

# LIVIN' THE BREWS



The Newsletter of the North Texas Home Brewers Association

Volume XXXVII

Issue XII -

## *Quick Sips for December:*

Officer Meeting	December 7th 6:30pm	Café Amore, Richardson
Brew Day	December 11 <sup>th</sup> 9:00am	Bill Lawrence, Richardson
Club Meeting	December 14th 6:30pm	Lakewood Brewing, Garland

## Prez Sez by Stephen Tyner

Season's Greetings NTHBA! I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving and you were able to sample great food and better beer. Break out your barleywines, imperial stouts, and winter warmers because it is the time of the year for family, friends, big beers and fireplaces.

As we close out the year for the NTHBA, I want to say thank you to all those who volunteered to be officers. The roles will be announced at the December club meeting but I want to thank James "Smitty" Smith, Terry Olinger, Jason Garland, Bill Lawrence, Fritz Shanz, Walter Hodges, and Jimmy Orkin for offering to serve the club. As I said last month, the NTHBA enters 2022 in a strong position. We have a healthy membership and excellent brewers who are showcasing their skills in a variety of competitions. There is quite a bit of creativity and energy around new activities and benefits for club members. The future is very bright for the NTHBA and these officers are going to do a great job.

For the December club meetings, the officer meeting will be held at **Cafe Amore** in Richardson on Tuesday, **December 7th**. The club meeting will be held at **Lakewood Brewing Company** in Garland on Tuesday, **December 14th**. As a reminder, any member is welcome to come to the officer meeting.

Don't forget that the Bluebonnet Brewoff is coming up with entries due in late January so take advantage of the downtime during the holidays to get some brews going. I have a shiny new electric brew system so I will be breaking it in with a nice IPA which will make an appearance on a BBO judging table.

Lastly, as I type this I am watching the snow come down for the third day in a row so northeastern Ohio has welcomed me with it's cold embrace. This will be my last newsletter contribution as an officer and I can very much say that I will miss the meetings, brewdays, great homebrews, and mostly, the

opportunity to learn from great brewers. While I may not be at the meetings going forward, you will continue to see my name on beers as I will be sending them down for LSC competitions.

*Prost,*

*Stephen*

## The First Sip by Terry Olinger

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We had a nice brew day in November at Walters house. Both Walter and Terry were brewing and as always, much homebrew was shared. We did have one new homebrewer stop by who is very excited about starting in the hobby.

Decembers club brew day will be at Bill Lawrence's house. If you have not made it to a brew day this year come on out.

### **Winter Party**

Mark your calendar for return of the Winter party. It will be held on January 22<sup>nd</sup> at Terry Olingers home in Allen. More details regarding food, beer and party activities will be forthcoming.

### **Here's what's on tap for December**

**Monthly Officers meeting** will be held **Tuesday November 7th at Café Amore, 600 North Coit Road #2050, Richardson TX.** We will be arriving around 6:30 with business starting at 7:00pm.

**Monthly Club meeting** will be **Tuesday November 14th. Lakewood Brewing Company, 2302 Executive Dr, Garland TX.** As usual socializing for the first 30 minutes starting at 6:30 and official business starting around 7:00pm. Lakewood does not serve food so plan accordingly.

### **Brew day:**

Will be held December 11<sup>th</sup> starting at 9:00 am at Bill Lawrence's home. 2008 Glenn Meadow Court, Richardson Texas.

### **Current Scheduled brew days**

December – Bill Lawrence

January – Mike Grover

February – No Brew Day due to Bluebonnet judging.

If you would like to host a future brew day, please let me know at [socials@nthba.org](mailto:socials@nthba.org)

*Prost,*

*Terry*



Given some of our member's other hobbies, I thought this appropriate to the season. Of course, our guys would never drink beer out of a green bottle but this does capture the spirit of the season.

## Competition Corner by Fritz Schanz

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### Upcoming Competitions

#### Operation Fermentation

I hope that you were able to register your beers for Operation Fermentation. The site filled to capacity in 2 ½ hours, which must be a record, and this was for 600 beers!

#### Key Reminders

- **Editing lock down** – Dec. 28. the Op Ferm management will lock down to prevent additional editing. Thus, you must make changes to your entries before Dec. 28. The reason for the lock down is to allow the Op Ferm management team to plan for judging the various styles.
- **Drop-off Date** – Jan. 7, and Fritz will drive the beers to the Houston drop-off point on January 5. Drop-off location is being determined.
- **Bottle requirements** – 4
- **Op Ferm website:** [opferm.cialers.org](http://opferm.cialers.org)

## Bluebonnet Brew-Off

The Bluebonnet is the second-largest homebrew competition in the nation, and it is the most important in the State of Texas, of course. For the past two years, the mighty North Texas Homebrewers Association has been the Bluebonnet Club of the Year because it has been the top-medaling club. Let's make this a third year in a row.

