



# The Newsletter Urquell

May 2002

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE HOUSTON FOAM RANGERS HOMEBREW CLUB

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## AHA Declares May Wear A Mash Tun On Your Head Month

By Steve "Scoop" Moore

Boulder, CO— Abandoning previous efforts such as National Homebrew Day and Teach a Friend to Brew Day, the American Homebrewers Association has declared May to be Wear a Mash Tun on Your Head Month. "This is the new, in your face, X-treme AHA with an attitude! Those older PR campaigns were just preaching to the choir. We've got to be aggressive if we are going to continue to fund The Great and Mighty Charlie's extended intercontinental pub crawls and...you know...help out the homebrewers with whatever money is left over." said AHA director Paul Gatza.

The Charlie to whom he refers is Charlie Papazian, who founded the AHA and its various spin-offs which are collectively known as the Association of Brewers. After resigning as AHA President, he appointed himself "President for Life of the Association of Brewers". Later he also declared himself "Leader of (Stainless) Steel", "Implacable Apostle of Brewing" and "Mac Daddy of Homebrew". Though basically retired, Papazian draws the Association of Brewers' largest salary and spends much of his time on association-funded pub crawls.

According to AHA project coordinator Gary Glass, "Wear a Mash Tun on Your Head Month is the lynchpin of our efforts to reverse declining mem-

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AHA Supporters in front of World Headquarters in Boulder

the American Homebrewers' Association South regional qualifier competition on April 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, National Homebrew Day May 4<sup>th</sup>, and our first Sunday pub visit to the Flying Saucer on May 5<sup>th</sup>.

First, I want to say Bev Blackwood did an outstanding job organizing the AHA contest and with the help of homebrew friends he has made all over Texas and Louisiana, he ran a very smooth judging session. It is hard to believe we even hosted the event because there was no panic, no arm twisting, no whining, ok scratch that part, the Putz did do his share. Bev and the Foam Rangers received tremendous praise for the event, now let us see if the AHA duplicates. Thanks Bev and everyone else who came out to Saint Arnold's to judge and steward. Special thanks to Brock Wagner coming to our rescue and the AHA's. Mark Muckleroy, your brisket was outstanding on Sunday as usual.

We did our part to support homebrewing with this  
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## Out Of The Wazoo

By Jimmy Paige, Grand Wazoo



Well, time for another installment of the Brewsletter. Sean and Steve continue to do an excellent job of beer journalism done the Foam Ranger way. Although Sean or Scott could have probably told me, I did a little research the other day on the Grand Wazoo. I like history and I wanted to see what www.google.com might have on it. All I have to say is whoever came up with the title must have been a long time Frank Zappa fan. Seems one of his albums from 1972 was titled The Grand Wazoo. Does anyone have a copy of this they could bring to the meeting?

May is upon us and it already seems like summer. By the time you read this we will have already had

**May Meeting  
Friday,  
the 17th  
8 P.M**

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If you are desperate enough to want to see your words printed in this rag, articles should be submitted in plaintext format to one or all of the Brewsletter Staff at the email addresses above. Hardcopy submissions can be sent to 8715 Stella Link, Houston, TX 77025

## Meeting Minutes



By Eric Wooten, Scrivener

As a public service of the Foam Rangers, the Scrivening section is this month turned over to civic-minded individuals who wish to express their views on the issues of the day.

**P**oint: *The Foam Rangers are a public menace to be dealt with in the severest possible way.* (by Martin Bell, local exterminator)

The Foam Rangers are a menace. Firstly, there's the water. They use a lot of it to brew beer, or at least that's what I think I heard. Anyone knows that the fluoride in water will rot your teeth and cook your brain such that you'll be even more of a pawn of the Trilateralists than you already are. Secondly, there's the issue of their ties with the aliens. Not only are these guys not keeping their alien alliances a secret, they've made *at least* a couple of T-shirts about it. Thirdly, the group seems to have an unnatural relationship with a certain Fred Eckhardt, apparently their God, or at the very least their Buddha. They further have open plans to engage in necrophilia, apparently with his approval, in the upcoming "Night of the Living Fred." Won't somebody please think of the children?

Adding to their transgressions, the Rangers openly trade with the BJCP (widely believed to be little more than a front for the world-controllers at the AHA and its shadowy leader known only as Papa Zian). If you for one second *believe* that the BJCP is just a beer-judging program, then you've definitely got another thing coming. God only knows what they found under the Temple of Solomon at the end of the Second Crusades, but I doubt it tastes very much like Classic American Pilsner. Several of these Rangers are planning to *pay* the BJCP \$50 to administer one of their "tests" in association with the Dixie Cup (most likely a gathering of suitable subjects for repeated alien "examinations," if you catch my meaning). A "study series" will be scheduled for those wishing to take part in these rather questionable goings on. God help anyone attending *that* for a few months. Speaking of the Dixie cup, the Rangers are holding not-so-secret meetings at Timberwolf, 4pm on Sundays after meetings to better plan their mayhem.

Is this the sort of thing we want happening in Houston? I think not. Join me at next Friday's book burning to strike a blow for freethinkers everywhere by destroying some (or all) of your neopagan Foam Rangers paraphernalia!

**C**ounterpoint: *The Foam Rangers represent a collection of harmless old rummies that need to be dealt with in the severest possible way.* (by Lars Kovar, local homebrew shop proprietor).

