

LIVIN' THE BREWS



The Newsletter of the North Texas Home Brewers Association

Volume XXXV

Issue V – May

Quick Sips for May:

May activities are either cancelled or postponed

Prez Sez by Mike Grover

Greetings fellow homebrewers. I hope all of you are staying safe and healthy during these difficult times. Before I get into updates on club activities, I have some sad news to share. Scott Townson, a homebrewer and former NTHBA officer, passed away this past weekend. As many of you know, Scott battled ALS, or Lou Gehrig's Disease, for many years. Scott joined NTHBA in 2009 and quickly became an active club member and homebrewer. In 2010 Scott served as NTHBA Competition Coordinator and became a club legend for his rousing speeches encouraging members to enter more beers into competitions. Everyone who attended that year's club meeting at The Londoner will remember Scott's "Gird your loins!" battle cry. Scott also won the beer belly competition at a raucous Addison Oktoberfest that year.

Scott was also a heck of a brewer. In 2010 he won seven Bluebonnet Brewoff medals, including a stein for first place in New Entrants. His Bluebonnet success continued in 2011 including a stein for an American barleywine. Scott also racked up numerous awards in the other Lone Star Circuit competitions and our own Club Only Competition. It bears mentioning that most of these beers were brewed on a structurally unsound – some would say life threatening – setup. Any OSHA inspector that saw the wobbly table that held up a pot of scalding hot wort would have night terrors for the rest of their life. Scott really loved the club and the homebrewing community. Even after his condition made him unable to brew, he still made a regular annual appearance at the Bluebonnet Brew-Off event.

There will be a celebration of Scott's life held at his church sometime after the COVID quarantine is over. As soon as I have details I will make sure they are shared with the club. Scott was a great guy and a great brewer and he will be missed by many, many folks. We will raise a toast to him the next time we are able to meet together. If you would like to send condolences to Scott's wife Sue, drop me a note. I don't want to post the address here in the interest of privacy.

SCHEDULE

Since the quarantine remains in effect we will be cancelling all social activities for the month of May. As we gradually tiptoe back towards normalcy, I am optimistic that we will be able to have

business as usual (more or less) in June. We plan to hold a virtual club meeting for the month of May. Details are still being worked out, but it would likely be a Zoom video conference or similar setup held on our usual meeting date of May 12th. We will provide details via email and on Facebook prior to the meeting. Here are some additional updates:

- Campout at Cedar Creek Brewery – The campout has been postponed until sometime in the fall. We will provide details at a later date.
- Lunar Rendezbrew – Cancelled until 2021.
- Cactus Challenge – Cancelled until 2021.
- Big Batch Brew Bash – Cancelled until 2021.

Take care and stay safe and healthy!

Cheers, Mike

The First Sip by Stephen Tyner

I hope everyone and their families are safe and healthy during this crazy time. Unfortunately bars and restaurants remain closed as we are still under orders to socially distance and avoid large gatherings. This means our social calendar remains on hold. The status of the upcoming club events is below:

Spring Party - Remains postponed and we will continue to evaluate as time goes on

Cedar Creek Camp Out (originally May 2nd) - Postponed until fall, date TBD

May Officers Meeting (May 5th) - Will do the first ever Zoom officers meeting!

May Club Meeting (May 12th) - Cancelled

May Brew Day at Steam Theory (May 16th) - Postponed until fall, date TBD

Saturday, May 2nd is National Homebrew Day and while we can't brew together in person, we can brew together digitally. I would ask that anyone brewing Saturday (or any day for that

matter) upload a photo to the club Facebook page. The weather should be great outside of a bit of wind so I will be brewing and will certainly be sure to share the experience.

The AHA is inviting everyone to take place in a global toast! Raise a glass on May 2 at 1:00 p.m. EDT and share photos of your cheers on social media with #BigBrew. You can check out photos on the AHA's [Instagram](#) page.

While not on the social front, for a bit of positive news on the hobby of homebrewing see recent articles from [Forbes](#) and a [Los Angeles](#) news station on a surge of homebrew popularity. With much of the news we are hearing not being positive, it is great to see growth in our collective hobby.

Prost,

Stephen

Competition Corner by Fritz Schanz

The Club Only Championship (COC)

Due to COVID-19 concerns, the March and May COCs have been postponed. So, hang on to your award-winning beers until further notice. At this time, it is too early to make a decision on the July COC.

