



THE FOAM RANGERS Newsletter Urquell

Houston's Leading Brews Source

January 2005 - Volume 25 - Issue 1

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January

Meeting:

Friday,

January 21

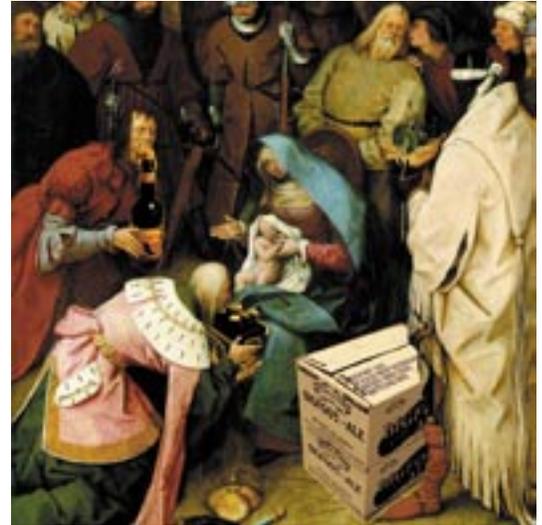
8:00 p.m.

at DeFalco's

The Gift of the Brew: Homebrew Brightens A Homeless Christmas

PEARLAND, TEXAS (AP) Rookie homebrewer Bob Daugherty displayed the "true meaning of Chriskwanzakuh" Sunday morning when he delivered two cases of homebrew to a homeless man in a suburb of Houston.

"We had an open house on Christmas day and several friends and neighbors came by for free drink and food. Anyway... my neighbors have been pretty good about drinking my beer this year and saying nice things. Well...that is until they tried my Judge [Lance] Ito Imperial Pilsner. Hell, I don't know went wrong with it. It was my first (and probably last) pilsner. It was about 1085 original gravity and I left it out to get the fermentation started at room (Continued on Page 8)



Wise men always bring beer!

Out (of) the Wazoo



By Ed Moore, Grand Wazoo

Well, out with the old and in with the new. The Foam Rangers continue onward through the fog. We had a fantatstic year and the officers for last year set the bar high by doing an outstanding job. We will continue the Foam Ranger

tradition of having great beer, learning to brew great beer and having good times. The membership is why the Foam Rangers are the leading homebrew club in the country, dare I say the world. We have so many events and all of them are well attended. The first Sunday pub visit with the other Houston area

clubs. The brew-in at De Falco's on the second Saturday, the pub crawl, the brew-ins at different people's house, the Friday meetings, the AHA regionals, the competitions, the Houston Homebrewers Christmas Party, and of course the Dixie Cup.

The Dixie Cup will be upon us before you know it, but we have the Bluebonnet and the Sunshine Challenge to conquer first. No club has owned all three of these trophies at the same time. We have owned three (of four) at one time, but to win all of these this year will take a lot of dedication and entries. I feel the Foam Rangers are the club to pull off winning all of the Gulf Coast trophies. In order to achieve these goals, we need the input from the members. Not only do we need entries to win the trophies, but we need you to tell us what we are doing right and what we need to correct. Be involved and you will get more out of it than you realize. Let us know your ideas. They might (Continued on Page 8)

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 credit is given to both the author
 and the Foam Rangers and a case
 of really good homebrew is sent
 in tribute.

EEEEEEK!



Christmas Party "Minutes"



By
**Bob "Titanic-Bob"
 Daugherty**

WARNING: I'll
 be your scrivener
 for this year. The
 following was
 written after
 imbibing numerous
 barleywines and
 without any aide-
 memoire (notes).
 Anyway that's my

excuse and I'm sticking to it...

Well it took four long years but I finally got to attend the club's annual Christmas Party. It seems like every other year Nannette and I had some work related Christmas party we "had to attend" or were out of town. All I can say is that I'll never miss another. Not only did Foam Rangers attend but so did our other neighboring clubs- the KGB and the Bay Area Mastronauts as well as the Golden Triangle Brewers from Beaumont. I know we often to get to see these folks at the Dixie Cup but it was great to see them in a non-competition situation. I can say this for the former "Czar Don" of the KGB--it seemed like every beer he brought was a HUGE, Strong, 22 oz. Beer! You know, the way the good Lord intended such beers to be bottled!

