



# The Foam Rangers Brewletter Urquell

All the beer that's fit to drink

March- Volume 30 Pints- Issue 3



**March Meeting:  
Belgian Beer Friday**

**March 26th**



**Ready to Camp?**



**Defalco's 8:00 p.m.**

**The Brewsletter Urquell**

**The Official Foam Rangers  
Zine**

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**By Grand  
Wazoo**

# Out (of) The Wazoo

With the global economy in the toilet and everyone stressed out its good to be able to concentrate on the one thing that keeps me comfortably numb...great beer and the

Foamrangers - the greatest homebrew club in the country! Seems like there are beer related events every weekend and ample opportunity to drink good beer of late so why worry! In March we had a brew-in hosted by Joe Perjak on the 14th which neither rain nor cold could undermine, the Bluebonnet Brew-Off in Fort Worth is on the 20th and 21st, and our own meeting is on the 27th.

A week later the Texas Homebrewers Campout is set for the weekend of April 3rd. At that point I think my liver mwill probably explode so I am

looking for willing donors now (I can supply a bath tub full of ice).

Note we changed the April 1st Sunday meeting to the 3rd Sunday because of the Campout and then Easter (man is scheduling getting complicated). Anyway, my point is we have plenty of opportunity to drink good beer with good people and for that I am truly grateful. Peace and beer!

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the Foam Rangers  
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# Ramblings from the Secondary

It's March, and that means Belgian and fruit beers! There are many things we can say about both Belgian and fruit beers, but there only are a couple certainties about either. First, nearly everyone either loves 'em or hates 'em. Second, the varietal rainbow of styles and interpretations for either sort is as broad as one can find in Beerdom. When it comes to fruit beers, that rainbow is complicated by base style, type of fruit, and strength of fruit character. One day, you may be handed a dry stout with subtle notes of woody cherries. The next day, you may be handed an American wheat that is so full of raspberry syrup, it makes your head spin. The day after that, you may have some brew that grew up with chilis in the secondary. The mix-and-match possibilities are endless, allowing both the novice and skilled brewers to experiment. Sometimes, those experiments result in beer that might cross your eyes. However, the skilled (or lucky) brewer can hit that sweet spot and create a thing of true beauty. The true artist shines most brightly when given the broadest palate and canvas with which to work.

The range of Belgian beers is no less staggering. Within a geographic area barely one-ninth the size of Texas and with less than half the population, one finds the Trappist beers, Lambic beers and other sours, witbiers, and any number of "pale" and "dark" ales. Within the marketplace, Belgian beers are the darlings of the American beer world, much like French wines once were to American oenophiles. Indeed, the BJCP recognizes fourteen substyles of Belgian beers to reflect much of what one might find when travelling the small nation.

What ties all these styles together? What makes a beer "Belgian"? Well, that is something like describing what makes a person "American." The common ground is not some phenolic, lactic, or *Brettanomyces* character. While many Belgian beers include one or more of those, very few have it "in common," so to speak. One would not argue that a Witbier and Flanders Red were Belgian

simply because they both included some degree of phenolic spiciness. Likewise, Belgian beers are not "Belgian" simply because they have some sort of uncomplimentary funk working within, despite the common euphemistic usage of "Belgian" among homebrewers who have a batch go south on them. No, Belgian beers are not about the product. They are about the process. They are about craftsmanship and a willingness to give oneself up to nature.

Belgian brewers, whether monks or some Flemish fellow in a garage, strive for a balance between controlling and relinquishing that control. Belgian brewers did not try to control conditions to fit the beer they wanted as much as they developed beers that worked well under the conditions that existed. Certainly, one can (and should) say the same about the other old and great brewing cultures in the world, but Belgian beers just seem less engineered than others. While Trappist monks may be picking out yeast cells underneath the microscope's lens, they also understand and even relish the fact that a force beyond their own handiwork transforms their wort into beer, and they give their beers over to that force. Lambic brewers go even further by just opening the windows and letting Mother Nature have her way with whatever lies within the open fermenter. The Belgian brewing culture feels a deep bond with the world around it, and that shows in the final beer.

That bond is precisely what so intrigues and fascinates homebrewers with Belgian beers. Because Belgian beers are so influenced by the very spot upon which they are brewed, a homebrewer simply cannot recreate that beer on this side of the pond. Still, many of us try, and many do well, but we all know there never will be anything like the beer that inspired us in the first place. Frankly, I believe that many of us prefer it that way. We want beer that carries its home with it. Certainly, we want our beer to carry our home brewery's soul. We appreciate that magic, we revel in it, and we dread a world without it.



# Scrivener

## The G-lover

Either you're one of five people even remotely involved with the FoamRangers that didn't show up to Barleywine Night, or you're one of the hundred or so who did and celebrated the night for all it was worth. Now you want to know what happened and so to the scrivener page you come. Well ha! Jokes on you, yes I was sober enough to remember what happened but I was only kinda there. It may surprise some readers to find out I was brewing. Yes, it turns out this isn't just an Anti-Alcoholics Anonymous for Drunks in Public but, is a club founded on the principles of brewing beer yourself. My last brew in seven people showed up, four worked there, two were glad to see me and one forgot to try to avoid me. Is it really because I don't use hops? I determined then the next time I brew, people were coming dammit. Record attendance for my brew-in where I brewed a true to form froach (frooo-ach), a heather ale, without hops of course, that will be premiering in April's meeting.

