Kegerators 101

Evolution of getting suds in a glass

By Todd Donnelly

What all kegerators have in common:

- Gas source (CO_2 or N_2)
- Regulator & gas lines (5/16” I.D.)
- Coupler (sanke/corny)
- Beer keg (1/6th, ¼, ½)
- Beer line (3/16” I.D.)
- Shank & faucet
- Temperature regulator

Fridge Conversion

Pros:

- Cheap
- Easy
- Flexible options for size/type

Cons:

- Not always terribly attractive
- Hard to ‘blend in’
- Limited capacity

Getting more creative:

- Multiple taps for multiple kegs, mix/match sanke and corny, Cobra taps
- CO_2 & Nitro
- Organization options for optimal space
- Build into bars, walls, pieces of furniture…

Commercial options

- Made by several companies ($400-$700)
- Single tap, multiple tap, corny or sanke
- Easy, but more costly
- “Turn key” simplicity

Going bigger – the “Keezer”

- Chest freezer conversion project
- Options range from Small (5cu’) to large (24cu’)

Pros:

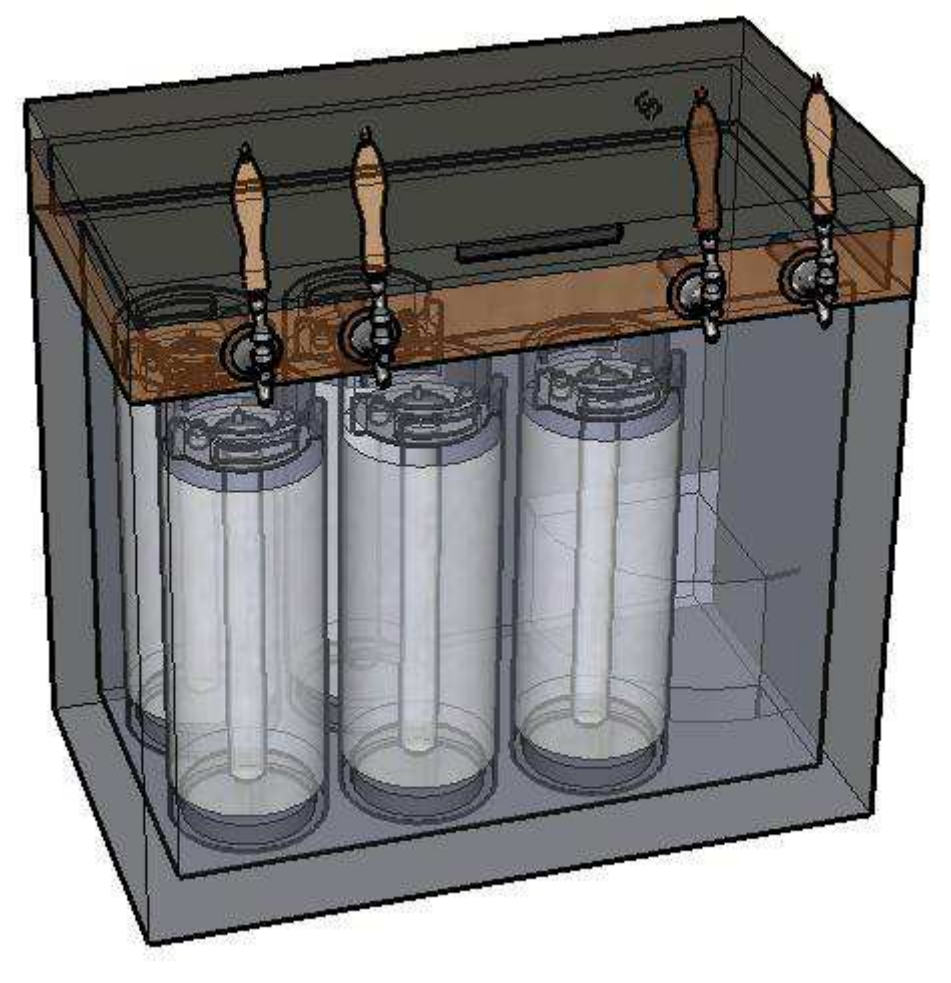
- Extra capacity for more beer!
- Cold air sinks, which works very well in a box vs. stand up fridge
- Lots of flexibility in how you want your system to work

