

THE FOAM RANGERS' BREWSLETTER

(for the lack of a better name suggested by you!)

A Publication of the Foam Rangers'
Homebrew Club



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**DEFALCO'S CLOSSES !!!
FOAM RANGERS DISBAND !!!**

Now that I've prepared you all for some very bad news, I'd like to give you the real not so bad news. Due to yours truly being forced to work mass quantities of overtime, move a house full of furniture, and generally try to put my new home in order for the past month, I will have to put out a shorter than usual Brewsletter this month. I hope to have my act together by the time the next issue is due, so please bear with me and I promise I'll make it up to you.

I'd like to thank Cary Jensen and Mike Bartol for their timely and well written contributions to the Brewsletter, as this helps a great deal with the quality and content of our fine publication. Cary wrote last months article on (gasp!) potato beer which Idaho's own homebrew club, the Ida Quaffers have asked permission to reprint in their newsletter. His work is also featured this month with "Confessions of a Mad Homebrewer", a story about the hassles of moving, especially if you happen to be a homebrewer (gee, why didn't I think of that one?!). Mike has written an informative article on Wheat Beer which will be featured next month since the BOM for July will be Wheat Beers. Thanks again guys, and please keep up the good work!

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The Foam Rangers' Brewsletter is a monthly publication of the Foam Rangers Homebrew Club. Subscription rates are \$12.00 for one year (\$10.00 for students). The opinions expressed herein are those of the editor and staff and do not necessarily reflect those of the Foam Rangers. **MOVING OR CHANGING ADDRESS? Please let us know in writing.**

We welcome letters, opinions, suggestions, articles, etc. from our readers. Correspondence and inquires should be sent to **The Foam Rangers' Brewsletter**, c/o DeFalco's Home Wine & beer Supplies, 5611 Morningside Dr. Houston Tx, 77005 or call (713) 523-8154. Or contact Steve Daniel at 1902 Delloro Ln., League City, Texas, 77573, Phone (713) 332-4747.

SNEAK REVIEW OF THE APRIL MEETING

The Foam Rangers met Friday, April 17 at the Gingerman to sample the BOM, Continental Dark. The crowd was fairly sparse, with about 30 people showing up to partake of the monthly festivities. The first order of business was to hold a special Wazoo-ial election, since the last guy kept with the usual tradition of taking a hike before his term was served. The unfortunate soul selected this time was none other than long time Foam Ranger Don Wilson. There is some hope that Don will actually be able to stick around for a while since he holds a steady job as a pharmacist for a local hospital. But if destiny follows its usual course, he'd better get busy typing up that resume pretty darn quick!

Buck Wyckoff brought along the art work for the pub-crawl T-shirt and as usual he did an outstanding job. It is similar to the latest Foamers club shirt with a cowboy on a horse, but this time they are both in armor and there is a castle in the background. The theme is "Search for the Wholly Ale", pretty good huh?

With the formalities behind us it was time to taste some Continental Dark Beers. The availability of these in the U.S. is somewhat limited by the fact that American importers feel that we brain-dead consumers prefer light colored beer over the dark style. The scant selection of Continental Dark was painfully evident this night at the Gingerman since Sam Miguel was the only brand to be had (Where's the Michelob Classic Dark when we need it?). We also tasted Shiner Bock which is actually closer to a C. D. than a Bock. The Sam Miguel was rich and malty, almost to the point of being dominated by the chocolate grain. It was also a little stale, which didn't help the flavor a bit. The Shiner was as usual, corny with a pinch of malt thrown in for grins, but at least it was fresh. The highlight of the evening was definitely a homemade Continental Dark from Ken Wilson. Everyone agreed it was what this style of beer ought to be and were more than willing to drink all he could pour.

On a personal note I would like to add that I really like meeting and drinking at the Gingerman, but the regular bar crowd is beginning to get so big that it is getting difficult if not impossible to conduct a meeting over the noise of the other patrons. We used to have the whole back patio to ourselves, but with the bar becoming so popular it is now often full on Friday nights. As much as I hate the thought of changing, it may soon be necessary to choose a different arrangement such as holding our meetings on Thursdays again or finding a new and less crowded location. The latter could possibly entail renting a small hall once a month, but we could make up the difference by not having to pay bar prices for the commercial beers we taste and we would also be able to bring in kegs of beer if we so desire. Who's to say we can't pile over to the Gingerman after the meeting is over anyway? Think about it. Any ideas are of course welcome!

