



BREWS & NEWS

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THE NEW BEER ROARS

By President Drew "Hoppy" Beechum

January Club Meeting – January 8th – 1PM — Belgian Strong Golden Ales

It's a good way to start the year. I'll admit. It's time for the holidays to wrap up and we get to put the insanity of family members, gifts, parties and the like. What better way to relax than to spend it with your fellow Falcons enjoying the finest fruits of Belgian Strong Golden Ales. Don't be surprised if George and Craig's *Bobby's Golden* shows up as well. Bring your beers (both Belgians and non) to the day and we'll talk about them all.

Also, while we're at it, we'll talk brewing; bus trips and new things for the club to do. Remember, all members and non-members, new, old, brewing or just drinking are welcome to come to these meetings. Give one a whirl and see what all the noise is about.

BJ's Beer Appreciation Night – January 11th – 7PM – Winter Warmers, Imported
Keeping in the spirit of the season, BJ's Brewhouse will be offering their second Winter

Warmer tasting. This month's focuses on the best of winter beers from England, Germany and Belgium. Remember the cost of the evening is \$16 for Falcons and we'll have table sitting reserved right in front. Come listen to Michael Ferguson and "Zambo" talk about the 15 or so beers available for sampling.

3rd Annual Doug King Memorial Homebrew Memorial Competition (Entries 1/13/2006; Judging – 1/20/2006)

Fresh off our first attempt at running a competition that involved both kegs and bottles, we're doing it again. This will be our third year running a competition in memory of experimental brewer extraordinaire, Doug King.

Remember the point behind this competition is to celebrate the diversity of lager beers, which are normally given short shrift in competitions, and the wackiness of experimental brewing. Remember Doug's philosophy, if it

See "President" (cont. on page 4)

MALTSE FALCONS COMPETITION COMMITTEE

By Steve V.P. Cook

The Competition Committee wants to remind you about the "Big 6" competitions that we believe would be the best for Falcons to enter, not only to pump up our egos but to garner favor with the beer powers that be, namely Anchor Brewing. Yes, we had that much fun last February and would like to be back in 2007!

The first contest coming up in about a month (and it's one of ours) is the 3rd Annual Doug King Memorial Competition, so lets get those lagers and specialty beers out and en-

tered. See the website to register online.

This year the DKC is allowing kegged beer to be entered so no bottling will be necessary for those entries. You register your kegged entry the same as a bottled entry but you bring the keg to the BWC Shop between Jan 1st and 13th or on the day of the Competition **before the judging has started.**

Here's the list of the "Big 6" competitions, so let's get those quality brews ready to be judged. Good Luck Falcons!

The Competitions in chronological order are:

Inside this issue:

<i>The Grand Hydro</i>	2
<i>Spring Fling Beer Bus Thing</i>	3
<i>Phantom Brewer's Tip</i>	4
<i>Stuffed Sandwich X-Mas</i>	5

The Doug King Memorial Lager & Specialty Beer Competition, sponsored by the Maltose Falcons. (www.maltosefalcons.com) Entries are due between Jan. 1st and 13th, and the judging will be held on Jan. 21st. For the first time, kegged beers can be entered, check the web site for more details.

See "Competition (Cont. on page 5)

Due to the Superbowl, the February Meeting will be held on Feb 11th

AND I DON'T MEAN VAN DAMME...

By Cullen Davis

But I'm definitely talking about **Strong Belgians**, just not the Muscle from Brussels. Yes, it's time to bring out those bad boys and see what they can do -- and do to you! We have work to do at the January meeting: we need to select the best of our homebrewed Strong Belgian ales to send to the Club-Only Competition. It's about time we win one of these for a change, and I know we have what it takes to do it. I'll be pouring a few commercial examples in the category to help educate our palates (and to help us start the year off in a really good mood!).

