



AT THE BAR WITH BOWDITCH

A Legal Blog for the Craft Brewing Community

Craft Brewers Experiment with Community-Supported Farm-Share Model

BY JULIE K. O'NEILL • JUNE 18, 2019

We all know it takes a village to raise children, right? Maybe it also takes a village to brew beer! Or, just possibly, it's a whole lot more fun doing it that way.

Frosty Bottom Brewing in Belfast, Maine, is staking its claim as the first community-supported brewery in Maine. Each member of the company is entitled to two half-gallon growlers a month from the brewery. The beer is brewed by the founder and others who want to join in the fun. Members of the group also often go skiing, camping, hiking and kayaking together as well.

The brewery started when the founder, Roy Curtis, got a brew kit as a Christmas present. His hobby led to the purchase of a larger brewing system 15 years later that he set up in his garage. He and a friend put out the word that they needed people to come help brew beer, and they had 15 people there the first day.

Eventually, the group heard about a 30-gallon brew system being sold by a monastery. Curtis and his friend Aaron Bauman bought the system and started the first "farm share" for beer. The brewery has no bar or tasting room, and you can't buy beer to drink on site.

Not only is the beer made by the group's members, the brewery itself was built by them as well. One member donated most of the wood and did much of the construction; another member milled the wood into boards; and many of the members helped put the walls up. The brewery did have to be licensed as a small craft brewery in order for it to be able to make over 200 gallons of beer a year. Even the licensing and permitting process was a group effort, with Curtis receiving help from many other area brewers on the technical hoops he had to jump through.

Does it take a village? Probably not, but it certainly makes it more fun!