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1,000 sip, guzzle and chug at beer festival

■ ADMISSION WAS \$35 AT THE GATE.

By **HOLLY KANE**

Alligator Contributing Writer

About 1,000 people sampled and chugged beer at the Greater Gator Beer Festival on Saturday at Magnolia Parke.

For \$35 at the gate, the festival offered unlimited samples of drinks, and local restaurants, such as Kazbor's Grille and Munegin's on 13th, provided samples of food. Music was provided by DJ Phred.

Between 30 and 35 tables averaged three to five drink samples each, while some of the dozen or so restaurants offered chicken wings, hot dogs and pizza.

Festival coordinator Ricki Black said the fall event takes places on the bye weekend every year so it doesn't conflict with fans wanting to watch the football game.

"You're competing for the dollar here," she said.

Another Greater Gator Beer Festival will be held in March at the same location, and Black expects about 3,000 attendees.

A combination of off-duty GPD officers and private security helped check IDs and give out wristbands.

Ted Owens, a friend of Black's for more than 30 years, has volunteered his security services at this festival and at festivals in Orlando for seven years.

Owens, who doesn't drink, said the biggest security problem occurs when people try to bring children or pets, both of which are not allowed.

Raul Prado, a 23-year-old UF alumnus, visited the Greater Gator Beer Festival for the first time on Saturday.

"It was nice to be able to drink my favorite beers and find new ones, too," he said.



Max Reed / Alligator

Kim Van Der Weijde, viking hat, makes a toast to Stokholm beer with friends at the Greater Gator Gainesville Beer Festival on Saturday at Magnolia Parke.