



# THE FOAM RANGERS Brewsletter Urquell

December 2023 Volume 43 Issue 12



**December 15th  
Eureka Heights Brewery  
941 W 18th St.  
Houston, TX 77008**

**This Month's Styles:  
Holiday Beers!**

**Next Up!**

**★ Annual Holiday Party!★**



## Out Of The Wazoo



**Foamies,**

As I begin my reign as the Waz in 2024 I am excited that we have finally been able to have our reestablished some roots thanks to Ovinnik Brewing. We will be meeting there in the Barrel Room on the Third Saturday of the Month from around 1-3 PM with the occasional adventure back out into the craft beer scene (as in this month! ed). We are discussing many different things internally to help drive additional engagement from our members and look at ways to get new people into the club. Since that's going to be one of our focuses, I am more than welcome to ideas from everyone about events that would drive attendance both within and outside the club. If you have any subjects

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*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)



## FROM THE EDITOR



This Friday evening is the annual Houston Homebrew Holiday Party. This has always been one of my favorite events of the year. It is extremely low key. No real business to conduct, other than maybe installing our newly elected officers. We often see spouses and kids not normally in attendance at monthly meetings. It's great! The Toys For Tots is a wonderful event. Not mandatory & you will not be judged if you don't want to participate. In other words, it's chill! I hope some of the other area homebrew club members show up. This party began with the KGB meeting at St. Arnold's for some yultide cel-

ebrations. It quickly became a central location for all the area clubs to gather once a year with no rivalries to interfere with comraderie. I hope to make an appearance again while I still have most of my marbles left. Cheers! - Scott

### Foam Rangers Homebrew Club

#### Grand Wazoo:

Robert Crowder-[robert.crowder@ngic.com](mailto:robert.crowder@ngic.com)  
& soon ([wazoo@foamrangers.com](mailto:wazoo@foamrangers.com))

#### Secondary Fermenter:

Chris (May the) Schwark (Be With U!)  
(I need Chris's email address - ed)

#### Purser:

Patrick Elder  
([purser@foamrangers.com](mailto:purser@foamrangers.com))

#### Scrivener:

Rosie Crowder  
([RosieBee3@gmail.com](mailto:RosieBee3@gmail.com))

#### Waswaz

Hayden Charter  
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Will Holobowicz  
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#### Dixie Cup Coordinator:

Hank Keller  
([kellerfamily89@comcast.net](mailto:kellerfamily89@comcast.net))

- On another note, you may notice that I have not included any photos of last month's meeting in this issue. The reason is simple. I didn't receive any photos this month. Folks! Please take some photos of the holiday party and send them my way! Thanks!

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

that you would find interesting please let me know and we can figure out ways to make this a great year for the club!

I also want to encourage anyone and everyone to see if you can help Hank with the XL Dixie Cup. We would love to be able to have a big blowout for the 40th, but one man no matter how many times they were a Was Waz he needs help. Please let him know ASAP of what you can and would be able to help with here.

Cheers,

Robert Crowder

Current Standing Waz

## ABOUT LAST MONTH

(Special Thanks to the Crowders & Hayden for their observations! )

The November meeting took place at "home, sweet homebrew," Ovinnik Brewing on Wynnpark (Thanks, J9 & Phil!). The beer styles of the month were porters & stouts. This being 'merica, we held elections in November. New officers - Robert Crowder stepped up to be Waz, New Secondary is Chris Schwark, Scrivener is Rosie Crowder. Hank Keller is obviously the Dixie Cup coordinator.

### TOPICS DISCUSSED

- The Inaugural Octoberfantasy Interhomebrew Club Competition was held last month - per Hayden: "Foam Rangers handled themselves phenomenally! We made it all the way to the final round and competed against BAM. There was splitting of hairs on the final beers and BAM eventually took the title. Thank you Hank, Mauricio and Patrick for entering the beers for us, extra appreciation to Mauricio for handing them off, and thanks John Black and BAM for hosting. Was a lot of fun and we look forward to future iterations."
- December Holiday Party was discussed - date & site. This Friday @ Eureka Heights Brewery starting at 7:30 pm. As always, we will be collecting Toys for Tots (small gift) for those who would like to participate. Potluck food with homebrews & special beers.
- New members needed! Ideas tossed out included:
  - Signage in Ovinnik, Farmboy, other breweries. Medium sized vinyl banner in Ovinnik and smaller signs in bathrooms?
- Website needs updating badly. Mobile optimized and general refresh of style.
- More consistent Facebook presence
- Newsletter link on Facebook?
- Perhaps new members get a T-shirt and pint glass? Need to be sure we have these on hand at the meetings.
- Dixie Cup - We need to set a deadline as to when we will "call it" if no volunteers. Hank is contact point. Need to get the Cup back to update.
- Where is the bottle opener Chain Of Command? (Side note - Need to set a time to go through storage unit and organize.)
- Ideas for monthly discussion topics:

**EXPLORATION SERIES** - Variety of hops steeped in a neutral beer.

Taste and smell different grains and beets that highlight them.