St. Arnold's again kindly volunteered their brewery (and their beers) as the site for the party. My only complaint is that their wonderful Winter Stout was not out yet! The KGB asked that attendees bring a toy for the underprivileged kids and from the pile that accumulated it looked like most people did so. Folks also brought plenty o'food and there was no shortage of anything except for plastic forks and

spoons. Many non-finger foods became finger foods as a result or went uneaten until reinforcement plasticware arrived later. Of course the party "highlight" is the announcement of new officers for the local homebrew clubs. Steve Moore remembered to bring the "chain of command" and to give it to Rob Kolacny as new Secondary Fermenter. Mike Heniff transferred the Fez to new Grand Wazoo Ed Moore. Mike will be working as Competition Coordinator. Kimi Cook took the thankless job of Purser, and I, Titanic Bob, am your humble Scrivener. Bev Blackwood will be Brewsletter Editor. Steve asked new Dixie Cup coordinator Colby Sheridan if was scared. Colby replied, "No" to which Steve replied in his best Star Wars' Yoda voice, "You will be."

The KGB's revolution replaced Czar Don with Ed Condon. And the Bay Area Mashtronauts introduced their new version of the Fez with outer space headwear for their new Mission Commander. A nice complement to our Grand Wazoo's Fez and the Former Soviet (read SOV-ee-yet) Union Officer's Hat of the KGB, it resembles a World War I leather flying helmet! We look forward to seeing it proudly worn at future get togethers!

After the offices were announced, I moved outside for the other party. Legally St. Arnold's can't let us bring other commercial beers into their brewery, so the parking lot had to suffice. I did not see much homebrew offered outside, but there were plenty o' hard to get commercial beers for the tasting. I brought along some JW Lee's Harvest Ale, Scaldis Noel, Victory Old Horizontal, Weyerbacher's Blithering Idiot and Dog Fish Head's golden colored Olde School barleywine to share. Others
(Continued on Page 11)

Join the Foam Ranger E-mail Lists!

By **Dave Cato, List owner**

In the example that follows, LISTNAME should be one of these mailing list names: **foam-rangers**, **foam-rangers-announce**, or **houston-homebrewers**. Replace LISTNAME with the *actual name* of the list when subscribing!

To subscribe to one (or more) of these lists, send the single line:

subscribe LISTNAME

in the body of an e-mail message, in *plain text* (make sure the message is not sent in

HTML or RTF format) to:

majordomo@crunchyfrog.net

You should receive a reply from the server requesting that you complete the subscription, by sending another message back to majordomo@crunchyfrog.net. Once your subscription is confirmed, you will receive a reply with the guidelines for the list you subscribed to, including instructions for unsubscribing in the future.



Beer of the Month

By
Rob Kolacny,
Secondary Fermenter

Long, long ago...
In a galaxy far, far away...

BREW WARS

-REDD KNECK VERSION

THE BEER SCENE WAS PALTRY AT BEST. THE SHELVES WERE FILLED WITH MEGA-SWILL, THE LIKES OF WHICH WERE UNFIT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION. CRAFT BREWS WERE FEW AND FAR BETWEEN. BUT ON THE HORIZON WAS A NEW HOPE. THE HOMEBREW MOVEMENT WAS ON THE RISE AND QUALITY BEER COULD BE MADE AT HOME THAT WAS CHEAPER, FRESHER, AND BETTER...

Our story begins on Whartonia, the home planet of Redd Kneck Skywalker and his quest for brew androids. RK has just finished a brewin at Floby Solo's and his Speeder Utility Brewery (S.U.B.) is loaded down with brew gear. He spots the shop of a droid merchant and stops in for a look..

"Hello, allow me to introduce myself. I am BDB-3PYO, homebrew-cyborg relations protocol android. I am a BJCP Certified judge and am fluent in all 28 styles of beer, mead, & cider. I also have 3,152,999 awards for the various beers I have brewed" spouts a slender, skirted android. "I would make a wonderful brew droid, and so would my friend here" he says as he points to the small robot at his feet. "His name is Carboy-D-2, and he is a fermenter droid." The small one responds with a series of whistles, beeps, and spurts, as he rocks in place. RK looks the two androids over and decides to buy them. "Master Redd Kneck, you won't be sorry. We will serve you well" says 3PYO.

After returning home, RK begins cleaning his brew gear and the new androids. He finishes polishing Carboy's stainless steel, and removes the stopper which triggers a holographic message. "Help us Obi-Wan

Stairway. You are our only hope. We must defend the Dixie Cup" the woman in the hologram says.

"Stairway," RK thought, "I know a Jimmy "Stairway" Paige, but he doesn't brew much any more. I wonder if they are one in the same?"

RK speeds off to find Stairway and relay the message. Stairway, acknowledges that he indeed is Obi-Wan Stairway, and that he was once an ass kicking Jedi Brewer. He explains how life happens and sometimes brewers slip a bit, but promises to teach young RK all that he knows. He produces a recipe book and presents it to RK. Then they hop in the S.U.B. and head to the homebrew shop.