The BJCP guidelines for category 18, Belgian Strong Ale is fairly wide open. It includes Tripel, Dubbel, Strong Golden, and Strong Dark Belgian ales. If it's strong and Belgian, it's in. The only exception to that is if it has some clearly distinguishing characteristic that would put it into the Belgian Specialty category. Belgium has a long tradition of brewing high gravity beers. Perhaps their proximity to France led them to believe that fermented beverages naturally ought to be as strong as wine. Or maybe they just really love the taste of malt. I'm willing to believe it has more to do with the latter and the fact that big beer is more nourishing than small beer. For hundreds of years before mass-marketed lagers,

strong beer was the preferred product, an integral part of a hearty meal. Small beer? That's for breakfast. Brewing monks are responsible for the development of some strong styles, like Dubbel and Tripel, at least partially because they could use the rich beer to help carry them through fasting periods. The Strong Golden Style is said to have originated at the Moortgat brewery with the invention of the famous "Duvel" ale. It was created to compete with the wave of light-colored pilsners sweeping the globe after the 2nd World War. Nowadays, the popularity of Belgian beer is growing and more and more brewers on this continent are creating great beers in this style. It's a very good time indeed to be a Belgian beer fan. Jean Claude notwithstanding, Strong Belgians are more popular than ever...and that's a good thing. I encourage you all to read over the BJCP category 18 and bring in your best Belgian Strong ale to the January meeting to see how it measures up to the rest. Who knows, you might be the brewer of the best Strong Belgian in the entire country!

cd



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SPRING FLING BEER BUS THING

By George Mahoney

In the shadow of the success of last summer's bus event, the **Rincon Brew Cruise**, the wheels are in motion for a trip this spring, that will take us do the depths of Beerdom -- San Diego County! **The Spring Fling Beer Bus Thing** is set for Saturday, April 1st. The bus will leave from the B of A parking lot in Woodland Hills @ 8am...

This trip will take us to some of San Diego's great breweries, including AleSmith, Pizza Port Solana Beach, Green Flash Brewing Company, and the new Stone Facility in San Marcos. All of our stops have been hand picked by *moi*, and each one has won at least 1 Gold Medal at the GABF in the last 5 years. Based on the positive response from the last trip, we'll use the same bus company from the Rincon tour, Patty Wagon and, by virtue of his request, the same diver, Hugo. Also returning will be Kent Fletcher's portable wonder bar, and lots of great beer on tap with the possibility of two going through the Randalls!!

Last summer's trip started @ \$40 per person, which included bus fare, a commemorative pint glass, guaranteed prize

"winner" in our raffle, unlimited home brew on the bus, and free beer at one location. This was a very reasonable price for a ride in a brand new tour bus, with lots of beer, taking you to more beer! The only draw back was that you would be responsible for any pub fare and all your beers at 3 of the locations and dinner was extra still. We found it to be better for all parties involved to collect \$5 per person, per stop.

Pricing for the Spring Fling will be slightly higher, partially due to a longer bus ride and with higher gas prices. The other reason we will raise the rate is to give you a much easier "all inclusive price." This means, that once you pay for your ticket, **you won't have to pay for any beer at any stop and dinner is included!** While it is more money up front, the "all-inclusive rate" will save you about \$20. Unfortunately we haven't set a price (yet) plus dates and locations are still tentative Stay tuned next month for more info... If you missed last summers trip, don't miss out on this one!!!

gm



A typically good-looking cast of Falcons gathered at BJ's on December 30th to brew Good Tom Wolf's winning DIPA, *Hop Worship*.

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Competition Reminders

Doug King Competition - 1/13; Judging 1/20

AHA Club Only - Big Beautiful Belgians - Entries due at the January Meeting

America's Finest City - Late February

Mayfaire - April

AHA Nationals - April

PHANTOM BREWER'S TIP By the Phatnom

President (Continued from page 1)

has starch or sugar, it will fit in a brew pot. As before, the competition requires two 7-22oz bottles of your brew that fits in any of our lager or experimental categories. There is a \$5 per entry charge to pay for the materials used in judging. If you have a keg packaged entry, it must be registered online at maltosefalcons.com ahead of time and be on site *before* the judging begins. And hey, if you're a judge, join us on the 20th at the Shop for the judging day. So now that we're taking kegs of beer (and yes, you get your kegs back), all of you guys who hate to bottle (including me) can get yourself back into the fray. And with kegs sitting around, who knows what might happen?

