



THE FOAM RANGERS Newsletter Urquell

But Seriously...

March 2011 - Volume 31 Pints - Issue 3

In this Issue:

Sunday, Beery Sunday	2
The March Of Time Goes On	3
Waiting On Winners	4
Belgium Stinks?	5
Surprisingly Tame!	6-7
Take A Flying Leap...	8-9
Mead Goes Acoustic	10-11
Join Our Posse!	12

March

Meeting:

Friday,

March 18th

7:00 p.m.

at DeFalco's

It's No Joke! These Bills Need Our Support!

By George Stuart West,
Was Waz

Alright Foamies, if you really want choices in this state then get off your La-z-boys (in the case of Bev I am talking about an actual lazy boy he is rumored to keep in his basement) [A basement in Houston? Right... -Ed.] and do something about it. Texas brewers are attempting to pass two important pieces of legislation. The first, House Bill 602 would allow microbreweries like St. Arnolds, which is sponsoring the initiative, to "give" a case of its bottled beer to people that pay a higher price for a tour. It stands a good chance of passing, but its scope is somewhat limited as you can imagine - still, support it by writing your representative. The second initiative HB 2436 just filed by representative



Out (of) The Wazoo

By Kyle Jones,
Grand Wazoo

Making mead the easy way with staggered nutrient additions (SNA)

I vividly recall my first batch of mead. I mixed local honey, water, a bit of yeast nutrient, aerated, then pitched my yeast. Thus began a long, arduous journey towards my first mead. Fermentation proceeded, albeit excruciatingly slowly. Days turned into weeks, weeks turned into months. I make the mistake of leaving it in a plastic bucket for about 6 months, which resulted in some oxidation. I transferred to



Eddie Rodriguez on March 7th takes Brock's bill a step further and simplifies the whole idea by allowing microbreweries making less than 75,000 barrels a year to sell up to 5,000 barrels directly to consumers for both onsite or off-premises consumption without having to jump through other hoops. The third, House Bill 660 would allow Texas brewpubs to 1. sell beer to distributors and (Continued on page 9)

a glass carboy, and I waited some more. I finally decided it was done and bottled it. I don't remember specifics, but a sack, semi-sweet mead was born, and it's not too bad. Some of you tried it at the February meeting. But if I was to continue making mead, I was going to have to figure out a better way to do it.

Fast forward to the 2010 National Homebrew Conference in Minneapolis. I was there to give a talk on food and beer pairing, and while I was there I attended some excellent talks on mead. The BJCP reception was a mead tasting where about 50 "doctorants" had been placed around the room, ranging from acid blend to grains of paradise and oak. It was very informative, but the real learning had only just begun. Later in the week, some of the best mead makers in the world presented a session (Continued on Page 8)

The Brewsletter Urquell
Official Organ of the
Foam Rangers Homebrew Club.

Grand Wazoo:
Kyle "Apolitical" Jones
wazoo@foamrangers.com

Secondary Fermenter:
Jaime "Eau de Doak" Robles
secondary@foamrangers.com

Scrivener:
Peter "Shorty" Lott
scrivener@foamrangers.com

Purser:
Sharon "Tax Season" Hayes
purser@foamrangers.com

Competition Coordinator:
Bev "Just Win" Blackwood II
competitions@foamrangers.com

Bozo Head of Special Events:
Scott "The Negotiator" Birdwell
stupidtoad@foamrangers.com

Was Waz:
Doak "Tambourine Man" Procter
waswaz@foamrangers.com

**Brewsletter Staff and
Other Slaves:**

Editor:
Bev "Bitchy" Blackwood
editor@foamrangers.com

Food God:
Erik "Slider" Ribeiro

Extra Articles By:
George Stuart West
Buck Wyckoff

Webmaster:
Beto Zuniga
webmaster@foamrangers.com

Mail Guru and Unix Geek:
David Cato
otac@crunchyfrog.net

The Brewsletter Urquell is published by the Foam Rangers Homebrew Club, 8715 Stella Link, Houston, Texas 77025

©2011 Foam Rangers
All articles may be reprinted without permission, provided proper credit is given to both the author and the Foam Rangers and a case of really good homebrew is sent in tribute.

Thanks to our officers for getting their materials (however brief) in on time! I opted out of "funny" this month in favor of the HB660 / 606 / 2436 article. A big thanks to Stuart! It's critical we let our legislators know the bills are important to us and to the state, get writing! There's so much going on this month in terms of competitions, deadlines and events, you need a scorecard to keep up! The Foam Rangers should be represented at just about everything, so get out there & socialize!

Notes & Scenes From The Saucer



By Peter Lott, Scrivener

The officers meeting mostly centered around speakers for the Dixie Cup and how much DeFalco's employees enjoyed the Pizza supplied by the Foam Rangers.

Arrangements with

St. Arnold were under way as to when we would supply pizza for them.

The Pub Crawl has been set for August 13. Storge, Kyle and Jaime are working out the details.

[There may have been a club meeting in February, but the barleywine seems to have claimed it. -Ed.]