The homebrew shop is located in the Defalco's system and is owned and operated by Birdwell. Birdwell doesn't look like he knows anything about brewing, but is himself a Master BJCP judge and Jedi Brewer. RK and Stairway enter the establishment carrying an offering of beer. As they pass a couple of patrons, the two confront RK and Stairway and demand their beer. Stairway waves his hand in front of them saying "These aren't the beers you're looking for." To which one of them replies "Wrong beers, my mistake". Then Stairway again waves saying "Give us your beer." The other one quickly hands over the barley wine and says "Here, we swiped this from a meeting when no one was looking." RK takes the bottles and Stairway says "Those Sly Bastards ain't gettin' my beer."

A small figure emerges from behind the counter. Stairway greets him and says "Master Birdwell. It has been a long time. We are here to have a recipe filled. My apprentice, Redd Kneck, wishes to brew a beer for Dixie Cup."

"Ah, my old friend Stairway. How long it's been since you have seen me" says Birdwell "Brew a batch for D-cup, you wish? Well, this way. Follow me you must."

"Yes, Master Birdwell" replies Stairway.

Birdwell pores over the recipe and begins to gather the grains. "Out of light Munich, I am. Vienna malt as

(Continued on Page 9)

Beer of the Month

Calendar



January 21st

Porter & Stout



February 18th

Barleywine & Holiday



March 18th

Belgian & Fruit Beers



April 15th

Brown, Old & Scotch



May 20th

Bock



June 17th

Wheat Beers



July 15th

Pilsner & Kolsch



August 19th

Pale Ale & Bitter



September 16th

Oktoberfest / Marzen



October 20th - 22nd

Dixie Cup XXII



November 18th

India Pale Ale



December 11th

Homebrewer's Xmas Party

Foam Ranger Events**January**

January 21
January Meeting
DeFalco's

January 27
Pack & Ship (Unpaid)
Boston & K.C. Events
DeFalco's

February

February 8
Avery Brewing Event
Flying Saucer

February 17
Pack & Ship (Club Paid)
Reggale & Dredhop
DeFalco's

February 18
February Meeting
DeFalco's

February 18
Entry Collection for
Bluebonnet Brew-off
DeFalco's

February 20
First Sunday
BJ's Northwest

February 27
AHA Membership Drive
Saint Arnold

March

March 6
First Sunday
Onion Creek

March 11
March Meeting
DeFalco's

March 18 - 19
Bluebonnet Brew-off



By Mike Heniff,
Competition
Coordinator

It seems like Dixie Cup was yesterday but the new competition season is here already. We all did a great job to bring home the

Dixie Cup and Gulf Coast Club trophies but now it is already time get ready to defend those beauties. I brewed my Dixie Cup 22 barleywine last month and an Imperial Stout won't be far behind.

This year we will trim back the pack and ships in order to help the club budget and put expenses more in line with club interests. This year, the club will pay for shipping and packing supplies for the Sunshine Challenge (Orlando, FL), MCAB VII (for all qualifiers), AHA Nationals (for those that qualify at the South Regional), and two MCAB Qualifiers: Reggale and Dredhop (Boulder, CO) and BURP Spirit of Free Beer (DC area). Local competitions that we will pack for that will not require shipping will be Bluebonnet Brew-off (Dallas), Austin Zealots Homebrew Inquisition, KGB Big Batch Brew Bash, Mashtronauts Lunar Rendezbrew, and the AHA South Regional. We will make announcements and pack as a club for a few more, but the shipping costs will not be sponsored by the club.

Upcoming Competitions:

<u>Competition</u>	<u>Ship By</u>
<u>Club Paid Shipping</u>	
<u>URL</u>	
Upper Mississippi Mashout	1/10/05
No	
http://www.mnbrewers.com/mashout/	
Meadlennium (Mead Only)	1/19/05
No	
www.cfhb.org	
Boston Homebrew Competition	1/27/05
No	
http://www.wort.org/ (MCAB Qualifier)	
Kansas City Bier Meisters	1/31/05
No	
http://www.kcbiermeisters.org/ (MCAB QE)	

Competition Corner

Reggale and Dredhop 2/17/05
Yes
<http://hopbarley.org/dredhop/> (MCAB QE)

Bluebonnet Brew Off 2/18/05
Yes
<http://www.bluebonnetbrewoff.com/> (MCAB)

Drunk Monk Challenge 2/25/05
No
<http://www.knaves.org/dmc/> (MCAB QE)

Gulf Coast Circuit

The most cherished trophy for the Foam Rangers is our Dixie Cup. Along with our Dixie Cup, three other competitions make up the Gulf Coast Circuit: Bluebonnet Brew-off (March, Dallas), Crescent City Homebrew Competition (April, New Orleans – cancelled for 2005), and Sunshine Challenge (May, Orlando). These are all competitions where the Foam Rangers pride themselves on doing well. Also, the awards are quite nice; the Bluebonnet Stein and the Sunshine Challenge Tap Handle are two of the most coveted awards in all of homebrewing. This year, we will one again strive to keep our Dixie Cup and the Gulf Coast Circuit Trophy!

