
LIVIN' THE BREWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH TEXAS HOME BREWERS ASSOCIATION
VOLUME XXVII ISSUE IV



PINTS OF INTEREST

- THE NEXT CLUB BREWDAY IS AT DAVID LEE'S —SATURDAY APR. 7TH IN ALLEN
- THE NEXT CLUB MEETING IS AT FRANCONIA BREWING —APR. 10TH IN MCKINNEY
- THE SPRING PARTY WILL BE HOSTED JASON STARNES —APR. 21ST IN PLANO
- THE CELTIC BREWOFF ENTRIES ARE DUE —APRIL 12TH

Prez Sez

By Chuck Homola

Wow – Bluebonnet is done! It was a lot of work by a lot of people – many from our fine club – but I am glad it is done. As I'm sure most of you all have heard – we reclaimed the coveted Bluebonnet Cup as the highest scoring club in the world largest single site amateur beer competition – that is amazing! For those that were there that night – it was an exciting and very proud moment. My congratulations goes out to everyone that volunteered, entered beers and attended the event. It was so cool seeing many old friends that haven't been able to be around much the past year and to make some new friends as well. We really need to keep the momentum going though – there are many more competitions in the Lone Star Circuit yet to come – so we need all of you brewers to keep entering beers all year long – it would be awesome to take the overall club title this year – let's make that our goal as a club.

Things are really picking up steam with events we are planning around the area with our commercial friends – we have plans for private and club events at virtually all of the new and existing breweries and some fun “outings” at a few of the pubs as well. We also have an idea on a magazine article about our club that I would like to see get nationally published. It would center around a Pro-Am competition here in the Dallas area – more details to follow.

All this talk about beer is making me hungry! The best way to take care of that might be to have some pairing parties through the year. Keep on the look-out for announcements to this affect – not only do we have great brewers in the club – but there are some up and coming chefs to go along with that – time to collaborate!

Ok – I know I keep pushing everyone to think about competing – and if I don't live by example – I start feeling like a bit of a hypocrite – so I am in the midst of laying out a brew schedule for the year to time out some entries in the upcoming competitions – 3 are ready to go now and I hope there are many more to come. With just a little planning you can easily have beers ready for competition. I am planning to focus on German styles again this year – and there are some truly wonderful summer and fall beers that hail from there – can you say Limbo entries ?

Last but certainly not least – it's time to get ready for Dark Lord Day at 3Floyds Brewery in Indiana. This is my 3rd year to get to go and look forward to finding out what color the wax is this year. This is one of the truly unique beer festivals in this part of the world and an experience to always be remembered. I really look forward to sharing some of the spoils with you all after we get back.

Once again – thanks for all the contribution and hard work so many of you all do for the club – we're having a great year and I hope it just keeps getting better and better!

Chicks Rule and Boys Drool Brewday By The Cougar Brewers

As mentioned last month, there is a competition sponsored by a club in California called the Queen of Beer. According to their website, The Queen of Beer Women's Homebrew Competition is open to all non-commercial, home brewed beers, meads, and ciders produced by persons of female gender. Beer, mead, and cider produced by or with the assistance of persons of the male gender is not eligible. "Assistance" is defined as: coaching during the brewing process, measuring ingredients, performing chemical reaction and/or timing calculations, racking, bottling or in any other way manipulating wort or fermented product. *Permitted* operations include lifting of heavy equipment or full brewing vessels, milling of grain and operation of a capper.

We have set the date for the Chicks Rule and Boys Drool brew day. It will be June 3rd at the Beyer residence. We have room for 8 to 10 brewers. The Cougar Brewers and Kris DeMaria will be brewing a Jasmine IPA. If you have not brewed before, We recommend an extract kit from one of the local home brew stores. They are easy and include instructions on how to make good beer.

Melinda Beyer and Kim Rhea
— The Cougar Brewers

Please email me at mjbeyer8@gmail.com if you are interested in brewing.

BREW ★ ENTER ★ JUDGE ★ WIN
THE CONTESTS OF THE LONE STAR CIRCUIT!

