



# THE FOAM RANGERS Newsletter Urquell

September 2023 Volume 43 Issue 9



September 16th  
Ovinnik Brewing  
7201 Wynnpark  
Houston, TX 77008  
1 pm until 3 pm

This Month's Styles:  
Oktoberfest/Märzen

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Next Up!

Ovinnik Brewing!



**OVINNIK**  
BREWING

"Safe At Home!"

Beer Tasting!

★ Oktoberfest Beers!

## Out (of) The Wazoo

Rangers,

We're all thinking it, OVINNIK IS HERE!!!

Congratulations to Janine and Phil for opening their doors to the public Labor Day weekend. I know a number of Rangers were there to support them and we look forward to having our upcoming meeting (and hopefully more) at their location this coming weekend.

This is ANOTHER Foam Ranger to Professional Brewer story we love to see. We are all so excited for this new brewery that they have created.



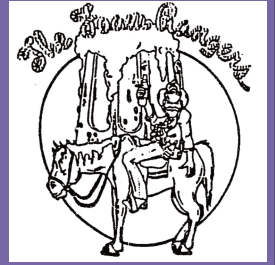
And continuing to discuss the upcoming meeting, OKTOBERFEST is here! If you haven't seen your grocery stores flooding the aisles with it, you don't know what you're missing. I even saw a seasonal Athletic Brewing NA Oktoberfest beer being





# FROM THE EDITOR

## HOME, AGAIN, AT LAST!



It will have been four years this month since the Foam Rangers last had a “permanent home!” That was our last meeting at the old DeFalco’s in September 2019 BC (Before COVID). Actually, that was technically DeFalco’s Version 5.0 - our fifth and final main shop from 1971 - 2019. Ah, but I digress. . . (and, I do it so well!). Anyway, since then, we have been a floating crap game, homebrew gypsies, meeting where we could - members’ homes and (mostly) local breweries. And, of course, there was that pandemic shutdown that has killed so many businesses and organizations. But, like a bad penny, we’re back! And, thanks to staunch, rock-steady members Janine & Phil, we have a new home: Ovinnik Brewing is a reality! We are having our first meeting this month at their new brewery! A few notes here are in order. First, we should make a spe-

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cial effort to thank our host breweries for allowing us to impose upon them for our meetings. It would have been difficult to survive without their support. Perhaps, it is time to revive our Second Sunday brewery visits. Minimal effort to set up and people can come and go as they please. No general business to conduct, just a nice social hour or two!. (Actually, I guess we did use these as officer meetings. . .) Anyway, I think that it would only be right to acknowledge the time, effort and dedication to our stalwart members: Hank, Janine, Phil, Doak & Charie, Erik, Will, Patrick, Paul (x 2) and new “stalwarts” Hayden, Robert & Rosie, etc. for refusing to allow this club to fold like so many have in the past three or four years. I imagine I have omitted some important folks here. I apologize in advance for the oversight. I’ve been away for three years now. Too long! I’ll make it to a meeting eventually! Meanwhile, how sweet it is to be home, again! And, how I wish I could join you! - Scott

*The Foam Ranger Brewsletter Urquell* is published quasi-monthly by the Foam Rangers Homebrew Club. The editor is grateful for any articles or photos (Puleeze!). Brewsletter Editor: Scott “Was Bozo” Birdwell (sales@defalcos.com)

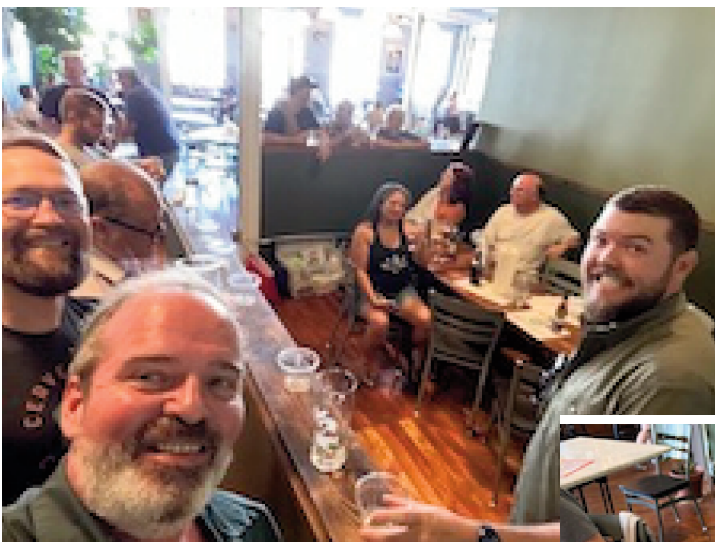


# ABOUT LAST MONTH

(Special Thanks to Rosie Crowder for Taking Notes)

