

Wow! What a crowd! Thanks so much for joining us today to celebrate the 5 year anniversary of the GTA Brews Homebrew Club! I'm grateful to all of you for attending today, and making this event special.

Some notes about today's festivities:

- Huge thank you to Toronto Brewing for sponsoring the tasting glasses! Aren't they sick?!
- Also big thanks to Cakes Cove for providing us with this beautiful cake!
- Thank you to Junction Craft Brewing for hosting us in their shiny new brewery! Please buy some beer to go on your way out!
  - Mike's beer; Chloe's NEIPA was just released today, and was brewed because he won the TBOY title at Brew Slam 2017
- Most importantly thanks to all the volunteers that came together to make today happen:
  - Bear, Evan, James, Mike, Matti, Rob
  - All the homebrewers (and pro brewers) that volunteered to bring kegs
  - All the people that are volunteering to sign people in while others get to drink
  - Everyone else that has donated their time to make this awesome event possible
- If you haven't found them yet, the bathrooms are over there
- At the end of this speech, we'll announce the winners of Spring Showdown 2018, and draw a few prizes for Paid Members.

If this is your first GTA Brews event, I apologize in advance for the amount of odd references in this speech, and possibly for the length.

Today is all about celebrating the strong and vibrant homebrewing community that we have built together in Toronto! Homebrewing in this city didn't start with GTA Brews, but it has certainly flourished under our banner over the last five years.

It makes me nostalgic to look back at all that has happened since we formed the club. I put together the slideshow over there to attempt to capture just a fraction of all the cool things we have done together. If I've forgotten something, please forgive me.

Many of you already know the story about how GTA Brews was formed, but please appease me and listen to it once again. This club was formed by 6 people back in April 2013, Craig & Scott Wallace, Jason Warner, Karyn & Mike, and myself. We were all members of an online only club called "Are You an SOB?", and wanted something "more". I hosted that first meeting in my condo, even though I was still new to brewing at the time. The "club brew" that month was only my 5th ever batch! It was a Citra+MO SMaSH and we drank it at the next meeting (which was at Jason's). Jason created the GTA Brews Facebook Group, and pretty soon things began to grow exponentially.

Looking back at where we started, and comparing that to where we are today is pretty staggering. For the last few years we've been the largest homebrew club in Canada, and just last fall we also took the title of largest homebrew competition as well. However, GTA Brews isn't just about size, it's about quality. Whatever it is we're doing, we strive to do it as best as we can.

This community continues to amaze me every day. Sometimes it's Matt Duimering posting about something I've never heard of. Sometimes it's the passion and courage of people like Matti & Sara of Silly Sir, or Mark of Katalyst that are following their hearts towards establishing their breweries.

I like to think that GTA Brews is one of the most welcoming homebrew clubs out there. As with any group that has been around each other for a while, there is a certain familiarity between long time members. You may have noticed that we love to make fun of Evan, he's actually a really good brewer. If you are new to the club and are feeling like an outsider, I

encourage you to strike up a conversation with any club officer. If you do this a few times you'll suddenly find yourself as an insider!

Looking back again, those first few years was mainly me driving the bus. It was pretty stressful trying to balance everything, but it was fun as well. Over time we added volunteer positions, as I delegated certain roles and tasks to people that were kind enough to put up with my pedantic style of leadership. Our organization has come a long way in the last 2ish years, and I'm so proud of all the directors that have joined the team. We've accomplished quite a bit together...

Here's a quick list to remind everyone:

- This party
- 2100 person FB moderated group
- Brew Slam
- Grain Buys
- Hop Buys
- Seasonal Competitions
- Learn2Brew
- Advent Calendar
- Barrel Brews
- People's Pint Tap
- Cask Days Homebrew Section
- Entry Shipping
- Member Profiles
- BJCP Exams & Classes
- Off Flavour Sessions
- All the other projects, past and present
- Not to mention all the stuff that goes into supporting and promoting these things:
  - Newsletter
  - Social Media
  - Website

This club has it all! Right?

We're always looking for more volunteers to help keep things running, so please never hesitate to reach out. Please also have patience when things don't go perfectly. As a volunteer organization, sometimes things fall behind schedule.

I'd like to end this speech with a bunch of personal "thank you's".

Bear, or as people online may know him, Huge JaHangover. I'm so thankful that you have stepped up as our Vice President. You are constantly a lifesaver for me, and do a fantastic job taking things off my plate when I'm feeling overwhelmed.

Jim, our Treasurer and Cellar Master, I'm constantly thankful for all the help you give. You're always the first one to volunteer for whatever odd job I need help with like sorting bottles, stewarding, and lots more.

Jesse, I'm so glad that you have learned the competition organizing ropes. I'm always jealous of your concise and elegant emails. Brew Slam is going to rely on you a lot this year, I know you're ready.

Mike, our Social Media and Brew Slam Sponsorship guy, you've been killing it. I was never much of an Instagram fan, but your enthusiasm has infected me and I'm checking it much more often now.

James, our graphic designer. Most of the polish on the GTA Brews brand is thanks to you. You're constantly wow-ing me with your designs and I'd still be using paint if it wasn't for you.

All the other officers and frequent volunteers, Clayton, Evan, Nicholas, David Laroque, Mark, Matti, Sara, David Green, Matt Duimering, Rob, Emily, all our judges and stewards. You ARE GTA Brews, thanks for all you do.

Last, and certainly not least, my beautiful wife, Rebecca. I'm constantly thankful for your support and forgiveness as I spend way too much time working on GTA Brews stuff. This club wouldn't be what it is today without all the flexibility you've given me.

As many of you know, Rebecca and I are expecting a baby this fall. I'm not planning to step down as President or anything, but I'll need to continue to delegate more effectively. My 2018 goal for GTA Brews is to put some kind of succession plan in place. I'll probably be President for a good while longer, but I expect at some point we'll have elections and an AGM like other clubs. I look forward to the 10th GTA Brews Anniversary Party when I'm standing in the crowd toasting with whomever is President then.

Anyway, thanks for indulging me by listening to this speech. In conclusion, this is one hell of a club! I'm so proud of everything we've built together. On the count of three, let say "Cheers to GTA Brews!"

1..2...3

Cheers to GTA Brews!