



The Foam Rangers Newsletter Urquell

All the beer that's fit to drink

January- Volume 30 Pints- Issue 1

**January
Meeting:**

**Porters
&
Stouts**

**Friday
January
16th**

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

**Can the new Waz
handle the fame?**

The Brewsletter Urquell

**The Official Foam Rangers
Zine**

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"Storge" West

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???

Competition Coordinator
??

Was Waz
Scott Dewalt

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**By Grand
Wazoo**

"Storge"
West

Out (of) The Wazoo

Sunday gatherings at pubs around the Houston area (preceded by occifer meetings), and who knows, the much maligned out of town pub crawl might be resurrected.

This year we will also continue to have some special commercial beers for calibration and analytical purposes at our meetings collected by our new Secondary Doak Proctor, but we will feature more homebrewed examples of each style as well. We also plan on at least one "homebrew only" meeting again featuring a wide assortment of our member's best kegged concoctions. Saturday brew ins at Defalcos like the one this past weekend will be pimped heavily so we can reach the greatest number of new homebrewers coming into Scotts place and I encourage everyone to stop by. Beers made at the brewins will make it to the meetings!

And with Rob's help as competition coordinator this year we can also encourage more newbies to enter. I have to admit I haven't been highly competitive in part because I hate to bottle, but I plan to be more active in that regard and maybe we can entice someone to give a demonstration of bottling options at a meeting - counter pressure v. beer gun v. cobrahead/racking cane, etc. Before returning our attention towards the new year

I'd also like to thank all of the past officers, especially last year's Waz Scott DeWalt, as well as T-Bob, Jimmy and everyone else that help out so much

I think it was Socrates that said "I drank what?!" I was really hoping to be impeached by now. I mean since you were all so nice to make me Waz I have been inundated by offers from royalty and displaced financial big-wigs in places like Nigeria, Russia and Liberia that want to share millions of dollars with me. Sadly they must be very busy as they haven't been back in touch since I sent them my bank account and social security details. So, I guess until President Mugabe finally transfers the \$2.5 million he promised into my depleted savings account or I am impeached you guys are stuck with me. Those of you that know me well were probably laughing your asses off when I agreed to take this on. Let's face it, I am one of those that often echoes Ken Rich's immortal words "it's just beer!"

Sure, I love reading the homebrew books and magazines each month. I also like to fine tune my brewing and believe me there remains a lot of room for fine tuning when it comes to my brewing. I also think we need to get more in touch with our homebrew roots, but in the end we need to have fun doing all of this! So my aim this year is to promote homebrewing for its pure enjoyment - enjoyment of the process, the results and the great people that homebrewing attracts.

Watch your email for special Foam-ranger events and make sure you are getting updates by email as we plan to keep the calendar full. In February we will once again begin monthly first

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**Secondary
Fermenter**

**Doak
Proctor**

Ramblings from the the Secondary

Hardly Know 'Er!

So, how many times will we here that on Friday? I have no idea, but it keeps getting funnier every time, doesn't it? Yes, this is the month we dive into the heart of darkness and find those delicious porters and stouts that tantalize us with roasty, coffee, chocolate, malty, hoppy mystery.

So, just what the heck is a porter, anyhow? Too many folks around these parts think a porter is little more than a dilute stout. Once the darling of the London working-man pub, one can hardly find a porter available in even the most well-stocked beer stores or bars. There are different stories about how a porter was born, but the truth is no one really knows. The most prevalent and accepted tale includes the legend of the "three threads," a blend of three different beers. However, no one seems to know what those three beers were like or why it took so long for someone to start brewing this favorite blend in just one wort. Regardless of how they came about, we certainly know how the old porters died out. Advances in malting techniques gave rise to clean, pale malt for golden ales that shimmered brilliantly in smooth, mass-produced glass. At the same time, those quaffers looking for roastier beers began leaning more toward the rapidly rising stouts that had appeared on the scene. Porters were caught in the crossfire and were banished to the history books. While we may call some beers "porter" today, we can be certain they are nothing like the smoky, sour, bitter brews that first bore that name.

So, what do we have? In our American obsession with taxonomy, the BJCP recognizes three styles of porter: Brown, Robust, and Baltic. Your brown porter is

probably the closest thing to what the 18th Century East Ender would have enjoyed and was born from those remnants.

Brown porters are lower in gravity, alcohol, IBUs, and color than other porters, but don't let that fool you. One drinking a good brown porter will enjoy a beer full of flavors and aromas that typically include dark chocolate, mild caramel, mild fruit notes, and a touch of English hops. Often, the complex flavor belies the lighter body. This is an excellent session beer for those that prefer the maltier side.