PREVIEW OF THE MAY MEETING

The Foam Rangers are scheduled to meet Friday, May 16 at the Gingerman. The meeting will get under way at 8 p.m. (yeah sure).

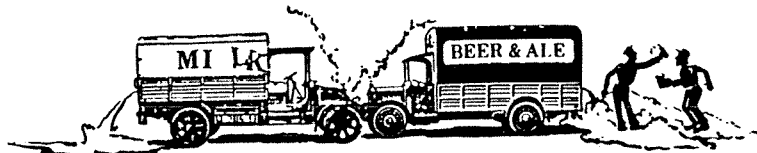
The beer of the month will be Bock and Doppelbock. We are indeed fortunate to have two of the best examples of Doppelbock available on draught from the Gingerman, these being Paulaner Salvator (makes me salivate!) and Spaten Optimator. Both these beers are deep copper colored, intensely malty lagers with a hint of hops and a complex and very smooth finish. Also available will be a good variety of bottled Bocks, most of which will be of the Helles, or light colored variety (heller is the German word for blonde). They are similar in style to Doppelbock but are not as full bodied.

Bocks and Dopplebocks are highly alcoholic since the German beer purity law, also known as the Reinheitsgebot require a minimum starting gravity of 1.064 for Bocks and 1.072 for Dopplebocks. Many such as EKV 28, also known as the Kulminator are even stronger than what is required. This ultra-brau has a starting gravity of way over 1.100 and an alcohol content of more than 13% ! Despite its potency it is medium copper colored and considered by German standards to be a light beer.

All Foam Rangers are encouraged to bring their finest examples of Bock brewing brilliance to the meeting to share with their brethren. If you don't have any Bock, bring anything you can. Foam Rangers aren't terribly choosy when it comes to good homebrew.

GREATER FILLING! LESS TASTE!

While attending the Eastern Homebrewers Alliance conference in New Orleans I was amazed to discover that Lite Beer from Miller is actually an all malt beer! It seems that the folks at Miller use an all malt recipe and use a special enzyme in the mash to reduce carbohydrates and dextrans to fermentable sugars, thereby making a beer that is both light in body and moderately alcoholic. I wouldn't have believed it myself if I hadn't heard it from several of the brew-masters attending the convention. No doubt corn farmers everywhere are loosing sleep over this.



Confessions of a Mad Homebrewer

By
Cary Jensen

Moving is bad enough without being a homebrewer. I learned this lesson the last time I moved, which was about 2 years ago. In fact, that experience was so bad that I vowed never to move again. Unfortunately, I only remembered that I had made this promise to myself as I surveyed the rambling contents of my 'Beer Room', in anticipation for my upcoming change of address.

And so my sad tale begins with a recounting of my previous move which was from a sizable 2-bedroom apartment to a sprawling 3-bedroom house. The awful thing about having all that additional space, though, derives from the fact that nature abhors a vacuum. Once I had transferred the contents of the apartment to the house, necessity insisted that I roam the countryside in search of Garage Sales, Yard Sales, and Moving Sales (events which were not scarce, I might add, given the Houston economy at that time). I must have been quit a sight, I imagine, frothing at the mouth, buying someone else's junk and turning it into my own junk. This ritual continued for about a month and a half after which two events ironically occurred simultaneously. The first was that the house filled up, the second was that I ran out of money.

What about homebrew, you ask? Well, I was just about to reach that part. You see, I love to make beer. I get a real thrill out of trying to make good beer and sharing good beer with my friends. I also enjoy entering my beer into competitions so that I may benefit from the helpful criticisms and comments of the judges. Unfortunately, these last two joys don't necessarily go hand-in-hand. Why, if I served all of my good beer to my appreciating friends, there would be none left to enter into competitions. Right? No, wrong.

Here, therefore, is my confession. When I moved from my apartment to the house, 22 cases of homebrew made the trip with me.

What!! 22 cases of homebrew. My God!, and I had only been brewing for just less than a year. My friends who helped me move were equally appalled. Sure, they were free to drink homebrew, I had chilled down many a bottle the night before in anticipation of their thirst. However, my retentive behavior knew no shame. I also made available several 12-packs of Bud.

