



## Voices From the Crowd: Out On the Town in My Pajamas

By Shawn Boutwell

Like just about every "Flat-Lander" who moves to the hills of Vernonia, I had great expectations of my new life in the country. The stories of what brings different kinds of people to our little town are always interesting. This is my story. The story of how I landed in Vernonia and was almost initiated into one of its most powerful secret orders-- a society so secret that there is no record anywhere of its members. I accidentally stumbled upon this secret order and almost gained membership into the Pajama Wearing Society of Vernonia.

When I first came to Portland fourteen years ago, it was only to be a three-day visit, a tour of the west coast as part of a bicycling trip from Boston to New Mexico. After hundreds of hours in training, and at least one hundred books on Portland, we arrived in Portland, cycling, at the end of November. Somehow, in all my careful research of the Great Northwest, I missed the part about how much it rains.

So there I was, riding a bicycle towards the coast on Highway 26, in November, sleeping in a tent, wet and muddy and cold. The books I had

packed across country became fire starters; I was miserable, I tell ya, absolutely miserable. I thought about my misery as I pushed the loaded bike uphill for eight hours-- only four miles further along the road. I was wet, cold and did I mention miserable? I decided to go back to Portland and live.

I soon met a girl, married her, and started a family. Over nine years our family grew to a massive, account-draining, priority-changing, five. As our children grew, and the world changed, our trail of tears led us further and further from the city. And here we are in Vernonia.

Now, everywhere I have ever traveled, and the people I've met, and the way I was raised, *pajamas* were for the cozy, hot chocolate drinking, getting ready for bed, sleepy time tea, snuggling under homemade quilts, and the Christmas Eve kind of night. So how could I have known that there was more to the story, use, and now history of pajamas? I thought I was more cultured, well traveled, and even well read. But after just a few days of living in Vernonia, I had reached full enlightenment on the matter. There were more uses for pajamas than for the largest roll of duct tape. Getting gas, going to the grocery store, walking your dog, football games, even horseback riding. In Vernonia, pajamas

are common dress-- just like regular jeans. They are so colorful, too: blue with yellow polka-dots, pink (just pink), white with little red hearts, you name it-- we've got it.

Here I am, in the cutest little town, full of pickup trucks with rifles in rear windows, people on horseback, a swimming hole in the middle of town-- even a paved bike trail inviting fellow cyclists from all over to visit Vernonia. People come from everywhere to participate in our festivities, and in, what I have come to find out is the secret, whispered claim to fame, the Pajama Wearing Culture of Vernonia.

When I mentioned to my boss that scenes from the movie *Twilight* were filmed in our little town, he called me a liar, and said something under his breath about chickens, and to my surprise, wearing pajamas.

"Am I missing out on some special, almost fraternal secret society here in the home of the Ax Men?" I thought to myself.

I've even overheard it whispered that if you get pulled over by a police officer on Bridge Street and have pajamas on, you'll get off with a warning.

You know I've never been a real, committed pajama-wearing person, but with the cold temperatures here in Vernonia, I bought a pair; a simple pair

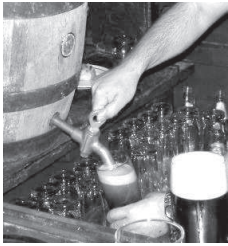
really, with a blue, gray, and green plaid design.

And that's when it almost happened. It was a cold night, a few years after our arrival here. I had slipped into my comfortable pajamas, stretched out on the couch, enjoying the dry heat of our wood stove. And I got a hankering for some ice cream like never before. I got up from the couch, and thought about the work it would take to put on some street clothes. Quickly, I put on my coolest leather jacket and got my wallet and keys. On my way out, in the corner of my eye, I saw my reflection in a mirror. Surely, plaid flannel would go with my leather? I hesitated, thinking for a moment about the pajama culture, fitting in, and possibly avoiding a ticket. I realized that going out on the town in my pajamas would be my initiation into the secret order of the Pajama Wearing Society of Vernonia. I fought the temptation, put on a pair of jeans, and felt really good about it!