Robust porters have become much more popular in the new world, though. With the roastier, more bitter character, many commercial and homebrewed examples are virtual stouts. In fact, if you ask your most educated connoisseurs, they will likely tell you that Robust Porters differ from many stouts only by a matter of degree (or an addition of roasted, unmalted barley). Coffee and darker roasted malt character is more prevalent than in Brown Porters, and hop character can be. Alcohol content can reach as high as 6.5% ABV but can be under 5%, so you may have anything between a session beer and a mild ass-whooper. With all the interpretations found on the market, this is the most difficult style to pin down.

Baltic Porters are fairly new to the competition and American scene but have been brewed in the Baltics for some time. Take a Brown Porter, cross it with a Schwartzbier, and raise it to the complexity and potency of a Russian Imperial Stout, and you will come close to the rich, smooth, ridiculously complex Baltic Porter. A good example should be filled with dark malt and fruit flavors and aromas, but restrained on roastiness and hops. It

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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



Scrivener

The G-lover

December is the time of festive cheer, bah hum buggery, egg nog, and the Houston Homebrew Christmas Party kindly hosted at St. Arnold's Brewery. What's not to love about a pot luck luncheon supplied by beer fanatics that make things like Guinness Stout Beer Bread Pudding. I don't know if that specifically was there, but one of you thought about it.

The Christmas party marks a special time for Foam Rangers, when the officers so gleefully elected the month before officially accept their positions. Wait you're saying, isn't scrivener an officer position? Where's the new guy? Well, "Hello, I'm G-Lover...and...I'm a habitual volunteer" Is it the fame, the money, the power? No, because I don't get any of that. I think it's the adrenaline rush of the deadlines which I am even now sprinting to beat.

I'm not the only ~~sucker~~ gentleman who's repeating this year. If you read the front cover Emil Campos is still your Brewsletter Editor. Rolland Pate is still your Purser and he wants you to pay your dues! November's meeting I found out why such a cold month is reserved for IPA's, a style I associate with warm baseball seasons. That is how you get everyone around for officer elections.

Waz Scott Dewalt mounted the cooler to give his final speech to cheers of "four more beers", which is exactly how long he promised to continue in the position if re-elected. Insults, threats, blackmails, schemes, coups and taunts were thrown around for near fifteen minutes to secure the respected of the oft-declined position as the Most Powerful Man in Home Brewing, the Foam Rangers Grand Wazoo. In the end the beloved Secondary Fermenter George "Storge" West, the Topless Homebrewer himself ~~lost~~ won out against no comers. Being pushed into what many consider the most important position in the club, that of secondary/beer supplier was Doak Proctor. Years of practice serving at St. Arnolds Brewery have prepared Doak to smash his way behind the counter of DeFalco's to serve a concentrated crowd of skeptical loud mouthed drunks. Storge set a high bar this year for exotic and hard to get beers and we can only hope Doak can shoulder the weight of our expectations and the new bowling ball bottle opener added to the chain he must lug with him.

But enough about last month because I can't remember much more about it, other than the brew-in I did that three of you showed up for. I don't feel bitter or shunned, I'm just saying I noticed. My goal was a Sarsa-

parilla Soda Braggot of about 3% ABV with plenty of esters and phenols. Just like Spinal Tap it went to 11 and I'm waiting a few months to spring this one at a meeting. Landry promised to throw in four ounces of Summit the moment I left my kettle and Da Birdman left in protest of my Hopelessly Hopless brewing. I will note however that DeFalco's is now carrying packaged heather and my influence along with a hops crisis is finally gaining influence.

St. Arnolds was packed with Foam Rangers, Bay Area Mashtronauts, KGB, CIA and I think a couple of Golden Triangles. I've said it once and I'll say it again, there's something dangerous about a Foam Ranger in a brewery of free beer. I was showing off my youngest to everyone and the brewery to her. She was really uninterested in anything she couldn't sink her five new teeth into. How ungrateful. My parents never took me to a brewery. Out of the womb anyways. That's another story.

Delighting in several Sailing Santas, a wonderful fifty/fifty glass of Elissa and Sailing Santa winter special I was saddled up at the the bar with Collin Birdwell. He's loud, he's obscure and he's got opinions. I couldn't find a reason not to drink with the guy. After pub crawling with the 1-2 punch combo of Steve Moore and Sean Lamb your tastes in brew buddies changes. We sat talking comics and games until we heard there was a decoction challenge outside. One of the better known, to others, members of the KGB was offering a single recipe in four decoction varieties. I learned a little of that goes a long way. I also learned Benny can do more than just warp your mind with weird ass physics talk, he can make some awesome mead. If only I could remember it better. I what I do remember most about that limited edition honey wine was my wife's reaction, "Why didn't you save me any!?"