They want HOW much for a glass of Old Rasputin?

I tried 600 different beers and all I got was a t-shirt...



Ladies, Sean is watching!



**Officers meeting:
Our excuse to start drinking an hour earlier.**



"At mile 64, I stepped on a dead possum. At mile 68..."



Hey Peter, isn't that the slice we dropped on the floor?



This Month in Foam Ranger History

By Sean Lamb, Club Historian (Sorta)

25 Years Ago:

At the Meeting:

Held at the Gingerman. "The highlight of the meeting was an excellent historical background of Texas brewing by Mervin "Brad" Kraus, our illustrious Secondary Fermenter." A blind tasting of Texas beers accompanied. Ascending Rankings: Draft Budweiser, Shiner Premium, Pearl, Lone Star, Shiner Bock and Collin County Pure Gold.

Other Events:

A "St. Paddy's Day Brew-in/Bar-B-Que Blow-out" was held.

20 Years Ago:

In the Brewsletter:

Grand Wazoo Lou Carrannante declares "the first Foam Ranger Darts night a minor success". John Donaldson gives an hour-by-hour travelogue of his "Trip to Cowtown" for the Bluebonnet Brew-off. "9:30-10:15 PM (Saturday) Try to maintain my composure while we packed up full box of steins and ribbons. Reluctantly agree to buy a T-shirt."

At the Meeting:

Held at the "Palace of the Grand Wazoo" Lou Carrannante. The meeting included a tour of the Muck and Meier Brewery. The Beer of the Month was Bock, with Monkshoff's Klofterbock, Eku Edelbock, North Coast Brewing Traditional Bock, Einbecker Ur Bock, and, of course Shiner Bock.

Other Events:

Darts Night was held at Cecil's Saturday March 23.

15 Years Ago:

In the Brewsletter:

Grand Wazoo Wes Woods explains that "if you

see me out in public don't be afraid to buy me a beer, I'm a nice guy." He continues with one word—"JENNINGS" exhorting the troops to "get the ball rolling" and announcing the Steve Moore is "the Big Kahuna" for planning the event. He also extols the virtues of brew-ins, reminding new and wanna-be brewers that they are a good source for learning the craft. Scrivener Andy Thomas covers the February meeting held at Steve Moore's house. "it appears that the Mookie fella was kind of amorous that night and (Grand Wazoo) Wes' leg seemed just to his liking." Secondary Karel Chaloupka was too lazy to write an article, so a few pages on beer glassware written by Graham Lees were reprinted from some un-credited source.

At the Meeting:

Held at Buck Wyckoff's house. Grand Wazoo Wes Woods got the business end of things started early. Beer of the Month was Belgian and fruit beers, but no list of the offerings remains.

Other Events:

DeFalco's Moves from Morningside to Robinhood.

10 Years Ago:

In the Brewsletter:

In The Brewsletter Urquell, Grand Wazoo Bev Blackwood notes "Let me first thank the great spirit of Drunk-Ra for his protection over our happy gathering of 32 barleywines last month." The scriveners Doyle (Kyle and Kari sharing the byline) remark "Bev took the helm at 9:04 and immediately was interrupted again by the ringing of his cell phone. Since this has occurred during both of his first two meetings conveniently while he's on the podium discussing club business, I've reached the conclusion that it's an arrangement he has with his wife to make him appear important by phoning during this time. Sorry Bev, we're not fooled!" From the Foam Ranger Northwest office, professor David Cato chimes in: "Outside it was cold and damp, but inside it was nice and warm with plenty of beer taps to choose from.... And just who was that strange fellow with the German hat making his way to the podium? Yes, it was Fred, and we had

(Continued on back cover)

Beer of the Month

Calendar



January 20th, 2012

Porter & Stout



February 17th, 2012

Barleywine & Holiday Beer



March 18th, 2011

Belgian Ales & Lambics



April 15th, 2011

Homebrew!



May 20th, 2011

Bocks, Dark Lagers, Dunkel



June 17th, 2011

Wheat, Wit, Fruit & Rye



July 15th, 2011

Homebrew!



August 19th, 2011

Pale Ale, Bitter & Steam



September 16th, 2011

Oktoberfest & Smoked



October 20th - 22nd, 2011

Dixie Cup XXVII



November 18th, 2011

I.P.A. & Ambers



December 4th, 2011

Homebrewer's Xmas Party

The Waiting Is The Hardest Part... So Do This Stuff!



By
Bev
Blackwood II,
Competition
Coordinator

So here we sit, on the cusp of the Bluebonnet Brewoff, waiting to rake in the countless

medals we're doubtless going to collect. However, as the Competition Coordinator, that makes my job more difficult, as I can't fill space by recounting who won what. All it seems I *can* do is warn you of upcoming deadlines for the next events!