Well, now, don't ya know that these fine boys come round here to my store and have their little meetings and whatnot. Now, I'm not a stern man. No sir, I enjoy a good joke just as much as the next guy. More maybe. Well, except for that Larry Grunderlinger. Now he can get a laugh going out at the old Fish Fry on Fridays, let me tell you. Oh my.

Well, anywho, these boys come out to my shop, and never a girl in sight, let me tell you. Yeah. Didn't know that about them guys did ya? Well, so they come around what with their kegs and taps and bottles and bottle openers...why there's one feller in there that must carry 200 bottle openers with him. What kind of a man needs more than one? Two, *maybe*, and that is if he also owns a boat in excess of 16 feet in length, but that's still pushing it in old Lars' book, let me tell you. So they come up in there, and start going on and on about winning the Bluebonnet this and getting Monks Drunk that, as if it's something to be proud of. Turns out that scary gangster rapper, Bev Blackwood, won Best of Show at Crescent City. That fella with all the openers (he goes by 'Kuyler,' but I figure that's got to be some sort of street-alias) along with Joe Lindsey and Mike Heniff took home some ribbons or guns or whatever it is too.

Next thing you know, these guys've drunk two or three hundred beers apiece and things start to turn ugly, let me tell you. Around this time, they always seem to convince otherwise good, upstanding folk to join their shenanigans. Mike Heniff, Sarah Baber, Jaimie Park and Jay Gardner all ruined what were previously productive lives by joining up with this bunch. Now, it's nothing I can't handle, you can be sure of that, but I hate to see good boys go bad.

(Editor's note—Mr. Kovar has since sold the shop back to it's original proprietor—Mr. Scot Birdwell. Mr. Kovar also was recently killed in a traffic accident, see page 10 for coverage.)

### Out Of The Wazoo (Continued from page 1)

event, that is what we are all here for, to do all things homebrew, to brew; to learn, to drink, and yes, sometimes to host contests and judge. It was a great warm-up for the Dixie Cup especially for our newer members. Remember, we were there to judge our own and our friends' entries. We did not use any of our club treasury money on this event. No one got burned out on the contest and everyone had fun. I think everyone did but maybe not Steve.

You know, it is really funny, despite all the griping the Putz made up front, he actually did come to judge on

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**ERRATUM**—In the March issue, the Brewsletter Urquell incorrectly reported that longtime Foam Ranger Karel Chaloupka had terrorized downtown Houston by climbing to the top of a 12 story clock tower and hurling live hamsters at the passers by. The Brewsletter staff regrets the error.

**Visit the Club Web Site—It's Fun And Educational!**  
**www.foamrangers.com**

## Beer Of The Month

By Kuyler Doyle, Secondary Fermenter



**B**ring on the goats! It's May again and that means it's bock month. Where did bock beers originate, you ask? Not in that little Texas town just south of the midway mark between Houston and San Antonio, that's for sure! The original bocks were brewed in the German town called Einbeck in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. As is common in Germany, different regions had their own style of beer. Einbeck's style was a very strong beer to survive travel of long distances. The beer brewed then was possibly more like what we call a Weizenbock than what we think of now when we think of bocks – a rich, malty lager symbolized by the goat. You'll have to be patient for Weizenbocks. I decided to serve them next month alongside the other wheat beers as a means to finish off with some great beers that are less sweet than a traditional wheat beer. So what's up with that goat anyway? There are many different tales as to why the goat is associated with bocks, but the one that makes most sense is because of Einbeck, the birthplace of the beer style. The town name is pronounced "Einbock" and was shortened to simply "bock." The word bock in German is the word for billy goat – hence its use for the symbol.

As far as the different styles of bock are concerned, there are actually several different categories. The traditional bock has a strong malt aroma and rich malt flavor which comes from the use of Munich and Vienna malts. The aroma and flavor of hops is not a part of these beers and bitterness is just enough to leave a hint of sweetness in the finish. The gravity of the "traditional" bocks weigh in at 1.064-1.072. Not a light beer at all. The original bocks also don't make use of corn in their grain bill, but here in Texas it sounded like a good idea to the big brewery down the highway and Texas bocks were born. As versions of traditional bock, we will first sample Ziegenbock as a Texas bock (let's see what them Bud boys are up to). We will also try St. Arnold's spring bock and Saxer bock. To see how other countries interpret the style, we have the Chouffe Bok from the La Chouffe brewery in Belgium. They brew unique spiced beers and it will be interesting to try their spiced interpretation of bock.

Another style of bock that has the same gravity of traditional bock is the Helles bock or Maibock. This style is paler than a traditional bock and was served as a seasonal offering in Einbeck as a welcoming of

spring. Maibocks are also very malty but with more of a flavor of good pale malts instead of Munich and Vienna. The hop character is the same as a traditional bock and should leave a moderately sweet finish. Because of the more pale malt character of the malt, hops may be more evident than in a traditional bock. Many people think of Maibocks as a stronger version of the pale Munich Helles style. Because of this, we will first try the Spaten Premium Lager as a version of this style before trying the Einbecker Mai-Ur Bock. Einbecker is the only remaining brewery left in Einbeck. As a microbrewed version of this style, we will try the Gordon Biersch pale bock. Since these beers are a bit "lighter" I will be starting the beer tasting with this style.