MCAB (aka Master Championship of Amateur Brewing)

The Foam Rangers (led by Louis Bonham) helped found the MCAB to promote the largest of the regional competitions. MCAB I was held in Houston. Since then, MCAB has been an annual tradition, with many of the large regional competitions qualifying the best brewers in the nation (<http://hbd.org/mcab/>). But, unlike most homebrew competitions, only those that qualify the year before are allowed to enter. Be sure to enter the MCAB qualifiers to be eligible for next year; be sure to watch for those eligible Foam Rangers and cheer them on.

AHA National Homebrewing Competition

Each year, the AHA (American Homebrewers Association) sponsors a national competition and conference. There are a number of regional qualifiers for those wanting to compete in the NHC. The Foam Rangers have hosted the South regional competition for the last few years. The major awards are some of the most difficult and coveted in the nation.

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This Month in Foam Ranger History

By Sean Lamb, Club Historian (Sorta)

15 Years Ago:

In the Brewsletter: Grand Wazoo Brad Kraus give his farewell address in the "Words of Wazdom" column, lauding the brew-ins and the process of holding club meetings at a members' house each month. An article by Jearl Walker entitled "Reflection On The Rising Of Bubbles In A Beer Bottle" is reprinted from The Amateur Scientist.

At the Meeting: Held at Tim Cooper's house on Lawrence St. Beer of the Month was "Strong Ales", but no Febrewary brewsletter is available to recall the selection of beers or other events. If anyone has one, please consider contributing it to the club Archives. It is known that elections were held and won as follows:

Chris Todd - Grand Wazoo
Steve Daniel - 2ndary Fermenter
Buck Wyckoff - Purser/Scrivener.

Other Events: A Mini Pub Crawl was held on Jan 27th, hitting the Gingerman, the Crown and Serpent, the Ale House, Griff's, Blythe Spirits and the Brewery Tap.

10 Years Ago:

In the Brewsletter: Grand Wazoo Autumn Woods encourages everyone to brew for the Bluebonnet Brew-off. Foam Ranger Nina Rach writes about her travels in Leiden and Amsterdam

At the Meeting: Held at the Oddfellows lodge in the Heights. Beer of the month was Porter - Dusseldorfer Dark Ale Porter Style Draft from Indianapolis Brewing Co., Anchor, Grant's Perfect Porter, Sam Adams Honey Porter, Rogue New Porter, Young's Samuel Smith's

Taddy Porter, Wild Goose, Sierra Nevada, San Andreas Earthquake Porter, Boulder Porter. Homebrew of note: Steve Robert's Raspberry Wheat. Elections were held, Autumn Moore was re-elected to Grand Wazoo, Leroy Gibbins Secondary Fermenter, Wes Woods Scrivener, Sally Thomas Purser.

Other Events: None noted.

5 Years Ago:

In the Brewsletter: Grand Wazoo David Cato awakes from a deep slumber hoping it's all just a bad dream, but soon dons the Fez, resigned to his fate. He takes a swipe at Charlie Papazian's excruciatingly poor brewing technique in his bestselling book before hawking tickets to Jennings, Louisiana and promoting National Homebrew Day. Like many before him, he tries to get the membership interested in actually learning something at the meetings to no avail. Bev Blackwood gets more than his fair share of space in two columns, one his first as Secondary (wherein he sacrifices the beer-drinking lesbians to a volcano) and the other covering Houston's homebrewing scene. Competition Coordinator, the late Dave Slamen, congratulates MCAB II Qualifiers, Fred Gibson, Joe Lindsey, Jimmy Paige and The Sly Bastards. Scrivener Kehn Bacon introduces himself.

At the Meeting: Held at DeFalco's on Robinhood. Beer of the month was Porter & Stout. Somewhere there exists a picture of what was served, but it's safe to say therewas some Saint Arnold Winter Stout, Sierra Nevada Porter and Stout, Taddy Porter, Anchor Porter, Guinness, Samuel Smith's Imperial Stout and many others. Sign up sheets were circulated for Jennings and Brew-ins. In a gesture of reconciliation, the club decides not to name all their Bluebonnet beers "Dallas Sucks." The very first First Sunday is announced, with Bradley's being the first stop. Jimmy Paige won an award for the best non-regular article submitted to the Brewsletter. Four new BJCP Judges are announced, Kehn Bacon, Bev Blackwood, David Cato and Mike Peltier.