< Star Wars Imperial March > If you're

entering the American Homebrewers Association's National Homebrew Competition, be sure to register your entries and have them at DeFalco's by the close of business on Thursday, March 24th and I will hand deliver them to the organizers at Bluebonnet next weekend. Be sure you've registered in the correct region and that you include your paperwork! If you're a member of the AHA, you can also enter the Southern Star Pro-Am. Any style is accepted as long as it's easy to make (I.E. No decoction, barrel aging or funky stuff!) it has to be over 5% ABV and must be drinkable in 2 months or less. Their contest is free, requires four bottles and the winner will become the Southern Star Pro-Am entry at the GABF. Entries are due Wednesday, April 6th, with judging

tentatively set for April 10th. < / Star Wars Imperial March >
The Alamo City Cerveza Fest is accepting entries through Sunday, April 3rd and I will be collecting entries at DeFalco's on Thursday, March 31st so I can deliver them to San Antonio that weekend. Judging starts Saturday April 9th, continuing on Saturday, April 16th and Saturday, April 23rd. I am sure they would appreciate all the help they can get! The main event starts on Friday, April 29th with a reception at the Ranger Creek "Brewstillery" and ends with the second round, best of show and awards ceremony on Saturday, April 30th at Blue Star (Duh-Da!) Brewing. The ACCF is always a lot of fun and gives all us Foamies a chance to remember what it's like to live in a city that has a brewpub.

Don't want to hassle with bottling? Enter the Brew Bayou Keg Only competition at the Quintana Beach County Park on April 16th. It's a part of the Brew Bayou Beach Blast, which is their annual beach party. Just make sure you bring all the necessary fittings and dispensing equipment and get there by 10 a.m. to be sure it's properly judged! There's no entry fee and it's a day at the beach!
Also sporting 4 B's is the Big Batch Brew Bash, whose entry deadline is May 6th. This year's style is Strong Ale, so if you haven't made one yet, break out that underattenuated batch of brown ale and buy a pint of vodka, some oak chips and get busy! (I am just kidding of course!) However, the style is very broad and there's nothing that says you can't still get a last minute brew done to enter... After all it's FREE, what have you got to lose? The winner of the event will get brewed as a Divine Reserve at Saint Arnold Brewing Company and may also be entered as their Pro-Am entry. Next month, I will hopefully be listing the brewers who brought us glory at Bluebonnet and rose to the top of the world's largest single site homebrew competition!

2nd Annual **Free!**

Brew Bayou Beach Blast

Saturday, April 16th, 2011
10:00 am - Sunset
Quintana Beach County Park
330 5th Street, Quintana, TX
(one hour south of Houston)

BREW * ENTER * JUDGE * WIN
THE CONTESTS OF THE LONE STAR CIRCUIT!

NEXT EVENT:

ALAMO CITY CERVEZA FEST
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

ENTRY DEADLINE
APRIL 3, 2011

ALAMO CITY CERVEZA FEST
APRIL 29-30, 2011

WWW.LONESTARCIRCUIT.COM





**By Jaime Robles
Secondary Fermenter**

Welcome back from the Barleywine meeting. Yes, you were there. Bev

has pictures. Let's see if we can top last meeting, which was filled with barleywine-induced impulse purchases and random guys walking up to the shop at 2AM and having a shouting match in Spanish about rides to the airport.

Ah, the diverse world of Belgian beers – you either love them or you hate them. Same goes for fruit beers. The range of colors, flavors and aromas found in Belgian-

style beers is quite vast. These beers are characterized by their unique yeasts/bacteria and deeply traditional brewing techniques held with utmost respect by Trappist and other non-abbey breweries. Beers can go from pale blonds with a spicy, clove-like nose, to golden alcohol bombs, to mouth puckering lambics, to vinous Flanders reds. This degree of diversity lends itself well for the enjoyment of many discriminating palates. It's also a great canvas for the use of fruits and syrups to add another degree of flavor complexity. The Belgian brewers, whether Trappist monks or not, aren't afraid to open up their fermenters for some natural inoculation by Mother Nature. Now, don't confuse this with your beer that went "Belgian" because you were lazy about sanitation (yeah, we've all been there). Some of these wild yeasts, especially those from the 7 Trappist Monasteries, are well kept and protected. They also like to keep working while in your digestive tract. The resulting scent is, for lack of a better word and seeing how this is a

Bring your air freshener – it's Belgian Beer Month!

family-oriented publication, pungent. It's hard to generalize this style of beer but for the most part, you will find some sour, phenolic or brettanomyces profile to these beers. Descriptors include tart, dry, barnyard, spicy, clove, musty, and overall funkified. Most of them have a dry and refreshing finish and look great when poured properly. Serving glassware is as varied as the number of different Belgian styles. Almost every Belgian beer has its own branded glass designed to showcase its aroma, head or both.

