

**Date:** 11:50 AM CDT, 09/07/2022

**From:** Urban Knaves of Grain Communications <communications@knaves.org>

**To:** Kevin <communications@knaves.org>

**Subject:** Knaves Knewsletter - August 2022



# Knaves Knews

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

## August 2022

\*\*\* 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](#).

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### Board of Directors

*Abbess* - [Eileen Uchima](#)

*First Lady / Head Penguin* -

[Mike Uchima](#)

*Master of the Coin* - [Darrell](#)

[Proksa](#)

*Master of Coms* - [Kevin](#)

["Woj" Wojdak](#)

*Chaplain of Education* -

[Ray Nonnie](#)

### Welcome Address



Hi, all.

Hope everyone is healthy, happy, and finishing summer with a bang (the good kind... no brewing explosions, please)!

We have had unusually good turnouts for our summer meetings this year. I have to chalk that up to everyone enjoying our new location,



**BubbleHouse Brewing**. Even though turnout has been good, membership numbers are still nothing like they were pre-COVID. If you know anyone who has not been to a meeting since before the pandemic, please take a minute to invite them back? It would be great to see some of those folks again. I know during the past few years, some of our former members have moved away and some have given up brewing but, there are a

*Brother of Events*

*Planning - Tim Devitt*

*Minister of Tournaments -*

**Dan Acheson**

Drunk Monk at Large - Jeff Landers

Monk at Large - Tom

Hayosh

Monk at Large - Dave Fetty

Monk at Large - Curt

Czapski

*Retired Abbot - Chuck Fort*

Contributions

Mike Uchima - Photography

Ed Bronson - Photography

## Communications Channels



ukg.slack.com

Click here to request an invite from a Board member.



<https://groups.io/g/ukg>

Editor's Note:

*Most images in the newsletter can be enlarged to see further detail. Simply click on the image*

lot of former Knaves unaccounted for. Our next meeting will be Tuesday, September 20th. We will be announcing the style for the next Knighted Knave Cup competition.

CHAOS BrewBQ on August 20 was great fun as always. In spite of rain during set-up and some missing pieces to our faucets, we powered through and had eight beers on tap for the thirsty hoards. Food, beer, and company were all wonderful as usual!



We also had a great time at the Kane County Cougars game this past Saturday. We were located close to the Beer Cave for help staying hydrated throughout the game

and the post-game fireworks. The Cougars beat the Chicago Dogs 3-0.

We are officially entering fall competition season. If you are considering entering any of the local competitions...Wortapalooza, Brixtoberfest, Charlie Orr, Spooky Brew, etc. make sure that you know all of the appropriate deadlines (which are likely in this Knewsletter and on the club calendar). Also, consider helping them out by stewarding or judging. You know we will need help from all of the local clubs in a few months' time when the 2023 Drunk Monk Challenge comes around!

A much-anticipated upcoming event is the **Train Crawl** on Saturday,



and it will open into a new window.

September 24. We will be visiting Revolution, Pilot Project, All Rise, and District Brew Yards. Both lunch and dinner stops are planned. Can't make the whole Crawl? Consider joining in for a couple stops and a meal. Hope to see a good group of Knaves along the way.

I'll be joining the Crawl late as I will be teaching "Mead Making Basics and Beyond" at Skeleton Key Brewing that morning at 11:00. The class



filled so fast last time that we are repeating it! I think mead is finally having its moment in the

spotlight! Let your friends who might be interested know that they can sign up on the Skeleton Key website or give SKB a call for details and to register.

As always, keep an eye on the calendar and Slack for updates on meetings, social activities, DMC, etc. If you have anywhere you would like to suggest for a social night, or a tech topic which you would find interesting, please post to Slack or email the Board.

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!

- Joe Neely (BeerGuyJ) - Villa Park
- 

## UPCOMING on the Calendar...

### September

- **Tuesday, September 20 @ 7:30 p.m . -**  
September Club Meeting at **BubbleHouse Brewing** in Lisle. Announcement of the next Knighted Knave Cup competition.
- **Saturday, September 24 @ 11:00 a.m. -**  
Eileen will be teaching “Mead Making Basics and Beyond” at **Skeleton Key Brewery,** Woodridge.
- **Saturday, September 24 @ Noon - 24th**  
**Annual UKG Train Crawl** featuring stops at Revolution, Pilot Project, All Rise, and District Brew Yards. Details and copies of the route map are available on the **UKG Calendar.**

### Other Social Activities Into 2022

- **October**
- **November**
- **December** - Annual holiday party.