Shop Brew – January 15th – 9AM – Drew's Doppelmaibock

It's winter time and the brewing is easy. Let's take advantage of the cold weather and brew up a lager. Of course being Falcons, let's make it a big strong lager to survive the long lager time to get to the sweltering summer months and the wilds of Temecula and Mayfaire. So taking a long look at a winning recipe from the Oktoberfest, we'll kick it up and throw a party. Cooking, brewing and of course the obligatory beer or two to sample.

Club Grain Buy (FREE GRAIN!)

Now's the time to get the big beers in gear for Temecula and Mayfaire, so the club has opened up the annual grain buy to the membership. The rules are simple. Any paid member is welcome to take, free of charge, a mix of any 10 pounds of malt available in the shop. The one, the only stipulation of the grain buy is that the resultant beer must partially come back to the club at a club function, festival or competition, etc. Decent price for a free batch of beer.

Southern California Homebrewers Festival – Temecula – May 6th, 2006

Here's one of the best times you can have as a homebrewer in Southern California. The older guys already know all about the craziness of over a 1,000 homebrewers joined together for a weekend of beer. This year the crew, led by our own Bruce Brode, is putting together a series of events for Friday night, including a performance of the Maltose Falcons Brews Band. To join in the madness, you have to join the CHA before the party. If you join before February 16th, save \$5 and pay \$40 for your membership and admission to the festival. Steve Cook has already reserved our beautiful campsites from last year and we'll talk prices at the meeting. Join us and see how much homebrew you can find!

Also, we're always looking for ideas about what to do special for the party. If you have any ideas, send them to me: president@maltosefalcons.com.

db



The longer you brew, the more technical you tend to get. Immersion chillers? That's for beginners. More and more brewers (especially us gadget crazy Falcons) are opting not just for counterflow devices, but for mini plate style heat-exchangers, just like the pros use (only minus all that glycol). Therminators for all! Hydrometers? Get a refractometer. Glass Carboys? I'll take my conical in Stainless Steel, please. And on and on it goes until many of us have a full working small scale brewery sitting in the backyard. And some aren't so small! The point is, as your enthusiasm for homebrewing increases, so does the complexity of your system, and probably the complexity of your various techniques. And of course, along with more money comes more time.

How about we take a step backwards and try something simpler? In this case, **Batch Sparging**. If you have ever been to a shop brew or brewed a batch of all-grain beer, you are (probably) familiar with fly sparging. This technique, developed in Britain around a century ago, is where you gently rinse the grains post-vovaluf with new water at the same rate that you are running the wort off into the kettle. Slow and steady is the name of the game, for the slower your sparge, the more sugar you will be able to extract from the mash. Batch Sparging is the opposite of fly (or continuous) sparging. Once you are done recirculating your mash, open up the valve and let her rip! The idea is to drain the mash tun as quickly as possible. Then, you refill the mashtun with new water, give it a stir, let it sit for a bit, restir and then once again drain the tun as fast as you can. Essentially, you are doing a parti-gyle and then immediately combining the two run offs.

Besides a reduction in time, Batch Sparging has a couple of other benefits. One is that you never have to worry about mash pH since the grains' buffering ability is not being continuously diluted like it would be in a fly sparge. Another benefit is that you can essentially skip Mashing Out since the liquid will get into the kettle so quickly the heat will denature any enzymes present. Drawbacks? Depending on your system, you will probably see a reduction in efficiency, but some brewers actually claim *better* extraction rates from Batching. Also, remember, grain costs about a dollar a pound, so just toss in some more. Is an extra buck per batch worth a one hour reduction in time? Probably. And best of all, you can use your existing equipment. And throw out your sparge-ring.

Keys to a Successful Batch Sparge:

1) Mash at the usual ratio -- slightly more than 1 quart per pound of grain.

Phantom (Continued on page 5)

Competition (Continued from page 1)

America's Finest City Competition, sponsored by QUAFF. (www.quaff.org) Entries due sometime in early Feb. (3rd ?), and the judging will be held on Feb. 17th & 18th.

