Keeping a Firm (Or Should We Say Furry) Upper Lip

By Catherine Converse

There is one month of the year that the men of the Flathead just might be primping a bit more than the ladies. Burley fellows stare in the mirror just a little longer each day, admiring their progress, planning their next trim with care. The month? March. The reason? March Mustache Madness at Tamarack Brewing Company.

What started as a college ritual has poured through the years into a new family business tradition going on three years at Tamarack Brewing Company Alehouse and Grill in Lakeside, Montana. Restaurant co-owner and manager Andra Townsley says that each year they attract more and more mustaches. “The creativity of our customers is fantastic,” says Townsley, “It is such a nice outlet for everyone when the winter is starting to feel a little long. It’s just something fun to help us all stay cheerful through those last few cold months.”

Townsley’s brother—along with friends—began the college tradition each March in order to compensate for early onset of ‘Spring Fever.’ The idea was inspired by Townsley’s father, who has been sporting a huge mustache for years and years. On his behalf, March Mustache Madness began.

An engraved Golden Shears Cup awaits the winner of the month-long contest. Men and women alike show up at the first of March for a head shot, which is posted at the restaurant all month long while male contestants are growing facial hair and female contestants are designing it (yes, women may participate too—hit the craft store, ladies, and make yourself a stylin’ stash!). On the last Saturday of March, all contestants show up not only with a mustache intricately trimmed into their favorite mustache character of choice (think Hulk Hogan, Burt Reynolds, Charlie Chaplin), but decked out in costume to match. Last year’s winners mimicked the West Coast Choppers. “It is definitely the party of the year!” says Townsley. “We see a lot of Horseshoes and Chevrons, but there are always a few that are really original, and it’s fun to see all of the matching costumes.” Townsley states about past year’s contests.

The fun doesn’t end with a neatly-shaped Pencil Thin or a loose Wild West or Handlebar—drink specials honor the evening with names like ‘The Bandit’, ‘The Big Bar’, and ‘Furry Vengeance’. *Meatloaf Mamas* will hit the stage to get everyone movin’ and groovin’. Townsley says that they decided on a 1980’s band this year to go with the human décor. “So many great mustaches were derived from that decade.”

The Tamarack Brewing Company is open for lunch and dinner daily. They hold fun events and have great specials most nights of the week, and recently opened another location in Missoula.

With Tamarack’s premiere beers on tap, fresh and delicious food from the grill, and a vivacious crowd, the festivities start at 7pm and generally go on until closing time. So when the winter starts to drag, and the sun seems hidden in a camouflage of gray, put on a happy face—preferably one with hair on it—and hit The Rack. This is not an event that you will want to shave from your calendar.

**Sidebar:**

March Mustache Madness

Tamarack Brewing Company, Lakeside, Montana

March 31, 2012, 7:00pm

Participants are encouraged to stop in early March for a pre-stash photo!

Don’t forget your costume!