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.

Mike Heniff
281.204.4617 (W)
281.630.6711 (C)
Before 9:00 p.m.

Rob Kolacny
979.532.8056 (H)
979.532.1932 (W)
979.533.1173 (C)
Before 10:00 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
281.799.8427 (C)
Before 9:30 p.m.

Please respect their stated time preferences when calling!

DeFalco's
713.668.9440
Business Hours only

Homebrewer's Xmas!



While Ed will never have to worry about "Fez Head" he clearly has issues with the whole tassle thing.



The Houston homebrew clubs are in deep trouble...



Yes, that kid's a Sheridan!

Scott forgets that rule about not strangling your kids in public.



Elusive Cane Island Alers (aka: C.I.A.) enjoy the holiday spirit with their fellow homebrewers.





<Insert weiner joke here>



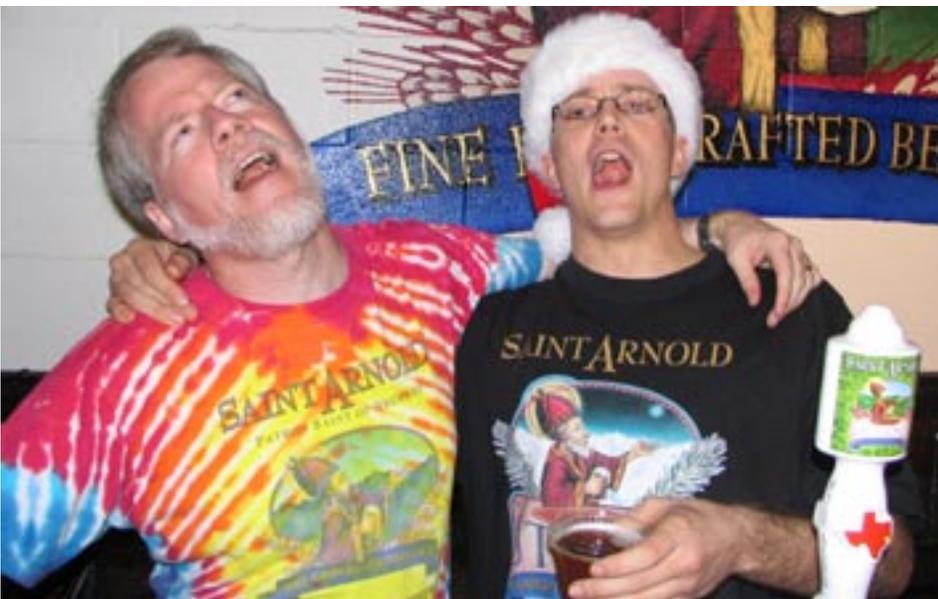
These lampshades are WAY too small for our heads...



What's that smell?
Oh, sorry, it's me...



You would think by now
that Leroy would know
what Nancy's cleavage
looks like...



You may not know the
songs, but be glad
you can't hear them.

(Continued from Page 1)

be a chance to improve the club. Paying dues would be a nice thing to do (I did not mention dues until the fourth paragraph – that has to be a record!)

Be sure to meet the new officers and I know you are always willing to give them a piece of your mind. Here are the officers for 2005:

Grand Wazoo

Ed Moore

Secondary Fermenter

Rob Kolacny

Dixie Cup Coordinator

Colby Sheridan

Scrivener

Bob Daugherty

Competition Coordinator

Mike Heniff

Brewsletter Editor

Bev Blackwood

Was Waz

Mike Heniff

Bozo Head of Special Events

Scott Birdwell

Webmaster

Beto Zuniga

Be sure to subscribe to the Foam Ranger email list (see page 2 for instructions) and check the online calendar for the most up to date information. We will try to have an officer's meeting before the each first Sunday pub visit. Any Foam Ranger can attend and let us know what they think.

Due to expenses rising for the club, all dues will increase by \$5. This will take effect after the January meeting. So, bring your check book to the January meeting and save yourself from the dues increase going into effect next month.

(Continued from Page 1)

temperature. Unfortunately, I forgot to put it in the fridge to get it down to a decent temperature for about a week. Maybe, just maybe, that had something to do with how it turned out."