The 2008 BJCP Guidelines officially recognize 16 different styles of Belgian

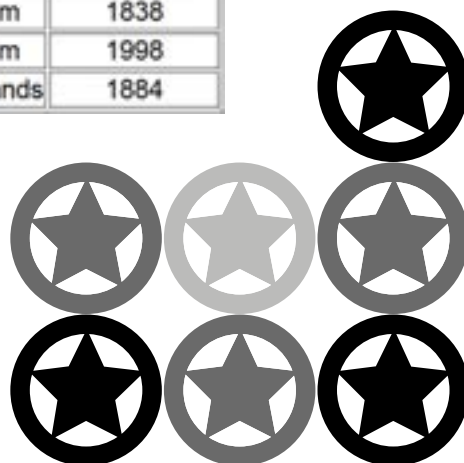
drinking experience more interesting. Belgian Budweiser, anyone? I've found pairing Belgian beers with food quite easy and entertaining. Try to stick to foods that aren't too spicy; seafood tends to work best. There is pretty much a beer for every course. A wit, maybe Blanche de Bruxelles, would be great to accompany a fresh greens salad and also use it to make the vinaigrette dressing for the salad. You can then move on to some garlic mussels and frites paired with a Saison like Ommegang's Hennepin. Finally, wrap up the culinary experience with a slice of a raspberry cheesecake with a goblet

Trappist Breweries	Location	Year Opened
Bières de Chimay	Belgium	1863
Brasserie d'Orval	Belgium	1931
Brasserie de Rochefort	Belgium	1899
Brouwerij der Trappisten van Westmalle	Belgium	1836
Brouwerij Westvleteren	Belgium	1838
Brouwerij der Sint-Benedictusabdij de Achelse Kluis	Belgium	1998
Brouwerij de Koningshoeven	Netherlands	1884

of Duchesse de Bourgogne. Does anyone else smell "Doak"?

Your Funky Secondary.

beers. Keep an eye out for the next revision since I'm sure that a few more will be added. The tartness, phenolic character, and funk produced by the Belgian yeasts/bacteria can radically transform a simple beer into quite an experience. Nowadays, it seems like every brewery is fermenting worts that are not traditionally Belgian (i.e. stouts, IPAs, browns) with Belgian yeast strains to get new styles and make the



Texas Homebrewers Campout
 Register Online!!!
April 1-3, 2011

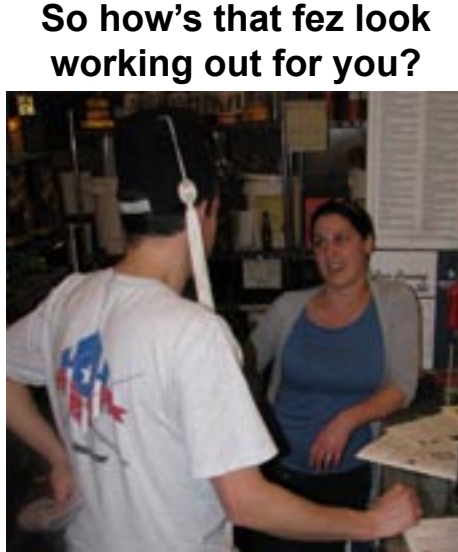





www.TexasHomebrewersCampout.com
 The Ultimate Family-Friendly Beer Event of the Year
Save \$\$\$!!! Register by March 15, 2011 and save \$5 per person



Come on, Stuart... You can rig it for me. Please?



The more barleywine I have, the cuter you get!



Jaime wisely holds his breath.



What the heck is this thing?



Barleywine apparently isn't for everyone...



Dude, you got hair in my salsa!

Foam Ranger Foto Pages!

Tom rehearses his speech, a la Palin.



More like eleven o'clock shadow, I'd say...



¿Mas barleywine señor?



He calls me "Tambourine Man" *one* more time, and it's *ON*.

You can stand up here George, but you can't wear the fez.



More barleywine? Really?



You take-a da picture, I break-a you face!



I'm gonna need another bottle...



Psst... I think some of this beer is *strong!*



Sean is challenged to try the margarita beer...

Foam Ranger Foto Pages!

I dunno George, I prefer a matching set, myself.



Pardon me, Mr. Waz...



For lo, they ran out of barleywine and yea, Doak wept.

(Wazoo - continued from page 1)

on varietal meads, where meads and the honey used to make them were available for tasting. Very informative, but we're just getting to the fun part. Steve Piatz would eventually give a talk on "Making Mead the Easy Way" (or at least, that's what it should have been titled). During this talk, he discussed several key points that have greatly improved my mead making, and I hope they will do the same for you. I think there are a few keys to a successful mead fermentation. But as with most things in life, there is more than one way to approach a problem, and other people have been doing things differently with great success. The first key is pitching an adequate amount of healthy yeast. Don't pull that expired yeast packet out of the back of your fridge and say, "Well, it's probably fine". It may not be fine, and then you're already in a hole. Good dry yeast is cheap, so buy a couple of new packets. How much should you pitch? While you can probably get away with pitching one packet, pitch two. Again, it will cost you an extra buck, but will go a long way towards your goal of a healthy fermentation that finishes in a timely fashion. And homebrewers generally don't have to worry about overpitching, because you really have to go overboard to worry. Finally, treat your yeast well. Don't just go sprinkling it on top of the must and leaving. Most dry yeast

explicitly state on the package that rehydration is required, and it doesn't hurt to rehydrate any dry yeast. Try 1/4 cup of 105F water per packet. Sprinkle the yeast in, let it sit for a bit, then give it a stir and let it sit a few more minutes. When you come back, you'll see why rehydrating it was a good idea - it should be frothy and smell fruity and yeasty. Many meadmakers also recommend using a rehydrating nutrient such as GoFerm with dry yeast. However, under no circumstances should you add any other type of nutrient, unless specifically recommended for rehydration.

