



THE FOAM RANGERS

Brewsletter Urquell

Competition Information

Tyson Schindler, Competition Coordinator

OpFerm - registration closed, for both entries and judges. Judging continues with the final session on 2/20. See: <https://opferm.cialers.org/>

Bluebonnet - registration closed

Judging 2/5 - 3/6

Event 3/19-20 (awards ceremony 3/20)

See: <http://www.bluebonnetbrewoff.org/>

National Homebrew Competition—Registration opens soon!! 2/17 - 3/3

*Note - changes this year - \$29/entry!

Shipping window 3/29-4/9

No longer multiple sites for first round and then a final round, but a single round, single site (Denver)

See: <https://www.homebrewersassociation.org/national-homebrew-competition/>

Lunar Rendezbrew - Registration opens 2/22

Entry Fee: \$10/entry (cap of 16 paid entries/person and 450 total paid entries)

All entries must be received by 3/28

<http://mashtonauts.com/rendezbrew/>

February Meeting Speaker—Nick Zeigler!

We will be hosting Nick Zeigler, vice president of research and development at Yakima Chief Hops (YCH). Nick will give a talk based on the latest research regarding topics such as how to make excellent hoppy beer, intra-varietal hop variance (variety vs lots), hop survivables, brewing techniques to accentuate beer flavor on positive hop character, yeast management, kegging/packaging tips and tricks, and more!

Nick will have give a presentation followed by a Q&A session. Club members can submit questions to Dave (davewfrank@gmail.com) ahead of time.

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Your 2021 Officers

- Grand Wazoo—Dave Frankowski
- Wazoo Whisperer—Hank Keller
- Secondary—Kelsey Whitebay
- Secondary Secondary—Mauricio Montoya
- Treasurer—Patrick Elder
- Scribner—Drew Domalakes
- Competition Coordinator—Tyson Schindler
- Dixie Cup Coordinator—Paul Porter
- IT Genius—Phil Verdieck
- Brewsletter Editor—Megan Frankowski

Upcoming Events

- Feb 19th—Virtual Monthly Meeting
- Mar. 7th—Officer Meeting

In Memorium—John Adams

By Chris Todd

John Adams was a founding father of the Foam Rangers. Like Hamilton was for the U.S., John was there at the beginning, and was active up until the day he was taken from us too soon. Man, sometimes I wish history did not repeat itself.

John passed away the day after the January 2021 club zoom meeting, which he attended.

Along with Scott Birdwell and a few others, John founded the “Houston Homebrewer’s Guild”, which was soon renamed “The Foam Rangers”. He maintained a quiet, almost parental, pride in the club throughout his life. John was a fixture at the early monthly Brew-Ins in front of Defalco’s when it was on Morning-side. His wit and conviviality contributed to the good times on that hot and sunny sidewalk. He was a correspondingly welcome contributor to the zoom meetings of the past year.



Early on, his mother had him tested, and (like so many of us Foam Rangers) he was found to be a genius! As a result, John joined Mensa at age 14. Active in the local chapter, he once thought it would be a good idea to host both a Mensa meeting, and a Foam Rangers meeting at the same time (hey, he was a genius!). Needless to say, the Foam Ranger brilliance deteriorated quickly with the usual copious imbibing, and we did not mix well... Nevertheless, this kind of crossover inclusiveness typified John’s personality.

John’s job took him around the world for extended periods of time (years). The longest was the fifteen years he spent in England, where he met Helena Cheng, who was to become his wife. When he returned, he was the happiest any of us ever saw him. Obviously, Helena was the reason and, as we came to know her, we could understand why. Her effervescence was a marvelous counterpoint to John’s exceedingly dry humor. They made a terrific couple.

Resuming his participation in the activities he had paused while abroad, John once again regularly attended Foam Ranger meetings and the Dixie Cup. Even though he could never be convinced to be an officer in the club, he clearly relished being an active member. (Yes, I wrote “active member” – go ahead and snicker. Oh jeez, “Snicker? I hardly know her!” – You guys are like Pavlov’s Homebrew Club!).



John’s focus extended beyond homebrewing and smart people. He was also in the Wine Club as long as he had been in the Foam Rangers. He and Helena hosted their meetings on occasion, and ventured on many of their vineyard trips. When they traveled, they usually had an eye on the breweries and vineyards in the area. These trips often led to an increase in the bottle count of the wine cellar in their house. I once asked where the beer from a trip was and John informed me that since it needed to be consumed fresh, it had not made the trip back. I’ll have to use that one myself!

He had a wide range of interests and pursued many in great depth. He could speak knowledgeably on disparate subjects, and had hands on experience with pursuits that were unexpected. Because he was not vain or boastful, it was often with some surprise that you would learn, for example, that the house he and Helena built was one of the most environmentally friendly and energy efficient homes in Houston. Or that he was an avid organic gardener, or that he rode in the MS 150 frequently, or that

he was a member of an association of individual investors, or ..., or ...