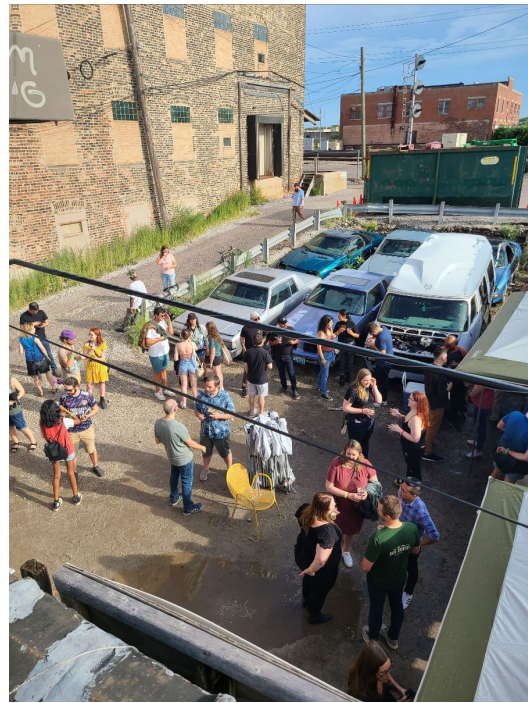
For more details on any of these events, see the **Club Calendar on the website.**

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## Recent Event Photos

Views from the 2022 CHAOS BrewBQ...tent city...



## Brave Noise Movement

We have all heard about sexual harassment issues in the local (and not so local) brewing industry, and this group 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 Brave Noise at [bravenoisebeer.com](http://bravenoisebeer.com)



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## Competitions

### Competition Wins

August 13, 2022 — Michigan State Fair, Grand River, MI

- **Dan Acheson**
  - 2nd Place - "Mark Dialed" - 13A: Dark Mile - Brown British Beer table
  - 3rd Place - "Flanders 80" - 23B: Flanders Red Ale - Sour Beer table

August 13, 2022 — Dominion Cup, Richmond, VA

- **Kevin "Woj" Wojdak**
  - **BoS Mead / Cider** - "Cool Runnings" - C2D: Ice Cider
  - 1st Place - "Cool Runnings" - C2D: Ice Cider - Ciders table
- **Dan Acheson**
  - 2nd Place - "Aintcha" - 26A: Trappist Single - Strong Belgian Ale table

August 27, 2022 — US Open Homebrew Competition, Charlotte, NC

- **Dave Fetty**
  - 1st Place - 20C: Imperial Stout - American Porter and Stout Table
  - 3rd Place - 26D: Belgian Dark Strong Ale - Trappist table

### Midwest Homebrewer of the Year (MWHBOY)

Top 10 UKG member standings on the 2022 circuit as of September 6, 2022.

- Dan Acheson - **1st**
- Jay Kash - 30th
- Jeff Landers - 80th
- Andy Day - 88th
- Kevin "Woj" Wojdak - 112th
- Jerry Hodge - 114th
- Joe Formanek - 117th
- Greg Ellwanger - 151st
- Alex Chambers - 170th
- Jim Silverstein - 170th

### **Master Homebrewer Program**

#### ***Circuit of America 2022 Standings***

(As of September 2, 2022 - **BOLD** indicates rank in top 10. Top 10 in Circuit of America win awards.)

- Dan Acheson - **5th**
- Kevin "Woj" Wojdak - 46th
- Jay Kash - 138th
- Jeff Landers - 167th
- Joe Formanek - 209th
- Alex Chambers - 349th
- Andy Day - 385th
- Gerald Hodge - 557th



#### ***Master Homebrewer Program Lifetime Rankings***

- **Kevin "Woj" Wojdak** - Master Brewer plus 1 x Silver Star, 2 x Bronze Stars
- **Dan Acheson** - Distinguished Brewer

### **Upcoming Competitions of Note**

- **Wortapalooza**  
Judge Registration: OPEN Now

Judging Dates: 9/16/2022 - 9/17/2022

- **Sowers Cup (MWHBOY)**

Judge Registration: 8/8/2022

Entry Registration: 8/8/2022 - 9/16/2022

Judging Dates: 10/11/2022 - 10/15/2022

- **Brixtoberfest (MWHBOY)**

Judge Registration: 8/6/2022

Entry Registration: 8/6/2022 - 9/23/2022

Judging Dates: 10/1/2022

- **BOSS Charlie Orr Memorial Chicago Cup Challenge (MWHBOY)**

Judge Registration:

Entry Registration:

Judging Dates: 11/5/2022

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**

- **Masters Championship of Amateur Brewing (MCAB) competition circuit**

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## **Financials**

### ***Annual Dues***

Annual membership renewal dues are **\$20**.