Barleywine and spirits of Christmas Present arrived, the brewery closed and it was time to eat again. "Putz" Moore isn't just a harsh beer critic, he's also a foodie so he picked a good 'Hispanic-American' place nearby. The food was great, the beer was imported, half of us remember what we ordered and nobody complained about what they got. Especially Rob Kolacny. I think a goat with a tortilla on it's head, mischief in it's eye and some salsa would have been fine for the Red Kneck. He was definitely feeling the Christmas Cheer. Colin spent his time give the facilities a careful review. "If you have to throw up for an hour, I recommend it". Fortunately his Godfather the Mr. Moore looked in on him time to time...from the next stall.

Shortly thereafter, the transfer of the Fez being complete, Storge began issuing edict after edict in the e-mails, delaying this meeting, speeding up that officers meeting, commands to compete and brow beating Doak for better beers at gettogethers. Yes, his will not be a gentle lordship and all will feel a hearty crack of the whip. It's the Shang-hai conscriptions of new members I look forward to. Boy will they be surprised! When Spring rolls around, topless homebrewing for all!



Treasurer

Rolland
 "Pyramid
 Scheming"
 Pate

Mary Henderson
 Mike Heniff
 Karl Herrmann
 Paul Levy
 Joe Lindsey
 David Lupin
 Carl "Zombie Brewer" & Cecil Minion
 Kris Morris
 Rolland & Melissa Pate
 Joe & Lori Perjak
 Doak & Charie Procter
 Ron Solis

Thank you all for your continued support of the Foam Rangers. If your name is not listed here you have not renewed your membership for 2009.

It is that time of year again. The first of the year is a time for renewal, not only of those long forgotten resolutions from last year but also your Foam Ranger Membership. We have had a few people join and/or renew early this year so we are off to a pretty good start of getting everyone renewed again for 2009.

First of all we would like to welcome the new members who have signed up for 2009.

Adam & Jen Adams
 Susan & Ken Armand
 Roger Barnaby
 Patrick Bertocino
 Tom Brazan
 Jorge Frank
 Daniel Hadsel
 Ron Haluzan
 Bob Kochman
 Daryl Maretka
 Joe Mims
 Jamie Todd

Second we want to recognize and thank our existing members who have decided to renew their membership for 2009. Continued membership provides, among other things, the funds we need to have the wonderful food and beer to share at our monthly meetings.

John Adams
 Scott and Alison Birdwell
 David Cato
 Benny Dacres
 Fred Eckhardt
 Leroy Gibbins
 Dave "Just Dave" Girard
 Taylor Goodhart
 Michael & Jennifer Head

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HOUSTON'S FIRST MICROBREWERY

Secondary from page 3

should be sweet, but not cloying; rich, but not heavy; complex, but not muddled; and warm, but not harsh. Well aged examples will treat the drinker to a nutty, sherry-like complexity. Often brewed with a lager yeast, Baltic Porters tend to be devoid of esters, but may have a very low level to complement and accentuate the dark fruit character from the malts. Alcohol levels can range up to 9.5% ABV (and often do), so this is not a beer for just playing around. The only bad thing about Baltic Porters is the difficulty most folks in these parts have in finding a good one. Unless you happen to make it over to Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, or nearby areas, your best bet on finding a tasty Baltic Porter is to brew one (or hit up a couple, select Foam Rangers).

Unlike with porters, the American market is chock full of stouts. Likewise, just about anyone reading this will be much more familiar with them (so let's be a bit more brief). The BJCP currently recognizes six (yes, six) substyles of stout: Dry Stout, Sweet Stout, Oatmeal Stout, Foreign Extra Stout, American Stout, and Russian Imperial Stout. If there is one thing that distinguishes porters from stouts, it's the roasted, unmalted barley. You can get quite a few arguments on this point, but many well-educated brewers and beer connoisseurs agree that a stout just needs to have roasted barley.

Dry Stouts are fairly easily summed up in three words: Guinness, Murphy's, and Beamish. If that doesn't tell you what a Dry Stout is, I don't know what will. Just in case, though, you are looking for something (wait for it) dry and bitter, but not harsh. In fact, your well-known and better Dry Stouts are mild in flavor, aroma, and alcohol. While fairly light in body, Dry Stouts still provide a creamy mouthfeel that satisfies and refreshes.

Sweet Stouts are, oddly enough, sweeter. In fact, some can be downright SWEET and further sweetened with lactose (often called "Milk Stouts"). Sweet Stouts also can be quite roasty (although they need not be). While hop bitterness may be apparent, you need to look for another beer if you want significant hop flavor or aroma.