[John Adams Obituary - Bellaire, TX \(dignitymemorial.com\)](https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/John-Adams)

The family's current request is for donations to the MS Society in memory of John

Ramblings of a Grand Wazoo: He is **not** a cat

Dave Frankowski, Wazoo

Uhhhh... can you hear me, judge? I'm prepared to go forward with it (the Brewsletter). I'm here live. [I'm not a cat](#)

It's February and the club is still standing. I feel like I deserve an award. I was extremely pleased with our first meeting and all the great brewing knowledge we gleaned from Jamil Zainasheff. I was also quite happy with how respectful everyone was during the Q&A. Apparently, other clubs don't do so well when it comes to Q&A (e.g., constantly talking over each other). I was also very happy with the thoughtful questions that were provided to me ahead of time and posed in real time. The February meeting with Nick Zeigler, VP of research and development at Yakima Chief Hops should also be illuminating.

Apparently, there is some sort of holiday this month celebrating "love" and "romance". I don't know why people think President's Day is about love and romance, but oh well. Apparently, Kelsey is a big fan of President's Day and is putting together a custom commemorative six pack for members who have paid their dues. The mix looks great (Samuel Smith's Organic Chocolate Stout, 512's Cascade Cream Stout w/ Chili, Founders' Blushing Monk, and Breckenridge's Strawberry Sky) and would make all presidents (like yours truly) proud.

Finally, thanks to all who have paid their club dues. I know it is not easy given 1) many are in a COVID-induced state of financial peril and 2) club meetings are virtual. As you know, the club incurs expenses even without in person meetings and I truly appreciate those who can help us through this process. I am hopeful that others will be able to follow suit once the hardships from the COVID-19 pandemic have lessened. In any case, if you're able, please toss a coin to your Witcher ([payment portal here](#)).

Questions and answers: Do you have a brewing/beer related question? Would you like it answered? Email your questions to davefrank@gmail.com for a chance at an answer at the next homebrew club meeting!

394th Foam Ranger's Court

Recording of this hearing or live stream is prohibited.

Violation may constitute contempt of court and result in a fine of up to \$500 and a requirement to attend Hank Keller's next pool party.



The First 100 Beers

Hank Keller, The Waz Whisperer, Waz Waz

Well Rangers, I've hit a personal milestone... I brewed my 100th batch of homebrew on 2/1/21! To celebrate the occasion, it was a big 'ol American Barleywine with plenty of Centennial hops (sg 1.105).

While getting ready for the big day, I looked back on the homebrew journey that took me to this point. I've brewed alone, as well as with my neighbors and fellow Foam Rangers. I went through different phases during this journey – English beer phase, IPA phase, Big Beer phase, Lager phase, and probably several others. I have been lucky enough to have some amazing mentors through this journey, but the biggest influence was probably a fellow Ranger (who coincidentally lived across the street from me), Jeff Reilly. He was a prolific brewer, who was very generous with his beers and brewing advice. If you've ever been to one of his tastings, you'll know what a flight of 7-8 Russian Imperial Stouts feels like!

Full disclosure, I did brew some in the late '90s when I lived in Delaware, but I don't count those as they were mainly extract with some adjunct. I brewed my first batch of homebrew here in TX in September 2011, which was an attempt at a pale ale, but was told by Jimmy "The Tongue" Paige that it was more of ESB than Pale Ale. This one actually got a bronze medal at Dixie Cup in 2012!



“So what’s next? Obviously, the next 100 beers; but I’m going to go back to the basics a bit more”

Throughout the 10 years it took me to brew these 100 beers, there were times where I brewed lots, as well as time that I didn't brew for months. But the pull of the aroma of sweet wort from the kettle coming to a boil always brought me back! Experimentation is a key with homebrewing – trying different processes, ingredients, and styles. Use watermelon in beer? YEP. Star anise or coriander? At least a half a dozen times. Extended boil? Up to 4 hours. Heard of Adambier? SURE – got one in a keg now. Ever blend 2 or 3 kegs of beer? YUP – some turned out great, others... well, not so.

So what's next? Obviously, the next 100 beers; but I'm going to go back to the basics a bit more. Brew some more ales and stouts, maybe an experimental beer or 3. But whatever the future of brewing holds, I'll make sure that it's interesting!

Advice to newer brewers: Don't be afraid to try new ingredients or techniques; don't be afraid to ask for help; don't stress about making mistakes – learn from them (and I've made A LOT of mistakes).

Herbs and Other Additions

Mauricio Montoya, Secondary

We all know the purity law (Malt, hops, water, yeast, blah, blah, blah). The Bavarians are known for sticking to what we all know as the *Reinheitsgebot*. But what if I were to tell you that the supposed purity of beer has been challenged by the same Bavarians for almost five hundred years now?

