

Larry Goeser solving the world's problems...one beer at a time!

Introduction I first heard about the Wynkoop's Beerdrinker of the year contest via the Koop Loop e-mail. I forwarded the e-mail to several people and they also thought I would be a good candidate for the "job". I was on vacation and began to see just how much drinking good beer affected everything I was doing. Most of the places I go are planned around good beer. Many events are beer related or have beer drinking at them. As the trip went on I began to see that many other people were enjoying the good beers I had been drinking for years. Most didn't know that much about them; I always seemed to know more about what folks were drinking than they did. It has become part of many conversations with complete strangers and friends. I have talked up craft beer styles and the related industry from the woods of North Carolina to the beaches of Florida. I wondered if I could make a living this way. (It helps to be on a two week vacation away from the work world, drinking good beer each day.) I thought of some kind of service that would inform stores on how to store and sell the good beers. Or as a consultant to restaurants and bars on food pairings and how to store and serve the beers. Possibly open a beer store like one I saw in New York that is sorely needed in South Florida. These services are all needed they just haven't been done much yet. The craft beer industry growth rate is the best in all the beverage related industries; maybe there was room for me. So, "Good Beer Larry" went to work. I now have the website started (<http://www.goodbeerlarry.com>) and am trying out different ideas to see what will go. I have helped a local food store get their beer tastings going, and continue to be a "messenger" for good beer. The good beer scene is just developing in South Florida and I continue to push it along as hard as I can. I hereby submit my candidacy for the 2008 Beerdrinker of the year.

Philosophy My beer drinking philosophy is ever evolving. From the old "drink until you sink" college days to the more current "drink a few stronger, good beers and actually taste them and enjoy the flavor" ideas my views and actions have changed accordingly.

I especially don't want beer to go the way of wine with regards to the "snob appeal" and expensive "rare" vintages. Wine tastings are serious dress up affairs where tasters spit out what they are tasting and don't have much fun. Beer tastings on the other hand are fun affairs where everyone has a great time and we also drink what we are tasting. If after a few hours we can't taste quite as well as at the start; well nobody cares as they all are drinking different beers and having a good time.

I have heard the phrase "It's only beer" many times and while I agree with

the sentiments I think beer is moving up in the world. It still gets no respect in some quarters but I believe that many of us good beer drinkers think differently. Most brewers and anyone in the industry would agree that their product isn't "only" beer. They spend their working days creating new style tastes and varieties that are worthy of respect. In fact I would like to express my thanks to the brewer and associated workers that brought me the IPA I am currently drinking! They all have gone to a lot of trouble and are doing what wasn't being done for years here in Florida. That is bringing in great beers from Colorado and other far away places that are ahead of us, microbrewery wise. At my local food store the wine tastings are very organized and there are many. The beer tastings are the stepchild and are smaller and not as frequent. It has become my "job" to change this. More beer events and more people attending; I will do everything I can to accomplish this goal. I believe the craft beer revolution of the last several years is just starting we haven't seen just how far this will go. There are still many people drinking bad beer and if they would just try some of the new stuff they would probably drink better beers some of the time anyway. I do realize this is a two edged sword; just look at what the big three are doing right now. They are buying some small guys and inventing fake names and companies to sell beer. That's ok; I can see the fakers and avoid them. I think that smaller is better and that good, real beers will come from smaller sustainable operations. I will continue to support local breweries and pubs. This is what it was all about in the first place; going local for a better variety and quality of beer. The big national brewers have to satisfy a huge group which limits some choices. They also spend a fortune on marketing; the local guys mainly spread the word through satisfied customers and people like me who like what they do and work to spread the word about them. Somehow a "Bud IPA" just isn't going to work; at least for me anyway. I remember a famous beer drinker once said "Beer drinking isn't everything..it's the **only** thing!" Cheers!

Brewpub Experiences

I have visited over 150 Brewpubs in the last ten years. In this section I will list only the 2007 visits with a short comment about each. My visits are usually with friends and we typically order a sampler tray to try all a pub's beers then get pints of favored beers. Lunch or dinner is usually had and these visits are usually great fun. Full reviews can be viewed on <http://goodbeerlarry.com>

Titanic Brewing – Coral Gables, FL My "home" brewpub with 6 regular ales and several seasonals on tap. As a mug club member I get a free dinner each Wednesday with happy hour pricing all night! White Star IPA is my favorite.

A1A Ale Works – St Augustine, FL I have visited several times. The renovated brewing area is brewing 4 ales to go with the fresh seafood menu that never disappoints. I sat on the balcony overlooking the water and park.

Tampa Bay Brewing – Ybor City, FL They have 12 or their beers and 12 guests, all good. The new location is along the parade route in Ybor City. I was there on St Pat's day and "a beer" turned into a huge St Pat's parade!

The World of Beer Bar and Retail - Tampa's best beer store now has a second location that serves all the beers. It is a bar only; food is ordered from nearby restaurants. There were girls dancing on the bar late that night!

5 Seasons Brewery – Atlanta, GA With two locations they are an excellent restaurant with their own beer. I visited both and enjoyed each. Organic foods paired with some of their organic beers really went over well.

Brick Store Pub – Decatur, GA A real find; they have 12 good beers on tap with food that in anything but standard “pub grab”. Great atmosphere and a friendly place. Upstairs has a separate cozy Belgian beer bar!

Twains – Decatur, GA Big pool place; beer was disappointing.

Taco Mac – Decatur, GA Many good beers on tap in a large sports bar. I found several I have not found on tap before; along with good tacos.

Barley's Taproom – Asheville, NC Asheville is a great beer town and this is the original place. 40 great micros available. Still a great place in 2007!

Pisgah Brewing Co – Black Mountain, NC They have 5 handles at Barley's; making all organic beers. Fun Thursday evening open house at the brewery!

Jack of the Wood Pub – Asheville, NC Home of Greenman Ales this colonial style pub serves classic food and great beers. Bluegrass band playing for us!

Chelsea Brewing – New York City Good pub food; IPA was the best beer. Overlooking the Hudson river with brewing area visible behind glass.

Gilded Otter Brewing – New Paltz, NY A great find for a late dinner and beers. Good selection of beers in a large open bar area like a ski lodge!

Half Time Beverages – Poughkeepsie, NY This could be a prototype for a great beer store anywhere. 12 on tap to go and everything in NY available!

Cambridge House Brewpub – Granby, CT Outstanding menu paired with great brews, friendly atmosphere and service as well. Lobster mac & cheese, stout steak and Abijah IPA anyone?

Willimantic Brewing Co. – Willimantic, CT Cool place inside a 70 year old post office! Original customer windows now serve beer; boxes hold wine!

Conclusion

In conclusion I think that we all are better off with beer as a part of our lives. Most good beer drinkers are good people and just want to drink a few and enjoy life. Perhaps world peace would be advanced if some of the fanatics would just knock down a few beers. It's hard to hurt someone you have enjoyed some beers with. Instead of finding reasons to not drink alcohol and demonizing it maybe they should have a good craft beer! Thanks for your consideration for the beer*drinker* of the year award and I look forward to seeing everyone on February 23, 2008! My home pub is Titanic Brewing, listed above, and my shirt size is XL