

LIVIN' THE BREWS

The Newsletter of the North Texas Home Brewers Association

Volume XXXV

Issue I - January



Quick Sips for January:

01/07 – Officer's Meeting – Flying Saucer Draught Emporium – Addison

01/11 – January Brew Day – Mike Grover's House - Carrollton

01/14 – Club Meeting – Three Nations Brewery – Carrollton

01/18 – Winter Party – Fred and Sue David's Home – Parker

Prez Sez by Mike Grover

Welcome to 2020! I hope everyone had a great year and that you are looking forward to another year of brewing – and drinking – great beer. I'm back for a third stint as club president, so I just need one more to tie FDR. On a more serious note, I'd like to thank 2019's officers for their efforts. I'd particularly like to thank Matt Parulis who wore two hats – president and competition coordinator – for much of the year. We will get things started with our officer's meeting at Flying Saucer on the 7th. I will be hosting the January brew day once again. Note that it occurs before our next club meeting. We will send out reminders, but be sure to put it on your calendar. I look forward to working with the rest of our 2020 club officers and making sure we have a great new year!

Cheers,

Mike



This is a photo of one of our newest members and a neophyte brewer. He is shown making his version of an American Wheat ale and employing the new brew in a bag method. Hopefully, he did not pay too much attention to what I was doing as I would hate for some of my.....um, seedier habits to rub off on him. Smitty can be seen offering assistance and then there is Matt, drinking.

The First Sip by Stephen Tyner

Happy 2020! A new year comes with changes in the officer ranks and I am thrilled to have the opportunity to serve as the Socials VP for 2020. 2019 was outstanding with excellent brew days and social events and both John Wherry and Mike Grover did great work in making sure there were ample opportunities for the club to get together. My hope and plan is that 2020 will continue to offer opportunities for all of us to socialize. With that, let's talk about what is coming up in January!

Monthly Officer's Meeting will be held at The Flying Saucer in Addison on Tuesday, **January 7th** and all club members are welcome to join. We usually meet at 6:30pm with business starting around 7pm.

January Brew Day will be held at 9am on Saturday, **January 11th** at Mike Grover's (1939 Castille Drive Carrollton, TX). Come out and start 2020 brewing!

Monthly Club meeting will be held at 3 Nations Brewing (1033 E Vandergriff Dr, Carrollton) on Tuesday, **January 14th** at 6:30pm.

Last but certainly not least we have the **Annual Winter Party** which Fred and Sue David have graciously offered to host. The party will be held on **Saturday, January 18th** at Fred and Sue's home (6803 Overbrook Drive, Parker) beginning at 6:00pm. Note: may show up as Allen, TX in some mapping apps. The meeting will be an opportunity to celebrate 2019 and kick off 2020 with a great time so please join us.

Looking ahead to February

At the November club meeting Fred made an excellent point regarding brew day scheduling and Bluebonnet so we will not be having a brew day in February as Bluebonnet judging will be in full swing (all entries due by Thursday, January 30th). We will reconvene with brew days in March and we are looking for a club member to host the March brew day. We don't have any hosts planned for 2020 brew days so if you are interested in hosting, please let me know at the next club meeting.

Prost,

Stephen

Competition Corner by Fritz Schanz

Beer Re-Classification Help and the Significance of the Bluebonnet

Welcome to the New Year, and I am very happy to be serving as your new Competition Director. This club has had tremendous success in the past, and I hope that the tradition of success will continue.

Beer Re-Classification Help

As many of you know, the Bluebonnet is fast approaching, with entries due on January 30th. Thus, the time for determining which beers we are going to submit is upon us. Let's say that in evaluating your beers, you noticed that one didn't quite hit its style marks but that nonetheless it is superb. So, what should you do with this beer? Please, do not discount it!

Let's figure it out. Let's determine which other substyle this beer can be placed. To this purpose, on our next Brew Day, we will have a panel of judges to help re-classify such beers. Bring as many beers as you wish (2 bottles of each). Also, bring the beers in the morning while our critical senses are still sharp, say, between 9:00 am and noon. **Brew Day: Jan. 11, Mike Grover's House, 1939 Castille Dr., Carrollton.**

The Significance of the Bluebonnet

One of the most important homebrew competitions in the world is in our backyard: The Bluebonnet. With 1,500 entries, it is second only to the National Homebrewers Competition (9,000 entries). To place this in context, only a handful of nationwide competitions approach 800 entries, and in Texas, the other competitions range from 250 to 375 entries, excepting the Dixie Cup with more than 600.