Now that you have plenty of healthy and happy yeast, we turn our attention to the must. But we're really still concerned about the yeast. Beer wort is very nutrient rich, a mead must is very nutrient poor. And when I say nutrients, I'm talking mainly about free amino nitrogen (FAN). Yeast, just like us, need nitrogen to build amino acids to build enzymes they use to go about their work. And honey has essentially no FAN, so you will need to add it. But yeast need not only FAN, but other micronutrients and minerals, which also need to be added. Ken Schramm, one of the best meadmakers in the world, recommends two specific sources in his book *The Compleat Meadmaker*. The first is diammonium phosphate (DAP). DAP is essentially a source

of FAN. The second is Fermaid K, a proprietary nutrient blend. Ken, Steve, and others swear by Fermaid K, but there are other nutrients available. Ken recommends a total amount of 2 tsp of DAP and 1 tsp of Fermaid K for 5 gallons of mead. Where Steve changed it up is how the nutrient is added. Instead of one big charge of nutrient, 1/4 of the mix is added at yeast pitching (along with aeration), and another 1/4 each day for the next three days. Which brings me to my next point...

At the same time the yeast nutrient is added for the next three days, two other actions take place. One, the must is stirred vigorously to rid it of excess carbon dioxide. You will be shocked at how much CO2 comes out of solution, and this CO2 inhibits the yeast. Start very slowly, or else it will foam right out of the bucket (you did use a big bucket, right?). A stirrer that attaches to an electric drill works great. After the must is degassed, stir it a bit more to aerate it. That's right, aerate it. What the *%\$#, you say. I've always been told to keep my fermented beverages away from oxygen after fermentation begins. However, in this case you have a very high gravity must, and the yeast are going to need reinforcements to finish. Aerating for the first few days allows the yeast to continue to reproduce to generate the army needed to fully ferment your must. After day three, let the must be - no more aeration or nutrient addition. And as always, make sure you sanitize anything that touches the must at any point in the process.

I have used this method for the past three meads I have made, and I routinely see fermentations that are about 75% finished after a week. Fermentation is, for the most part, completely finished within a couple of weeks. Meads still benefit from time to smooth out and mellow, but this method has produced many a drinkable mead after a month or two for the folks up in Minnesota. Meads that are a bit harsh will benefit from some extended aging. My last two meads (one a pyment) finished at 1.004 and 1.010 (I prefer a drier mead). I used Lalvin 71B-1122

(Continued on next page)

SAINT ARNOLD
 PATRONS SAINT OF BEERIES
 TEXAS OLDEST CRAFT BREWERY

2000 LYONS AVE HOUSTON TEXAS
 GO TO WWW.SAINTARNOLD.COM FOR MORE INFORMATION
 -SECONDS FROM DOWNTOWN-

OPEN HOUSE & TASTING
 MONDAY - FRIDAY
 GUESTS ADMITTED FROM 3:00-3:30 PM
 SATURDAY
 GUESTS ADMITTED FROM 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM

SAINT ARNOLD

(Bills - Continued from Page 1)
wholesalers 2. Sell up to 5,000 barrels of beer per year directly to consumers 3. self-distribute their product to retailers so long as they are under 10,000 barrels per year 4. have total production of up to 75,000 barrels per year and 5. change their license to a brewpub so long they meet the brewpub qualifications. In essence, if this legislation were to pass brewpubs across the state would be able to sell its beers in kegs, bottles or cans anywhere, including other bars, at your local beer store, at restaurants, and at its other locations. Similarly if



(Continued from previous page)

(Narbonne), which will ferment meads that straddle the line between standard and sack (1.120) to a fairly dry finish. If you want a sweeter mead, start with a higher O.G. or use White Labs Sweet Mead yeast.

One final note concerns the pH of the must. Depending on things like ash content and the original acid content of the mead, mead fermentations can become quite acidic. You probably don't need to go to the length of titrating, but keeping an eye on the pH can be helpful. I take the proactive step of adding a few tablespoons of calcium carbonate (CaCO3) to the must prior to pitching the yeast. This will keep the must at a pH level that is more conducive to good yeast activity. The mead can always be acidified after fermentation using acid blend. While you do not have to add CaCO3, and can have a healthy fermentation without it, under no circumstances should acid be added to the must prior to fermentation.

I hope this article eases your concerns about making your first (or second) mead. And don't forget, our club counts many good meadmakers amongst our ranks. If you have questions, find someone like Jeff Reilly or Thomas Coburn and ask them, I'm sure they will be glad to help. Credit where credit is due - Ken Schramm first published the nutrient mix referenced in this article, and Steve Platz mentioned many of these techniques in his talk at NHC 2010.