Cons

- Extra capacity = much bigger footprint
- Older ones can be energy hogs (ask me how I know)

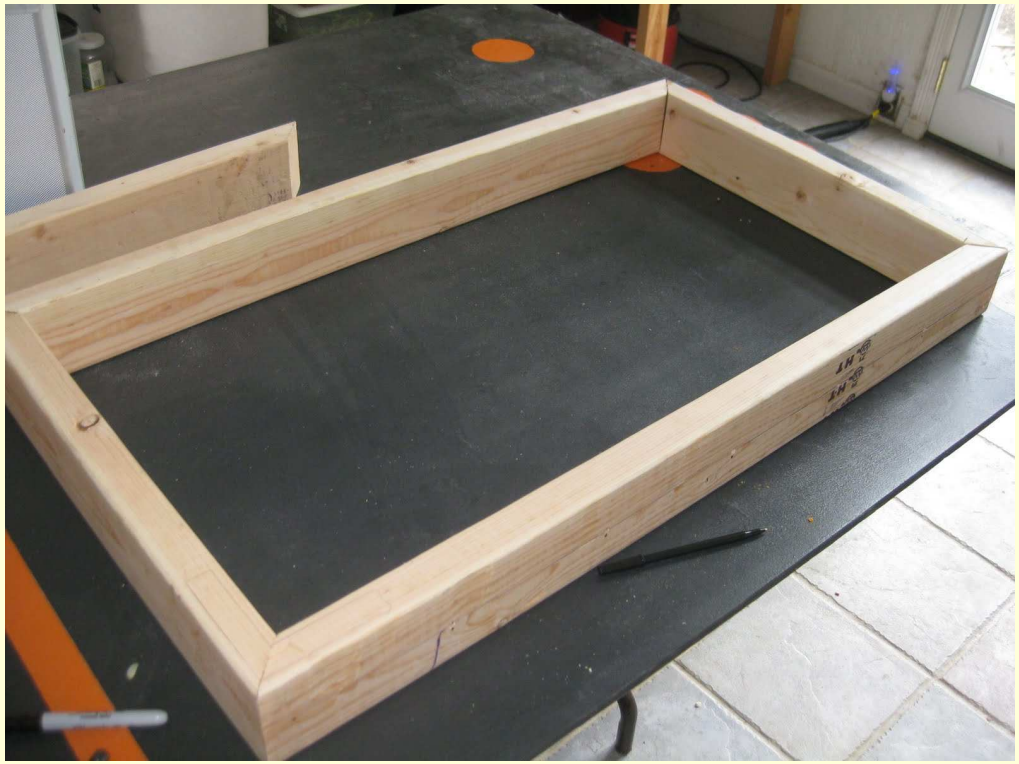
Anatomy of the conversion:

- Collar or tower
- Lid hinge reset
- Manifold for CO_2
- Liquid lines
- Temp control



The collar:

- Creates space between body of freezer and lid
- 2x4, 2x6, 2x10, etc
- Allows for shank to transit in/out without hitting refrigeration coils
- Can be made simple or very ornate
- Affix with Liquid Nails
- Insulate, caulk, enjoy!



- 7/8” hole fits standard beer shank
- Make sure the shank is long enough to transit the thickness of the collar you build

- Hinges mount to the new collar, it will be higher than it was… kegs are heavy, do the math…how tall do you want it?

What did I build, and how did I get there…?

- Just having good craft beer on-tap was my first goal. Bought kegs from from local distributors and breweries
- Started with a fridge conversion, single tap through the door. Instant popularity!
- Turns out, a half-barrel of one beer takes a loooong time to drink and I got bored easily. I may never drink a Molson product again as a result

