of hobbies and crafts.

I was born in St. Paul, MN. in 1962 and have fond memories of my mother and Mrs. Bloomfield from next door making wonderful pickles in a wash bin. Joe the Fruit Man would drive up in his Fruit truck and allow me and my best friend to eat all the fresh cherries we could stomach. The Bloomfield's and the Ziens shared a common vegetable garden, and I was raised on mostly fresh and delicious homemade foods.

Now I say "mostly" because of what I'm about to tell you: My father was a St. Paul restaurateur who joined the McDonald's corporation in the late 1950's, at the request of Ray Kroc who was pedaling his multi-mixer milkshake machines to the restaurant owners around the country. My father employed a woman to play the piano at his restaurant, and long story short, she ended up marrying Ray and becoming Mrs. Joan Kroc. So amongst the homemade foods in our house, were also the red and yellow bags full of McDonald's. I tell you this because I think it had a profound effect on me to pursue crafts and home-made items.

By the age of 15, we had moved to La Jolla, CA. and I was already in love with beer. By the age of 17, I had accumulated a 300+ beer bottle collection in my bedroom. I had traveled to Europe a few times as a teenager and returned thirsty for well-made beer. But there was hardly any to be found. Like many of you I'm sure, my teenage friends and I would hang outside the local liquor store and ask people to buy us a six pack. We'd hand \$7 to a person, and tell them to not buy us the big name stuff but rather look on the bottom shelf for the Monkshof or

Spaten. They'd give us this crazy look, like what the hell is that? But we knew these beers were better, a good many years before the modern microbrew renaissance that we find ourselves experiencing today.

In 1988, I received my JD in law from the University of San Diego although I never planned to use it as source of income. I began homebrewing in 1995 and was fascinated by the incredible blend of art and science that the hobby provides. I joined the local homebrew club in 1996, QUAFF, and by 1999, I was president of the club. We competed and honed our craft as a club, and in 2001, we earned the AHA Homebrew Club of the Year in a teary-eyed Banquet held that year in Los Angeles. Along the way, I became heavily involved with the Beer Judge Certification Program and reached the rank of Grand Master Level 1 within the organization.

In 2002, I became the owner of the AleSmith Brewing Company and still run the daily operations. Brewing has treated me very well, and in 2008 AleSmith won the Small Brewery of the Year Award at the Great American Beer Festival in Denver, CO..

OVERVIEW OF TODAY'S DISCUSSION

- Creativity and the Mind of the Hobbyist; Obstacles to Creativity in Today's World;
- Why we do what we do;
- The Importance of Passion;
- Hobbies like Homebrewing that 'Scratch the same Itch';
- Q and A

MODERN OBSTACLES TO OUR MOST VALUABLE ASSET: CREATIVITY

In case you haven't noticed, technology and the general pace of our society continues to increase and move faster every single day. I think that commercial showing people owning gadgets and 3-D TV's that instantly are out-of-date says it all. In fact though, there's documentation that appeared in TIME magazine around ½ a year ago which discussed this frantic pace of technology as we move closer to what's known as "SINGULARITY". According to some, the year 2045 will be the year that human evolution as we know it changes forever. It will be that year when computers begin programming other computers, and the human element will be removed from the equation. For those of you who watch THE OFFICE, it's kind of like when Dwight and his boss were discussing the need for a life-size robot, and Dwight suggests "No, don't make it life-size. I suggest a 2/3 scale so it will be easier to overpower when it eventually turns on you". Funny, but maybe true....

Anyways, there's a point to all this. I find our quick-moving modern society to be an obstacle for your most valuable asset- your individual creativity. Need a quick answer? Go Google it. Can't figure out something? The internet will save you- whether it be a "how to" website or a search of every conceivable way something can be done. If you need to see it done, go to You Tube for the video, and finally don't forget to share it with everyone on the planet through FaceBook.

So my point is: it's easier to turn our brains to the OFF position now and follow accepted ways of doing things.

OK, with that said let's turn our attention to turning our brains to the ON position and letting your individuality and creativity flow and prosper. So I ask you all to step back in time with me, to a simpler, mellower era where all you had was your individual brain power and that "light in your soul" that makes you, YOU, and fosters that most valuable part of you- CREATIVITY.

THE MIND OF THE HOBBIEST AND WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

Everyone in this room has a different kind of mind. Some of you may even have a screw or two loose, and that's not only OK but it's down-right GREAT! For it is the creative soul of those of you on the extreme edge of the spectrum that produces the most wonderful art this planet has to offer. Michelangelo, Picasso, Pierre Celes, all lived on the extreme edge of the art spectrum and their names will live forever.