As with any competition, you will want to register and pay for your entries as soon as the registration period opens. Competitions have been filling up rapidly across the nation.

This year, there will be a 38-entry limit in each table category, so you will want to enter your beers immediately before the categories close out.

### Key Reminders

- **Registration** – Jan. 3 - 24
- **Judging** – Feb. 4 to Mar. 5
- **Medal category entry limit** – 38 entries
- **Personal entry Limit** – 20 entries
- **Competition entry limit** – 1,634 entries
- **Bottle requirement** – 3
- **Awards ceremony** – Mar. 19
- **Website:** [bluebonnetbrewoff.org](http://bluebonnetbrewoff.org)
- **Drop-off point** – this is still being determined by the BBO Committee

## Competition Perspective – High-Gravity vs. Low-Gravity Beers

This is a continuation of a study presented early in 2020. Regarding competitions, we hear fairly often that the higher-gravity beer tends to win more frequently than the lower-gravity beer in a given competition category. This makes sense given that higher-gravity beers are typically more complex and have a richer impact on our senses. We are biologically programmed to favor greater richness. Sensory scientists describe such effects as an organoleptic bias.

If true, this would be an important consideration in brewing beers for competition. So, is this true? What is the evidence for a high-gravity bias?

In an attempt to answer this question, I have “analyzed” the scores for Bluebonnet 2021, 2020, and 2019. The tables below list the number of medal placements earned by the highest- and the lowest-gravity beers in each competition category. I did not count middle-gravity beers because, again, I was interested only in the highest- and lowest-gravity placements.

- For 2021, there is clear evidence that the highest-gravity beers had an advantage over lowest-gravity beers in the 1st Place category: 52% vs. 35%, which is a 50% advantage. The 2nd Place categories were identical in medal count at 43% each, and in the 3rd Place category, the advantage goes to the lowest-gravity beers, which had 22% of the placements compared with only 4% for the

highest-gravity beers. As an overall generalization, though, the medal counts were identically distributed over the highest- and lowest-gravity beers, at 23 medals.

- For 2020, there again is evidence that the highest-gravity beers had an advantage over the lowest-gravity beers. The 1st Place category shows 48% vs. 38%, which is a 25% advantage for the highest-gravity beers, and there is also a slight bias toward the highest-gravity beers in medal count at 31 vs. 27, which is a 15% advantage.
- For 2019, there is clear evidence that the highest-gravity beers had an advantage over the lowest-gravity beers, especially in the 1st Place category: 63% vs. 38%, which is a 67% advantage. In addition, the total number of medals is significantly weighted toward the highest-gravity beers: 37 vs. 30, or a 23% advantage.

Bluebonnet 2021					
Gravity of Beer	Competition Categories*	1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place	Medals
Highest Gravity	23	12	10	1	23
% Categories		52%	43%	4%	
Lowest Gravity	23	8	10	5	23
% Categories		35%	43%	22%	
% Difference between Highest and Lowest Categories		50%	0%	-80%	0%
*Competition Categories -- categories dedicated to a single beer were excluded as were tables that included beers that had the same maximum OG and beers with unstated gravities such as those in fruit, veg, spice, wood, and smoke categories.					
Bluebonnet 2020					
Gravity of Beer	Competition Categories	1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place	Medals
Highest Gravity	21	10	9	12	31
% Categories		48%	43%	57%	
Lowest Gravity	21	8	10	9	27
% Categories		38%	48%	43%	
% Difference between Highest and Lowest Categories		25%	-10%	33%	15%
Bluebonnet 2019					
Gravity of Beer	Competition Categories	1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place	Medals
Highest Gravity	24	15	10	12	37
% Categories		63%	42%	50%	
Lowest Gravity	24	9	11	10	30
% Categories		38%	46%	42%	

<b>% Difference between Highest and Lowest Categories</b>		67%	-10%	20%	23%
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## Applications

So, how can one approach the data?

- First, consider entering the higher-gravity beers in specific categories; 50%, 25%, and 66.7% advantages may serve you well.
- Second, understand how a particular competition is structuring its categories. Is the competition keeping the BJCP categories intact (e.g., Operation Fermentation, Lunar Rendezvous), or is it combining categories (e.g., Bluebonnet, Inquisition)?
- Third, assess where your beers fit within the gravity profiles of the competition categories. Are they at the low, middle, or high end? Are the gravity spreads reasonable?