American Homebrew Association's National Homebrew Competition, sponsored by the AHA (www.beertown.com) and many, *many* homebrew clubs throughout the nation. Entries are due April 3rd to the 14th, and the judging will be held from April 21st to the 30th.

Mayfaire Competition, (our big one) sponsored by the Maltose Falcons. (www.maltosefalcons.com) Entries are due by April 20th, check-in is on April 23rd, and the judging will be held on May 13th.

Los Angeles County Fair Homebrew Competition, sponsored by the Maltose Falcons. Entries are due July 7th, check-in is on July 8th, and the judging will be held on July 15th.

Pacific Brewers Cup Competition, sponsored by the Strand Brewers Club. (www.strandbrewers.org) Entries are due in late Aug. or early Sept. and the judging will be held sometime in Sept.

California State Homebrew Competition, (AKA Stern Grove) sponsored by the San Andreas Malt's (www.sanandreasmalts.org) Entries are due sometime in Oct. and the judging will be sometime in Nov.
sc



Phantom (Continued from page 1)

2) Due to grain absorption, you will need to add additional water to the Mash Tun *before* the first runoff. So if you are mashing 5 gallons of water, two of those gallons will be absorbed by the grain, so you will need to add the two lost gallons back.

3) You still need to perform a vourlaf -- on both mashes.

pb



STUFFING AN X-MAS SANDWICH By Drew Beechum

In the middle of the holiday season, we Falcons are lucky to have a handy respite to a world of beer as built by a pair of unsung heroes of the "Good Beer" movement. For nigh on 20 years, Sam and Marlene have opened their beery home to Falcons and proffered a selection of wonderful beers of the season.

We had a record crowd for this year's tasting, 25 Falcons grabbed a sandwich and a seat for the flight of beers. Marlene gifted the tasters with some really cool and funky tasting glasses from Stone's 9th Anniversary Festival. Sam and Marlene were impressed with the turnout and the number of first time attendees was heartening.

Beers that flowed from Sam's cellar included the following:

1. Butte Creek Winter Ale: Chino, Ca
 2. Petrus Winterbeer: Belgium
 3. Fish Brewing Winter Fish Seasonal: Washington
 4. Ridgeway Very Bad Elf: UK
 5. Ridgeway Seriously Bad Elf (nearly banned in CT!): UK
 6. Ridgeway Bad Elf: UK
 7. Rogue Festive Saison Ale: Oregon
 8. 2002 Harvey's Christmas Ale: UK
 9. La Choulette De Noel: France
 10. Butte Creek Christmas Cranberry Ale: Chico, CA
 11. Alesmith Yulesmith DIPA: San Diego, CA
 12. Brasserie Blaugie's La Moneuse Saison d'Hiver: Belgium
 13. De Ranke Pere Noel Hoppy Belgium Winter Ale: Belgium
 14. Brasserie Dupont Saison Avec Les Bon Vouex de la Brasserie: Belgium
- 1996 Anchor Our Special Ale: San Francisco, CA

Opinions varied around the tables, but we tried to collect a group value for each of the brews. Only the Winter Fish was voted as a dog. The crowd favorite was a bit of tossup between the Ridgeway Seriously Bad Elf and the Dupont Avec Les Bon Vouex. Both were incredibly flavorful and full of the spirit of the season.

Of course, folks hung out finishing up the left over beers and the other treats Sam was providing (including several years of Anchor). Falcons walked out of the Sandwich with boxes of beer as presents for friends and themselves. This is only one of two places in LA where you can buy beer "off sale," the other being Lucky Baldwin's **Delirium Café** up the street in Sierra Madre.

To those of you would didn't make it this year: All I can say is "Neener". Next year you should come and enjoy Sam and Marlene's hospitality. And of course, their beer.

THE ED NOTES

By Jonny Lieberman

And a good 2006 to you, sir! Or Madam. I just returned from my annual New Years pilgrimage to New York City, and me being me, was it ever filled with beer. Possibly a little *too much* beer (if such a phrase exists) as my immune system is in full revolt. For those of you traveling to Manhattan, let me hip you to what just might be the very best beer store in the entire world. New Beer Distributors, located in the Lower East Side is an eye opener. Essentially it is a warehouse packed with every beer you can think of, all being sold at extremely low prices. Better yet, they arrange their beer by style, so if you are looking for a Barleywine, there are a few rows to choose from. Highlights included:

Panil -- An odd, yet delicious Italian pseudo-Lambic. I say "pseudo" only because it is not from the Seine Valley. As good as anything Belgium has to offer. Yes, I just said that.