Needn't be a member to attend but perhaps suggest a small fee to offset materials costs.

Some existing members may be able to lead these, or do we need Guest Speakers?

Tips and discussion on entering homebrew competitions

- Other ideas welcome!

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## **THE TRUBSACK**

**By Mike Retzlaff**

Many years ago when I started home brewing, my first few batches were extract or extract with “specialty grains.” Within just a few batches, I went to all-grain. Following the instructions garnered from Charlie Papazian’s book “The Complete Joy of Homebrewing”, I built a “ZAPAP” lauter tun. It consists of two nested plastic pails. The bottom pail has a 5/16” hole drilled through the side near the bottom. A short length of 3/8” diameter of plastic tubing is forced through the hole. A valve is attached to the outside end of the tubing. The top pail has a series of 1/8” holes drilled through the bottom of the upper pail. They are spaced apart enough to not touch each other and they virtually cover the whole bottom. This is the false bottom of the rig and simply makes it a big colander.

Once fitted together, the finished mash is poured into the upper pail. The wort flows through the holes into the bottom pail while the mash acts as a filter bed. The valve on the tubing is opened to allow the flow of lautered wort into the kettle. The first runnings are returned to the ZAPAP and the sparging is accomplished in the same setup. As crude as this seems, it worked just fine for a number of years. I retired my ZAPAP when I bought a false bottom and started using an Igloo cylindrical water cooler as a mash / lauter tun. The false bottom was eventually replaced by a bazooka screen. The march of progress seems relentless . . .

Sometime later, I put the old upper pail, the one with all the holes, back into service. I started using it as a hop-back. I sanitize it and nest it at the top of my plastic fermenter. I line the hop-back with a fine mesh nylon bag to run the wort through. The mesh bag collects all of the hops (whole or pelletized) along with most of the trub. It works like a champ!

A few years later, I realized that I had rediscovered a piece of old German brewing hardware called a trubsack. The original mesh bags look like a conical minnow net and work in exactly the same way but strain out hops and trub instead of minnows.



Most brewers today seem to use the whirlpool technique to collect “clean” wort for the fermenter. This effect was discovered many years ago but got started commercially around 1960 and has gained popularity among most brewers; home and commercial. It seems quite appropriate for commercial brewers as it is less liable to hot side aeration than the old hop back (aka hop jack). All sorts of innovative designs are now built into many new high-end homebrew kettles. Brewers also add hops to the whirlpool which augments the addition of flavor and aroma without the extra IBUs; something formerly done in the hop back. My observations, of most home brewers who whirlpool, indicate that they don’t deliver a cleaner wort to their fermenter than I can with the old trubsack so I don’t have any incentive to change. I’m not that set in my ways but I’ve never felt the compulsion to do things just because “everybody else is doing it.” I suspect the technique of BIAB (Brew In A Bag) is an adaptation of Dave Line’s suggested technique in his “The Big Book of Brewing” back in the late 1970’s. His mesh bag technique was pre-boil but I’ve adapted it to post-boil.

The fine mesh nylon bags I use are 18<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>” X 19” supplied by BSG (Brewers Supply Group) and are usually readily available from your local homebrew supplier or a multitude of on-line retailers. They snugly fit the rim of my 5 gallon plastic ZAPAP upper pail.

There seem to be endless methods of skinning a cat. Most other major aspects of brewing have a variety of techniques to accomplish the various tasks required to make a batch of beer. Who else brews exactly as you do? Who brews exactly like me? I’ve taught a number of others how to brew and each of them has deviated from my methods for as many reasons as there are brewers. Some have shown me a better or easier way and I’ve adopted some of their techniques. However, some of their changes just make me shake my head but then, life would be boring if everyone was just like me!

#### **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

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**DEC Xmas Party - Eureka Heights. TOYS FOR TOTS DONATIONS, potluck, homebrews**

**JAN barleywine tasting (“My brain hurts!” - ed)**

**FEB - brew in at Ovinnik? Jeannine suggested steinbeer. Would this be a wort share?? BYO equipment and ingredients and Jeannine provides stones?? MUST CONFIRM WITH BREWERY and ensure all OSHA regulations are met.**

**MARCH - Exploration/Discussion Series**

**APRIL - Exploration Discussion Series**

**MAY - NATIONAL HOMEBREW DAY Jeff Riley Memorial Day - ideas?**

**JUNE - POOL PARTY**

## Calendar of Events

**Dec 15 - Foam Ranger Monthly Meeting/Annual Holiday Party 7 - 10 pm (Eureka Heights Brewery)**

**January 2024 - Foam Ranger Monthly Meeting (Ovinnik Brewing?)**

**Febrewary 2024 - Foam Ranger Monthly Meeting (Ovinnik Brewing?)**

**March 2024 - Foam Ranger Monthly Meeting (Ovinnik Brewing?)**

**April 2024 - Foam Ranger Monthly Meeting (Ovinnik Brewing?)**

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

**Help feed this section! Let me know what's happening out there!**



**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**