

# Features

## Beer and bluegrass at Brewfest



PHOTO BY PATRICK BRASWELL

Great Smokies Craft Brewers Invitational, or "Brewfest," as it is more commonly known, drew people interested in microbrewed beer and bluegrass on Sept. 19.

**John Locke**  
Staff Writer

The fourth annual Great Smokies Craft Brewers' Invitational Annual festival was held at City-County Plaza on Sept. 19. The event featured microbrewed beer from across the country and both locally and nationally recognized bluegrass bands.

Bluegrass music is native to the Southern Appalachian region, having developed out of folk music in the early 1900s. The style has maintained a strong following in the western N.C. area, which is the home of such notable bluegrass musicians as Doc Watson.

For many, bluegrass calls to mind images from the movie "Deliverance," in which a dentally deficient inbred boy sits on his porch playing a banjo and hooting. However, the

bands who performed at the festival proved that while bluegrass may be a hoot, it is anything but toothless.

The festival featured the Tony Furtado Band, the Yonder Mountain String Band, The Sons of Ralph featuring Ralph Lewis, New Point Special and Straight Ahead.

The bands spanned a surprising range of musical territory, from traditional Appalachian music to more eclectic groups that incorporated elements of jazz fusion and jam band ensemble digression.

At the other end of the spectrum is Asheville's Sons of Ralph. This band plays straight-forward old-time bluegrass, and features Ralph Lewis, the elderly local hero who played with the legendary banjo player Bill Monroe, considered the originator of bluegrass music.

The headlining act, the Yonder

Mountain String Band, describes itself as "psychedelic boogiegrass from the Colorado high country."

This eclectic ensemble from Nederland, Colorado, play music rooted in the jug band tradition but spiked with offbeat cover songs and adventurous improvisation.

The Tony Furtado band was distinguished by the jazz-influenced banjo stylings of its namesake. Straight Ahead's name pretty much explains their music, and New Point Special was neither new nor special.

Barley's Taproom and Pizzeria has sponsored the festival every year.

So, why combine bluegrass and mi-

cro-beers? Well, both have experienced a resurgence in recent years, and the Asheville area is known as the kind of place that likes offbeat

music and strange brews.

Microbreweries are small breweries usually run by people interested in the high-quality, low-quantity approach to zymurgy, the art of creating fermented beverages. This concept was almost unknown ten years ago, when most Americans thought Zima was classy.

While there is no one style of beer typical of these companies, they can be oversimplified into two categories, comparable to two types of bands. There are traditionalists, who faithfully re-create drinks such as lambic, a fruit-infused strong beer that is similar in taste and fermentation time to wine. On the other hand, there are brewers who cook up things like hemp beer.

The festival featured 25 breweries offering 100 exotic varieties of beer to people passing by the vendors' booths. Most of the breweries represented at the festival are based in the Southeast region, although the Sierra Nevada Brewing Company makes its home in Chico, Calif.

Although a vendor for one of the local breweries told me that they brought less beer than in previous years, this may have been due to the increasing competition from microbreweries from across the country. Whatever the cause, by the end of the festival most of the tents were running low, if not entirely dry.

Breweries from the Asheville area included Highland Brewing Company, Green Man Ales and the Asheville Pizza and Brewing Company. The most honored brewery present was Rogue, which has won over 100 awards.

Microbreweries now produce

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## Hispanic culture viewed in films

**Kristina Elliott**  
Staff Writer

The second annual Hispanic Film Festival features five films from Spain and Latin America for anyone interested in movies, or for those who want to brush up on their Spanish.

The festival began on Sept. 11, and will show one film each week until Oct. 8.

All of the films are in Spanish, but there are subtitles for those of us who are unable to quickly translate the dialogue. Gretchen Trautmann, an assistant professor in the foreign language department, chose the films.

"I wanted to do something outside of the academic atmosphere. I do not make everyone stay after for long talks. I am definitely able to stay afterwards to answer any questions though," said Trautmann.