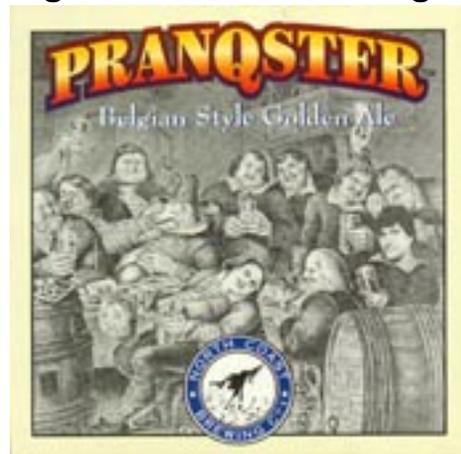
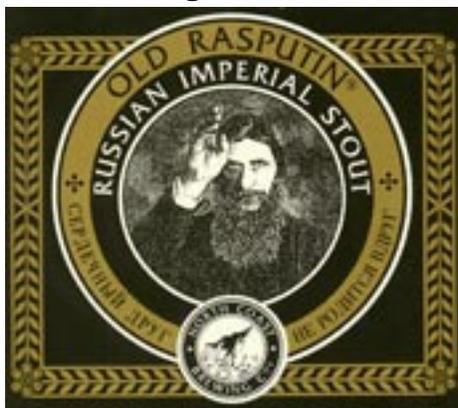
Sean Lamb was an attendee and an unfortunate victim of the lager, "You know T Bob's done okay for only brewing a single year and all but I don't know what he was thinking that night. First he made me drink his first 'IPA.' It tasted liked barbeque meat (and we ain't talkin' Goode Company's) and then he gives me this imperial pilsner of his. When I smelled it, I immediately looked for a cap gun or a firecracker that must have just gone off. Yeah... it was that sulphury!" Of course, T Bob being a friend and all I thought maybe it just smelled bad. Perhaps, just perhaps, it would taste better than it smelled. Wrongo!" Daugherty was not angered with the comments of his friend, "I thought the beer was bad too, but then again I hate pilsners. I don't ever drink them but thought I should brew one anyway. So as far as I knew they were all supposed to taste this bad. When 'the Laminator' dissed it, some of the neighbors admitted that they too thought it unpleasant. 'Yeh, Bob we did not want to hurt your feelings but this sucks! Maybe you can use it to trap slugs,' said one. Another tried to make me feel better by saying, 'Maybe it'll get better with age.' Sean immediately responded, 'No it won't. Not one bit.'"

Daugherty was then left in a quandary. "The beer's bad but at least I have fifty bottles of it! What could I do? I

thought about just pouring it down the drain but that seemed like such a waste even of bad beer. Then I thought about others less fortunate than me. After all, it was Christmas. I thought about the homeless guy I see over by Alameda Mall. He's the one with the sign that reads 'Why lie? I need the money for beer.' I had always appreciated the guy's honesty. You know, none of this 'unemployed Desert Storm vet amputee homeless crap.' Instantly my philanthropic idea was born! I'd give the beer to him!" The homebrewer quickly packed the two cases of imperial pilsner into his small sports car. Donning a Santa Hat complete with the Foam Rangers badge, Daugherty went in search of the homeless man. "I was surprised he was 'workin' on the day after Christmas. Don't these guys ever take vacations?" he commented. The putrid but nevertheless potent homebrew was gratefully received by Joe Mama (as the homeless man calls himself) After sobering up he told this reporter yesterday, "I ain't no beer judge or anything but once I found some clothespins for our noses that stuff really knocked me and my buddies on our asses. Besides we can use the two boxes for our houses. That guy sure knows the meaning of Christmas."

Daugherty was relieved to be rid of the beer. "This turned out to be a win-win situation. I got more room for decent beers in my fridge and I made a little corner of the world a bit happier. Maybe I'll brew the same recipe next year. Remember only one word separates homebrewer from homeless."

Thank you C.R. Goodman for supporting the Foam Rangers & for distributing these great beers!



(Continued from Page 3)

a substitute, you can use" he says. "And California yeast, I am all out of as well."

"That is OK, Master. You seem to have some 1056 over here" proclaims RK. "We will take it instead."

The grains are crushed, yeast and hops gathered, and the three friends sit down to enjoy the beer offering. They discuss the "force carbonation", a mysterious power within us all, to carbonate beer in a few hours rather than conditioning it for weeks in the bottle. The Dixie Cup, the Foam Rangers, and officer candidates for next year are also discussed. RK is informed of the future leadership of the club and that there is need

of a 'Secondary Fermenter'. He is shocked to learn of the Emperor Was Waz and the "Dark Side". All of those medals, all of the trophies have done him in. Winning the Templeton and Homebrewer of the Year so many times has made him unstoppable. He could win D-cup all by himself! Although he has hated it at times, he just can't give up being "the most



powerful man in homebrewing". He and his evil minion, the current Waz, Dark Brew, have devised a plan to never give up this power...

"Is the dark beer stronger, Master Birdwell?" asks RK.