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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## **Editorial Perspective: The Price of Success as a Competitive Homebrewer**

by Kevin "Woj" Wojdak



I, personally, have been homebrewing for 14 years. I also enter a few competitions here and there. I enter conservatively and am happy with a few wins each year. In fact, it took me about 7 or so years to amass 100 wins for which I am quite happy and proud.

Recently, a fellow homebrewer thanked the Master Homebrewing Program (MHP) community for helping him be better and for helping him achieve 100 wins in 2022... so far.

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*I rarely post in Facebook, but I wanted to give a shout out to the MHP, which has had a dramatic effect on my brewing. This past weekend, I reached a milestone by winning 100 medals for the year. This number, of course, includes*

*CoA (Circuit of America) as well as non-CoA wins. (Some of you may have already achieved this milestone, but it is a first for me.)*

*I wouldn't have been able to achieve this personal milestone without the MHP.*

*The MHP has identified a number of competitions across the country that are high-quality, well managed, and well judged. If the MHP had not brought these competitions onto its schedule, I would have overlooked many of them. I believe that opinions from non-local judges have been the most important factor in helping me to become a better brewer.*

*Success on a national scale, of course, isn't easy; however, the great benefit of competing intensively in the long-term is that chinks in your armor will eventually surface. They have for me, at least, and as a result, I have taken a deep dive into evaluating every aspect of my brewing cycle. Although I am a little depressed by the number of issues uncovered and the changes that need to be made, I'm also a little excited. A year-end review will now be part of my brewing routine.*

*I really like the way the MHP incentivizes you to brew across all subcategories of beer, mead, and cider. Going forward, better roundedness will be my primary goal. Although I have done reasonably well this year by medaling in 40 subcategories of beer, more than 100 subcategories exist, so much unexplored territory lies ahead.*

*None of this has come easy. I have made inordinate sacrifices to do well on the circuit, but as long as my wife continues to be encouraging, I'll trudge on.*

*Thanks for everything MHP!*

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My mind was blown by this crazy feat and the great commitment of time and resources it must have taken to do.. So, I approached him and asked about it making a new friend in the process. His answers are also mind-blowing and I felt a great need to share them. I did some quick research on his very minimal Facebook profile beforehand and it states he was born in 1954.... making him about 68 years old if his profile is correct.

What follows is our conversation with some edits....

Woj: "I offer you a mighty Congratulations for your achievement of 100 wins. I

did pass that 100 mark in my brewing career a few years back but, I have to ask what you do for a living that you can afford to enter this many competitions in a single year? I calculated my spend over a year a few years back for brewing supplies, entry fees, packaging, and shipping costs and it was over \$1000 and I enter very conservatively. I can't even imagine the spend needed to win 100 medals/ribbons in a year and then brewing time and materials on top of that."

*RESPONSE: "Kevin, thanks for reaching out. I work as a consultant in the university textbook publishing industry, and my wife works in public education. We live in a small town and in a small home, which we built 25 years ago and which has long since been paid for. I am not a monied man; my wife and I lead simple, unencumbered lives. And I have made uncommon sacrifices to be successful as a homebrewer. Really, any one can be successful if he or she is willing to make the sacrifices. Of course, it is all about allocating budget, time, and effort. When I first set out on the quest for success, I ran through a series of scenarios that focused on costs and time. Of course, the goals were out of reach, and it was a depressing realization. But then the nagging question appeared and reappeared: "how badly do you want success?" Well my personal answer is that I want it at all costs. And thus, I have made a series of sacrifices, and it is these sacrifices rather than brewing skills that define who I am. I believe time, effort, and money are distractions which can be made irrelevant through carefully planned sacrifices. So here is a quick laundry list of sacrifices that my wife and I have made. To make more time for brewing...*

- I now sleep 3 hours per night;*
- I have "given up" church and teaching Sunday School.*
- To free up money for brewing, my wife and I go out to dinner only once a month, usually to have inexpensive Tex-Mex, BBQ, or Hamburgers; we grill steak only once a month, and buy all of our groceries with newspaper coupons.*
- We have given up going to movies and other forms of entertainment.*
- We go out only twice a month, once to a beer club meeting and once to a wine club meeting.*
- We haven't traveled in 2 years, and I haven't had my fishing boat out in 2 years.*

*Success at the highest level is really about determination and sacrifice. If you really want success, you will find a way despite the constraints of money, time, and effort."*

Woj: My first response to him was a knee jerk reaction as I thought he was

yanking my chain and I sent him a "LOL" and "Thanks for making my day". That laundry list of sacrifices seemed a little too extreme. But, then I reread his response and realized he was serious so, I offered further praise for his dedication and an apology for my light-hearted response because I wanted to hear more.