2012 EVENTS

BLUEBONNET BREWOFF
ALAMO CITY CERVEZA FEST
CELTIC BREWOFF
BIG BATCH BREW BASH
LUNAR RENDEZBREW
LIMBO CHALLENGE
CACTUS CHALLENGE
DIXIE CUP



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Bluebonnet 2012 WINNERS

— *First Place* —

Bill Lawrence - Dark Lager
Don Vanslyke - Kolsch
Jenna Higgins - Extra Special/Strong Bitter
Jenna Higgins - Spice/Herb/Vegetable Beer
Anthony Perea - Smoke Flavored Beer
Don Vanslyke - New Entrant

— *Second Place* —

Don Vanslyke - Pilsner
Doug Nett - Strong Scotch Ale
Randy Friese - Brown and Baltic Porter
Phillip Zayas - Sweet/Oatmeal Stout
Aaron Wolin - English IPA
Kent McBride, Ryan Saenz - Belgian Strong Light
Lance Smith - Spice/Herb/Vegetable Beer

— *Third Place* —

Phillip Zayas - Sweet/Oatmeal Stout
Lee Pelfrey, David Ireland - Brown & Baltic Porter
Andrew Speer - Strong Stout
Bill Lawrence - Belgian Pale & Specialty Ales

Education Station By Aaron Wolin

We're past Bluebonnet now, and brew days are commencing. Einar Jonsson will be providing the next education session at the April 7th brew day on the changes in the BJCP testing process. As always, we need more volunteers for the remaining brew day sessions. If you want to lead a session or volunteer your unsuspecting friend, please do so.

We're in the process of formatting the new beer classes, which will deviate a bit from BJCP style guidelines. I know people have expressed interest in the classes at every turn. We'll be taking a more formal census of participation and anticipations throughout the next few weeks.

Making Mead Easy

By David Lee

I have become more interested in mead lately and since making beer is such a breeze, I figured, I can make mead. I heard from folks the hardest part of making mead is waiting. Waiting for it to become ready to drink! I'm pretty sure that I started getting interested when I tasted my first mead only a year ago, that was the first mead I really remember. I know that there are several varieties of mead, for me, I prefer sweet, floral mead. Mead can also be dry or semi-sweet. You can also use carbonation, which rocks, or there is still and naturally sparkling mead. I really enjoyed this run of the mill wildflower honey mead I had at the Texas Renaissance festival close to Plantersville, Texas, but the best mead I have tried lately is definitely Wayne Yandell's caramelized mead. That stuff is the bomb! You might have a different opinion, but hey, if you like fermented honey and water then we can probably get along.

I wanted to tell everyone that I went and created something, which I hope is good, it's definitely mead or honey wine. I'll even enter it into the bluebonnet next year if it's decent.

I used 18 lbs of Sam's club honey (White Clover Honey), four gallons of water, wine yeast and some yeast nutrient. Really that's it? I watched a few youtube videos on making mead, asked my buddy Jason Starnes and banged this one out. It's stored in my fermentation cooler at a comfortable 65 degrees. Perfect? I don't know... seemed good enough to me. My point, I did a bit of research, asked a couple people and gave it a try. Total cost, 50 bucks. I did win a mead book last club meeting and plan to check that out before I try again, but I wanted to get something started and if I was going to be waiting 6 – 8 months or more then I wanted to get it done yesterday.

I approached beer the same way; I'm a Mr. Beer guy. I feel in love with making beer, it's my biggest and main hobby. I like to learn about the styles, try the beer, listen to other brewers and brew it! I started out saying hey it's like making a

tea and that's easy. Haha I learned later, I'm not the only one that feels that way, Charlie Papazian said "Relax! Don't Worry! Have a homebrew!" Making mead or beer can be as complicated as you like, but I bet with a little practice and good sanitation, you can make great stuff!

Go home, do a little research and try something new. We have a great club, folks with a wealth of knowledge in many areas... ask a question, come to a brewday or google it. Go NTHBA!

Tipsy Tips

By Aaron Wolin

I handed out a survey at the January club meeting, and one of the consistent requests for newsletter improvements was an ongoing education section. So let's try it.

This newsletter section will be devoted to any significant, less-intuitive tips to brewing. General ideas like sanitation already have their zealots, so this will bring awareness to more obscure topics.

I'll kick this off with a discussion of one of the most important brewing techniques I've learned over the last year: *cold crashing*.

Cold crashing involves radically reducing the temperature of a beer to drop yeast and sediment out of suspension. Yeast can finish converting sugars but still remain floating in a beer, making the beer cloudy and possibly changing its flavor and texture. Dropping the temperature of a beer below 40 degrees for a few days helps shock the yeast and drop it to the bottom of a carboy, bottle, or keg. The temperature drop should be relatively large, at least 5 degrees per day.