"Where's the bottle opener?"

"Gee, I think it's packed in here somewhere. No, wait a minute, maybe it's in this box."

"Oh, never mind. I'll just drink one of these".

A 3-bedroom house is pretty big for two people: my fiancée, Loy, and myself. One room wasn't really being used except for being a large storage room for all the stuff which we hadn't unpacked yet. It was here where we put the beer. And it was here where it stayed. After months of unpacking, this additional bedroom contained few items which were not beer related. Hence the name 'Beer Room'.

The Beer Room was a nice place to be. Beer posters adorned the walls, there were steel shelves bulging with cases of beer lined up along one side of the room. Cases and cases of empty bottles were piled in one corner, awaiting to be refilled at some later date. Brewing equipment of all shapes and sizes were arranged in a pseudo-coherent fashion about the room.

A strange sense of forboding overcame me as I contemplated the Beer Room for my upcoming move. It was then, as I tried to envision where in the new 2-bedroom house would the beer and accompanying supplies fit in, that I remembered my vow.

My friends helped me move again this time. Not the same friends, mind you. The others had learned their lesson the first time.

Bud, Miller, and Coors was provided in great supply (no shame).

Loy and I had a garage sale. The truth is that if you go to enough garage sales you end up having one of your own. I think there is a law somewhere. Maybe it's just a law of nature.

We ended up moving 20 cases of homebrew. Certainly, I figured, I had made great strides in overcoming my pathology. Look at it this way. In one year I had amassed 22 cases of aging homebrew. In two more years I had reduced that amount to 20 cases. If you take the time to extrapolate, you will immediately see that my cure will be complete by the year 2008.

The Beer Room? Well, that is a thing of the past, a fond recollection. All I have to my name now is a Beer Closet (not a very big one either). The beer barely fits in it. The empty bottles are relegated to the attic. The Beer Closet will do, though. I am sure that there are others, less fortunate, who lack even this modest storage facility.

I think that I am getting better, though. I have been making a serious attempt to reduce the contents of the Beer Closet. Invited guests to my house will find a wide selection of cold bottled beer to choose from, and a bottle opener within reach. I have even been throwing away some of the really crummy bottles, not the long necks, but the thin-walled short ones.

The move is over and I survived. However, I vow never to move again. Well, at least not if I have more than 10 cases of homebrew (I guess about the year 1997). And those cases better be vintage barley wines!

And bottles? Every time I think about all of those bottles I moved, I start to feel an uneasy, itching sensation. I seem to be developing a rash. Must be time to start kegging. Boggles the mind, doesn't it.

RANTNGS AND RAVINGS

1. About 8 Foam Rangers were able to attend the Eastern Homebrewers Alliance held April 22-25 in New Orleans. All who attended agree this was an absolutely wonderful time. Complete with talks from the nations best commercial and amateur brewers, all the beer you could drink, brewery tours, and a slew of other events, there was never a dull or a dry moment. According to an anonymous source who has been to most of those other conferences, this one was better than anything put together by the A.H.A. (who?). How could it be better? The scope wasn't just limited to beer. We also attended the Jazz and Heritage Festival where we were treated to every kind of music from Gospel to Blues to Dixie Land Jazz. Along with the great music we feasted on things I never imagined could be so good. These included oyster po-boys, muffolata(?), alligator steak, crawfish pie, sweet potato Pie, herb tea, and dozens of other Cajun delicacies. As if that wasn't enough we also took in the French Quarter with its circus like atmosphere and the never ending supply of drink and interesting people. We even had a pool-side crawfish boil where an incredible 500 pounds of these tasty little mud-bugs were consumed in one night. I was even talked in to sucking crawfish heads by a local fanatic and much to my surprise it was truly delicious (please no cheap jokes at my expense). Thanks to Andy Thomas, Ron Downer, and everyone else who worked so hard to make their convention the complete success it was. You guys truly did an outstanding job.
2. The Dixie Cup has been slated for Saturday, October 17. We will be holding it in DeFalco's parking lot in conjunction with some type of activity at the Gingerman next door. The plan is to rent a tent to hold the contest under and have a spread of German food and an oompah band to go along with the festivities. This should work out better than ever since there will be no shortage of beer with Bobs great selection, and the problem of transporting and refrigerating the entries will be eliminated. We are also currently trying to have Fred Eckhardt attend as a guest speaker. The entry deadline is Wednesday, October 14 at 6 p.m. The entry fee is \$5 for independent brewers and \$4 for members of homebrew clubs. We had 200 entries last year and hope to hit 300 this time around. The response last year was great and we hope to really outdo ourselves this year. Clubs should receive their entry information fairly soon.
3. The Beer of the Month schedule has been changed up a bit to coincide with the Dixie Cup. As you know, the date for the Dixie Cup has been set for the day after our club meeting.

