

NABA Convention will be the Biggest Ever!

by Mike Michalik,
NABA Vice President & Convention Chair



The 51st NABA Convention in Pittsburgh from Aug 2-6 will be the best-attended convention we've ever had—beating even last year's record breaker in Milwaukee. Don't miss this incredible event! Here are the many highlights:

Hotel: Doubletree-Greentree, Pittsburgh

Our room night count is over 850 at this writing. This number already is 40% higher than the final tally at the Milwaukee convention hotel and it continues to grow.

Our current room rate of \$105 is still being honored by the hotel, even though we've exceeded our contractual block. We don't know how long they will continue to offer that low rate. The Doubletree has advised that a \$140 rate will eventually be instituted. Please reserve your room if you haven't already done so by going to: <https://group.doubletree.com/7xyuje>.

Home Tours (Tues, 9-4)

Beginning Tuesday morning, we have three home tours on tap that you won't want to miss. These self-guided tours feature an outstanding array of Western Pennsylvania breweriana and

more. First up is the terrific collection of Tracy Wallace. Then, it's on to Jim Mickinak's wonderful "After Hours" home bar for a light lunch and a Rolling Rock or two. The tour concludes at the home of Chip Echnoz. Chip's amazing collection will soon be housed at the new Pittsburgh Brewing Co. facility.

Room-to-Room Trading (Tues-Fri)

Tuesday night marks the start of NABA's second-to-none, room-to-room trading. There will be plenty of early birds with open rooms as over 110 rooms have already been booked on Tuesday. Room trading will be in full swing Tuesday through Friday. Importantly, there are no external convention events on Thursday. Both buyers and sellers can spend the day visiting and transacting with fellow NABA members, a highlight of NABA conventions.

Bus Tour (Wed, 9-4)

Always a convention favorite, our annual bus tour will combine history with current craft breweries and will be centered around a visit to the exciting new Pittsburgh Brewing Company. This state-of-the-art brewery has repurposed a former glass factory



and fills a gargantuan 140,000 square feet with equipment to produce 150,000 barrels a year, with a capacity of five times that. PBC is the official beer sponsor of the NABA convention.

We'll also visit Dancing Gnome Brewery, one of the Steel City's most celebrated new craft breweries. Opened in 2016, Dancing Gnome has quickly become highly regarded for the taste and quality of its hop-forward beers. The old Fort Pitt Brewery building conveniently sits just a few blocks away and the tour will provide an exterior look (and photo op) of this historic art-deco structure.

Our last stop is the Penn Brewery, located in the historic former Eberhard & Ober brewery building. Penn Brewery was a pioneer in craft brewing in Pittsburgh, and offers a fine selection of quality brews, with a specialization in German-style lagers.

The Back Bar Display & Contest: (Tues -Fri)



Lighted sign expert John Bain brings his popular Back Bar Display and Contest on the road to Pittsburgh. NABA members will be treated to this experiential exhibit and event that has become a famed feature at the annual Blue and Gray Show in Herndon, VA.

John will present a display of vintage lighted signs—many of them for sale—in an expansive hotel suite decorated to evoke the 1930s-1940s art-deco era during which these signs were created.

NABA members are invited to enter their lighted signs in the display and can vote for their favorite piece. Winners and prizes will be announced on Friday at 3pm. Members interested in displaying a sign can contact John at the-back-bar@earthlink.net, although only a few slots remain for this high-demand event.

Brewmaster's Dinner (Wed, 6-7:30 PM)

Master Cicerone Brian Reed, who hosted last year's event in Milwaukee, returns this year to present pairings

of the finest local beer with outstanding cuisine. This event offers great value compared to many beer and food-pairing dinners, which can exceed \$100. Brian is one of fewer than 20 Master Cicerones in the world.

Olde Frothingslosh Chapter Hospitality Room (Wed, 7:30-11 PM)

Celebrate with Pittsburgh's local NABA chapter as they commemorate their 50th Anniversary! The party begins after the Brewmaster's Dinner. The club will feature a display of the Olde Frothingslosh Brand along with locally-brewed beer.