Month	Beer Style	BJCP Category
March 2020 - POSTPONED	Irish & Scottish	14 & 15
May 2020 - POSTPONED	British	11 - 13
July 2020	Lagers	1 - 3
September 2020	Extract American	18 & 19
November 2020	Spiced	30
January 2021	Trappist	26

Competition Update

We have the following "updates":

1. National Homebrew Competition: First Round – canceled, but AHA may hold a one-round competition at the national convention (Nashville, TN, Jun 17 – 20)
2. Cactus Challenge (Lubbock, TX) – canceled; may be rescheduled for fall
3. Lunar Rendezvous (Clear Lake, TX) – canceled; no word on a possible reschedule
4. Operation Fermentation (Katy, TX) – canceled for this year, and rescheduled for January (awards in February)
5. Big Batch Brew Bash (Houston, TX) – canceled for this year; no word on a possible reschedule
6. Homebrew Inquisition (Austin, TX) – no decision yet; LSC site indicates TBD; last year's entry registration was July 1 – July 12
7. Alamo City Cerveza Fest (San Antonio, TX) – no decision yet; LSC site indicates registration is July 6 – August 8
8. Limbo Challenge (Dallas, TX) – no decision yet; LSC site indicates registration ends July 28
9. Dixie Cup (Houston, TX) – no decision yet; LSC site indicates TBD; last year's entry registration was August 16 – September 7

I will remain optimistic, and assume that competitions will be held July onward. I am targeting beers for these competitions now, and I hope that others in the mighty NTHBA, the Bluebonnet Club of the Year, will also begin preparing.

In the Meantime A Review of Our BJCP Scoresheets

Now that we are in a holding pattern for beer competitions, how can we stay close to competitions and our intentions to produce award-winning beers. Of course, we can brew, sample, and revise our beers. Perhaps, though, we can pause to reexamine our beers, say, through the lenses of our competition scoresheets.

In the past, I haven't used scoresheets well. If the score was good, then great. If the score was bad, I mumbled quietly and dismissed the judges' imperfections. And that was about it – no real attempt to consider what the judges had to say.

But now, after accruing some experience as a judge, I see scoresheets in a new light. They are documents produced with great difficulty and sincerity, and their goal is to help us produce better beer. After talking with some really good judges and homebrewers, I've put together some of their ideas regarding judging and scoresheets.

First, judging is so complicated and subjective that it can't possibly be perfect, but on the whole, it has proven to be reasonably accurate.

- The act of judging is tremendously difficult: (1) perceiving aroma, flavor, and mouthfeel, (2) associating these with BJCP style requirements, and (3) then expressing one's

perceptions in writing in order to benefit the entrant. And then, there are the added pressures from time constraints and sensory fatigue.

- Judging is also complicated by the BJCP Style Guidelines. The guidelines specify a range of characteristics, which we are all too familiar: “moderately high to moderately low,” “may have . . .,” “the balance can vary,” etc. For sure, these ranges are indispensable, but they also promote a level of subjective interpretation – at a time when many of us prefer more objectivity.
- After an open-minded reading of our scoresheets, we will likely, if grudgingly, admit that judges get it right most of the time. This is a remarkable achievement in light of the difficulties inherent to judging.

Second, let’s not separate the act of judging from the act of being judged.

- We typically approach judging very seriously, giving it our all, and when we are finished, we are pleased with the outcome of our efforts.
- However, when we read a judges’ scoresheet on our own beers, we are less certain that the judges were as committed as were we or that the judges possess the required skills.
- This is a double standard and a trap that we should all avoid.

Third, calibrating our perceptions with those of the judges can fine-tune our own senses.

- After receiving a scoresheet for a particular beer, we might sit down with the scoresheet and that beer (if any is left), and walk in the shoes of the judges. That is, we might try to perceive the beer as the judges did. With practice, we will be able to do this most of the time, but there will be occasions when we simply can’t, no matter how hard we try. Maybe the beer changed since the time we entered it, or maybe the judges simply perceived things differently. We are all different after all.
- People who calibrate in this way report a better understanding of their palates, of the beer as a whole, and of how the beer fits a style.

Fourth, trying to understand what was not said in the scoresheet is as revealing as what was said.

- Reading is a high art, and interpreting what was not said is as important as understanding what was said.
- We have all submitted beers that we thought had an astounding dimension in one characteristic or another, but the judges didn’t comment on it. Why? Maybe our perception was a bit too fanciful, or maybe our focus on the characteristic was too reductive, or maybe the judges just didn’t see this characteristic as important for the style.

- All are reasonable explanations, and they are causes to review our expectations, perceptions, and the BJCP guidelines.

Last, archiving scoresheets over time provides an impartial trendline of our beers.

- Some homebrewers staple their scoresheets to their brewing notes for the given beer and then file them away. When planning the next brew, they return to these scoresheets for guidance.
- By sending our beers to more than one competition, we can obtain a body of scoresheets from which to draw reasonable conclusions: e.g., what is the average score for this beer? How has the score changed over time? Which features of the beer, negative and positive, have been commented on more than once? Which comments will help us to improve the beer? With enough palates in the mix, we will arrive at a consensus regarding the beer's merits and how to improve the beer.
- Importantly, this body of "evidence" can serve as a system of checks and balances against our own biases.