*RESPONSE: "Your response was a little odd. I guess it all does sound a little humorous and fantastical. I brewed two beers today.. my brew day started at 3:00 am. Wife and I are having stir fry tonight. Getting ready to cook."*

Woj: "My first reaction was that you might be joking with me but then after reading it through again, I realized you're serious. It does sound fantastical. Amazing dedication really! Are you planning to go pro with it or just making a mark on history? What are you doing with all of this beer?"

*RESPONSE: "Kevin — I really am serious; again, I know it sounds outlandish. But to your questions, they are spot on. My wife, family, and friends all ask, "when does it all end and what is the end game?" To be honest, I'm unsure. I think of opening a small brew pub, but that would be 2 years out. The financial commitment is daunting of course. This is the direction my wife and family are pushing me toward. The question of what I do with all the beer is always at the top of my mind. I simply have too much. I send it to comps; I give a lot of it away. But unfortunately, I throw a lot away — it simply goes past it's prime before it can be used or consumed. I really can't afford to throw it out, but that is what happens despite all my bluster about cost-cutting. To compound issues, I don't keg; I bottle condition everything. Currently, I have 30 styles of beer either in refrigeration or bottle conditioning at room temp. I'll try to send you a photo later — in our kitchen, I have 7 crates of beer conditioning, with 3 fermenters going. I have 3 carboys cold crashing — all are Belgians, which I haven't brewed in 2 years and which I consider my forte. So, we haven't been eating at the kitchen table — we eat on TV trays in the living room. My wife is tolerant, but again, she asks, "where is all this heading?""*

Woj: I shared some conversational type chit-chat mentioning my wife and her hobbies and my brewing space, etc. I won't go into the details. I also asked him about the name of some of his beers which follow a pattern starting with the name "Steerman's".

*RESPONSE: "I don't have a dedicated room — only the garage and the kitchen on occasion. You are right about the wife having a hobby — my wife is a quilter — and she spends as much time quilting as I do brewing. You are very lucky*

*with your job, house, wife, and with your judicious moderations. I cannot keep up my current pace; so in a year or two, I would expect to become more of a hobbyist. I am amazed by the longevity of some of the competitors. The Midwest is a tough tough circuit. I'm a certified beer judge, but I would like to pursue cider and mead endorsements as well. So my father-in-law owned several Steerman airplanes, which are old biplanes, on which WWII pilots were trained. He owned a flight school in the 90s in which he taught people how to fly Steermans. It was loads of fun. So, I named my "brewery" after his passion. Went over well with my wife, of course."*

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This conversation has left me speechless. I cannot fathom sleeping three hours a night to wake at 3:00 am and brew 2 more batches of beer everyday.... and then to say I would keep this pace up for another 1-2 years. Where does this all lead and to what gain or end goal? I'm simply at a loss for words....

Brew competition medals are fun but they are not worth 2-3 years of my life spent earning them at all costs. They don't pay the bills and they don't have real value to me.

This individual has found a higher purpose for competitions and has made it his goal to achieve it at all costs. I find all aspects of his drive to achieve homebrew success both admirable and frightening.

Thank you,  
Woj

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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



Hombrewers 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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## Club Schwag

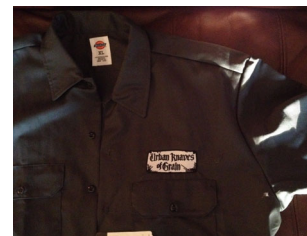
### *LogoUp.com Merchandise*

We have an account at **LogoUp.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** and pick out items you want. Then, email Woj at **marketing@knaves.org** with your item numbers and colors and he'll coordinate placing the order with you.



### *UKG Work Shirts*

Our official UKG work shirts are Charcoal Gray Dickies brand work shirts with the club logo over the left pocket and a full back transfer of the woodcut graphic on the back. Optionally, you may get your name and/or homebrewery name embroidered over the right pocket.



Because the shirt is custom made to order, the cost per shirt ranges from \$45 - \$50 depending on size needed and custom embroidery, etc.

Club work shirts orders are placed by special order with our vendor and custom

made to order. We place a new order 1-2 times per year and need to order so many shirts to make the order happen. Contact Woj at [marketing@knaves.org](mailto:marketing@knaves.org) to get on the list for the next order.

Club woodcut graphic T-Shirts are also ordered at that time.

## 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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## 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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