So what did in fact happen at the meeting. I only have my perspective which was of being driven outside to a brew pot and being forced to brew like a monkey dancing for change. In the first 10 minutes I stepped on a nail while filling a bucket for cleaning and dropping my phone in the water. Hooray, maybe all my mistakes were taken care of early!

After a while King Storge made his weekly proclamations while demanding fealty, I'm sure he changed some time honored tradition like changing 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday to 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday or began conscripting members into competing. I don't know, I was outside begging my brewpot for warmth. Probably the Bastards ran a raffle and you jeered like howler monkeys. Weird I know, it's almost like I actually WAS there.

Sometime thereafter a hoarde of new and prospective members came outside to see

what I was doing. Many mid and long term members were quick to point out I was a freak and the club at large was in fact huge fans of hops. I laid my spiel out anyways. That's when I noticed that the beer I brewed at my last, poorly attended, brew-in was down to it's last six pack. It was my saspirilla soda beer that went to 11...percent ABV that is. One member actually told me it was nice but had no place at a barleywine meeting, really only the mead makers caught wind of subtle taste of the happy juice known as ethanol. I offered the beer with the slogan, "All I promise is different." Guys, I thought the deal was the club pays for brew-in ingredients, I make a 'hopeless hopless' catastrophe and bring it to the meeting and ya'll don't actually drink it, netting a batch of free beer for me. Ya'll wiped me out and I am right now siphoning the next batch into the secondary fermenter. I'm ashamed of you!

Speaking of mead makers I had the wonderful opportunity to talk with Benny at great length. Did you know he's studied ninjitsu? Yep, there's nothing quite as inconspicuous as a crazy, bone thin white bearded giant with a pipe. Actually I never would expect to get my ass mystically kicked by a crazed physicist so yeah, I guess ninjas 1 me 0.

The proprietor, founder and unfortunate role model for the club, Scott Da'Birdman was nice enough to lure some of the club who know's cara-pils from corn syrup outside for some of the finer tastings. A '96 Old Crustacean, '92 Hardy's aged so long the hops fermented out. All in all it was actually a nice sublime night for me. Also the next two meetings are mine to get drunk at and my wife to drive so if you come to compliment my article, or ask for more saspirilla soda beer good luck getting a coherent response.

### Beer of the Month Calendar

January  
Porter & Stout

February  
Barleywine & Holiday Beer

March  
Belgian Ales & Lambics

April  
Brown, Old, Scotch, Irish

May  
Bocks, Dark Lagers, Dunkel

June  
Wheat, Wit, Fruit & Rye

July  
Light Lagers & Ales

August  
Pale Ale, Bitter & Steam

September  
Octoberfest & Smoked

October  
Dixie Cup

November  
I.P.A. & Ambers

December  
Homebrewer's Xmas Party

# **Register now for the 3rd Annual Backwoods Beer Campout.**



**After a year off the Campout is back. Get your tents, sleeping bags and your best beer. It's time to get your drink on under the stars.**

**Friday April 3rd through Sunday April 5th.**

**Go to our website for info and to register:**

**<http://www.texashomebrewerscampout.com/>**

**Make sure you bring the following:**

- 1. Camping equipment, to sleep, cook, bug repellent, lantern etc.**
- 2. Beer! Homebrew/ commercial to share. Those choice things in your cellar that you have been squirriling away.**
- 3. Food, We will be doing potlucks Friday and Sat. Friday a one pot dish or a side, and Sat. something to grill or have as a group. Also bring stuff for breakfast lunch etc.**
- 4. Other things, chairs, ice for all of the beer. Games like horse-shoes etc**

**Don't forget the Beer Olympics, be ready to compete!**



**Brew in with Joe Perjak**

**Cheers!**



**First Sunday at the Petrol Station**



**At Southern Star Brewery**

Can you find Mike Heniff?



This just in!! Sierra products at Kroger ???

(continued on page 5)

**The Foam Rangers Homebrew Club  
Newsletter office  
8715 Stella Link  
Houston, TX 77025**



**The March club meeting is:  
8 p.m. Friday,  
March 27th  
at Defalco's**

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**I WANT TO BE SOMEBODY!  
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THE FOAM RANGERS HOMEBREW CLUB!**

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Paid between December 1 & December 31st      \$30.00 / \$40.00 (Pay early and save)

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Paid between April 1 & June 30      \$30.00 / \$40.00

**Paid between July 1 & September 30      \$25.00 / \$35.00**

Paid between October 1 & November 30      \$35.00 / \$45.00 (Includes next year)

**Please make checks payable to: Foam Rangers**

Bring this form (and your payment) to the next club meeting, drop it off at DeFalco's or send it to:

The Foam Rangers, 8715 Stella Link, Houston, TX 77025-3401