Next steps…

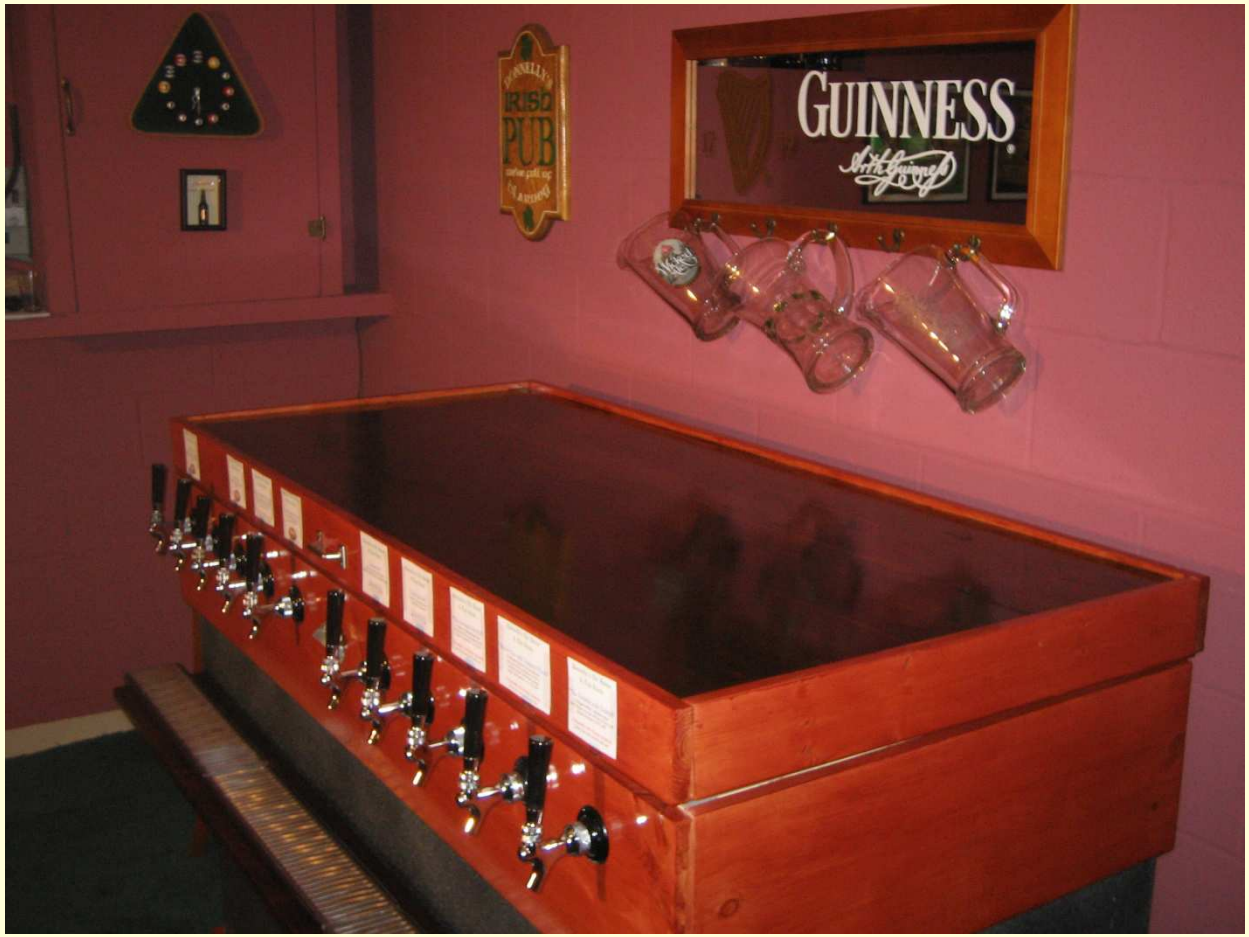
- Bought a single tower Haier kegerator about 2 years later

- Quickly converted to dual tower with sanke/corny quick disconnects. Would fit 2 corny or ¼ sanke tall kegs, or one ½ barrel

Got the OK to go a little bigger…

My theory - If you are going to go big, make it a fun project…


IRISH
PUB
we're full of
BLARNEY
GUINNESS
17
59
GUINNESS
EXTRA STOUT
ST JAMES'S GATE DUBLIN



- Very simple carpentry, love my air-nailer!
- Cherry stain for 1x2 and 1x12 trim over the lid and collar, mahogany for top with marine grade varnish for spills


PETE'S
WICKED
MICHAEL
SHEAS

Glued on brackets to support drip tray shelf

Original boring white freezer now coated with Rustoleum© Granite textured spray paint