*Names, places, and other facts regarding the Society of Pajama wearers have been changed in order to protect the innocent and other agents that have infiltrated its ranks. Poetic license has been taken in order for future whistle blowers to come forth and give their stories.*

## Another Round: More Words of Wisdom About Beer

By Scott Laird



**2009 Holiday Ale Festival:** "Oh Imperial Stout, Oh Imperial Stout, How much I love to taste you!"-- I was highly anticipating this year's visit to the Portland Holiday Ale Festival in early December, and, of course, I was not disappointed. This year

was the 14th annual winter fest-- held under clear tents in Portland's Pioneer Courthouse Square. This festival brings together around four dozen one-of-a-kind robust winter ales, many of them created especially for this event, plus some special kegs that were tapped and available on Wednesday and Thursday. It's a chance to taste beers and ales you will find nowhere else-- all in one place, and a chance to taste vintage ales and reserve barrels. Oh yes-- and they had a pretty cool coaster, too.

I went for tastings on Thursday afternoon, and found a manageable and mellow crowd that seemed intent on seriously tasting ales and discussing them. Even early in the afternoon, it was a good crowd and an enjoyable atmosphere, which lent itself to a fine afternoon of ales.

Often at these kinds of beer festivals, I try a lot of beers, dislike the majority of them, enjoy a handful, and find a couple of real standouts. At this year's Holiday Ale Fest, I was almost finished tasting before I came across one I didn't really enjoy.

In looking back over my notes, I am realizing that, surprise, surprise-- mostly what I tasted and liked were Stouts and Porters. I am also realizing that to truly appreciate and enjoy this festival, you have to attend for more than one day. I spent my day tasting those porters and stouts and never even got to the strong ales, Belgians and reds. There were also some interesting IPA's and a few other surprises I never even got to try. But anyway-- back to those standouts.

**Barrel-Select Baltic Porter '07 from Cascade Brewing in Portland--** This was one of the Spe-

cial Tappings on Thursday. It was sweet and especially tangy with a nice vanilla flavor. **Barrel Aged Old Baba Yaga, an Imperial Stout from Bear Republic Brewing in Cloverdale, California--** This was a strong ale at 11.5 ABV that was aged in French oak barrels and really let that Cabernet flavor through. **MacTarnahan's Imperial Chocolate Stout, from MacTarnahan's Brewing in Portland** was smooth and balanced and especially flavorful. **Da Grind Buzz, a Kona Coffee Imperial Stout from Kona Brewing in Kailua Kona, Hawaii--** This was also a Special Tapping on Thursday and was very thick and heavy with that strong coffee

flavor. **Arctic Blast '09 Vanilla Porter from Vertigo Brewing in Hillsboro** was smoky and smooth with a subtle vanilla flavor. This is a small local brewery-- give them a try if you see them on tap in your travels. **Chocolate Huckleberry Stout from Laughing Dog Brewing in Ponderay, Idaho--** This was, surprise again-- chocolatey and very fruity. Tasted like dessert! And last but not least, **Black Sand Porter from Kona**

**Brewing--** Just a well-made, smooth and mellow Porter-- the kind for drinking everyday!

This is a great festival-- especially if you like dark winter ales. Mark it on next year's calendar as soon as you get one! The first weekend in December, don't miss it!

**This Month's Sign that 2012 is Almost Here--** Sapporo Beer from Japan has announced they are making a batch of beer from barley grown in space! That's right, barley, grown at the International Space Station as part of an experiment to see if crops could be grown to support astronauts during long distance space travel, is being brewed into our favorite beverage. Beer from outerspace? What's next-- Solent Green and Logan's Run? Probably not. But what makes no sense about this, is, they're only making 100 bottles-- AND THEY

ARE NOT FOR SALE! Make beer, but don't sell it to us to drink? And not just any beer, but space beer? What's the point? I think it might be the end of the world as we know it.

**Here's Some Good News--** Hopworks Urban Brewery (HUB) in Portland has built a Bike Bar. What's a Bike Bar, you might ask? Exactly like what it sounds-- a traveling bar built onto a bike. Commissioned by HUB and built by Metrofiets, the HUB Bike Bar, carrying pizzas and sporting a sound system, holds two kegs of cold HUB craft beer below an inlaid wood bar. The Bike Bar will make appearances around Portland at various bike events throughout the year. Leave it to Portland to think of this!

**A Winter Warmer--** My friend Bob shared a **Rogue Chocolate Stout** with me the other day. I've had this before, but forgot just how good it really is. Mellow, balanced, tasty and very chocolatey. This is a good Oregon beer you should look for this winter. It's like a steamy cup of hot cocoa on a winter 's day. Except it's cold. And it's beer.

*Join us next time for Another Round!*