Oatmeal Stouts are something of a variation on Sweet Stouts, with a healthy dose of oats to the malt bill. Most brewers will draw up a bill that includes around 5-10% oats, and some will toast them for an extra twist. Typically on the drier side of the Sweet Stout Range, Oatmeal Stout drinkers also enjoy a silky, full mouthfeel that straight barley just cannot provide.

Foreign Extra Stout is a fairly broad category and is, essentially, where you put your kicked up Dry and Sweet Stouts. Originally brewed for the export market, Foreign Extra is to stout what IPA is to English pale ales. That's about that.

American Stout is something of a newcomer and what happens when we Yankees take hold of something. So, what is it? Well, it's anyone's guess. However, we know it's roastier, hoppier, more potent, and bigger in every way than any other stout substyle (except for the one that made it to the Czars). Beyond that, it's anyone's guess.

Last, but not least, we have the Russian Imperial Stouts. Originally brewed for the Baltic and Russian market, this is a big, complex, malty, chewy beer than will whoop your butt if you give it the chance. This beer is stout's answer to the Baltic Porter and shares many characteristics, with the main difference being that RISs are more roasty and tend to be even more intense than than a Baltic Porter.

There you have it. Enjoy!

Waz from page 2

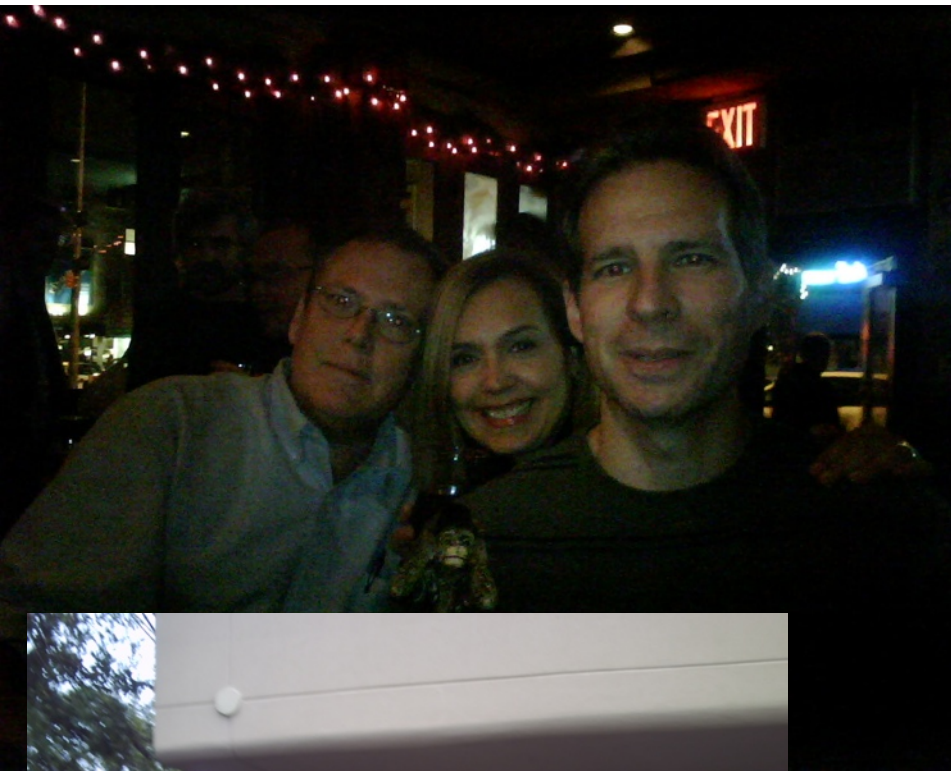
before, during and after our events. We have a great line up of officers for 2009 including the oversized leprechaun, hip-hop artists and gruit maker Mr. G-Lover who remains our semi-lucid Scrivener, as well as Rolland Madoff-Pate returning for another stint as Purser and Foamranger Ponzi-scheme artist (remember to find him and pay your dues this Friday or the entire club might collapse! - we might turn socialist and start charging for meetings!), Emil who graciously also agreed to remain as Brewsletter Editor because he like Ted Turner and Rupert Murdoch knows where the power really lies and of course Scott

Birdwell who remains as always our host, benefactor and all around Bozo Head of Special Events.

I could go on and on about everyone that makes this club so special, but I am getting old and probably senile so don't feel too bad if I didn't. Come by and introduce yourself again at the upcoming meeting and I'll buy you one of those fizzy drinks that seems to have killed off my brain cells.

Stay tuned...

Random Pics



See ya next month for the return of the picture pages



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**The Foam Rangers Homebrew Club
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**The January club meeting is:
8 p.m. Friday,
January 16th
at Defalco's**

**I WANT TO BE SOMEBODY!
SIGN ME UP TO BECOME A MEMBER OF
THE FOAM RANGERS HOMEBREW CLUB!**

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