BRATFEST: The Tradition, the Legend

Fall 2009 Graduate Student News

Bratfest is still going strong and the party has gone national (even international!). No matter where you are in the world, you can consult Bratfest.net for all things Fest.
Bratfest XXXI, "Griller," was held in Tucson on Saturday, September 26, 2009. Joe Gotobed graciously hosted the festivities, and Tom Schad and Kat Volk organized the party. Beer, brats, corn, and cheesecakes were enjoyed, and the addition of pies to the Bratfest menu was a success. The party was well attended, and guests were entertained by a Michael Jackson rich playlist, complete with a graduate student rendition of the Thriller dance. If anyone thought the LPL grads couldn’t dance ... well, they might be right, but it was fun!

Meanwhile...BratfEast has partied into its fifth year. Andy Rivkin reports that the BratfEast tradition began in 2005 with Andy, Nancy Chabot, Ron Vervack, and Jennifer Grier. That first "test" party was held at Nancy’s and kept fairly small. BratfEast grew the next year with the addition of more LPL alums: Zibi Turtle, Ralph Lorenz, and Terry Hurford. They started making t-shirts in 2007. The parties usually have an attendance of 40-50 at peak, with 70-80 over the course of the night. There is good attendance from friends and colleagues at APL and Goddard, as well as non-science friends. Andy says, "Our understanding is that our success here in Maryland is what finally shamed Bill Merline et al. into going forward with Bratfest Colorado." This year’s BratfEast was held on October 11. Pictures from the first BratfEast are on Andy’s site, and T-shirts and other gear are sold for cost on Cafe Press.
Indeed, Bratfest's growing popularity meant that by 2008, Bratfest founders Bill Merline of SwRI, Nick Schneider of CU, and Gordy Bjoraker of Goddard were in a particularly difficult spot---two founders in one location and no Fest. Eventually, they had had enough of the shame and embarrassment and initiated Bratfest Colorado.

**Bratfest II CO, "Bratzilla,"** took place on September 19, 2009, at the home of Marc and Joni Buie. A good time was had by all (and we think no one got hurt).

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