The Bluebonnet is a crown jewel, it is the principal amateur event outside the NHC, it is in our backyard, and it is designed to benefit the entrants for a number of reasons. We should all feel its call.

It includes 38 beer categories.

- The BJCP style guide lists 34 categories and the NHC has 34 categories. By offering the standard categories as well as single-beer categories (Kolsch, Wee Heavy, etc.), the Bluebonnet increases the chances that your beers are competing against beers of like kind. Many other competitions collapse categories either for idiosyncratic or administrative reasons, and competing in combined categories can be a frustrating challenge. Consider, for instance, the Homebrew Inquisition (Austin, TX). It offers 15 categories, with the first one being Sweet or Malty – try puzzling through the different beer styles that can fit there, and then weigh your chances of winning.

It draws from a very large pool of Texas judges:

- 205 total, of which 3 are Grand Masters, 2 are Masters, 45 are National, and 155 are Certified. Such a pool ensures qualified evaluation of your beers. Every beer will be judged by at least one BJCP-certified judge, typically two. I entered a large competition this year, and one of my beers was judged by two non-certified, but experienced homebrewers. I wasn't real happy with the evaluation.

It offers a New Entrant category:

- This is a wonderful way to recognize the achievement of a first-time entrant. Such recognition generally fosters greater confidence and further engagement in homebrewing. If you have never submitted a beer to the Bluebonnet, here is a very special opportunity for you.

It offers the finest first-place trophy in the industry:

- The Stein is a work of art. It looks good on your mantel; it looks better in photographs shared with friends and family; it feels good in your hands; it makes you more handsome or more lovely, and it makes you more creditable. When you speak to homebrewers from outside the state and when they learn you are from Texas, they will invariably ask you, “What are those steins like?” “Do you have one.”

It launches the Lone Star Circuit:

- It sets the pace for homebrewing activity in Texas. It provides an early glimpse as to whom the homebrewing stars may be, which beers and styles may stand out, and which clubs may be in contention. Hopefully, with every one’s participation, this club will make another grand showing.

Speaking of homebrewing clubs and stars, the NTHBA has performed extraordinarily well at the Bluebonnet. In 2019 and 2018, the club placed 3rd and 2nd, respectively, in overall club standings. Those who propelled the club’s success are as follows:

Dean Weaver (2019)	Richard Harris (2019, 2018)
Don Trotter (2019)	Bill Lawrence (2018)
Fred David (2019 Homebrewer of the Year, 2018)	Chuck Homola (2018)
John Driscoll (2019)	Claire McGillivray (2018)
John Sutton (2019, 2018)	Dave Kutschman (2018)
Layne McBeath (2019)	Phillip Zayas (2018)
Matt Parulis (2019)	Steve Barsalou (2018)
	Walter Hodges (2018)

For all the reasons above: why wouldn’t every member of this club feel the call of the Bluebonnet and submit at least one beer to this competition? If you don’t have a stein, many of our club members are here to help you get one.

Cheers

Fritz



Just a little tease offered up by none other than our own Mr. Weaver. Likely, he was using this beer to rinse out his mouth before going on to more hearty fare.

The Secretary's Missive by Bill Lawrence

By the time you read this, the new year will be upon us. With the grace of God everyone had a fine holiday and if this pig goes out on time, you are likely suffering from your recent excesses as you read this. Before I get too far into my usual pontification, I want to thank the members for the turnout held at my abode in December; it was fun. I was also gratified that the beer I made during the event pretty much went off without a hitch and I actually hit my numbers so that was a good thing plus fermentation kicked off in less than 12 hours; the fruits of using a large pitch of active lager yeast.