The August meeting took place at Equal Parts Brewing in the Heights. The Beer of the Month was Czech Lager (Equal Parts Pilsner Resov (in varying pour styles), Galveston Bay Kraus Czech, Pilsner Urquell, Czechvar). We eventually had about 20 folks in attendance, including three new members! Ahh! Fresh blood! Beer was tasted, opinions were expressed, and, verily, the BS flowed freely! In other words, it was a typical Foam Ranger meeting, only with more people (yea!). A raffle was held and only “somewhat” sucked - Foamy shirts and AB InBev (queue Star Wars “Imperial March” theme) steins. Some concerns were expressed with current club communications possibly not being received by all members. Discussed communication platforms (Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, email, Slack).

Members are all anxiously awaiting the grand opening of Ovinnik Brewing! It’s time to begin thinking about club nominations for next year’s positions (Waz, Secondary, Treasurer, Scrivener). Attendees were reminded that for the first time in forty years, there would be no Dixie Cup this fall. The good news is that Hank will take helm for DC XL in 2024. He is desperately seeking Susan, er, I mean “volunteers” for Head Judge and Head Steward for this auspicious occasion! Lastly, members were reminded to pay their 2024 f\*cking dues! Oh, of special note, congratulations are in order to Hayden & his wife for his incoming twins. I guess it’s too late to add saltpeter to the mash & sparge water!



Last month - after the beer kicked in!



On the other hand. . .



The milkman dropped by!

## **ASTRINGENCY**

**By Mike Retzlaff**

Some time back, my LHBS was running occasional brewing contests. I decided to enter the one for dark beer. It could be any style of beer as long as it was dark. I was more interested in getting an honest appraisal of the beer than anything else. My friends always seem to love my beer but I think that they love the “free” part best. Getting an honest and informed appraisal from them is tough.

After the contest, I got the score sheet for my pseudo Murphy Stout. The sheet listed a flaw - astringency. The judge had suggested: “mashed too long?, over sparged?” I went back to my brew sheet and found that I had only mashed for an hour so I conceded to myself that the problem must have come from over sparging. I knew I had a little problem with astringency in some beers but it wasn’t noticeable in others. Color didn’t seem to be a deciding factor with this occasional flaw as these beers were all over the map as far as style. The problem would come up from time to time and I had no idea when it would happen. I seemed to be at the mercy of some mystical force.

I checked the books to learn how to keep those pesky tannins out of my beer. Some texts said to stop collecting wort during the lauter at a SG of 1.008. Others said 1.010 or 1.012. That’s really a fairly wide spread. What are the measurement parameters for this? Are these cut-off gravities based on a ratio of the OG? Are they based on color? Is this just a matter of hocus pocus and “feel”, or is it based on some scientific principle? I put this problem on my “things to figure out” list.

For a few batches, I started checking the SG toward the end of the lauter and stopped collecting at the suggested gravity. I still wondered why the tannins don’t leach out during the entire lauter. I found my answer in reading more technical publications. They seemed to lay it out in a way my puny brain could understand although I would have expected this explanation from basic brewing texts. As the sugars are being rinsed from the mash, so are the buffers which keep the pH down in the 5.1 to 5.5 range. As the sparge water, with a higher pH, rinses these buffers out, the pH of the grain bed starts to rise. Once the grain bed rises to about pH 5.9, the tannins start to leach out of the hulls. The pH of the mash will continue to rise and eventually would match the pH of your sparge water, if you were to lauter that long. Raising the temp of the grain bed by using sparge water over 172 oF just exacerbates the problem.