As an example, consider the Trappist Single. If the competition were adhering to strict BJCP categories, the Single would be a poor entry choice, given that it would be competing against its higher-gravity brothers. However, if the competition were combining categories, then the Single becomes a better entry choice, given that it will probably be competing against beers more closely aligned in gravity. According to Bluebonnet public records (going back to 2009), the Single has never won in a Trappist category, but it has won 4 times in a combined category: 2nd place in 2021, and 3rd place finishes in 2020, 2019, and 2012. Interestingly, the 2012 beer was brewed by our own Bill Lawrence.

Even so, I don't believe that the Single is a good candidate for Bluebonnet-style competitions. One 2nd place and three 3rd place finishes over an 12-year span is not impressive. Such a beer would be better entered in a gravity-limited competition, such as the Limbo.

*Regards,*

*Fritz*



## The Secretary's Missive by Bill Lawrence

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Well gentle readers, this issue of our club newsletter will serve to be my “swan song”. In the hard fought campaign recently concluded, apparently some of my previous transgressions have finally seen the light of day and I was soundly defeated in the club election. It would seem that committing acts of moral turpitude is probably not the best idea so close to the election. I congratulate the winners and thank them for stepping up to run our club this next year. Actually, I view the fact that we had more aspiring officers than slots to fill as extremely positive and I think it's great that some of the newer members are taking the helm. I have had a pretty good time putting together the newsletter and I hope the membership found it informative and hopefully entertaining.

The next brew day will be held at my humble abode on the 11<sup>th</sup> (see details elsewhere in this newsletter). I would like to take this opportunity to post the following disclaimer: Although I have been engaging in this hobby for in excess of three decades, please do not interpret any procedures, processes or other actions you may or may not see me engage in as so called “best practices”. Should you chose to adopt any of the above in your own brewing, neither I or NTHBA are in any way responsible for injury or damages resulting from said endeavors.

Ok so let's see here; I suppose I need to discuss competitions since I am in the middle of brewing for both the Bluebonnet as well as Operation Fermentation. I am still on schedule to have my planned entries ready to go for both competitions despite being out of town for the majority of November. I would like to point out yet again that I just hate bottling. It is tedious, time consuming and tends to be wasteful. In an effort to at least get some benefit from the spillover, I tend to get rather overserved especially if I am bottling higher gravity styles. Naturally I will soldier though and get it all done if I can find enough empty bottles ('cause I'm just too damn cheap to buy empty bottles and on top of that pay shipping). Oh and speaking of cheap; if you are patronizing Austin Homebrew Supply make sure you pay attention to your emails as they frequently have one day sales (yesterday for instance was a little north of 14% off). Just buy enough for two batches and you can also avoid shipping charges plus it gets delivered fast (as in a couple of days).

Well it's time to sign off. It has been my pleasure to be the Director of Propaganda these last couple of years but all good things (depending on your point of view I suppose) must inevitably come to an end. As always, may God bless America, work on your Bluebonnet entries and have a great holiday season with your family and friends.

*Prast,*  
*Willy*

## Education Thesis by Smitty

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### Previous Newsletter Articles:

- [Brewing with Invert Sugars](#)
- [Ten Things You Should Never Run Out Of](#)
- [What causes astringency in finished beer?](#)
- [Diacetyl...How do you prevent and detect it?](#)
- [Etch your brew kettles](#)
- [What are Yeast Nutrients and Why and When Should You Use them?](#)
- [An Overview on Treating Water in Your Brewing Process](#)
- [How Efficient is Your Beer?](#)

Greetings, homebrewers. Figured since this is the last newsletter of the year, I would submit an education article, but also let you know I am looking forward to serving in an officer position next year. I and the other officers are excited to keep the joy of homebrewing alive. We have quite a few exciting ideas to help achieve this and hope you will participate in helping us keep the club going strong. If you have any questions or comments about today's article or anything else, please get with me at a club meeting or brew day, or send me an email at [education@nthba.org](mailto:education@nthba.org).

### Simple and Bulletproof Gelatin Fining

Some of you may have gelatin fining down to a science, while others though intrigued by it, may have some apprehension to it for whatever reasons, or you have tried it and not sure of your level of success. I did a deep dive on the matter some time ago and came across an article that gave instructions somewhat different from what I had previously read elsewhere, but also explained what is actually going on. One point to note: gelatin fining is not vegan-friendly, so if you are into that, you'll have to find another way. There are vegan-friendly options out there.