Leave it to the monks to create another fine strong brew. As if a traditional bock wasn't strong enough, the German monks at the St. Francis of Paula monastery really went all out to create a tasty form of "liquid bread" to consume during the Lenten season of fasting. Thus came the "doppelbock" or double bock. Not really double in alcohol, but stronger nonetheless with a gravity range of 1.073-1.120. These beers have an intense malty aroma with an even more rich malt flavor and an alcohol presence. For this style we will sample the Paulaner Salvator, Ayinger Celebrator, a special doppelbock in a fancy bottle brought back from Germany by Paul Gruhn, Lagunitas' Lagunator, Sudwerk's doppel bock, and the 2000 Samichlaus.

The last form of bock to discuss is the Eisbock style. Our good friend *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* can only tolerate so much alcohol. Thus, some German breweries took lessons from the wine industry and decided to brew a strong doppelbock and then bring down the temperature of the beer to a level that formed ice. They would then remove that ice which would leave an even more concentrated form of the beer. This style is hard to come by these days but we have one offering which is somewhere between a doppelbock and an eisbock – EKU 28. This beer is brewed to super strength and lagered for 9 months at freezing temperature which leaves some ice behind in the process. Whether the amount left behind is enough to concentrate the alcohol and flavor significantly is debatable. There is actually a North American version of an eisbock - Kari brought back the Niagara Eisbock back from Canada last summer. However, as we were curious about this

(Continued on page 5)

BOTM Calendar	
January	<del>Porter and Stout</del>
February	<del>Barleywine and Holiday Beer</del>
March	<del>Belgian and Fruit Beer</del>
April	<del>Brown, Old, and Scotch Ale</del>
May	Bock
June	Wheat Beer
July	Pilsner and Kolsch
August	Pale Ale and Bitter
September	Oktoberfest
October	Dixie Cup
November	Amber Ale and IPA
December	Homebrewers' X-mas Party

## The Business Of Beer

### Boston Beer Company Releases New Sam Adams Summer Offering

BOSTON—The Boston Beer Company has introduced its new Summer Seasonal, "Sam Adams Tropical Ale". The beer is flavored with Mango, vanilla and other spices. "The beer is a wonderful mix of tropical flavors, malt and hops" said brewery president Jim Koch at the roll-out of the new product.

### Pete's Brewing Company Releases New Summer Offering

SAN ANTONIO—Pete's Brewing Company has introduced its new Summer Seasonal, "Pete's Wicked Tropical Ale". The beer is flavored with Mango, vanilla and other spices. "The beer is a wonderful mix of tropical flavors, malt and hops" said brewery spokesman Pete Slosberg at the roll-out of the new product.

**Foam Rangers  
Calendar**

**May**

- 4 AHA National Homebrew Day Big Brew Brew-in at St. Arnold Brewing
- 5 1st Sunday Pub Visit
- 12 Brew-In at DeFalco's with Bev Blackwood
- 17 Club Meeting
- 17-19 Sunshine Challenge XIII Orlando, FL
- 25 Big Batch Deadline

**June**

- 2 Big Batch Brew Bash at St. Arnold Brewing
- 9 1st Sunday Pub Visit at Rudyard's
- 15 Brew-In at DeFalco's
- 20-22 AHA National Homebrew Conference, Irving TX (www.beertown.org)
- 21 Club Meeting

**July**

- 13 Brew-In at DeFalco's
- 19 Club Meeting
- 21 Lunar Rendezbrew sponsored by the Bay Area Mashtrons, Seabrook TX

**October**

- 17-19 Dixie Cup

**Please send items that you want listed on the Foam Rangers calendar to:**

editor@foamrangers.com

Or the brewsletter office address!

**Competition Corner**



By Bev Blackwood

Competitions aren't for everyone and I think it's important that we remember that here in the club. When you enter a competition, you're not only putting your money on the table, you're putting your pride on the line. Maybe you didn't spend days getting the recipe for the beer just right. Maybe you didn't carefully control every aspect of your brew day to ensure it came out like you wanted. Regardless of how much care and time you put into that beer, you think it's a good one, good enough to enter in a contest.

It's tough when a scoresheet comes back with a lot of less than kind things to say about your beer. I have an indelible memory of the first beer I ever entered into a competition. I was producing my TV show at the time and was following my Old Ale through the rigors of the KGB's Big Batch Brew Bash. My beer (#65, I think) was being judged by Gary Heyne, a professional brewer, and Steve Daniel, one of the most respected homebrewers to ever come out of the Foam Rangers. The beer fairly leapt out of the bottle when they opened it... Never a good sign and as I quietly taped them judging the beer, Gary uttered the phrase which I will remember the rest of my homebrewing career: "You'll have to lick your armpit to get the taste out of your mouth."

Farewell ego, it was nice knowing you!

As I am sure many of you know, I've done better since then. However I approach every contest as the gamble it is. I enter expecting to win nothing. Sure I have hopes for one or two of the beers, but I know that on any given day the same judges can render completely different verdicts from the day before on the same set of beers. Palates change, perceptions change and every contest throws a whole set of new variables into the equation.

Sheer volume helps. Cross entering a beer into related categories never hurts. I've heard of people blending beers, but I can't see it being worth the effort. There are a great number of things you can do to further your chances, but the bottom line is that your beer has to be clean, carbonated and in the same time zone as the style guideline. Beyond

that, the rest is up to the judges.

I always like to judge American Pale Ale when I don't have an entry in the category. I'd like to think I've had enough Sierra Nevada to know a good match when I taste it. It's always fun though to see just how over the top homebrewers go with the style. I recall judging myself at a more recent Big Batch where the best example of a Sierra Nevada clone lost out to 3 bigger beers in a first round flight. Compared to everything else we tasted, it was weak. The first beer I had after the judging was done was a Sierra Nevada, and I realized too late that we had done that brewer a disservice.

Consider also the memory of the judge. It is rare these days that I am thrown a style I have no example of in my memory. However, that memory might have been based on a flawed example! We've had spectacular tastings at our club meetings, but every now and then we see examples that are past their prime or just plain off. My first Thomas Hardy was exactly that sort of experience... I had no idea how it was supposed to taste, so I assumed there was something wrong with it, since it was like no beer I had ever tasted.

I poured it out.

So if you enter a contest heavily and come away empty handed, chalk it up to a bad day at the races. You should only be entering for the fun and for the feedback, not to build your ego or prove your worth as a brewer. You prove yourself as a brewer not by winning, but by how you win, how you lose and how you share those experiences with your friends.

Sharing your beer never hurt either!

I'd like to encourage everyone to continue to brew during Houston's long hot summer and to start now on beers that we'll need at Dixie Cup. I realize

it's not easy keeping a beer in good shape when the temperatures start cracking ninety and your electricity bills break two hundred! The Dallas clubs will be gunning for us and we also need to have something to enter in the Lunar Rendezbrew this August. At this point we should be focusing on beers that need to mature: lagers, strong ales and the like. As we get closer to the Dixie Cup we will want to brew beers that depend on their fresh character to win, especially in the case of lighter ales and hoppy beers. We're a little too late to really make a difference in Meads, and that is something we need to start working on for next year, as it's a huge hole in our competitive line-up.

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Competition Calendar			
Event	Entry Deadline	Pack 'n' Ship Date	Info
Aurora Brewing Challenge 2002 Edmonton Homebrewers Guild	Friday May 31	Thurs. May 16	<a href="http://www.ehg.ca/COMPS/abc/Abc_main.htm">http://www.ehg.ca/COMPS/abc/Abc_main.htm</a>
Buzz-off BUZZ, Chester Co. PA	Wed. May 29	Thurs. May 16	<a href="http://hbd.org/buzz/BUZZ%20Off.htm">http://hbd.org/buzz/BUZZ%20Off.htm</a>
Big Batch Brew Bash KGB	Sat. May 25	Sat. May 25	<a href="http://www.thekgb.org/4b2k2/index.html">http://www.thekgb.org/4b2k2/index.html</a>

**Competition Corner** (Continued from page 4)

Our last Pack & Ship of the spring season is coming up the Thursday before the meeting. The two competitions are in Philadelphia and Edmonton, Alberta. The **Aurora Challenge** in Canada is a favorite of mine. 2 bottles, \$6.00 and a trip north of the border and you're in as well! The **Buzz-off** is frequently confused with the Buzz Boneyard Brew-off, so don't get mixed up! Here again, 2 bottles, \$5.00 and you're ready to go! Both these competitions are **MCAB qualifiers**, so first place victors will move on to the Masters!

I'd like to salute all of you who won in New Orleans and thank Kuyler for being there to represent the club and pick up our winnings. While we did very well, the local club managed to win back the fabled C-Cup, thus nipping our "sweep" in the bud. However, with 2 to go, I'll take 3 out of 4 any day!

**Michael Heniff** took a 3rd in I.P.A., **Bob and Cathy Orahood** won with their Kolsch, **Kuyler** scored a 1st with his Barleywine over **Joe Lindsey**, who took a 3rd in the same category. **Bob and Cathy** also had a 2nd in Stout finishing ahead of the Waz in 3rd. **The Waz** wasn't done though, nabbing a 3rd in Belgian and French ale along with a 2nd in Herb, Spice and Vegetable. I took 3 1st places, with a Pilsner, an I.P.A. and an American Brown, also picking up a Best of Show for the I.P.A. Hard to believe that we came in 4th for the C-Cup in spite of all those awards!

Summer is here, let's make some more beer!

**Beer Of The Month** (Continued from page 3)

beer, it was served with the Oktoberfest style last year. Sorry if you missed it!

We will have a really good selection of good strong malty bocks to sample this month. There should be some other surprises in addition to those I've listed. So come on out but watch your intake of these or the next day you will feel like you've been kicked in the head by the goat itself!

Homebrew word search puzzle is courtesy of Ms. Caroline Sackett

Words To Find:	C	D	U	B	B	E	L	K	N	T	D	I	U	Y	G
ALTBIER	C	I	G	M	W	Q	N	P	C	W	J	A	I	U	O
APA	R	X	M	O	Y	X	D	G	A	O	Z	K	F	L	Z
BARLEYWINE	E	I	C	J	L	B	I	A	R	P	B	O	L	Q	C
BIGRIG	T	E	R	N	X	R	J	E	E	R	A	L	A	Q	S
BOCK	R	C	E	U	G	G	I	J	O	M	R	S	M	U	H
BROWNALE	O	U	E	I	F	B	U	W	R	E	L	C	B	J	J
CIDER	P	P	B	O	T	K	N	A	B	S	E	H	I	D	C
DIXIECUP	J	I	M	L	R	A	N	R	T	E	Y	D	C	W	R
DUBBEL	J	L	A	O	L	G	E	F	U	L	W	H	E	A	T
ESB	E	S	E	E	E	D	O	W	O	L	I	A	F	N	N
FOAMRANGERS	Y	N	T	R	I	P	E	L	T	E	N	P	Z	Q	N
HELLES	O	E	S	C	O	T	T	I	S	H	E	Q	A	O	C
IPA	I	R	X	C	B	Q	M	D	V	M	T	H	K	N	O
KOLSCH	D	J	V	Q	E	H	H	Q	C	V	X	G	A	U	Y
LAMBIC															
MEAD															
PILSNER															
PORTER															
SCOTTISH															
STEAMBEER															
STOUT															
TRIPEL															
WAZOO															
WHEAT															

**2001 Dixie Cup Award Winning Recipes**

**2nd Place (Doppel) Bock By Dean Domec**

Recipe for 10 Gallons  
 14 lb Belgian Pilsner  
 10 lb German Light Munich  
 5 lb German Dark Munich  
 1.75 lb Belgian CaraMunich  
 .5 lb Belgian Biscuit  
 2 oz British Chocolate  
 90 Min @ 153  
 60 min boil  
 13.6 AAU Tettnanger for 60 min  
 1 oz Tettnanger for 10 min  
 2 qt starter of Wyeast 2206  
 4 weeks @ 46F  
 1.082 OG 1.023 FG

**This Month In Foam Ranger History**



By Sean Lamb

**10 Years Ago...**

**In The Brewsletter-** Not much original material- many recipes from the 1991 Dixie Cup, a final call for sign-up for the Bayou Rendezvous from Andy Thomas, and some Rantings and Ravings.

**The Club Meeting-** Hosted by Tim Case and Donna Milton. Tim gave tours of his garage brewery and Donna served brisket. BOM was Pale Ale—Sierra Nevad, Anchor, Santa Fe, Sam Smith's, Young's Ram Rod, Fuller's ESB, Young's Special London, Bass, Bateman's Victory Ale and XXXB.

**Other Events-** The Bayous Rendevous was held in Jennings on the 30th. The Foam Rangers were triumphant in the contests, Doug Lindley from the Crescent City HB'ers brought some "Chalmet Pils" and Lee Anthony from the Rangers brought Bock. Blackened Voodoo and a huge crawfish dinner were also consumed. Jennings Mayor Greg Marcantal told a joke and invited everyone for dinner at the Boudin King restaurant.

**5 Years Ago...**

**In The Brewsletter-** Grand Wazoo Steve Moore recounts the history of Foam Rangers, telling of the founding by Adolphus Birdwell in 1765. 2ndary Steve Capo explains Bocks, suggests that the club "get our collective penises together and beat the bushes for new members"; and gives his list of top 10 least-loved Dopples, including "Expectorator" and "Castrator". The "What's on Tap" section listed the beers available from the 9 brewpubs in Harris and Galveston counties and from St. Arnold. Highlights: cask conditioned IPA at the Houston Brewery, IPA at Two Rows and Maibock at the the Village Brewery

**The Club Meeting-** The meeting was held at DeFalco's on Robinhood. BOM was Bock. Larry Mayhew brought a beer that everyone agreed didn't suck.

**Other Events-** There was a Spring bash held at The Bank Draft during which Grand Wazoo Steve Moore sat in the dunking booth filled with "used" beer. The "Jennings Thing" happened on May 17th. Ranger Tom Irven won the Big Batch Brew Bash, Dave Cayo took 3rd place and Steve Moore and Honorable Mention. Leroy Gibbins took 3rd place in the 1st round of the AHA Nationals.

# Foam Ranger Picture Page



Alison and Scott have brewed up something special! A little ESB! The Foam Rangers welcome Emma Sarah Birdwell!



Wayne contemplates what Aloha! really means...



I tell you what, Aloha doesn't mean what Wayne thinks it means..



I'm so excited.



As the man in the funny hat reaches to shake her hand, Sara wonders what she has gotten herself into

# Foam Ranger Picture Page



Big Brew Day At St. Arnold Brewing

# A Brew-man's Holiday In London

## A Brewsletter Geographic Special

By Bev Blackwood

Three days, Fifty-four single malts, Nine real-ale pubs and One brewpub... A brew-man's holiday in London...

Before you assume all I did was drink my whole trip to London, let me assure you there were some other sights and activities strung between a few of the pub visits! I arrived in London at midday Friday, April 19th aboard British Airways 216, a 747-400 that had a paltry 40 people on it between Houston and Washington Dulles, but filled up at the Dulles stop. Even so, I had the luxury of an empty seat next to me, which made snoozing at least a possibility. First plug of the story: Bose noise canceling headset... What a great thing this was! It reduced the roar of the 747 to a muted rumble and made sleeping a much easier task. I'm never traveling without them again (Couple them with an Apple iPod and you have a intercontinental jukebox to amuse yourself with.) Clearing customs, I hit the cash machine and headed for the Tube. I wended my way to Tottenham Court Underground and upon emerging cast about for my hotel, which was adjacent to the British Museum.

Naturally, I went the wrong way at first... After checking in, I started searching for something to occupy the next few hours (I was supposed to meet the group conducting the scotch tasting at 9:00 p.m.) and ended up looking up a few pubs in the Covent Garden area. Setting off on foot, I first bought a new London map, and then dropped into a few Whisky shops to peruse the shelves for any new offerings.

Wandering down to Covent Garden, I found my first pub, the Marquess of Anglesey. Here I had a Young's Triple A, a beer made with "A" grade hops, "A" grade barley and "A" grade... something... water maybe? Stopping briefly at the Covent Garden Whisky Shop, I then proceeded to the Prince of Wales pub over on Drury Lane and had a Steak and Ale pie with potatoes and limp, tepid vegetables. British cuisine at its most bland and badly cooked... I truly felt at home. I had an Abbott Ale with my late lunch. It tasted remarkably like the first beer I had... and pretty much like every one after it, for that matter! Wandering through Covent Garden, I browsed a few shops and eventually dropped into a Tesco to grab myself some bottled water for later.

I then found the Lamb and Flag, where my drink of choice was Young's Special Bitter...it was also the choice of the business executives I ended up socializing with. We had several pints together and discussed life and cities and all manner of topics. Funny thing about beer... it bridges cultural boundaries and lets you relate to all kinds of people. Taking my leave, I headed back to my hotel, enjoying my walk through the streets of London. However, here I made a critical error... I decided to sit down and watch some TV in the room... Jet lag (and all those hops) finally caught up with me and I was out like a light... When I awoke, it was 11:00 p.m. and I had missed my meeting... Oh well... I made my preparations for the next day's scotch tasting and then went to bed for good.

The morning of the scotch tasting I got up extra early and had breakfast in my room. (After all, one can't go trying 50 odd single malt whiskies on an empty stomach!) I then got my suit on and assembled my video equipment and took a cab to the hotel where the event was being held. The hotel was dramatic and VERY high class. It was so high class it inclined you to speak in hushed tones in the lobby. The event was held in a very elegant room and the 40 - odd guests who were in attendance were seated at long tables facing the tasting panel's seats. We each had 10 glasses arranged in front of us along with bottles of High-

land spring water, and various little "goodies" and information packets arrayed before us. Once the tasting started, we were served 10 samples at a time and had the option of pouring a portion of our serving into a special bottle that we could keep as a souvenir of the occasion. I elected to taste about 1/3rd and pour about 2/3rd which meant I ended up with about 3/4 of a bottle. The resulting bottle is one of only 40 that exist in the whole world and is a distinctive blend of Macallan vintages that is unlikely to ever be replicated again. Talk about a collector's item! The event went pretty smoothly and I took a few moments at the end of the event to interview Michael Jackson, (not the singer) who is widely regarded as the world's leading journalist on beer and single malt scotch. After the tasting we were (surprisingly) sober and had a very enjoyable lunch. I packed my equipment, jumped into a cab and headed back to my own hotel, pretty darn tired given that the whole morning had involved sitting around and tasting whisky. (Ok, so I was also videotaping with a pair of cameras as well...)

That afternoon, I changed into my tourist clothes and headed out into the city again. First stop was Milroy's, a scotch haven I always visit when I am in London. I picked up a bottling of Port Ellen and dropped it off at the hotel before heading down to the Thames to check out the pubs near this most famous of rivers. I walked down Charing Cross road to Trafalgar square and took a left to the River. This was my first chance to have a look at the London Eye, a 450 foot behemoth of a Ferris wheel. It's quite distinctive, to say the least. I walked the riverbank down to Blackfriars Bridge and crossed the river to visit The Kings Arms near Waterloo station.

Located in a long row of homes, this pub very much typified the "local" pub one imagines when thinking of London. My beer here was an Adnams Broadside. Heading back towards Waterloo station, I crossed beneath the rail line to see the London Eye. It's quite an engineering feat and was quite busy. I inquired about tickets for the next day and mentally noted my plan to return in the morning if the weather was nice. Heading back to Westminster Bridge, I paused to listen to Big Ben strike seven p.m. I just love London!

Wandering into the quiet streets near Parliament, I was greeted with several failures in trying to find open pubs. Apparently nobody sticks around this part of town after dark. I finally ate some dinner at Adam & Eve, a non-CAMRA pub, but with good real ales on tap anyway. I seem to recall this beer being a Bombardier. Leaving there full of fish & chips, I made my way back up to Whitehall via Saint James Park and the Mall. I stopped in at Lord Moon of the Mall, where my beer of choice was a Shepherd Neame Spitfire. Leaving there, I boarded the Underground for the short ride back to Tottenham Court station and my hotel.

Despite my best intentions to be at the London Eye when it opened at 9:30 a.m., I ended up getting there about 10:30. Thankfully, most of the rest of London was still fuzzy eyed and waking up as well. Arriving via Underground at Waterloo, I was interested to note that the Eurostar trains depart from Waterloo and they go to Brussels and Paris, making a run to Belgian beer destinations a simple matter! Heading over to the Eye, I got a ticket for 11:00 a.m., meaning my wait in line was very short and I was soon starting the slow journey into the sky high over the River Thames and all of London.

It was a bright day with scattered high clouds, so the view was spectacular. About 15 people ride in each "pod" so you end up taking turns at the North end that overlooks the "touristy" part of town. The great circular truss that is the Eye, is suspended over



the river itself, with the hub supported on one side, held in place with massive tension cables. If you spend too much time thinking about it, you might end up worrying about ending up on the bottom of the Thames instead of enjoying the view. (Never mind the whole glass bubble way up in the air thing...) It was great fun slowly rising up from the river and then sinking back to the surface... the whole trip takes about a half hour. One unnerving thing is boarding while the pod is in motion...over the river, no less! (Sure, they have some nets, but it's a bit scary...)

Heading back to Westminster bridge, I did the proper tourist thing and took several photos of the Eye gleaming in the sun. Walking back up the Embankment, I decided to head out to Parson's Green (a good way out of town towards Wimbledon) for lunch. Unfortunately, they were working on the District line that Sunday, so I had to change trains a couple of times to get there, but eventually I found my way to this charming pub. I had the Ploughman's lunch and a Highgate Mild, the darkest beer I had the whole time I was in the U.K. They were quite busy, as everyone was out enjoying the day. I headed back into London, this time exiting at Blackfriars and crossing the Thames to see the Tate's Modern Gallery, housed within a converted power station. It's a very dramatic space and has only been open a short time. I browsed the collections, enjoying the whimsy and stark contrasts of modern art. They have a great room of Rothko paintings that reminds me of Houston's own Rothko chapel, only done in deep reds and greys.

Retiring to the riverside, I visited a busy modern pub called the Founders Arms where my beer of choice was Young's Special, which I enjoyed while gazing across the Thames at the dome of

St. Paul's. I then crossed the new Millennium footbridge to the far bank and walked the banks to Charing Cross and headed inland to the Covent Garden Whisky shop to pick up a bottle of their direct-fill cask whisky and confirm how I might order a bottle of the new Rum-casked Springbank whose release I missed by a week. Bottle in hand, I browsed the Covent Garden shops a bit before heading down some side streets in search of another pub. While searching, I stumbled across a branch of the Porterhouse brew-pub (from Dublin originally) and sampled their range of beers while having some dinner. Their beers were surprisingly diverse and were a welcome change from the consistent character of the Bitters I had been having. After dinner, I sought out the pub I had originally intended to visit, Marquis of Granby, where I had a "mystery" beer simply called "California" which seemed to be pretty hoppy and was quite refreshing. Returning to the Covent Garden Tesco, I stocked up on

water to properly hydrate for my morning flight out and walked back through the streets to my hotel to pack. My precious bottles safely stowed, I woke early the next morning and boarded the Tube back out to Heathrow, where I briefly perused the whisky selections at duty free, deciding against adding to my collection, fearing that Virginia's import laws would be even more draconian than Texas. The plane ride back was uneventful, letting me catch a few showings of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's stone and a bit of Ocean's Eleven (the remake) before we got to Virginia. Customs at Dulles was a joke... We shuffled through Customs and right back onto the transporter that took us off the plane. We then sat around the terminal for about an hour before they flew us back to Houston.

(Continued on page 10)

**Out Of The Wazoo** (Continued from page 2)

both days. I recall when Steve walked into the brewery, there was a sudden silence, a gasp almost, as the participants took in the Putz. Was he there to go "postal" with his Uzi 9mm or to get down to the nitty gritty judging? Somehow I talked him into judging American Lagers of all things. Steve gets the DT's when he does not have his hourly fix of American hops.

What was even funnier, was the following Sunday when Sean Lamb arrived and he said "ok, what do you have for me to judge?" Bev and I, who were judging "freak" beers (specialty, experimental and historical) both said in unison, "Herb, Spice and Vegetable Beers!" Sean laughed and said "yeah RIGHT!" This WAS the only category left to judge and it was ironic Sean got this one. He then graciously accepted and proceeded to go through the flight of 12 beers with the Putz. Ask them about the special nettle beer.

Despite all the revulsion Sean and Scoop have for all things AHA, when it comes to judging I can think of no better pair to have on your judging panel. They proved they will judge anything if necessary. We finished the contest early and even got to spend time after at the Texas Brewers Festival.

National Homebrew Day was fun. We had tremendous participation and attendance. It really shows the Houston homebrew community is alive and well. The food was great as was all the help provided by Saint Arnold's head brewer, James Cunningham. He got there early and stayed until the end. Without his help we would have been at a great loss. Thanks to Ian at Two Rows for the 1056 yeast.

Our next hurdle is the Sunshine Challenge. This is the third leg in the Gulf Coast Homebrew Circuit and we had a fairly good amount of entries. Bev will attend for the club.

Our next local homebrew event is the fast approaching KGB Big Batch Brew-Off where the king of barleywines will be determined. Details for the contest are listed later in this newsletter. The entry deadline is May 25<sup>th</sup> and the contest is June 2<sup>nd</sup> at Saint Arnold's.

Mike Wiley of the Mashtronauts informed me the Lunar Rendezbrew contest would be held earlier this year, on July 21<sup>st</sup>. We will be participating in the Lunar Challenge keg contest again. Our Secondary, Kuyler, won this event last year with his killer APA. Is a repeat going to happen? We will be pairing up experienced brewers with new or novice brewers as teams for this keg event. We will select our club winner at our July 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. The Lunar Rendezbrew is always a fun contest.

Our next "first Sunday" event will be at Rudyard's pub on June 9<sup>th</sup>. We had to move the date back one week due to the KGB's Big Batch contest. Barleywine judging and a pub visit would be, although an adventure, just too risky since most of us have to work the next day.

The Dixie Cup planning is moving right along. Kuyler is the point man this year. If you have ideas, or want to volunteer, see him. The theme this year is "NIGHT OF THE LIVING FRED", based loosely on the whole horror thing of the B cult movie Night of the Living Dead. Special beer category is Monster Mash, a big beer, og 1.070 minimum, made with your favorite Halloween candy. Joe Lindsey has already made the give away beer, an 1.130 og and insanely hopped barleywine called "Brain Death". It is sure to be a collector's item once Jeff Reilly puts on the bottle labels. Our contest is October 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup>.

Our meetings have been fantastic. The Widger's and Mark Muckleroy have boosted morale with all their great food. Kuyler and Kari have been a tour de force with all sorts of beer, and attendance is up with a lot more new members including

those of the female type. Please invite your friends or any others interested in joining our cause.

Lastly, congratulations to Alison and Scott Birdwell on the arrival of their new ESB, that is **Emma Sarah Birdwell**. Until next meeting, keep on brewing and learning and have a great May. JP

**Mashtun On Your Head** (Continued from page 1)

bership and provide the best services to the homebrewing community that we can after taking care of the Exalted Brewing Warrior, of course". AOB Finance Director Tom Clark noted that "While AHA membership and revenues have been declining since the mid-1990's, Our Puissant and Gypsum Loving Leader's appetite for worldwide pub crawling has not declined". The resulting financial crunch has resulted in the AHA's recent price increases.

The Wear a Mash Tun on Your Head Month initiative has already generated controversy. It has its supporters, such as former Foam Rangers Grand Wazoo Bev Blackwood II who enthused, "Wahoo! I'm gonna wear a Mash Tun on my head because that's what Charlie Papazian Wants"! Others think it may have had tragic consequences. Houston Police Officer and Foam Ranger Troy Stearns is investigating the traffic accident that claimed the life of local homebrew shop owner, Lars Kovar. Stearns noted that, "The Mash Tun on Kovar's head was, in my opinion, the primary cause of the accident; if it had not been for the brewing apparatus obscuring his vision, I do not believe he would have driven into the bridge abutment".

**Holiday** (Continued from page 9)

Sadly, the Old Dominion brewpub there had their most bland beers on offer, so I took a pass on that and had a free Ben and Jerry's ice cream cone in honor of Earth Day. Flying back to Houston, I took full advantage of my iPod and headset, jamming my way across the Eastern U.S. The 45 remaining passengers filed off the jet in Houston, and it looked like the return flight was going to be packed again... not! A short rush-hour drive home and I was back, safe and sound, with my liquid treasures and pub-crawling memories intact!

**2001 Dixie Cup Award Winning Recipes****1st Place (Traditional) Bock By Dan Humphrey**

Recipe for 5 Gallons  
 12 lbs German Pilsner  
 2 lb Munich  
 .5 lb Crystal 30L  
 .5 lb Crystal 60L  
 3 oz Chocolate  
 1 lb Carapils  
 15 minutes @ 125, 60 minutes @ 152  
 90 minute boil  
 10 grams Hallertaur (4.0) 90 min  
 10 grams Perle (6.6) 60 min  
 14 grams Perle (6.6) 30 min  
 18 grams Hallertaur (4.0) 15 min  
 1 pint Wyeast 1007  
 1.078 OG 1.020 FG  
 2 weeks @ 50F 6 weeks @ 32F

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## Brewer Assistance Programme

**Need help brewing? Contact one of the following folks. Use some common sense and please respect their stated time restrictions!**

Kehn Bacon 281.420.5096 Before 11:00 PM

Joe Lindsey 409.925.4664 (H) 409.763.2386 (W)

Ron Solis 281-324-7157 Before 9:30 PM

Jimmy Paige Phone 281-894-0307, pager 713-603-2512, call before taps (10pm)

Bev Blackwood 713.432.1248 (H) 713.972-4832 (M) Before 11:00PM

Steve Moore 713.923.2412 Before 11:00 PM

Jim Youngmeyer 713.667.0455 (H) 713.267.5108 (W) Before 9:30 PM

DeFalco's 713.668.9440 During business hours

# THE HOUSTON FOAM RANGERS H O M E B R E W C L U B

Brewsletter Office  
8715 Stella Link Rd.  
Houston, TX 77025-3401



**May club meeting is  
Friday the 17th at DeFalco's  
WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!**

**Sara Baber**

**Bruce Ross**

**Steven Walker**

## I Want To Be Somebody!

Sign Me up To Become a Member of the Houston Foam Rangers Homebrew Club!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Amount Paid \_\_\_\_\_

New Membership  Renewal  Change of Address

**Membership Fees** (per year) \$20 Individual/ \$30 family

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Paid between January 1 and March 31..... \$20.00/\$30.00

Paid Between April 1 and June 30..... \$17.50/\$26.25

Paid Between July 1 and Sept. 30..... \$15.00/\$22.50

Paid Between October 1 and November 30..... \$20.00/\$30.00 (Includes the next year!!)

Please make your checks payable to **The Foam Rangers**

Bring this form to the next club meeting, drop it off in person at DeFalco's, or send it to:

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