Lately, I have calibrated a few beers with the judges' scoresheets, and indeed, my palate and understanding of style requirements is improving. Also, I have begun the archival process, and I have spotted several reoccurring comments, which escaped me earlier. Now that I am revising some recipes and processes, I am brewing renewed.

Cheers

Fritz



Well, given the current situation I guess this is pretty much moot now. Hopefully, you guys haven't taken care of this situation too often lately.

The Secretary's Missive by Bill Lawrence

Spring has certainly sprung here in north Texas and a young man's/woman's fancy naturally turns to beer (well it turns to sex also but this is a family friendly publication). As I pen this, I guess things are going to open up a bit at the end of the week but even staying put at home I have been productive. So far, I have brewed a Belgian Blond, a German Alt bier and a German pilsner. Incidentally, you can get ingredients to brew from Homebrew Headquarters by just giving them a call and indicating what is needed. Once they have assembled your order, they give you a call and you can safely go pick it up. Besides supporting a small business during this difficult time, you can increase your stock of our mutually favorite libation. I guess it's just luck but many of my hobbies have come in really handy right now. Sausage making, small-scale gardening, meat smoking and other culinary pursuits keeps the larder full and me off the streets and more or less out of trouble.

Many yearly events have been cancelled, sadly the most relevant to this publication being the annual Munich Oktoberfest. It makes me strongly suspect that perhaps the Addison version will also meet the same fate. I think I will get into prophylactic mode and fairly soon brew up a couple of fest biers just in case I am forced to celebrate here at home. Aw hell, who am I kidding.....I'll likely do it anyhow. I would also admonish you my loyal readers to perhaps brew a style you have never made or maybe try a technique you have been itching to attempt. Also falling prey to the virus are many of the competitions we normally get involved with. Use the situation to your advantage and get a little kinky; when things open back up you will have another arrow in you quill. I have personally had really good luck doing cereal mashing and decoctions. Making sours or maybe trying a high gravity style are just a couple other ideas to ponder.

Well, I have waxed poetic enough for this month. I hope that everyone is saying safe and not driving their significant others too crazy as familiarity can indeed breed contempt. As Jimmy says "brew strong" (whatever the hell that means) and may God bless America.

*Prost,
Willy*



This is what I did a couple of weeks ago when I got bored. Although doing the bottling and corking is a real PITA, if you are gonna brew Belgian it's obligatory. By the way, this is a batch of Belgian Blond Ale. The other advantage to bottling high-octane beers is that the tendency to find yourself is much reduced over putting this sort of thing into your tap system.

Beer Porn (plus a bonus)



This is a Munch Dunkel submitted by one of our members. As you can easily see, this sultry brunette is just screaming “take me you big stallion you”. This is one of my favorite styles and I make my version in the fall every year. Smooth and malty with just enough hops to offset the sweetness of the malt. The aroma is consistent with the flavor and the totality invites the imbiber to quaff more than one. A dark bready flavor with maybe just a touch of chocolate....wunderbar.



Of course, this is unprecedented but I bring you “Double Beer Porn” because, yeah, I can plus, it’s been rather a rough month. This is a saison which is named “Socially Distant Saison” no doubt in reference to the times. Beer looks great, the glass, well that needs a little work but at least it’s clean. What is not clean however is the name given the hazy IPA on the sign in the background of this picture but at this juncture, I’ll leave that one alone.

The Treasurers Report by Jimmy Orkin

Summary:

Equity December end \$8,969.79

Equity January end \$8,144.11

Equity February end \$7,793.51

Equity March end \$7,271.95

New members in March: 0.

Members at March end: 96.

Current members at the time of this article: 95 members for year 2020.

Current members at the time of this article: 1 member for year 2021.

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. We are in the year 2021 extra period. Join now for \$30 and your membership will not expire until end of May 2021.

I got time to update the club's financials and everything is posted to on the website. I have not been by Homebrew Headquarters to pick up membership applications so there may be some new applications I have not received.

The club's equity has been going down with yearend awards. We will also spend on the t-shirt program as I now have time to focus on it again.

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

*Brew Strong,
Jimmy*



For all those members that had never met Scott, he is shown here no doubt admonishing us all to “gird our loins” and win some medals and steins. He always had a gleam in his eye and had a fantastic zest for life.

NTHBA Officers

President

Mike Grover

president@nthba.org

1st Vice President

Fritz Schanz

firstvp@nthba.org

2nd Vice President

Stephen Tyner

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