April 28, 2014

Professors Help Create New Beers for Two Roads Brewing Company of Stratford

Geffrey F. Stopper

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/geffrey_stopper/11/
Professors Help Create New Beers for Two Roads Brewing Company of Stratford

Sacred Heart University professors Kirk Bartholomew and Geoffrey Stopper recently teamed up with Two Roads Brewing Company of Stratford to create a new beer called “Urban Funk.” The two professors previously worked with the brewing company on the Sacred Heart University-inspired Via Cordis beer, and they jumped at the opportunity to help create another beer. Bartholomew and Stopper are professors in the Biology Department.

“I was acquainted with their brew-master, Phil Markwoski, prior to the existence of Two Roads,” said Stopper. “When I heard he would be part of the team at Two Roads, we started chatting about ways we might work together for the benefit of the brewery and the University. We’ve since had students intern in the company’s microbiology lab, and one of our recent graduates is now employed there full time.”

“We were looking to create a truly local beer in the literal sense, and set out with this wacky idea of capturing a yeast from the general area and making a beer with it” said Markowski. “Only issue is that we didn’t know how to go about capturing it and that’s when we approached Geff and Kirk”. “Both professors clearly love beer and brewing and are very down-to-earth considering their stature. They have been very open to trying just about anything that relates to making specialty beer and sharing their vast knowledge of the microbiology behind it”, added Markowski.

The process of creating a new beer was no easy task. Both Bartholomew and Stopper had to first capture the strain of yeast that they wanted to use in the new beer. To start, Bartholomew put out a bucket of beer-like culture media to capture the wild microbes found on the wind and allow them to grow. Then he had students isolate the individual species and use the single-species cultures to ferment beer. They then did some preliminary screening to narrow down the ones that had pleasant sensory profiles before taking them to the brewery where they worked side by side with Two Roads to select a single strain of yeast from the ones they sampled.

“Two Roads is filled with incredible, smart and creative people running a highly professional organization that is rapidly expanding,” said Stopper. “I’m excited that the University and our students have had the opportunity to work with such a great organization in achieving some of these goals that are of common interest to the University and the brewery.”