The films will all be shown in the Whitman Room, which is located in Ramsey Library. The room seats only about 45 to 50 people comfortably, so you might want to get there early to reserve your seat. Many people were left standing and sitting on the floor during the showing of the first film, "Alas de Mariposa."

There has been a large increase in attendance compared to last year's festival. Trautmann credits this to an increase of promotion from the multicultural services office, which is co-sponsoring the event. The film festival coincides with Hispanic Month and is free to the public.

"Last year we just saw students

who wanted to do their cultural events. This year we are seeing much more of a crowd from UNCA and the outside community," said Trautmann.

Students are attending for a variety of reasons. Kristina Hartenstine, an undeclared sophomore, attended so that she could rest her Spanish skills. Others attended because of their interest in film and Hispanic culture.

### Profile

"It is a great opportunity to get a different perspective on Hispanic culture and watch a well crafted movie," said Joseph Wilbe-Ramsing, a senior Spanish major.

The first film of the festival, was entitled "Alas de Mariposa" ("Butterfly Wings"). The film was released in 1992 in Spain and was directed by Juanma Baho Ulloa. It is a highly poetic and symbolic film that gives a critical historical view.

"Hombre Mirando al Sudeste," ("Man Facing Southeast") was shown this week. It is an Argentinean film from 1986 that was directed by Eliseo Subiela. It is a science fiction flick that also serves as a religious parable with some social commentary. It was considered to be a very important movie when it came out, but is no longer in circulation, according to Trautmann.

The next movie is about African immigration in Spain. It is called "Las Cartas de Alou" (Letters from Alou). It is a Spanish film from director Monxo Armendariz. It is a fictional narrative filmed in a documentary style. It deals with con-

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## DiFranco great as always



PHOTO BY PRESTON GANNAWAY

Ani DiFranco's poetic and musical style was well received at the Civic Center on Sept. 12.

**Rebecca Travers**  
Staff Writer

Ani DiFranco left the audience screaming for more after her performance at the Asheville Civic Center on Sept. 12.

DiFranco has stood on her own for more than a decade, while distributing unique music through her own independent record label, Righteous Babe Records.

While performing one of her newest songs, which ironically evaluates a situation in which DiFranco herself feels the disapproving gaze of those watching her on a fictitious stage, she sang the wrong lyrics.

Rather than continuing on, she burst into laughter and started all over again.

Openly admitting a traditionally embarrassing mistake only added to her performance.

Her ability to connect with her audience is wonderful.

The casual way she carries herself

makes her appear less like a celebrity and more like everyone else.

Her personality is only part of the attraction. Her lyrics have multifaceted effects. Some of her songs are political in nature while others are saturated with personal experience.

Those songs addressing the commonplace theme of heartache and disappointment scream what every hurt girl I have ever met likes to hear: It is more than okay to be pissed off, loud, and mildly neurotic toward those who have done you wrong.

Although the guitar is her main instrument, DiFranco also played the bongos and the banjo.

The most compelling trait about DiFranco is her overwhelming passion towards her work.

The show contained a balanced mixture of upbeat and slow songs. She accommodated her fans by first playing her more well known songs, and then introducing her new music every chance she got.

The one new song that remains

vivid in my memory defined and explained the beautiful relationship the musician has with her husband.

By this point in the show, I was ready to hear some of her older outlandishly angry songs.

It was overtly obvious due to her newest songs that she had transitioned into a more peaceful point in her life, and this clashed with my expectations.

Still, this is not to say that the performance was not musically fulfilling.

DiFranco inspired me with her music and poetry.

She has a unique and sturdy voice that frequently ranges from loud and harsh to sweet and soft.

While delivering her poetry, she maintains perfect rhythm and effectively stresses the most influential words.

She performed three of her poems, "My IQ," "Fuel" and "Not So Soft."

All three are political in nature

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