2001 Cantillon Lou Pepe Kriek -- For \$18 a bottle, a steal. If Delta ever finds my luggage, look for a bottle to show up at Dead Palettes.

Jolly Pumpkin -- One of those fabled breweries that you hear a lot about but that you just cannot get out here. Their flagship beer is *Oro de Calabaza*, a fantastic Bier de Garde.

Southampton Publick House -- Much like Jolly Pumpkin, I hear really good things about Southampton but can never drink the beer. But then I did. Great stuff, though I preferred their Bier de Garde ad Bier de Mars more than I did their much bal-lyhooded Saisons.

Dogfish Head Raison D'extra -- \$8 for a 12-ounce bottle? Damn Skippy! Especially when the beer in question comes in at 20% abv! And, it tastes really, *really* good, too.

I'll spare you the rest (though I should note that they have the best selection of Cider I have ever seen -- drooling Cullen?) but I just need to reiterate how great this place is. Both Stone and Rogue are cheaper than we can get out here! And, yeah, they have Stone Anniversary going back five years... Anyhow, beer traveling is where it is at. If you've got your own beer travel story to tell, write it up and send it to me for publication in these hallowed pages.

And how about a little local beer traveling? Just miles from *my house* in Eagle Rock (just north of Dodger Stadium) is **The Bucket** – a local burger destination since 1935. Sure, they serve up a burger called "The Cardiac," which features over one pound of beer, double cheese, bacon, ham and is "guaranteed to flatline," but they have a secret. Owner Ivan Quiles is a beer lover and they have 3 **Craftsman Ales** on tap. Recently I sampled the Bucket's "Wet-Style Burger," some "Bucket Fries" (cooked in bacon grease) and washed it all down with a delicious **Cabern Ale** – then slept for two days. So come on

you Westsiders, come see how the other half eats their burgers – with cheap pitchers of great beer! www.bucketburger.com for details...

Speaking of great beer, this year's Holiday Tasting at **Stuffed Sandwich** was excellent. Kudos to Mr. George Mahoney for organizing a stellar event. And to Sam and Marlene for pouring such tasty beers. My favorites were **Ridgeway Brewing's Very Bad Elf**, **Dupont's Saison Avec les Bon Vieux de Brasserie** and the most excellent **Harvey's Christmas Ale**. We used the traditional ratings system of one through five Falcons, indicated by a show of fingers. As Fletch said of the **Harvey's**, "If you can't rate this one a five, you are a double amputee." Nuff said.

And finally, a big **THANK YOU** to John Atchison for organizing a fantastic BJCP class. For those of you who missed it, your loss. For those of you hoping to take the class in the future, start praying now that it will be as good as this one was. Every other week, John brought in various experts to talk about different aspects of brewing. Familiar to the Falcons were Bruce Brode, Brian Vessa, Michael "The Other Black Brewer" Ferguson from BJ's, and our own beer diva, MB Raines. We learned a lot, drank a lot and are hopefully prepared for the big test! Also, cheers to Sal the Younger for stewarding and Fletch for the photocopying.

jl



The reports are probably false; the above beer is in no way associated with Tom Hamilton.

SECRETARY'S CORNER

By Paul Sedgwick

General Meeting Minutes — December 4, 2005

A crowd of 45 thirsty Falcons showed up for the traditional holiday beer tasting at the December meeting. Our Grand Hydro Cullen Davis supplied a diverse assortment of winter warmers and spiced beers for us to enjoy while he was off drinking wine at John Daume's open house. John Aitchison did a fine job leading the tasting in Cullen's absence. This year's brews included **Sam Smith's Winter Welcome, Alaskan Winter Ale, Dechutes Jubelale, Affligem Noel, Yulesmith, Pizza Port Night Rider Imperial Stout, Anheuser Busch Brewmaster's Reserve, and Anchor's Special Ale**. Next we tasted the 1999 **Samiclaus** and the 2002 **Falcon's Claws**. We tasted **Craftsman Holiday Beer** and **Craftsman Wassail**. We concluded the tasting with some homebrewed holiday beers. Mark Poliner brought a 1996 holiday beer. We had Xmas XPA from Rick Burnside. Sal the Younger provided a 2004 Holiday Scotch Ale, and we concluded the tasting with Hank's Holiday Gingerbread Brown Ale.