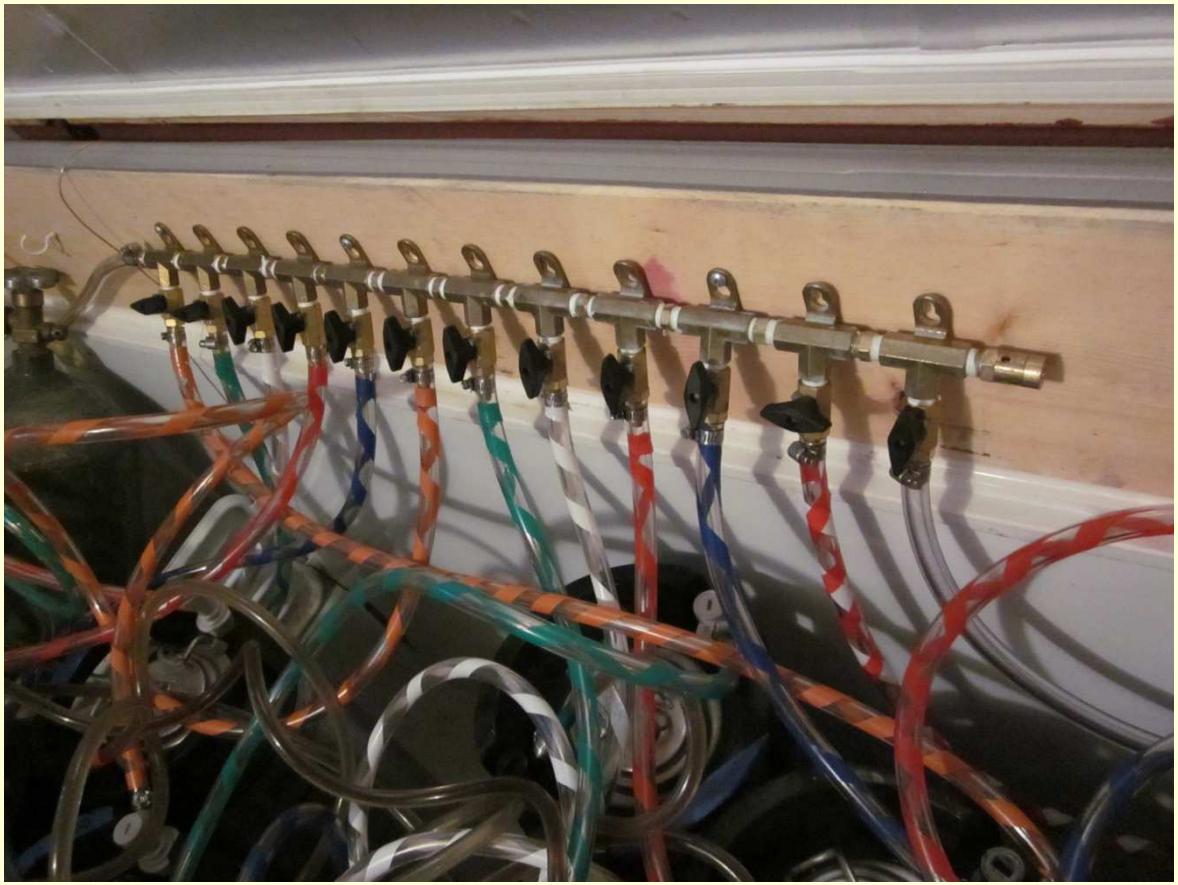
- Silicone caulk all corners of the lid, where it joins the base, and all seams inside the freezer body to prevent air leakage and rust

- Weather stripping around the lid for a tight seal

- I removed the plastic lid/light for looks & more room
- Replaced with 1” foam panel