HB 660 or the newer HB 2436 were to pass microbreweries would attain the ability to sell to consumers just like brewpubs do now. If these initiatives pass the line between what constitutes a microbrewery and a brewpub in this state would begin to blur, just as they have in other progressive states. All of these measures will result in a more level playing field and more choice for the beer consuming public. Of course large breweries and their lobbyists are threatened by the prospect of any impact on their own market share despite the fact that they still supply over 95% of the entire domestic market which includes other states such as Colorado, Oregon and our neighbor New Mexico, in which brewpubs already have these rights. Distributors might also voice concern due to pressure from the same large brewing conglomerates that again make over 95% of our country's beer, but from a distributor perspective the prospect of having more to offer is enticing, especially given that most craft breweries sell for a premium. At its core current restrictions on microbreweries and brewpubs in Texas are outdated and unfair, especially when compared to other similar regulations such as those for wineries. In Texas wineries are allowed to sell on site or through distributors and have none of the restrictions placed upon similar craft brewpubs/breweries. Some might argue Texas wineries are different in that they use local ingredients, but in actuality most import large amounts of juice from California to as far away as Argentina. Texas breweries and brewpubs use Texas water, which seems to me makes their products more deserving of a locally sourced

designation (at least on the basis of their contents) than many Texas wineries.

If you want to see microbreweries and brewpubs in this state on equal footing with those in Colorado, Oregon and other more progressive beer friendly states there are several ways to get involved. Archaic Texas beer laws must be changed so that we the consumer have the same sort of options consumers in other states have. So do your part and sign an online petition which can be found at <http://www.petitiononline.com/TXHB660/petition.html>. Second, contact your local representative to voice your support of this measure. You can look them up here <http://www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us/>. Third, if you have personal contacts with any state legislators or beer distributors please consider discussing it with them (or stalk them and find some dirt). Scott Metzger, owner of the Freetail Brewpub in San Antonio sponsored the HB 660 initiative and maintains a blog regarding the effort at <http://brewednotbattered.wordpress.com/>. As part of this initiative all participating brewpubs located mainly in Austin and San Antonio have produced their own version of a style invented by the Foamrangers (Texas Brown) HB 660 brown ale to help bring attention to the cause. Also check out a new website for information on rallies <http://texasbeerfreedom.org/>. Both sites also have links to information on HB 602 and HB 2436.





Dues Paid Foam Rangers Members Receive a 5% Discount at:
DeFalco's

8715 Stella Link
Houston TX 77025
(713) 668-9440
sales at defalcos.com

website:
www.defalcos.com

TOLL FREE ORDER LINE: (800) 216-BREW (2739) *Ask about getting your very own Frequent Fermenter Card!*

What's The Buzz About Acoustic Meadery?

By Buck Wyckoff

On my last trip to Michigan, I took a look beyond the brewing scene. There is much more brewing in this state to investigate, but as a mead maker, when I found out Michigan had meaderies, I had to see what this was all about. First stop, Acoustic Meadery in Traverse City, Michigan. I have a family gathering and fish-fry to go to in Traverse City, so I stopped by Bruce Grossman's operation

beforehand. This is what happened...

...knock, knock, knock....

(Garage door opened successfully after one failed attempt with a locked door.)

G: Hey, how you doing?

W: Hi Bruce.

G: Buck, right?

W: Yeah, yeah.

G: Come on in.

W: Thanks. Yeah, this ain't your normal garage, huh? (Looking around) Sweet. I know a lot of people in Houston wish they had this in their garage.

G: Yeah, sure. That one's going. (Points to vessel with large white PVC hose running into a bucket of water. Bloops periodically.) These are all full. I'm bottling off of this one. These are both full of cherry and these are both apple. I'm bottling apple.

W: So those are seven barrels each?

G: Seven barrels. Yep. 217 gallons each.

W: The Pub Brewing Company. They made it?

G: Yeah.

(I'm handed a goblet containing a lightly golden, wistfully effervescent beverage. I take a whiff.)

W: Hummm! Appley.

G: Apple. Made with three different kinds of Michigan apples and star-thistle honey from Michigan.

W: That's tasty. Nice and light. Very drinkable.

G: Yeah. Very drinkable.

W: It's good. What, are you bottling today?

G: Yeah. I'm not going to finish all this. This thing takes forever. I can do about six cases in an hour. It's just way slow. I'm shopping for something. And it's not affordable really for me to pay somebody to sit here and do this. I couldn't pay them anything that would be worthwhile. But for me, you know? What else do I do? This is all I do so it's not a big deal.

W: Well, if it keeps growing, you'll solve that problem, I guess. What will you wind up doing if you grow? You'll wind up building a building off the side, er?

G: I can build up to a 2400 square foot structure under this ordinance and do it here, but, I mean, it's really nice to

work out of your house, um....

W: I work out of my house. I know what you mean.

G: But I just don't have a retail site.

W: Right. So you can go 2400

square feet on a site like this or you can go retail and go even bigger.

G: What I might do is build a structure just for storage. 'Cause I've got (knocking on an empty vessel) six more of these vessels and I mainly just use this for mixing and measuring. But it's serving tanks. I bought up a brewery, thinking I was going to do a brewery.