January brings forth not only a new year but is the beginning of the competition brew season. You will note that Bluebonnet registration opens on the 5th I believe and closes at the end of the month. At the risk of using yet another hackneyed phrase, I hope everyone has been “girding their loins” and brewing up some great beer for the event. It is my intention to try and get a couple more batches done before the deadline and I’m guardedly optimistic that I might actually pull it off. Low gravity beers and wheat beers are easy to turn around quickly and actually taste best pretty young. Of course, the club has a new Competition Coordinator and I am reliably informed that he can be a cruel taskmaster so my advice is to get off your ass and brew something. I recently had a conversation with a neophyte brewer who mentioned that once he gets a few beers under his belt he might try competing. For any of you untested virgins out there my advice is to dive right in and enter those first beers. First of all, you might actually win something. Second, even if your efforts are found wanting by the judges you will have gained experience which hopefully will hold you in good stead for any events you enter down the road. Finally what’s the worst thing that could happen? Yeah, you might not win but you’ll have 5 gallons of beer to quaff

Well, I have droned on long enough for the month. Again, I hope all the membership had a fine holiday and may this new year bring nothing but happiness and prosperity. As always, may God bless America and may your beers turn out great.

*Prost,
Willy*



There was some serious sensory evaluations going on at the December brew day. Although this photo shows some evidence of the difficult work being done it was in no way representative of the complete effort expended that day.

Beer Porn



This beer is reputed to be a Japanese pilsner. What I find interesting about this submission is that the brewer actually resembles one of the members of ZZ Top but perhaps he identifies as Japanese so we will respect his wishes. Anyhow, I have had the honor of trying this particular beer and I can vouch for its quality. As can be gleaned by the picture, it is very light and a beer like this is not easy to do well so congrats.

The Treasurers Report by Jimmy Orkin

Summary:

Equity October end \$9,228.25

Equity November end \$9,056.02

New members in November: 2.

Members at November end: 89.

Current members at the time of this article: 94 members for year 2020.

I want to remind you that the financials trail the newsletter because I write this article before the end of the month.

The final monthly reports are available on the club website at the following link:

<http://nthba.org/?q=groups/financials-corner/financial-statement-archive>

Please let me know if you would like to discuss any of the club's financial information. Also, please let me know if you would like additional or different information in this article.

Our membership year runs June until May. If your membership is not current, please renew at Homebrew Headquarters or any club event. I'll be at most events and you can pay with a credit card. Starting January 1st, the membership fee is \$15 and will expire at the end of May 2020.

I or the officers always have membership forms and cards at all the club events.

Brew Strong,

Jimmy

The Minister of Education Report by Smitty

Welcome to 2020 and a fresh set of NTHBA Officers and their henchmen. I'm happy to be serving as your 2020 Minister of Education (MoE) and will do my darndest to provide some informative articles and

other minutia to help you(AND ME!) improve as a homebrewer. I can assure you that by no means am I a pro! Far from it, in fact. Hopefully though, through me researching the topics I write about each month, we can all “up our game”. With that, enjoy!

Question: What causes astringency in finished beer?

- A. Mash and Sparge pH
- B. Grain Crush
- C. Sparge Temp
- D. All of the Above

If you answered All of the Above, you are correct! All of these elements of producing your beer can cause some level of astringency. Let’s back up a little bit though and cover what astringency actually is. Astringency is a “dry” puckering like character in a finished beer. There are probably some tannins in beer, but an overabundance of astringency is definitely not desired. It is also a common characteristic in red wine. So, if you have ever had a red wine that dried out your tongue, especially after pouring the last glass from the bottle, those my friends are tannins, and that sensation is called astringency. Tannin astringency in wine come from the skins, seeds, and stems, and are actually desirable at some level, either for mouthfeel and structure, or longer-term cellaring of higher quality examples. Tannins in beer come from the grains, namely the husks. Now, let’s look at the contributors to astringency individually and discover what the causes are. I will provide a summary, but there is more information in the links provided at the end of this article.

- A. **Mash and Sparge pH** – pH levels in your mash should never be over 6.0. If so, excess tannins can be extracted, resulting in higher astringency. Ideally, you should keep pH in the 5.2 – 5.5 range and monitor throughout your mash cycle from strike water to sparging. Setting your pH early on is pretty easy and great insurance. When sparging, check that you are not over-sparging and that your final runnings do not fall below 1.008-1.010 on average(number varies according to strength of beer). The best way to monitor pH is to invest in a reliable pH meter. Many good pH meters are made by different companies such as Milwaukee and Apera. I personally do not recommend pH test strips.