If we suddenly were able to go back to the dark days of the Middle Ages, we might find stuff like sour, smoky, herbal concoctions served up as beer. Bavarians and other ancient people like Sythians, Thracians, Tartars, used dozens of other additives, spices, herbs, barks, etc. in their beers. The definition of beer was quite different from what most people, even those more -or- less versed in these matters, would imagine them to be. The point of using different ingredients was to come up with some new property or flavor to the brew. Not very different from what we do nowadays.

Although, herbs and other things may not be the most appetizing way to make a beer different, a glance into the past can serve as a starting point for a number of interesting and quite delicious beers.

Let's be honest, hops are relatively new. Hops began to be used in beer ~1100 CE (Common Era) in Europe, and much more recently in the British Isles. The modern way of using hops in beer eventually took over, but they used to co-exist side-by-side for a while. Later to be banned due to the Reinheitsgebot.

Some additives have survived i.e., the cloudy spiced Belgian wheat (wit) or the German local wheat beer (weisse) which is still served with a dash of syrup made from an herb called woodruff. While in other places ales such as *gose* and *kotbuss* still linger. Craft brewing also has had a deeper effect on beer and the ingredients used. Anchor Brewing pioneered spiced holiday beers and now they are served by many breweries, large and micro alike. Bruce Williams in Scotland has resurrected a number of beers with pine, elderberry, and kelp flavorings (even mustard beers and pickle beers are being produced which – let's be honest – still seems very strange to me).

What about fruit?

Same applies. You can use pretty much any fruit you can think of in brewing. It's important to keep an eye on the beer itself especially in competitions. Judges do like to detect a "beer in there somewhere,". Outside of competitions, you have more leeway as regular drinkers may not make such demands. Light bodied beers work better with most fruits, but assertive beers can work as well if proper consideration is applied.

Bitter beers tend to fight the sweet and sour character of most fruit. Sharp roasty flavors from malts like chocolate fight with the fruit, but as the cheery stouts will show us, there can be exceptions for every rule.

Fruit beers require a modified concept of balance. Malt and hops are usually the big players in a beer (sweetness vs bitter), however, with fruit, balance is more of a sweet/acid thing, with bitterness and even tannins supplying the background of flavors. When it comes to fruit, without enough acidity, fruit can get lost (also known as flabbiness). This can be usually adjusted with the use of various acids such as citric or malic acid (acid from apples which tends to be softer of the two). Lactic acid may also be used and it will add a yogurt like tang.

How to use them in brewing?

For fruit, it's recommended to use perfectly ripe fruit and in sufficient quantities that will produce a complex and deep beer. Unfortunately, these conditions aren't exactly easy to find for any brewer (small or large). Workarounds for such situations can be found by using fruit extracts, which still adds a small amount of real fruit taste without a lot of fuss. Blending of different extracts can allow better taste. You can also add a different fruit altogether to find the right balance and add depth (cherries can be added to raspberry beers or elderberry to cherry beer to intensify color without adding any detectable flavor, etc).

Some fruits may not translate in flavor as expected, since they may ferment into different flavors during the brewing process. For example, peach beer may be better brewed with apricots than peaches themselves. Blueberries seem to fade to nothing, although cooked blueberries have more of recognizable "blueberry" flavor than fresh. Strawberries lose all their color and much of their flavor within a month or two. There is also the issue of carbohydrates that complicate the brewing process. Pectin for example can form a starchy haze especially if the fruit is cooked prior to adding it to the beer. And some fruits have sugars that ferment very slowly which can impact the final product (especially for bottled conditioned beers).

For fruit, the best way to incorporate fruit is to add it to the fermenter. Some suggest is best during secondary fermentation for those that do it as the yeast at that point should be strong, the conditions acidic/alcoholic, and nutrients depleted sufficiently to keep invading microbes at bay.

The "how?" for using whole fruit is to freeze it first (outside of the obvious benefit of conservation) this step ruptures the cell walls and allows the fruit to release its flavors into the beer more rapidly. Keep in mind that freezing does not kill the microflora on the fruit's surface. Before using in the brew process thaw the fruit in a sanitized container and then add to the beer. Fruit concentrates should be treated in the same manner as fresh or frozen fruit and they tend to be stronger in flavor.

What about herbs?

Herbs may be dry hopped after primary fermentation. You could also add them during the boil as it is more sanitary, but flavors may be lost. Right at the end of boil is normally the best time to add them as it helps preserve aroma and avoids extracting too many harsh substances or unexpected flavors.

There is also the idea of using Potions, aka Tinctures. This technique uses alcohol to solubilize and sterilize the aromatic components of spices and herbs. This is usually a very effective way of adding spice and/or herb flavor and aroma to the beer while reducing your risk of infection or harsh flavors.