This is so out of towners can attend the Foam Rangers get together the night before if they so desire. We have decided to move the Micro-Brewed Beer tasting to that night so as to provide for a more interesting meeting for the out of towners who will be attending in anticipation of the D.C. to be held the following day.

4. Thought for the month, and last month, and the month before that, and so on: Why don't we consider adopting a set of simple by-laws?! We still have a copy of the Bexar Brewers' by-laws. They are a bit overly-structured for our needs, but some of their ideas might be worth considering. If you're interested, stop by DeFalco's and take a look.
5. In case you haven't noticed, the Foam Rangers' treasury fund has been looking pretty flat lately. We have under \$200 left and it is difficult to plan events without the money to back them. We have well over \$200 in unsold T-shirts alone, so if you can afford it, buy one for you or a friend and help out the club. We will be soliciting suggestions for fund raisers at the next meeting, so put on your thinking cap and try to come up with some money making ideas.
6. Help! We need munchies!! Once upon a time we actually had food at our meetings. We're not asking for anything major, just your basic bread, cheese, chips, dips, or whatever else you have lying around the house that you don't need. Anyone who is interested in forming a munchie committee is welcome to do so. Better yet, why not make it the responsibility of one of the club officers?! Hmmm... Those by-laws are sounding better and better.
7. Those of you who couldn't make it to the pub-crawl can still own an official pub-crawl T-shirt! These are real dandies with beautiful five color art work done by our own Buck Wyckoff. Stop by the shop and take a look and you'll be sold. Need I say more? These and the regular club shirts are no doubt the best looking Foam Ranger shirt ever produced, and no wardrobe will be complete without one. They available at DeFalco's for only \$8 each. They're going fast so you'd better hurry! We also have a few of last years pub crawl t-shirts left in any size you want, as long as it's large. Also a few remaining Dixie-Cup shirts are available for only four bucks!
8. Beer of the Month schedule for the rest of the year:
 - May - Bock and Doppelbock
 - June - Steam Beer
 - July - Wheat Beer
 - August - Light Lager

September - Weird Beer (fruit, spice, Montrose, etc.)
October - Third Annual Houston Microbrewry Tasting Night
November - Oktoberfest (Novemberfest?) Beer
December - Holiday Beer and Strong Beer

9. Please note, the annual dues for this irregular are now \$12 per year (\$10 for students). This includes membership to the Foam Rangers and special perks which are made available to members from time to time. Please check the mailing address on your mailing label. If your subscription has expired PLEASE send us some bucks **ASAP**, otherwise you will be deprived (depraved?) of this epic tome. Use the form on the inside back cover to renew.
10. **MORE THREATS!** We have a number of folks that have allowed their subscriptions to expire (accidentally, I'M SURE...). While I realize that this is probably just an oversight on your part, these things cost about 75 cents each to print and mail. If you want to continue to receive this rag, you'd better fork over quick buddy! **Check the expiration date on your mailing label. If it has been highlighted in yellow this will be your LAST issue of the Brewsletter unless you do fork over.** If you did not get this letter in the mail and should have, or got it after extensive forwarding, send us the form on the inside back cover with your corrected address.
11. If you really like our club t-shirts, think about the possibility of having the logo put on our very own German beer steins. We have just been offered a number of authentic German half liter steins with the Paulaner logo on one side for only \$2.50 each! We could take these and have our own Foam Ranger logo silk screened on the other side for about an extra \$2. This will be considerably less expensive than the \$6-\$8 previously mentioned.
12. We're looking to make you a star! Got a feature story or news item you want printed in the Brewsletter? Type it, or print it neatly, (have it tattooed on your fanny if it pleases you) and drop it off at DeFalco's or mail it to the shop. We would prefer to receive the material by the first of the month in order for it to be printed in that month's Brewsletter. (after all we have a deadline to miss!!!)
13. We are still collecting a \$5 fee for those of you that would like to use the new grain crusher. This is a one-time fee to help us recoup our sizable investment. Otherwise there will be a five cent per pound charge to crush grains for an indefinite period of time.