W: Yeah, that's what I remember in the Traverse City thing (I found out about Acoustic through Edible Traverse City, a foodie flier sent to me by a relative), you were brewmaster at a couple craft breweries or brewpubs here in Traverse City or whatever. Then you got this equipment thinking

you were going to brew beer and...

G: Uh-huh. And it just didn't work out. I had a \$150,000 loan I was about ready to sign for, but I couldn't sign the lease on this particular property. And everything just fell apart after that.

W: So you were trying to do an actual commercial brewery on a commercial site and do your own operation and that sort of fell apart and your equipment landed here?

G: Well I brought it back here and, I still have the rest of it, you can kind of see it (pointing out the window), it's mostly wrapped though. In the trees there...and on the pallets....got the whole brewhouse and everything. (And there, off in the tall weeds banked by juvenile pine trees, arose various bits of stainless steel, shrink-wrapped brewequipment.) I'm thinking I'm just going to sell it. Except for the vessels. I want to keep these and I might build a cold room and then I can make stuff and store it. 'Cause I don't need a lot of space to produce.

W: Right.

G: That's the thing about mead. You know this is all honey and some concentrates. You need nothing special to store the stuff.

W: Are you using a no-boil process?

G: I never boil.

W: Not even heating it up?

G: Well, I hit it with really hot water which probably pasteurizes it somewhat, but... no, um....I don't boil it because you can set pectins and different stuff. It changes it. I'm not worried about it. I

mix it up and pitch yeast right away, so, just bang. It's over.

W: Well, I know there's a school of thought going around about, not even heating mead at all, using clean water and the honey's already kind of



(Continued on next page)

(Continued from previous page)

preserved.

G: Exactly. I just use hot water so it goes into solution. Otherwise, it might take forever.

W: Yeah. So you've been doing this how long, here?

G: I've been selling and producing a little over a year.

W: And you've got lots of places selling it on draft?

G: There's only about a half dozen places selling it on draft. It's hard to get taps. Well, (looking around) if you've seen the tap handles I use, I make....(finds and hands me one)

W: Oh cool. Guitar neck tap handles, huh? I like it.

G: ...and that works real well. I mean, it's very recognizable, so it sells really well.

W: Yeah! Cool.

G: But it's just

hard. There's a lot of competition on handles. A lot of bars don't have a lot of handles and they're always going to have their Bud Light and that sort of stuff on. Although I've taken some of that stuff off, which is really kind of cool, but...it's kind of a dog-eat-dog industry in some respects. Some of the distributors play dirty.

W: I'd believe that.

G: They've hidden my product.

They've taken it off the shelves and buried it. And I've had the store owners back me up, which is really cool 'cause it's their store.

W: Do they have the three tier system here in Michigan?

G: Here in Michigan. But the small wine maker can self-distribute. That's the other reason I chose to get this small winery license is that I had more control. I could do everything myself.

W: It's weird how the laws are more lax for wine than beer. Wine's got more alcohol, you'd think they'd be more concerned about that.

G: It's nothing but a monopoly. And it prevents entrepreneurship.

W: It's tough being the underdog. Isn't it?

G: It's funny though. I've had some of them call me and want to carry my product. This one guy....a fairly big distributor here called me up. But I

didn't say anything to him, thinking, "You guys up there ruin my stuff. Why would I want you to rep me? What are you going to do for me? You know nothing about what I make."

W: First they won't give you the time of day and then after a while, maybe they start to...

G: Well, they want a piece of the action, 'cause I've taken taps from them. So that's money to them. They told one place, "Oh his stuff's going to ruin your lines." Stuff like that. People are gullible. I lost one account because she was just manipulated by the distributor.



W: I'm sure there are a lot of dirty tricks and things. It wouldn't surprise me, the lengths they'd go to mess with your business. That's pretty nasty. But, you said things are going good?

G: Yeah! Really well. Ah, I got down state in a couple of spots.

W: What? Down in like, Detroit and stuff?

G: Ah, yeah. Detroit area. I've got a bar in Detroit in Greektown that's interested.

W: I found out Poland still has meaderies, so if there are any Polish communities around here

G: Well, here, there is a big Polish community. Especially Cedar.

W: Well maybe they're hip to mead then.

G: Some of the other wineries have made some mead and there might be a half dozen meaderies in Michigan, I think. A friend of mine where I get the honey from, Kirk Jones, he just got approved. He got federal approval like a week or two ago, and then a Michigan officer, I think inspected his site a couple of days ago so he's all ready to go.

W: So you're honey supplier is getting ready to open a meadery himself?

G: Uh-huh. But he doesn't do... nobody I know of does it like this. Light like this. Everybody's doing more wine like stuff.

W: Yeah, all of mine are that way as well. I want to try to do it lighter. I don't why I got in the habit of doing it strong.

G: I mean, basically, just use less honey.

W: Right.

G: But a lot of them aren't equipped with like, what I have. My background is in brewing, so I employ some brewing techniques that will come out in mine. And the way I've formulated the yeast strains, the ones I use and don't use, stuff like that.