"No. Not necessarily" answers Birdwell. "In fact, with a dry stout (BJCP cat 13c) like Guinness Draught, a starting gravity as low as 1.036, one can have. The same percentage of alcohol as the megaswills it would produce. Historically taxed on the percentage of alcohol in their beers have many breweries throughout the galaxy, been. Forced them to brew their session beers to a lower gravity, it has. The lack of adjuncts it is that increases the

mouthfeel and tricks the drinker, it does. Into thinking the beer is stronger. Perceived this way, most homebrews will be."

"But, very strong the dark beers can be" says Birdwell. "Beware the Russian Imperial Stouts (BJCP cat 13f). Powerful, they are. 1.075 - 1.095+ starting gravity, they have. Put a hurtin' on you they can. Rich and complex is their aroma and flavor, smooth and velvety is their texture, dark reddish-brown to jet black is their color. Brewed for Czars they were. Very careful the drinker must be, that he does not fall victim to this opaque temptation and consume too much."

"Will I be tempted to brew a dark beer, Master?" asks RK.

"Yes, temped to brew dark beers, we all have been" says Birdwell. "A misnomer there is that dark beers can cover up most flaws. Therefore, easy to brew they are perceived. Not the case. To brew a really great porter or stout, a killer recipe one must start with. But don't forget about water and mash ph. While true it is that dark grains will lower the mash ph, very dark these beers are and too

much all that dark grain can lower the mash ph, causing problems. Always check and adjust your mash ph to about 5.3, you must. In every beer you brew."

"But master, I was so busy worrying about the mash temperature on my last beer, I forgot all about the ph" cried RK.

"Yes, this one is too old to teach. Wander, his mind does. Not enough attention does he pay to where he is, or what he is brewing. He will be tempted to brew a dark beer, and ready he is not!" yelled Birdwell.

"I am ready to brew a dark beer!" insists RK "I am not afraid!"

"You will be, you will be" mumbles Birdwell.

FUN AT FIRST SUNDAY



First Sunday revelers at Richmond Arms



What you drinkin' that shit for Steve? Get yourself a GOOD beer dude!



Mike wistfully remembers his carefree days as a homebrewer as he listens to the details of the latest club crisis.

But, why do we compete?

Many homebrewers enter their first competition because of the push from their homebrew club. Entering a homebrew competition helps the sponsoring club financially while promoting the entering club for recognition (and maybe even promoting future memberships). The return is feedback on the entered beer in the form of multiple scoresheets, often from certified beer judges (see www.bjcp.org for information on beer judge sanctioning). Many others may enter just to see how their beer stacks up to the competition. Regardless the possible thrill of winning a ribbon or medal can be quite exciting, especially if you are in attendance at the awards ceremony. For some veteran competitors, competing can be as addictive as crack.

Heavy Medal

After you have been brewing awhile, especially if you target your beers for specific BJCP styles the medals are more likely to follow. But, the biggest rule for winning the most medals is to enter the most beers. There are a number of other strategies to garner more medals per brewday (check out my competition article in last July's Brewsletter). The highlights are: Parti-gyle Mashing, Split Batches, Two Batches/Same Day, Plan Your Brewing Schedule, Enter in Multiple Categories, Enter in Multiple Categories, Brew Meads and Ciders Too, Enter in Categories with Low Entry Counts, Enter the CORRECT Category, Enter in New Categories, Don't Forget About Specialty/

Experimental/ Historical, and Don't be Bashful.

Everyone cannot win

The saddest part of competition is not winning (this does NOT mean losing). Just because a beer doesn't medal doesn't mean that it was a bad beer. The beers that medal are oftentimes excellent representations of a style, sometimes even better than what you can buy on a store shelf, especially at large competitions such as the Dixie Cup. Sometimes a beer just misses the style. Sometimes there is really something wrong. Sometimes the judges just screw up. All of this should be well indicated on the scoresheet. Regardless, don't take this entirely at face value. The most important aspect is that YOU like it. But, if you do have concerns, by all means, seek out a trusted Foam Ranger at a meeting that will be sure to give you honest feedback.

Regardless, if the feedback that you get helps you make better beer then they are good. If competitions inspire you to make better beer and brew more often then they are great. If competitions allow you to win a few medals then they are awesome! Best of Luck!

Gotta Catch 'em All!

One thing you should be looking for in every issue of the Brewsletter are the things that aren't quite normal. Reality is only as real as Photoshop makes it! Did you catch the changes in this issue? Here's a hint: There are exactly three "Photoshop Moments" in this issue. Can you find them all? (If you get the print issue, they may be lost in copying process.)

