**Homemade Homebrewing Gadgets**

by Tony Profera

Editor’s Note: Tony Profera of Charlotte, N.C. won the Great Gator Tail Brewing Gadget Extravaganza at the AHA’s National Homebrewers Conference in Orlando in June. Here he shares some of his simple homemade gadgets—sure to make you say “Why didn’t I think of that?”—to help make the brew day a little easier.

one.

No-Nonsense Bottle Filler

Use to fill bottles from Cornelius style kegs for competition entry, homebrew club meetings, parties, etc. No reason not to enter your kegged homebrews into competition anymore.

**How-to:** Chill bottles first. Set Cornelius style keg of homebrew to 3-5 PSI. This gadget is very simple and inexpensive to make, easy to use, and cleanup is a snap. Simply insert a length of rigid 3/8" white nylon tube into a cobra tap and fill your bottles. Remove tube while filling, then cap on top of foam, just like the breweries do! Bottles filled with this method after six months show no signs of oxidation. Note: Do not force nylon tube too far into the cobra tap head, or it will hold the tap open even after you let go (beer shower to ensue!). Fit should be firm inside the cobra tap head. Changes in pressure can cause the tube to calk off, so you may need a stopper (optional, to differentiate tubing).

**Parts list:**
- 16" x 3/8" rigid nylon tube
- Cornelius keg with your homebrew on CO2 (pressure released to approximately 3-5 PSI)
- Cobra (aka “picnic”) tap connected to keg
- Sanitized 12- or 22-ounce brown glass flip-top bottles (chilled to brew temperature is best)
- Sanitized bottle caps
- Bottle capper
- Stopper (optional, to differentiate tubing)

Editor’s Note: Tony Profera of Charlotte, N.C. won the Great Gator Tail Brewing Gadget Extravaganza at the AHA’s National Homebrewers Conference in Orlando in June. Here he shares some of his simple homemade gadgets—sure to make you say “Why didn’t I think of that?”—to help make the brew day a little easier.
Do you let your carboy sanitizer drip dry like the no-rinse sanitizer manufacturers suggest? This 6" piece of scrap PVC pipe makes it easier, and even works with carboys that have handles installed. I use this simple DIY tool every time I brew.

How-to: Cut a 5- or 6-inch length of scrap 6" sewer pipe. Round the inside edge with a router using a round-over bit, or hand file until smooth (that's what I did). Make several small cuts on the bottom to allow drainage. Note: Do not use the carboy handles to support the weight of a carboy at any time. I was able to find a scrap piece of unused sewer pipe so this gadget cost me nothing to make.

Parts list:
- 6" diameter x 6" long x 1/2" thick PVC pipe
four.

Wallpaper Tray Sanitizer and Storage Box

It's easy to sanitize long items such as spoons, auto siphons and racking canes using a store-bought wallpaper tray, but these trays can be flimsy and prone to spillage and cracking. Fortifying the tray with a wooden homebuilt pine box solves these problems and makes the trays far easier to use and more durable.

How-to: A simple 1”x4” pine scrap enclosure with feet added props the box above any water that gets on the brew table and supports the center of the tray. Cutout handles on the ends make it easy to pick up, move and empty the tray. Cut plexiglass can be added as a cover to keep dust and nasties out between brew sessions. Attach some bungee cord on each end to keep the plexiglass lid in place during storage. Be sure that all equipment is dry prior to storage. Note: I still use a bucket to sanitize hoses.

Parts list:
- 2 1”x 4”x33” fir or pine boards (note: a 1 x 4 board is actually 3 1/2” wide)
- 4 1”x 2”x 6 5/16” wood cross braces (align with indentures on the bottom of the wallpaper tray)
- 33”x7 1/4” plastic wallpaper tray
- 33”x 8”x3/16” plexiglass (as a cover)
- 2 small eyebolts to attach the bungee cord
- 2 lengths 3/8”x18” bungee cord (to hold the plexiglass in place during storage)
- Wood glue
- 1 1/2” nails or wood screws (pre-drill holes to avoid wood splitting)

five.

PET Carbonation Cap

These caps are great to fill 1-, 2- or 3-liter PET bottles for taking your homebrew on the road, or to give beer to friends. There are commercial versions but you can save big when you make them yourself. These are more durable than the commercial versions and at only 20 percent of the cost are an easy DIY project. If you give a friend a bottle of your homebrew with one of these caps and don’t get it back, you are only out about $2!

How-to: Carefully drill a hole into a 1-, 2- or 3-liter plastic bottle cap. Unscrew the tire valve parts and install the tire valve with the seal on the inside of the cap. Tighten until a seal is made with the cap. Fill your sanitized PET soda bottle 3/4 full from your keg. Put one of these caps loosely on the bottle. Squeeze the bottle until all the air is out and the foam starts to come out the cap (this is good). Tighten the cap and pressurize with CO2 expanding the bottle. Use about 14 psig to carbonate. You may need to pressurize the bottle several times as CO2 is absorbed into the beer. If the beer is already carbonated set the pressure to about 7 PSI dependent on the style of beer. Note: The ball valve installed on the standard air chuck hose ensures there will be no loss of CO2 through leakage.

Parts list:
- 2- or 3-liter PET soda bottle cap
- Universal tubeless tire clamp in tire valve (NAPA #90-432)
- CO2 bottles with attached regulator and hose
- 1/4” FTP x 1/4” FTP brass or stainless steel ball valve (this allows the system to reliably shut off ensuring your CO2 tank doesn’t slowly drain)
- 1/4” x 1/4” nipples
- 1/4” MPT tire fill chuck

Tony Profera is a member of the Carolina Brewmasters in Charlotte, N.C.