W: Yeah, my heavy duty sack meads....it takes a couple of years before they are even drinkable.

G: Right. I can get this out in four weeks. And people are like, "What?" (chuckles) I know what I'm doing.

W: How do you pronounce the product's name, with the "B-Z-Z-Z"?

G: Oh, I pronounce it "Buzz." Well, yeah...a, because you can't incite intoxication on a label.

W: Right. So you can't say "Buzz."

G: So, well I took the "u" out so that they couldn't say anything.

W: Right.

G: It's just "bzzzzzzz." It's like the sound that a bee makes.

W: Yeah, that's perfect...a bee... .bzzzzzzz.

G: You can't imply....you can't incite, imply intoxication.

W: Yeah, I know that's why in the United States, Guinness can't use their slogan, "Guinness is good for you."

G: Right. You can't have....you can't imply any health benefits....you look at my stuff...it's got green tea, cherries, honey and all. It's clearly healthy in some respects.

W: You'd like to talk it up, but you can't.

G: I don't know what health benefits it really would have. But it's probably better than drinking a lot of other stuff that's out there.

W: I used to do the newsletter back in the 80's and I put in an article about an ancient Roman. He lived to be a 110 and he was chronicled by some ancient writer, and he said the secret to his longevity was drinking mead every day and rubbing olive oil on his legs.

**To be
continued...**

(Continued from page 3)

gathered together to participate in the 13th Annual Beer and Chocolate Extravaganza—a fitting combination a few days before Valentine’s Day.” Sean Lamb debuts the “This Month in Foam Ranger History” column (happy 5th anniversary!) [*I appreciate your making the effort Sean! - Ed.*]

At the Meeting:

The March 2001 meeting was the last meeting held at the DeFalco’s location on Robinhood. Plans for the Jennings trip and new t-shirts are discussed. Beer of the Month was a bounty of Belgian and fruit beers. Some of the items served were Cantillon Gueuze 1997, Kriek , Iris, Rose de Gambrinus and Grand Cru Bruocsella 1900, Boon Gueuze and Framboise, St. Louis Framboise, Gueuze and Cassis, Mort Subite Gueuze, Bellevue Kriek, Lindemans Framboise, Faro and Cassis, Liefmans Frambozenbier and Goudenband, Vielle Oud Beersel Oude Kriek and Oude Gueuze, Poperings Hommelbier, La Duchesse de Bourgogne, Bush, Timmerman’s Bourgogne des Flandres, Chimay

Grande Reserve, Westmalle Dubbel and Tripel, Westvleteren 12, Trappist Rochefort 10, De Verboden Vrucht (Forbidden Fruit), De Dolle Brouwers Ara Bier, Oer Bier, Bos Kuen and Stille Nacht (Silent Night), St. Bernardus Abbey 12 and Tripel, Duinen Dubbel and Tripel, Duvel, Delirium Tremens Nocturnum, Fantome Black Ghost, Pauwel Kwak, Maudite, La Fin Du Monde, and Celis Grand Cru.

Other Events

The First Sunday visit was at Two Rows on February 4th.

5 Years Ago:

In the Brewsletter:

Grand Wazoo Rob Kolacny opines about the meaning of March: “March means time has just about run out for those delinquent on their dues. March means we’ve survived the barleywine meeting, and are ready to move on to the Belgians! Full steam ahead! It also means bluebonnets, as in the Bluebonnet Brewoff in Dallas/Ft.

Worth. And it means camping: The 1st Annual Beer in the Backwoods Homebrew Festival. Wow! Five weekends in March and three of them are beer weekends! That ain’t bad.” Secondary “Titanic” BoB Daugherty recounts the wonders of Belgian Ales, and contributes the headline article Boulder Burns As Enraged Rangers Protest “Freditorial” Cartoon. Scrivener Sean Lamb recounts the rift in the space-time continuum caused by the Massive amounts of Barleywine served at the Febrewary meeting.

At the Meeting:

Held at DeFalco’s on Stella Link. Scrivener Sean Lamb did not submit any minutes, the jerk.

Other Events:

The Foam Rangers kick some at the Bluebonnet Brew-off and take the Bluebonnet Cup. Beeriac, Fundrew, Your Uncle Fester, Papa Joe Lindsey, E Mo, Redd Kneck, “Scooter D” DeWalt, [*Skirtboy - Ed.*] and T-Bob attended, wearing t-shirts declaring “All your Beer Are Belong To Us”



I WANT TO BE SOMEBODY!



SIGN ME UP TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE FOAM RANGERS HOMEBREW CLUB!

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

HOME PHONE _____ **WORK PHONE** _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

AMOUNT PAID _____ NEW RENEWAL CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Membership Fees: (per year) \$35.00 Individual / \$45.00 Family

Paid between December 1 & December 31	\$30.00 / \$40.00 (Pay early and save!)
Paid between January 1 & March 31	\$35.00 / \$45.00
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 the next year!)

Please make checks payable to: The 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, Texas 77025-3401