How to make a tincture?

- Pour enough vodka (or other alcohol >25% ABV) to cover over the spices
- Seal the container and allow to soak for a week or two in a dark, shake regularly
- After a week, taste it and adjust to flavor by adding more spices, if necessary
- Filter the tincture by using a fine filter, like a coffee filter, to remove all the spices
- Use a pipette or small syringe and add graduated small amounts of the tincture to your beer. Document your results for future use.
- Based on your findings you can add the tincture to the beer during bottling (add the same amount to each bottle) or to the fermenter for which you will need to scale up your tincture addition.

And now for a recipe...

Herbs and Other Additions (cont. from pg. 5)

Cherry Chocolate Porter (Featured in July/August 2007 Zymurgy magazine)

Original Gravity: 1.075

ABV: 6.0-7.2%

Color: 38 SRM, deep reddish brown

Bitterness: 30

Ingredients for 5 gal (19 L):

2.5 lb (1.1 kg) Pilsner malt (1.6°L)

10.0 lb (4.5 kg) Munich malt (8°L)

0.75 lb (340 g) Dark crystal malt (80°L)

1.0 lb (454 g) Melanoidin malt (33°L)

0.5 lb (227 g) Carafa® (röstmalz) malt (470°L)

0.7 oz (18 g) Northern Brewer pellets, 8% a.a., 20 IBU (60 min)

0.5 oz (13 g) Northern Brewer pellets, 8% a.a., 10 IBU (30 min)

5.0-10.0 lb previously frozen sour cherries

0.5-1.0 lb roasted cocoa nibs, crushed lightly

European ale yeast; Belgian or lager a possibility, too

Directions:

Mash 1 hour at 152°F (67°C). Ferment the beer through the primary. Then to the secondary, add frozen sour cherries and cocoa nibs. Allow the beer to stay on the fruit and cocoa nibs for at least two weeks—a month or two is better. Rack to another secondary, allow to settle before bottling or kegging. Note: hop calculations are based on pellets. Figure on 25% more if using whole hops.

Mini-mash substitution: Substitute 5.5 lbs of amber dry extract for the Munich, and mash the rest of the ingredients for an hour at 150°F (66°C), add the drained, sparged wort to the extract.

Officer Meeting Minutes: 2/7/2021

Drew Do malakes, Scribner

To start out Dave gave an update on getting the website re-vamped, stay tuned Rangers! Kelsey announced February's Beer of the month will be a Valentine's variety 4-pack to do some beer blending and also drink with chocolate. Beers will be available to pick up for members who have paid their 2021 Dues (Note the incentive to pay your dues). This system of pick up and distribution will continue each month through the year with a new set of comparably delicious but less expensive beers! Cheers to Kelsey for being so creative! Also if you like small games of chance and are in the market for beer paraphernalia or potentially even a gift certificate to Farm Boy, each paid up member will receive a raffle ticket at the distribution and will also be given the opportunity to purchase... even more raffle tickets. The raffles will be focused on fewer items but better quality and you must be present at the monthly meeting to win (Note the incentive to pay your dues and attend monthly meetings). For those of you wondering, we did not forget about Barleywine month. It has been officially moved to November, with the hopes of in-person meetings returning at that point so we're able to share the cost and ABV of the bottles with each other.

I know at this point a lot of you are saying to yourselves... "Raffles, Valentine's variety 4-packs... I should just pay my dues right now and sign on to the February meeting on the 19th! But, you know what would really sell me... if I could listen to a talk about hops and the current state of the brewing industry from one of the leading experts". Well, you are in luck! Dave was able to snag Nick Zeigler from Yakima Chief Hops to present at the February meeting! So please bring some questions for Nick and you can stay for the February beer share blending experience of a life time! (Note the incentive to pay your dues and attend the February meetings and Prep some questions for Nick). At the time of the officer's meeting, 17 people had paid for 2021 and for reference, we had 36 in 2020. Looking forward to seeing you at the February meeting!



All things Monies

Patrick Elder, Treasurer

The Foam Rangers

The Foam Rangers Homebrew Club is the oldest homebrew club in the Houston metropolitan area. We meet every third Friday of each month at 7PM at rotating breweries in the Houston area (see the club events page for location), except for October, which is the month of world famous Dixie Cup.

Membership

\$40/year—Individual

\$60/year—Family

Early Renewal: \$35/\$55

Just like that nearly-fake company listed in the back of your comic book that will sell you 2 Llamas to breed at home yourself...

WE HAVE A MAILING ADDRESS AGAIN!

No solicitations please.

The Foam Rangers Homebrew Club
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Reminder: Please pay your 2021 dues!

The Foam Rangers

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