The guts: gas side

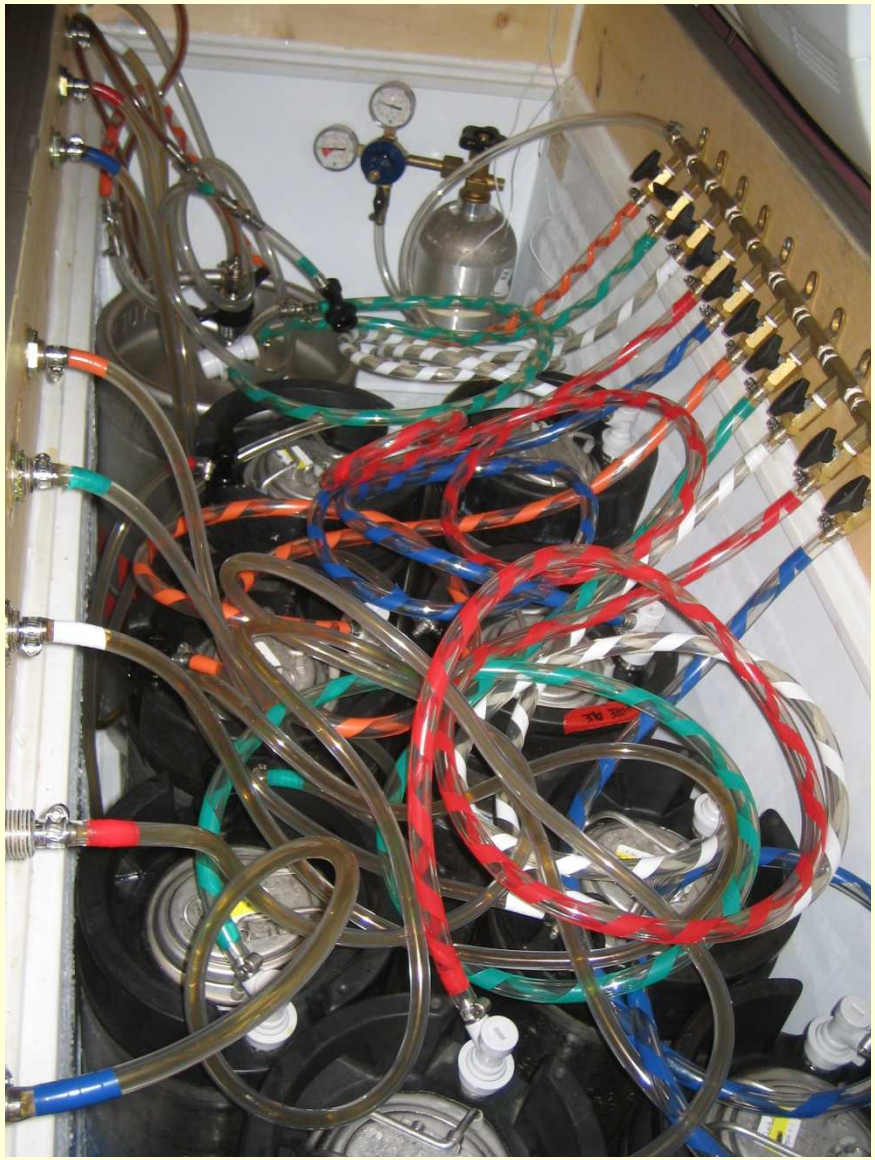
- Runs 10 CO_2 and 1 Nitrogen tap (uses separate regulators)
- 12 separate on/off valves
- 1 CO_2regulator = 1 pressure for all kegs



Had to color code everything…

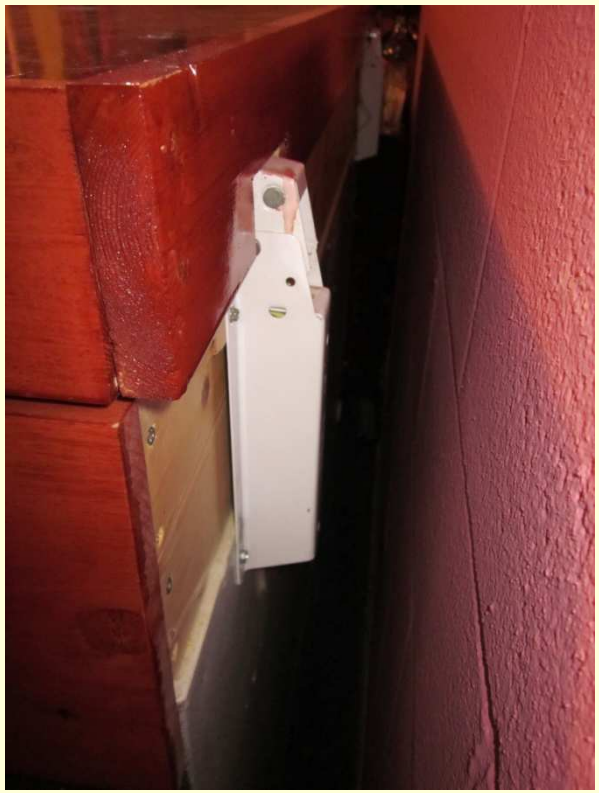
The Guts: Liquid side

- More color coding
- 2 taps are quick convert sanke/corny
- Will hold 12 cornys, less if also using a ½ barrel
- Using Johnson analog temp controller