How do you adjust pH, you ask? There are many ways to do this. Acid malt in your recipe can regulate your mash pH. Most common for homebrewers is adding lactic or phosphoric acid to your strike and sparge water, as well as during the mash to adjust your pH. Citric acid can also be used, but probably advisable only for certain styles like a juicy IPA. Darker malts also lower pH, so when brewing darker beers, be sure to account for this.

FY! Municipal water supplies keep their pH well above 6.0. For example, the latest monthly NTMWD report from Wylie shows 8.23. Otherwise, the more acidic water would leech out undesirable compounds from the supply system. See the Flint, Michigan water crisis as an example.

- B. **Grain Crush** – As stated above, tannins that cause astringency come primarily from the husk of the grain. As I understand it, if your grains are crushed too fine or especially if they are ground (which you should never do), the husk material that normally should serve as a filter medium, can be passed into the boil. Temperature (which I will cover below) induces tannin extraction from the finer husk material, resulting in more astringency in your finished beer. The best way to avoid grain crush induced astringency is to not crush your grains too fine and to use a proper

grain mill. Grinding your grains through a corona type flour mill is a big no-no. You are not making bread; you are making beer. You can purchase a good quality two or three-roller grain mill from [Homebrew Headquarters](#) or an online retailer. Be sure that your gap width (which usually comes preset at the factory) is set properly. I personally own The Barley Crusher MaltMill and love it!

Pro-tip: you can usually get by with a slightly finer crush (smaller gap width on your mill) as long as your husks are kept intact. This maximizes extraction and efficiency! Just be sure to add some extra rice hulls to keep the grain bed flowing and to avoid a stuck mash.

- C. **Sparge Temp** – Temperature overall is a contributor to tannin extraction and astringency. Obviously, you would not mash even close to 170°, but when you are sparging/recirculating/mashing out, it is likely that you will in some way raise your mash temperature to maximize extraction. Setting aside the argument about even raising temperatures during sparge or mash out, if any excessive heating or hot water additions raise the mash bed temp too high...>168-170 being considered the threshold...you greatly increase the risk of excessive tannin extraction resulting in astringency.

Sources:

1. Craft Beer and Brewing: <https://beerandbrewing.com/off-flavor-of-the-week-astringency/>
2. BeerSmith Home Brewing Blog: <https://beersmith.com/blog/2015/10/25/astringency-from-grains-oversparging-and-hot-sparging-your-beer/>
3. North Texas Municipal Water District: <https://www.ntmwd.com/water-quality-reports/>

That is it for this month. Happy brewing and we will see you at this month's events

Cheers,

Smitty



This photo was taken at a recent brew day. As you can see, Walter's snifter is slightly larger than mine however; the monogram on mine has a larger font (although that is rather hard to tell on this picture). In any case, the more "refined" members always drink from proper glassware and well.....a monogram just adds to the genteel nature of our endeavors. I would be remiss if I did not point out that generally protocol would demand that our pinky fingers be extended but as it was a casual event, we felt that formality unnecessary so as not to appear snobbish plus we were trying hard not to intimidate the neophyte brewers in attendance.

NTHBA Officers

President

Mike Grover

president@nthba.org

1st Vice President

Fritz Schanz

firstvp@nthba.org

2nd Vice President

Stephen Tiner

socials@nthba.org

Treasurer

Jimmy Orkin

treasurer@nthba.org

Minister of Education

James Smith

education@nthba.org

Secretary

Bill Lawrence

secretary@nthba.org

Past President

Matt Parulis

pastpres@nthba.org

Our Supporting Home Brew Stores



300 N. Coit Road, Suite 134
Richardson, TX 75080
972-234-4411
www.homebrewhq.com

North Texas Home Brewers Association

The North Texas Home Brewers Assoc. is a group with an interest in beer and homebrewing. We meet the second Tuesday of the month at various locations around the DFW area. Visitors are welcome!

"Livin' the Brews" is our monthly newsletter. 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.



www.NTHBA.org