Seminars (Thurs., 9:00 AM-Noon)

We have three outstanding presentations:

- **9:00 - 10 AM**
Pittsburgh brewery historian Dick Ober will provide a comprehensive overview of the city's rich brewing history.
- **10:00 - 11:00 AM**
Demonstration of the new website called "Trayman 2.0 Powered by NABA," will be presented by its creators, Mark Rogers & Peter Bayer. Announced at our last convention in Milwaukee, this will be the "official unveiling" of this ambitious project, which aims to capture images and information of every North American beer tray ever made, for the benefit of our hobby.
- **11 AM - Noon**
The final seminar features the collaboration of two breweriana superpowers! Restoration expert David Butler combines forces with NABA's Barry Travis. Watch these two creative geniuses produce a beer-related art project right before your eyes.

First Timer's Happy Hour (Thurs., 4-5 PM)

If Pittsburgh is your very first NABA Convention, we have a special welcome reception for you with a little gift. Please come to meet NABA's Board of Directors for a Q&A and free beer!

Annual Auction (Fri, 9:00 AM-2:00 PM)

Our successful partnership with Morean Auctions continues as NABA's longtime auctioneer, Ricky Schmidt, returns to assist Dan in a revamped format. This

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year's live and online event will be shorter and more focused with about 150 NABA-only lots. The preview

begins at 9am and the auction follows at 10am. **If you have an item valued at \$250 or more to consign, contact auction chairman, Matt Olszewski, at mattski323@gmail.com.** Proceeds benefit NABA's operating funds and allow us to keep dues low.

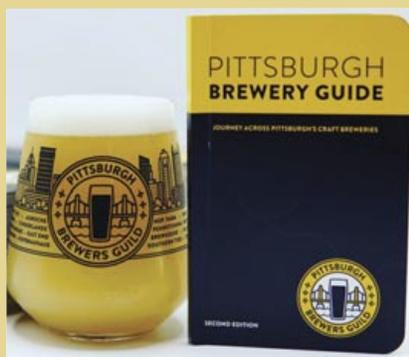
Casino Shuttle (Fri, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM)

Although members will not want to miss our incredible auction, spouses may be seeking another diversion. NABA has arranged for a free shuttle from the hotel to and from the Rivers Casino, which is only 4 miles away.

Craft Beer Tasting (Fri, 4:00 – 5:00 PM)

This has become our annual pre-dinner cocktail party and is a favorite with our members. Socialize while sampling a diverse array of some of Pittsburgh's finest craft brews. The Pittsburgh Brewers Guild, which represents over 40 area breweries, have been extraordinarily helpful in obtaining notable local beers for NABA members to enjoy.

The Pittsburgh Brewers Guild has been an invaluable partner to NABA for this convention. They are offering their high-quality, information-packed Pittsburgh Beer Guide at the reduced price of \$8. To



receive this discount you must order in advance through the convention registration form. The guides are typically sold for \$10. The guide will not only provide users with valuable brewery information, but it also contains the most efficient routes to travel between breweries and rewards for visits. And you can get it stamped at each brewery and redeem for merchandise at our Saturday Trade Show.

NABA Beer: We are collaborating with one of Pittsburgh's preeminent craft brewers, Dancing Gnome, on a special beer to celebrate our 51st Convention. NABA's Creative Director, Barry Travis, designed a label rooted in both a Fort Pitt brand from the 1930s and Dancing Gnome's current label. Four-packs of the 16 oz. cans will be available at the brewery.



Presentation Banquet (Fri, 6:00 – 8:00 PM)

This is one event you won't want to miss—our annual high-quality, buffet-style banquet. During this event, you'll hear the latest news about the club, followed by presentation of awards, and other surprises. Enjoy great food and fun!

Speakeasy Event (Fri, 8:00 – 11:00 PM)



What do we do for an encore to the banquet? We have something amazing planned for this year. We took inspiration from John Bain's Back Bar and created a Speakeasy, where Prohibition-era cocktails will be poured while NABA members are entertained by the live piano playing of special guest Tom Roberts. Tom is one of the world's foremost authorities on old piano styles and his performance of jazz music will create the perfect backdrop in which to enjoy this unique event. In addition, we'll be serving up three special beers that were brewed expressly for this occasion.

Public Trade Show (Sat, 9:00 AM–1:00 PM)

Our convention-ending trade show will be heavily promoted locally and is open and free to the public. We expect hundreds of walk-ins. Tables will sell out, so register early to claim your spot.

There will be no Saturday dinner at the convention this year. This decision was made due to rising food costs and the fact that this event has recently been only lightly attended.