Homebrewers Sweep Houston HP Marathon

Houston (AP) Race officials are still shaking their heads about the surprising winners of last month's Houston Marathon. Three relatively unknown runners: Charles Vallhonrat, Bev Blackwood and Bob Daugherty finished first, second and third respectively in the men's division of 26.2 mile race. All are described as homebrewers.

Initially race officials, as well as the general public, were skeptical when the three runners crossed the finish line long before the expected winners did. One even went so far as to declare "there must be some sort of Rose Ruiz thing going on here," referring to the unknown woman who won the 1980 Boston Marathon only to be disqualified when it was determined she had taken the subway rather than run the entire race.

However, an investigation following the Houston race determined that these three unknowns had indeed run the entire race. "We checked their chips and they had crossed all checkpoints. The back up cameras as well showed them to have run the whole course. Apparently these guys won fair and square!" said race director Al Koholik.

One of the runners, Bev Blackwood spoke for the three runners: "We're still stunned by the results!

When we heard that Gatorade had dropped its sponsorship at the last minute and had to be replaced with a beer company I felt we might have a chance. When the race began and I saw that Sierra Nevada's Bigfoot had replaced Gatorade I knew we had it sewn up. I mean, if it had been Tequila or Zima I don't think we would have won. With Bigfoot, I knew the only real competition would

(Continued on Next Page)



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(Continued from Previous Page)

be Charles, Bob and the Hash House Harriers. We have been training for such a race for years! At each water, I mean barleywine, stop we just got stronger, faster. I noticed that other racers began to get disoriented. Some even collapsed or turned around and ran in the wrong direction! Once the Hash House Harriers stopped at mile 24 to party, we realized we had it made... Each of us shattered our previous PR (Personal Record) by at least an hour!"

Race organizers are re-evaluating the wisdom of substituting a sports drink with a potent beer. Director Koholik concluded: "We can't let this happen next year. When three guys with beer bellies beat fine athletes with washboard stomachs, Houston looks bad. Real bad. Changes are going to have to be made."



**Foam Rangers
Announce Karel
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In order to help make up the club's recent shortfall in funds, A limited edition 2005 pinup calendar featuring Karel Chaloupka will be sold at club meetings. Sure to be a sell-out, so Pre-order YOUR copy today!

(Continued from Page 2)

brought too many to name or even remember. But I do recall we ended up having a pretty nice horizontal flight of JW Lee's that Mike Heniff brought and some Samichlaus doppelbocks that Bev Blackwood and others shared. J. Gardner Biggs absolutely fail hopelessly in love with Lee's 1998 Vintage Ale. Ah, another convert! In addition I had the opportunity to meet some of the folks from Beaumont's Golden Triangle Club. They had come over for our party and invited the Rangers to a crawfish boil and beer tasting in Beaumont later this year. Since we have not done our Jennings, LA trip in a couple of years, it's a definite possibility.

A Twilight Zone like moment occurred for me when a guy came up and introduced me to his friend as the "Master American Lager Brewer." I thought he was joking, but he went on to talk about how outstanding my American Light lager had been. I remarked that I had brewed some lagers before, but with the exception of my Spocktoberfest they all both blew and sucked (to steal a Homerism). You'll read later about plan to dispose of my terrible Judge Lance Ito Imperial Pilsner at another time. Anyway, he continued to insist that I made great lagers including one that had one Best of Show at the Dixie Cup.

At last I realized that he had me confused with the KGB's own John Donaldson! And I thought I was wasted! Quickly I found John so that the guy could pay proper homage. The confused guy then insisted that John and I were twins and had been separated at birth! If we were, all I can say is, why didn't I inherit some of John's brewing talent?

As time passed and the party was supposed to have officially ended, even rarer beers surfaced. The one I recall most fondly was a bottle of Rodenbach

Alexander. As almost everyone knows, in one of history's great crimes against humanity, this wonderful cherry flavored Flanders Ale is no longer produced. Jimmy Paige had a bottle apparently won from Bev Blackwood in some sort of bet. Thanks Bev! Things at this point were getting very fuzzy but I remember some people driving new treasurer Kimi Cook's convertible around and other folks inspecting the inside of new Secondary Fermenter Rob Kolacny's new Honda. What was that all about? I'd like to conclude with a word of thanks for our long suffering spouses, or, as Lindsey "the Bionic Woman" Wagner says on a mattress commercial, sleep partners. I really enjoyed getting to meet these fine ladies. Understandably many do not come to our meetings or the Dixie Cup so it was great to put faces finally to names we have been hearing great things about for years. Our brewing hobby demands a very understanding and patient significant other. I watched many a devoted wife take home an inebriated husband, and though I do not know what was said in the privacy of the car or home later, none appeared too upset. We are fortunate to have y'all!

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