PRIZE WINNING RECIPES FROM THE
THIRD ANNUAL DIXIE CUP
COMPETITION

This month's award winning recipe is for a Bock brewed by Alan Lee of the Malthoppers. As you can see the judges did not award a first place for this category. I think I have a good explanation as to why this particular beer didn't quite cut the mustard. If you look closely at the recipe you will notice that the beer was brewed with reverse osmosis water. Having done this once myself, I was amazed to discover that when I poured my first bottle the foam went straight to the bottom of the glass where it stubbornly remained. Sure that it was a fluke I quickly opened another bottle only to find that it acted the same as the first! I subsequently determined that the reverse osmosis process reverses more than it ought to! I certainly learned my lesson. It's not nice to fool with mother nature. Though they probably found it quite amusing, I'm sure the judges had to take off points for an otherwise fine beer since it had it's head on backwards. I've often asked myself, "If this beer was poured south of the equator would it be okay? And if so does that mean Australian beers destined for this side of the equator have to be brewed with this type of water in order for them to appear normal up here?". It makes me wonder.

REBOKKED BOCK
(recipe for 5 gallons)

2 cans Munton & Fison light plain syrup
1 lb. crushed crystal malt
1/4 lb. crushed chocolate malt
1/4 lb. crushed roasted barley
2 oz. loose Hallertauer hops
5 gal. reverse osmosis water
2 tsp. gypsum
Weinstephan 308 yeast starter
1 cup corn sugar for priming
Starting Gravity: 1.048
Terminal Gravity: 1.005

As usual there weren't many specifics on how this beer was brewed. I would suggest putting the grain in a muslin or nylon bag and soaking it for a half hour or so in about a gallon of very hot (not boiling) water. Sparge and add the malt and gypsum. The recipe calls for boiling all the hops for one hour. It was fermented at 45° for 1 week in the primary and spent four weeks at the same temperature in the secondary. On a surprising note it was only a month old at the time of tasting.

Gingerman's Ale Garden is at 5607 Morningside, next door to DeFalco's in the Rice Village. Gingerman's is generous enough to let us bring in homebrew. Lots of imported and quality domestic beers are available, so please bring a six-pack of homebrew and buy your commercial brew at Gingerman's. Thanks!

FOAM RANGER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Fri. May 15, 8pm	F/R May meeting (BOM Bocks and Dopplebocks)
Fri. June 19, 8pm	F/R June meeting (BOM Steam Beer)
Fri. July 17, 8pm	F/R July meeting (BOM Wheat Beer)
Fri. August 21, 8pm	F/R August meeting (BOM Light Lager)
Fri. Sept. 18, 8pm	F/R Sept. meeting (BOM Weird Beer)
Fri. October 16, 8pm	F/R October meeting (Micro-Brew Night)
Fri. Nov. 20, 8pm	F/R November meeting (Octoberfest)
Fri. Dec. 18, 8pm	F/R December meeting (X-mas & Strong Beer)

BEER COMPETITION CALENDAR

May 23-24	Escambia Bay Brewers Comp. (Pensacola, FL)
late May-early June	A.H.A. National Competition
Sat. October 17th	4th Annual Dixie Cup Competition

----- chop chop here -----

I WANNA BE A FOAM RANGER!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip: _____

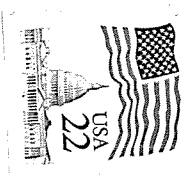
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new membership _____ address change _____ renewal _____

Send this form with a check (payable to DeFalco's) for \$12.00 (\$10.00 for students) to:

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HOUSTON, TEXAS 77005

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THE FOAM RANGERS HOMEBREW CLUB
c/o DEFALCO'S HOME WINE & BEER SUPPLIES
5611 MORNINGSIDE DR.
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77005
(713) 523-8154



TO:

