



THE FOAM RANGERS Newsletter Urquell

Spring Edition - a bit early!

Volume 23, Number 3 - March 2004

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March meeting
is
March 12th
at DeFalco's

This is the
Second
Friday!!!

Out (of) the Wazoo



By
Mike Heniff,
Grand Wazoo

For those of you that have managed to survive 50+ Stouts and Porters in January, and Barleywines in February, there are still more big beers to come in March - BELGIANS! I can hear the collect cry of all the Foam Ranger livers already! Secondary Steve Moore has done a great job so far, I can't wait to see what he drags up this month. Thanks to all of those that have brought back all of the great out of town beer and continue to think of the Foam Rangers in your out of town travels.

Thanks to those that brought homebrewed beer to the last two meetings; that's what we're all about. If you have some homebrew, bring some and share it! If you have a keg of beer (even if it's not the style of the month) - bring it! If it isn't so good and you want an honest opinion, still bring it and if you let me know and we can assemble an expert judging panel to help you out. I will be bringing a keg of Belgian Strong Golden to the meeting (but be careful it is deceptively strong!).

Thanks to those that supported me in my brew-in in front of DeFalco's last month especially Cliff Peery who helped the whole time and Andrew Sheridan who brought a bunch of beer at the end. It was about 45 degrees with a 20 mile per hour wind and looked like it would rain any second. But, 6 hours later the yeast was pitched to make a Belgian Strong Dark. It

certainly won't be ready by the March meeting so that's where the keg of Strong Golden comes into play (although I'm sure plenty of bottles of the Strong Dark will show up during the summer months!). For the benefit of our newer members, the Foam Rangers host a brew-in each month outside of DeFalco's on the second Saturday of the month. If you want to see an all-grain batch brewed, have questions, or want to bring your set-up and brew along - just drop by! If you want to host a brew-in, there are a few dates left late in the year; your ingredients are paid for by the club but you are obligated to bring it to a meeting.

We are right in the peak competition season right now (see Bev's column for more info). Most of the MCAB qualifiers are packed in the first few months as well as the first leg of the Gulf Coast Circuit. We already have a ton of Foam Ranger awards rolling in, watch the Newsletter columns and Foam Ranger mail lists to see them as soon as the results get posted. It looked like we had a ton of entries for Bluebonnet (I'm guessing 150). Bev's SUV was loaded down so much I bet he bottomed-out a few times. It's all a waiting game at this time to see if we get to bring their stein back to our home. Speaking of Bluebonnet, Joe Lindsey is heading up the wagon trail up to Dallas. It is a great time, even if you don't have any entries up there. There is a banquet with Mark and Tess Szamatulski of CloneBrews fame followed by a commercial beer tasting with just about everything that we can get in Texas, and a monumental room crawl. Saturday has a small talk from Mark and Tess, followed by one flight of second round judging, and a decent pub

The Brewsletter Urquell

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Notice: Sorry for the lack of great brewing tech articles and reports from our travelling writers in far off places, but I have lots of excuses!

1. Early deadline!
2. I am going to England in a few days.
3. Did I mention the early deadline!

I promise to make up to you all next month..... Ed



By
**George
"Stu" West,
Scrivener**

Barleywines and holiday ales, now that's what I call a meeting. Another impressive selection of fine consumables provided by the secondary and filling munchies courtesy of Cliff, what else can anyone ask for? I have no idea, and by the fourth or fifth sample of the good stuff I really didn't care. I remember taking notes on the beer list during the substantive portion of the meeting (look...substantive and meeting in the same sentence!), but sometime between Hog Heaven and oblivion I lost the damn thing. Maybe we ran out of TP, perhaps someone smoked it on the sidewalk, but a search the next day turned up nothing. I am sure there were speeches on competitions and first Sunday meet-

ings. I am also certain someone welcomed the new members and pleaded for people to pay dues, but beyond the ordinary I remember very little. My only solace remains the fact most of the other people I asked can't seem to remember much about what anyone said either. So to be fair I guess I should try to fill in the gaps. Maybe I imagined Bev crazed with newfound power running through the shop grunting something about having "the precious" and shaking Scott's keys in front of everyone. But I can't bring myself to pick on Bev too much this month, after all I also seem to remember him driving a beer laden mini SUV scraping tarmac on its way to Dallas. Perhaps I also imagined someone raffling off the register and the shop's dumpster, and maybe, just maybe those cartoon characters spinning around my head weren't really there. Such was the Barleywine and Holiday Ales meeting.

Competition Corner

By **Bev Blackwood**

Last month I was entering for the Club, hopefully this month, it's for Jimmy and Mike. The three of us have a friendly wager. Jimmy has put up some beer of his, A J.W. Lees Harvest Ale I think, against my last bottle of Rodenbach lexander that this will be the year I move into the ranks of Bluebonnet Stein owners. (Not sure what beers Mike & I are betting with, but they're good ones...) For some reason Bluebonnet "blue" has always eluded me, but this year, I have put forth an effort that might change that.

Why have I always come close at luebonnet but never won the big stein? I attribute it to many things... First, the past few years my beers haven't exactly been fresh. In fact, for the most part they have been Dixie Cup leftovers. I typically brew "big" beers over the holidays, but they are never ready in time for luebonnet, at least not the current year's... A second factor is the size vs. awards issue. The Dixie Cup awards 126 medals into about 1000 entries. Thus 12% of the beers entered in Dixie Cup win a medal. (Although if you take our 3 year average of 900 beers, that jumps to 14%) At Bluebonnet, the numbers really don't change too dramatically, but it can make a difference! They award 87 medals into about 850 beers, so only 10% of the beers take home a medal. Of course, just playing the numbers game guarantees nothing, but if beers are clean

and close to style, then they at least stand a chance. Third, there's the time factor... I really think this is the big one. Even with my driving our entries to the drop-off, we still leave our beers in their hands for a full month! Naturally, they handle them with great care, but there is plenty of time for things to go wrong in the bottle, even without mishandling. Last, there's the judging issue. Every contest has good panels and bad panels, I recall one Dixie Cup where one of my beers got judged by a panel *I* talked into judging when they were reluctant to do so because they had, well let's just say judged too many rounds already. When I got my scoresheets back, one of my best beers was basically trashed by them! Ever since then, I've realized that no matter which competition you're at, you're rolling the dice when it comes to quality judging. However, one thing shines through, the bigger the competition, the harder it is to get 100% good panels and Bluebonnet is no exception, being one of the biggest every year. However, it doesn't help that the entire first round of Bluebonnet takes place over the two weekends before the main event, leaving them with mostly local judges to make that crucial first cut.

So how do you fight the odds? Volume, volume, volume! Multi-beer strategies like cross-entering and shot-gunning can spread entries over the whole BJCP range. Of course, some entries you can't cross-enter, like most Herb, Spice & Vegetable entries or Fruit beers. On the other hand, we can learn good lessons from our local brewers... Take Saint Arnold's Oktoberfest, despite its name and the brewery's intent, it makes a hell of a Scotch



**Belgians
By The Duchess
of Drink**

Editors Note: Because Secondary Fermenter Steve Moore can never make a deadline, we are using guest writers for the BOM article until we think of something better to do.

Hello everyone. It is I. the Duchess of Drink. You probably remember me from my column in the Soused Worst Spewing Brews. It is a humor column! Boy howdy is it humorous! It is a column so humorous that there are no other humor columns in the newspaper! So what we are going to do here is that I'm going to provide answers to letters from my readers that are chock-full of The Funny. Then will be the big Hoo-Ha! You'll be slapping your knees and busting your guts! So let's get right to the hilarity.

Dear Duchess,

What's the deal on Belgian Ales?
Confused

Dear Con,

Belgium, despite its small size, produces the most varied array of traditional beers of any brewing nation. Ingredients and methods that have fallen out of favor in other lands still remain in use in Belgium. The Duchess lacks the space to cover some Belgian styles such as Biere de Garde and Saison; the unique specialty

ales are far too numerous to mention. However, here is a survey of some of the more popular varieties.

The most unusual of the Belgian Beers is Lambic, produced only in the Senne valley from barley and unmalted wheat. These beers are spontaneously fermented by the ambient yeast and other microflora resulting in a sour beverage. Lambic brewers age their wares, sometimes for years, and blend different vintages to achieve a more consistent product. Frequently lambics are flavored with fruit such as cherries (kriek), raspberries (framboise), peach (peche) or blackcurrent (cassis). Blended unflavored lambic is known as gueuze.

Somewhat related are the brown and red ales of Flanders. While not spontaneously fermented, they pick up acid producing microflora from wooden brewing vessels. These may also be flavored with fruit.

Belgium is also known for its Trappist ales such as Chimay and Orval which are brewed by monks of the Cisterian order. Closely related are the abbey beers, which are of a similar nature, but produced in secular breweries. These beers tend to be of above average strength (with the exception of Singles, which are table beers that are generally consumed only at the monastery) and partake of estery and spicy flavors that are characteristic of the various ale yeasts. Hops are not used in great abundance and the beers tend to be sweet. While Trappist

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**Beer of the Month
Calendar**

January 16th, 2004
Porter & Stout

February 20th, 2004
Barleywine & Holiday

March 12th, 2004
Belgian & Fruit Beers

April 16th, 2004
Brown, Old & Scotch

May 21st, 2004
Bock

June 18th, 2004
Wheat Beers

July 16th, 2004
Pilsner & Kolsch

August 20th, 2004
Pale Ale & Bitter

September 17th, 2004
Oktoberfest / Marzen

October 15th - 16th,
2004
Dixie Cup XXI

November 19th, 2004
India Pale Ale

December 14th
Homebrewer's Xmas Party

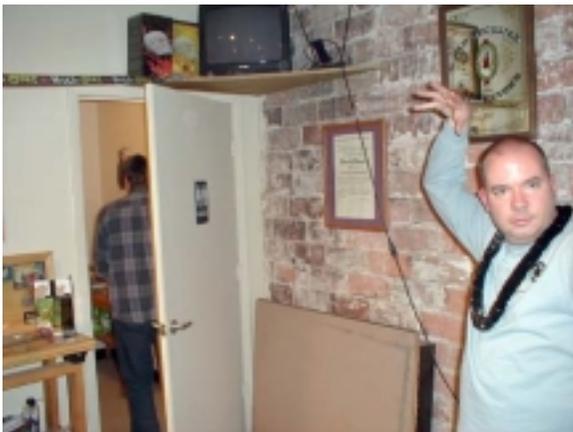
Febrewary Meeting Pix



Frigid



Smile



Looney



Stuffed



Proud



Personality



Lads



Blitzed



Old



Work



50



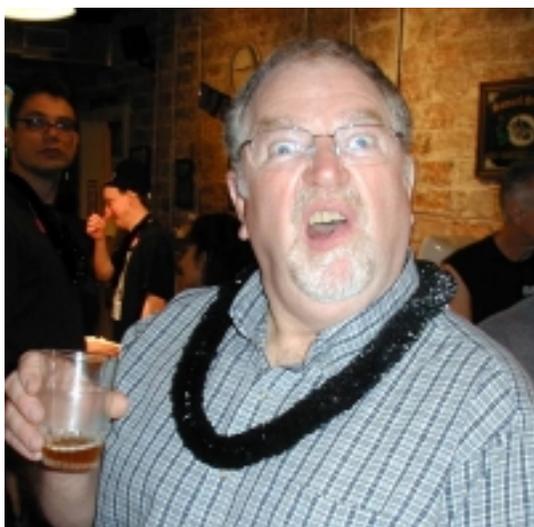
Friends



Happy



Mmmmm



Wierd



Barleiwyne...!

Foam Ranger Events



March

March 7

First Sunday
Onion Creek 4pm

March 12

March meeting
DeFalco's

March 13

Brew-in by Andrew S.
DeFalco's

March 19-20

Bluebonnet Brew-off
Irving, TX

March 25

Pack/Ship-Crescent City
DeFalco's



April

April 4

First Sunday
Flying Saucer 4pm

April 10

Brew-in by Russ/Brad
DeFalco's

April 16

Monthly Meeting 8pm
DeFalco's

April 14-17

Crescent City
Competition
New Orleans, LA

April 22

Pack/ship Sunshine Ch.
DeFalco's

April 24-25

AHA South Regional
St. Arnold's Brewery

Waz...cont from page 1

crawl, then the awards ceremony and raffle. For the room crawl, a dozen or so of local and not-so-local clubs sponsor a room, decorate, and most importantly have an endless supply of homebrew kegs. The Foam Rangers will have a room and we need beer! We will need at least six kegs to fill up our tap table. Let me or Joe Lindsey know - Joe can transport your keg up there as well. Oh yeah, the date is March 19-20, more info is at www.bluebonnetbrewoff.com.

Also, upcoming is the AHA South Regional. Once again the Foam Rangers are running the event (more specifically, Bev is running the event). Bev probably has more info in his column but in general entries are due by the April Foam Ranger meeting and judging is on April 24-25 at Saint Arnold's. Be sure to show up and help judge or steward!

Mark your calendars: National Homebrew Day is on May 1st. We plan to do a big brew-in at Saint Arnold Brewery. More details to be coming soon! Also, the date is set for the KGB Big Batch Brew Bash (aka BBBB): June 6th. The single style this year is category 18 - Strong Belgians. The award for the Best of Show winner - Brewer for a Day at Saint Arnold Brewery. A keg of Saint Arnold beer goes to the club with the most second round entries. Start brewing now so that strong Belgian will be in peak condition by June!

Foam Ranger stuff for sale! We have finely aged t-shirts available right now: 1999 MCAB "Beer is my obsession and I'm late for therapy" (grey), Dixie Cup 17 - The Dixie Cup Sells Out (green), Dixie Cup 18 - La Copa Dixie (yellow), Dixie Cup 19 - Night of the Living Fred (black), all for \$8 each but sizes are limited. We still have a few of the more recent t-shirts "We Drink More barleywine by 9 AM than Most People Drink All Day" (olive) and Dixie Cup XX - The Dixie Cup Gets Lei'd (white) for \$13 each and the Foam Ranger Polo (navy) for \$25 each. We have Foam Ranger badges on order - they will be \$10 each and we are designing a Foam Ranger taster glass that should make its debut around June.



**by Sean
Lamb,
Closet
Historian**

5 Years ago

In The Brewsletter - Grand Wazoo Wayne Smith recounts the 1st MCAB, and floats Steve Moore's idea for the "1st Sunday" pub get-together. Scrivener Jimmy Paige puts in thorough but dry recounting of the meeting. 2ndary Vallhonnrratttt goes "E-E-E-W-W!" and refuses to write about Belgian Ales.

At The Meeting - Held at DeFalcos on Robinhood. Louis Bonham appeared and thanked the Rangers for helping make the MCAB a success.

Other Events - Bluebonnet winners: 14 ribbons out of 58 entries, 3rd Place English Style Pale Ale: James Paige - 3rd Place American Style Pale Ale: Randy Veazey - 3rd Place Stout: Sly Bastards - 1st Place German Dark Lager: Dave Cato - 3rd German Style Wheat Beer Dave Cato - 3rd Fruit and Vegetable Beer Wayne A. Smith - Leroy Gibbins, 1st and 3rd in Fruit and Vegetable Mead.

10 Years ago

In The Brewsletter - Grand Wazoo Sean Lamb encourages everyone to enjoy their own rites of Spring. 2ndary Autumn Woods-Moore delves into Bocks. Bonnie Roberts reports on the goings-on at the February meeting. Rich Fortnum contributes an article about malt extraction.

At The Meeting - The March meeting was supposed to be at the Odd Fellows lodge. The Grand Wazoo forgot to set the meeting up and the club repaired to the near-by home of "Nasty" Norm Malone. Beers of the Month were Rolling Rock Bock, Augsburger Bock, Samuel Adams Double Bock, Paulaner Salvator, Spaten Premium Bock, and Wurzurger Mai Bock.

Other Events - The Foam Rangers eat it at the Blue Bonnet - only 3 ribbons out of 51 entries sent. The Bluebonnet had over 500 total entries.

15 Years ago

In The Brewsletter - Editor Buck Wyckoff
cont on p7...

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Ale. Enter beers where they fit! Nowhere is it written that you have to enter a beer in the category you originally brewed it for! That's the cross-entry mantra: Where else will it fit?

Does it always work? No. A good example of a given style should (in theory) be sufficiently different from a good example of another style that the difference is obvious and the cross-entry would make a barely adequate entry in the category and vice-versa. However, the vagaries of judging and the interpretation of BJCP guidelines by the judges will often propel a beer that's only close to style into the ranks of the winners.

Shotgunning is spreading the same beer into adjacent sub-categories. If it's a good ESB, chances are it's a slightly small English Pale Ale or a somewhat big Ordinary Bitter as well! Who cares if it's the same beer? You're increasing the chances you'll win by doing two things... You're bettering the chances it will be judged by more than one panel (at larger competitions) thus increasing the chances someone will like it and pass it to the second round. Of course, shotgunning involves two sacrifices... One of beer and another of money. Six bottles to enter versus three and one more entry fee. One nice thing about this strategy is that some of the BJCP sub-categories are so close to one another that it's almost impossible to tell the difference between them!

So there you have it. How to take a measly 20 entries and turn them into 36! We will know later this month just how it has worked out. (And what beers I am going to end up owing Jimmy and Mike!)

Congratulations go out to Rob Kolacny for a pair of third place winners (English Bitter & I.P.A.) at QUAFF's competition in San Diego, to Bev Blackwood for a second with his Wee Heavy and a third in Herb, Spice & Vegetable. Wazoo Mike Heniff brought back a first in Fruit Beer and second in Experimental. Homebrew & Austin.. what more do you need? Apparently not BJCP or AHA certification... In conjunction with the May 15th Texas Brewers Festival there, the Austin Zealots will be holding their first homebrew competition and it's based solely on... Does it taste good? I'll be providing more details about the event in a future Brewsletter, but if you hate brewing "to style" this is the event for YOU!

Upcoming Pack & Ships to be ready for are for Crescent City on March 25th, the week after Bluebonnet. We would like to keep the C-Cup on the shelf next to the Bluebonnet trophy we're going to be bringing back! Of course it's hoped that everyone will plan to attend on April 17th in New Orleans. Their crawfish boil is legendary and I can attest to the quality of the food! The New Orleans club could really use our help with all aspects of the event, so be watching for e-mails about what we can do for them. Remember that the AHA Regionals are coming up in April and the KGB's Big Batch in June! Keep brewing, keep entering, keep winning! Thanks to everyone who helps the Foam Rangers in competitions!

cont from page 3

(and Abbey) ales are quite idiosyncratic, some breweries produce Dubbels which are strong (6-8% abv) brown ales and Trippels which are stronger still (7-10% abv) and pale in color.

Strong Golden Ales are a relatively recent innovation. When the Mortgat brewery turned their dark beer into golden version, they inspired many imitators. Duvel (which is Flemish for Devil) inspired Judas, Satan, Lucifer and others. These ales are 7-10% abv and generally less estery and spicy than the Trippels.

We were fortunate to have, at least for a brief time, a classic Belgian beer brewed in Texas. In the mid '60s Pierre Celis, revived the Belgian style of wheat beer known as Wit at his Hoegaarden brewery. Following some bad luck, his brewery was purchased by the large brewing conglomerate Interbrew. Later, Pierre and his daughter founded the Celis brewery in Austin, but success eluded them, in spite of the fine quality of the beer. The brewery was eventually sold to the Miller Brewing Company and closed. The equipment and assets were purchased by the Michigan Brewing Company and beers with Celis name returned to the shelved last year. Witbier is brewed with barley malt and unmalted wheat and is flavored with spices, usually bitter orange peel and coriander.

cont from page 6

relates what he likes about the club. Wazoo Brad Kraus inaugurates the club brew-in. Buck covers the state of changes to state law regarding homebrew competitions. Dr. Strangebrew delves into the affects of temperature on fermentation and flavor.

At The Meeting - Held on the Feast of St. Patrick at Scott and Janet Birdwell's house. BOTM was Newcastle Brown Ale, Young's Pale Ale (draft in the 2 liter plastic bottles) McEwans Scottish Ale, Fullers ESB, Bate-man's XXXB, Victory Dark Ale and Chimay.

Other Events - None noted.

20 Years ago

In The Brewsletter - Um, I misplaced it.

At The Meeting - Held DeFalco's on Morningside. There was a club-only competition in 9 categories that attracted 42 entries.

Other Events - None noted.

Brewers Assistance Program

Need help brewing?

Contact one of the following Foam Ranger members:

Bev Blackwood
713.432.1248 (H)
713.927.4832 (C)
Before 11:00 p.m.

Kuyler Doyle
713.523.8379 (H)
832.566.1197 (C)
Before 10:00 p.m.

Mike Heniff
281.489.3762 (H)
281.474.1537 (W)
Before 9:00 p.m.

Joe Lindsey
409.925.4664 (H)
409.763.2366 (W)
Joe Never Sleeps

Jimmy Paige
281.894.0307 (H)
832.576.6191 (C)
Before 10:00 p.m.

Ron Solis
281.324.7157 (H)
Before 9:30 p.m.

Jim Youngmeyer
713.667.0455 (H)
713.267.5108 (W)
Before 9:30 p.m.

Please respect their stated time preferences when calling!

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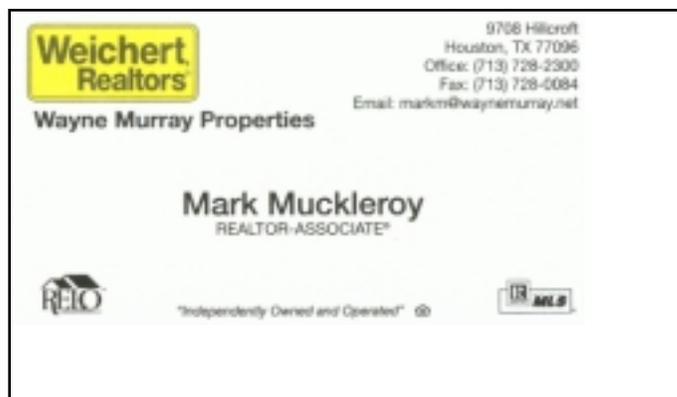
Monthly Meeting
March 12th
@ DeFalco's

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Paid between July 1 & September 30 \$15.00 / \$22.50

Paid between October 1 & November 30 \$20.00 / \$30.00 (Includes the next year!)

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