Other hardware ideas/issues:

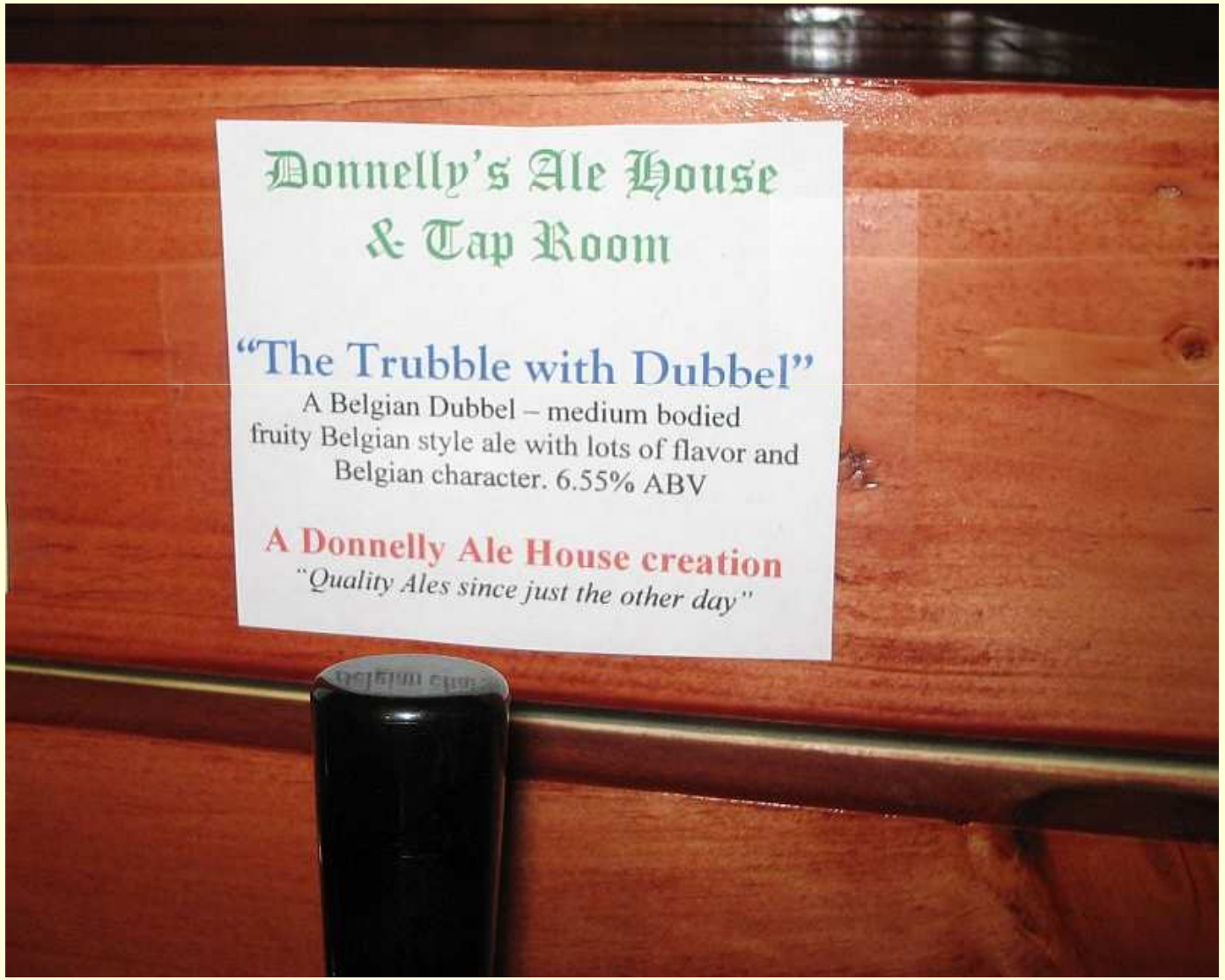
Spend the money on **PERLICK** faucets!!!!



Hinge placement is a bit tricky

Gatorade bottles, Shrader tire valves, tire filler chock = portable pressure vessels

- Get creative with labels and tap handles (just watch the height!)



Cheers!