For lunch our Burgermeister supplied Peter Sheppard's Pie, bread, salad and cookies for us to enjoy while he was off serving lunch at John Daume's open house. We had some **Bear Republic Racer X** and **Blind Pig IPA** to enjoy with lunch.

After lunch it was time for business. The Falcons will be brewing Tom Wolf's **Hop Worship** Double IPA at BJ's in Woodland Hills on December 30th. The brew will start at 7:30 AM. Anyone interested in participating should e-mail Drew. We are planning another brew session at BJ's next year. 2006 marks the 30th anniversary of the Stuffed Sandwich. We would like to brew something to commemorate this milestone.

After finishing up the business there was nothing left to do but drink some homebrew. We had Mark Poliner's Monster Mead and Sal the Elder's Ordinary English Bitter. We tasted the Doble Doble Strong Ale, which was one of our Shop brews. Mark Levitsky provided his Belgian Mutt. We enjoyed a Honey Steamer from Craig Shapland and a Straight Lambic from John Aitchison. Jim Moorman and Ken Rhude brought us their Stout. Greg Van Citters supplied two chocolate Porters, one with Scharffenbergen chocolate and the other with Valrhona chocolate. Bruce Brode treated us to Barbara's Mead. We sampled a Pretzel Beer from Jonny Lieberman and Nolan Reese.

Congratulations to Mark Poliner whose **Monster Mead** was voted the best homebrew at the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 4:50 PM.

Board Meeting Minutes — December 19, 2005

This month's Board meeting was held at George Mahoney's house in Simi Valley. The meeting began at about 7:35 PM. The board members in attendance were Drew Beechum, Cullen Davis, George Mahoney, Steve Cook, Jonny Lieberman, Craig Shapland, Kent Fletcher, and Paul Sedgwick. Ian Mahoney made a brief appearance and Otis the wonder dog kept us entertained throughout the evening. Kent reported that the finances are in good shape. We had four new members and four renewals at the December meeting.

The Stuffed Sandwich tasting was a big success this year with 26 paid attendees. Sam and Marlene treated us to 15 excellent holiday beers.

The January Shop Brew will be Drew's Doppel Maibock. In February we will brew an American Amber Ale for the upcoming AHA Club Only Competition.

The January meeting will be held on the 8th. The style of the month will be Strong Belgian Ales.

The Brew Day for Hop Worship at BJ's is set for December 30th at 7:30 AM.

The San Diego Breweries bus trip date has been changed to March 11th [ED NOTE: The actual date is April 1, 2006]. The itinerary will include Ballast Point, Pizza Port Solana Beach, Alesmith and Stone. The price is still TBD, but will include the bus, beer, lunch and dinner.

The Board discussed the possibility of paying for club members to ship their beers to the upcoming Sam Adams competition.

Drew discussed the possibility of holding one of our general meetings at an offsite location. Several local breweries were suggested as possible venues.

The Board decided to add a date to the membership form so we can make sure new memberships and renewals are processed in a timely manner.

At about 9:00 PM the meeting adjourned. The board would like to thank George and his family for hosting the meeting and providing the pizza and beer.



Membership Renewal

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

- ◆ *Next Meeting: Sunday, January 8, at the Shop*
- ◆ *BJ's Beer Appreciation Night: Winter Warmers, January 11th*
- ◆ *3rd Annual Doug King Memorial Competition, Entries Due Jan 13, Judging Jan 20*
- ◆ *Shop Brew: Drew's Doppie Maibock, Jan 15th*
- ◆ *Hop Worship: Coming Soon to a BJ's Near You!*
- ◆ *Spring Fling Bus Thing, April Fools Day*



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