Have you ever asked yourself, "Why do I do what I do?" I encourage you all to explore the answer to that question. It is my opinion that you will inevitably come to the conclusion that you are PASSIONATE about creating something that is yours and yours alone. If you love what you do, whether that means a hobby like homebrewing or what you do for a living, then it will love you back. You will be a creative soul and you will experience satisfaction at the highest level. I am incredibly fortunate to be able to combine my love of brewing into what I do for a living as well.

So let's bring all this back to the realm of brewing beer. I would like you all to do a few things differently the next time you sit down to design a homebrew recipe. I want you to do the brewing equivalent of "FLYING SOLO" for the first time. You will not look for a recipe or a clone beer to recreate. Think about that word for a minute, "recreate". Are we not talking about "re" as in already done, and applying it to the word "creativity"? When you recreate are you not just already doing what someone else has already done? No, I'm asking you to "CREATE" with your one-of-a-kind "CREATIVITY".

Now I'm not asking you to come up with something completely different than has ever been seen in the beer-drinking world, although that is perfectly acceptable as well. And I'm not saying that the World's accepted beer styles need to be forgotten about. What I am asking you all to do is sit down in a quiet and peaceful place, and think about what kind of beer you want to create. Imagine that perfect beer that you have in your mind, and think about how you would

create it. This is no easy task that I put before you: it requires careful note taking and a fair amount of trial and error before you will reach your target.

It's perfectly acceptable to consult the Style Guidelines as well. The trick will be to put flavors and aromas from your raw materials to those written words. Like achieving a "toasty, toasted bread-like" aroma in your next attempt at an Oktoberfest. Or the "high level of citrus-like, grapefruity hop aroma" in your next American-style IPA. You will be required to use your senses when evaluating the use of your raw materials: look, listen, taste, and smell everything that goes into your homebrews. Once you begin to hit your expectations of what grains and what hops produce what flavors and what aromas, then you will be well on your way to huge brewing success.

BEER-RELATED CRAFTS THAT 'SCRATCH THE SAME ITCH' FOR ME AS BREWING

Chances are that if you are in this room that you already have other hobbies besides homebrewing. (show of hands). As I review my life, I've had many hobbies from stamp collecting to model rockets, trains to beer-bottle collecting, and on and on. A hobby that consumes my time now is CHEESE MAKING.

This hobby started when I became a professional brewer and like many brewers, was giving my spent grain to the local farmers for their goats and cows to eat. One of these farmers returned one day with some raw goats' milk and told me how it was from the animals that ate the AleSmith spent grain. A light bulb went off- what a wonderful and 'green' way of producing another food product from the malted barley. Since that day in 2002, I've attended the Dairy Institute on 4 separate occasions at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, where I was instructed on the science of cheesemaking. Important similarities to homebrewing:

- Sanitation
- Limited ingredients producing a vast array of types and styles
- Temperature control

- Use of enzymes
- Creating a food-art
- Serendipity at work
- Air born yeast destined to ferment sugar source into alcohol
- Enzymes present in milk storage vessel coagulating milk to cheese
- Especially delicious when consumed together!

Although time prevents a deep discussion of cheesemaking, I wanted to share some homemade cheese with all of you and let you know that this may be for you if it peaks your interest. I have been thinking for about 2 years now to produce cheese in the commercial arena, and I'm pleased to announce that the CheeseSmith Micro creamery is now in the planning stages. I have a few more hoops to jump through before certification, but I'm expecting to make available CheeseSmith cheese in early 2012 if not sooner.

My bio mentions some other food-related hobbies that I currently or recently have tried with varying degrees of success: coffee roasting, olive curing, chocolate making, baking, and mustard making. If you are looking for interesting and delicious hobbies to add to your beloved homebrewing, then I highly endorse looking into some of these beer-related crafts.

(Q AND A) With the remaining time, I'd like to take a few questions that you may have for me.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR ATTENDING TODAY'S TALK AND I HOPE THAT I GAVE YOU SOME THINGS TO THINK ABOUT AS YOU STRIVE TO BECOME THE BEST AND MOST CREATIVE YOU, YOU CAN BE. THANK YOU AND GOOD LUCK FOSTERING CREATIVITY IN YOUR BREWHOUSES BACK HOME!