I read that many brewers acidify their sparge water to alleviate this condition. Sulfuric, lactic, and phosphoric acids were mentioned. I really didn't have a clue as to which kind or even how much to use but this mystery seemed to be unravelling. I found John Palmer's RA worksheet on the web and downloaded it. One part of this worksheet is a calculator for acidifying the sparge water. I used lactic acid in the amount set by the calculator on my next batch of beer. Toward the end of the collection, I checked gravity as well as pH which stayed low so I collected until I had enough for the boil. Neither the collected wort nor the finished beer had any perceivable astringency. I tried it again on subsequent batches and still found no astringency.

The gravity of the final runnings seems to be of lesser concern if that wort doesn't climb above pH 5.8. Keep this in mind if you are making a double batch from a single mash such as a Wee Heavy and a small beer or a DIPA and a bitter. However, there is little to gain by rinsing the grain bed until there is zero sugar left!

The mystical force of "hocus pocus" has now been replaced by honest-to-goodness science. It has provided me with a technique which seems to have corrected the problem and is keeping astringency at bay in my brewing.

#### **Out Of The Wazoo - Continued from page 1**

pushed at the very front of my local store. From light to dark, you'll see all the variations and that's what the style of the month is at the upcoming meeting on Saturday. We encourage any and all homebrews for sharing and in addition we review different variations of commercial Oktoberfest styles.

As for my own brewing (which I'll always make an excuse to mention in the Brewsletter), I chose an easy brewing option recently, but also with fall in mind, a hard cider. I've only done one of these in the past and this go round reminds me how easy this is and how many variations you can easily make. A future need I see myself having...

To wrap it up, we dropped to the mid nineties here in the Houston areas and I'm starting to feel all giddy for fall weather and beers. What are you brewing in preparation for Halloween? Any Pumpkin Beers for Thanksgiving? Getting those Winter Warmers brewed and starting to age for the colder nights? Whatever it is, we're glad you're doing it and enjoying the hobby. Happy Brewing y'all.

- Waz



**August Meeting at Equal Parts - Photos by Erik Ribeiro & Rosie Crowder (Thanks!)**



**Are you ready to RAFFLE?!**



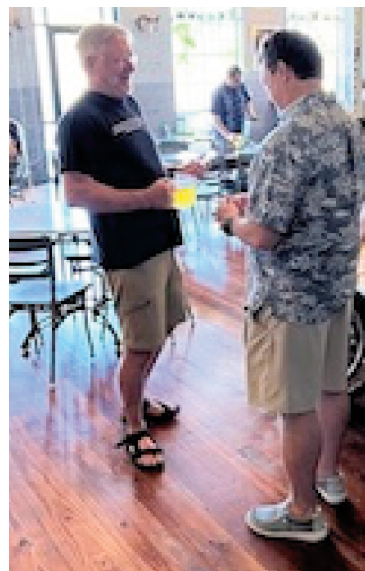
**We can talk standing or sitting down! Multi-talented!**



**This glass has a hole in it! At the top!**



**Synchronize watches! I mean smartphones!**



**I challenge you to a dual!  
Blockhead at twenty paces!**

## Calendar of Events

- Sept 16 - Foam Ranger Monthly Meeting 1 - 3 pm (Ovinnik Brewing)  
Oct ?? - Foam Ranger Monthly Meeting TBD (Ovinnik Brewing?)  
Nov ?? - Foam Ranger Monthly Meeting TBD (Ovinnik Brewing?)  
Dec ?? - Foam Ranger Monthly Meeting/Annual Holiday Party (Ovinnik Brewing?)

For more Events, go to: <https://foamrangers.com/clubevents.php>



**I Want To Be Somebody!**  
**Sign Me Up to Become A Member!**  
**Foam Rangers Homebrew Club**



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Other Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Paid \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Fees per year \$30 individual/\$60 Family**

**Paid between December 1 - December 31      \$25/\$55 (Pay early & save!)**

**Paid between January 1 - June 30              \$30/\$60**

**Paid between July 1 - September 30          \$25/\$55**

**Paid between October 1 - November 30      \$30/\$60 (Includes the next year!)**

**Please Make Checks (Remember them?) Payable To: The Foam Rangers**