Sediment also benefits from a large drop in temperature. At higher temperatures, liquid molecules are more volatile and are in constant movement. This movement can keep minute particles moving throughout the beer. Cold crashing helps slow a liquid's movement, which helps gravity do its thing and bring sediment down.

The easily-seen benefit of cold crashing is a higher beer clarity. But, personally, I don't care about clarity as much as flavor. The main benefit that I've gotten from cold crashing my beers is in racking and dry hopping.

I cold crash my carboys to between 32-35 degrees a few days before I plan to rack my beer into a keg. This produces a much denser trub, allowing me to rack off more beer from the carboy with less yeast. More beer > less beer.

My initial dry hopping attempts produced beers with large grassy and subtle smoky flavor, most likely due to extensive hop exposure and particles. Cold crashing the dry hopped beers after kegging removed the off-putting flavors as the hop sediment sank to the bottom and could be pulled from the keg. I now cold crash my fermenting carboys after a few days of dry hopping, preventing most of the excess hops from even reaching a keg.

If you want to volunteer to teach a brew day session or suggest a topic you would like to learn, please send an email to education@nthba.org.

So, How Did You Do?

By Barrett Tillman

The next series of words will be a bit of tail wagging in an attempt to advert a pointed question. The truth is I did not get to impersonate Eddie Murphy as *The Nutty Professor* shouting "Hercules, Hercules, Hercules" while receiving awards at the Bluebonnet Brew Off. I did however embrace NTHBA member's steins and medals. This moment was an awesome delight.

Back in the lab of strange things I ponder what's next. Shall I join the masses or continue to brew rouge? Failure has it's good point and that is the point of submission: relax the fight's over Tyson bites but Holyfield wins.

Okay you get the point ..there are no knock outs in an 1800+ entry competition. Your beer must go 12 rounds and finish strong.

I had eluded to this last month but I had entered some rather lifeless beers. Those were prepared in a hurry and I was praying they would carbonated. The Flanders Red was well trained and finished well. It got great scores. Entered in New Entrants and Belgian Pale & Specialty Ales as a Flanders Red the high score was 39 points with a low of 30. Pushed twice it was a great contender.

The other ear bitter was a Farmhouse Rye. This ale was truly unique as yeast was cultured from a homebrewed bottle swap. The original bottle was a White Labs Trappist WLP 500 strand with some funk. I had bottled and sampled regularly. What started as bubble gum esters with some sulfur aroma aged into a sun kissed ale with grassy farmhouse complexity. It scored high at 38 points and low at 37 without ever making it past the first round judges.

Everything else entered was rushed or stored too long. There's one more funny lightly smoked American Pale Ale that landed my worst score ever 17 points. The ale was great but it's hard to wave smoke blankets over national judges in a category that borderlines IPA's with citrus hops.

The truth is I just like the art of brewing. I'm challenged to compete within style as opposed to interpretations. If I had my way I would lightly wheat a Kolsch or even coriander a Triple. However, I must also admit when things have gone too far. Not only should beer please the palette it should by chance have a history.

My process is changing and I see styles guidelines and "The Pope" aka Jamil Zainasheff on the horizon. If I read anything it will reference the BJCP leading to a path called standardized beer.

If you want to be feature in the next NTHBA newsletter submit articles, news, review, and questions by email to secretary@nthba.org.

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Club Brewmeisters

Club Brewmeisters are members who are experienced brewers and have volunteered to help other brewers, new and old, with brewing problems. Give them a call with your questions! Just don't call too late, too early, or during Cowboy games!

Homebrew Headquarters
(972) 234-4411

The Wine Makers' Toy Store
(866)417-1114

North Texas Home Brewers Association

The North Texas Home Brewers Assoc. is a group with an interest in beer in general and home brewing in particular. We meet once a month on the second Tuesday at various locations in the area. Visitors are welcome! "Livin' the Brews" is our newsletter and is published about once a month. We do accept advertising, although the NTHBA, its officers, assignees, and editors are not liable for losses or damages resulting from mistakes or misprints, or any other consequences of advertising in this or any other publication. Ads are \$30 for a 1/3 page and \$50 for a full page, subject to change without notice. Readers are encouraged to submit articles. The deadline for ads and articles each month is 14 days prior to the club meeting.



Visit the NTHBA Website at
www.nthba.org