Now, the reason for any sort of fining is remove any yeast remaining in suspension, but also any remaining proteins and polyphenols. Removing these three elements can and will give you clear, often brilliantly clear beer. Other products exist to achieve clear beer, but gelatin is probably the most accessible product for use by the average homebrewer.

When I know I want a clear beer, I start with the brewing process by adding whirlfloc 10-15 minutes from end of boil at a rate of ½-1 tablet per 5-10 gallons of wort. Whirlfloc, according to the product description, helps precipitate haze-causing proteins and beta glucans resulting in a clearer finished beer. Notice there is no mention of yeast, so it is unclear if whirlfloc aids in dropping this out.

Simply put, gelatin binds with yeast, protein and polyphenolic particles via an electrostatic binding process. This results in a larger particle that settles to the bottom of your vessel rapidly. Here is the process for you to simply and quickly clear your beer:

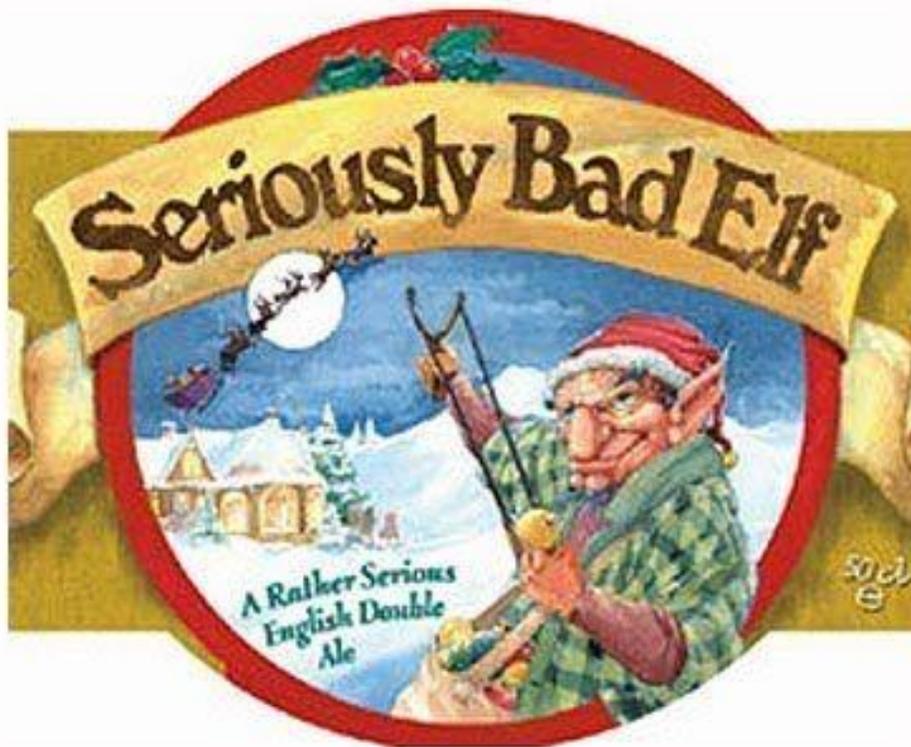
- The most common use rate for gelatin is 1g of gelatin for each gallon of beer.
- Dissolve the gelatin in 2oz of cool water per gram of gelatin. Using this rate, it takes 5 grams of gelatin dissolved in 10 ounces of water to dose a 5-gallon batch of homebrew.
- To dissolve and rehydrate the gelatin powder sprinkle it onto the cool water and give it a gentle initial mix then allow it to rest for 15-30 minutes depending on how patient you are.

- After allowing it to “bloom”, stir the mixture together until you don’t see any more solids.
- Heat the solution on the stove top or in the microwave until it is at least 160°F. If using a microwave, heat slowly in bursts and check temperature.
- Pour the mixture into the already cold vessel (<50°F minimum, <35°F even better) and agitate, if possible, to disperse the mixture a little better in the beer.
- Let the vessel rest cold for 2-3 days or longer. Then, if you are kegging or bottling, rack off to these containers. If you are already in the keg, which I see more frequently, simply pull off a pint or two to draw the gelatinized particulate off.

Source: GELATIN FININGS: THE CLEAR CHOICE <https://spikebrewing.com/blogs/ask-a-pro/gelatin-finings>

I hope this article helps demystify anything you might have been unclear about (See what I did there?). Clarity seems to be less of a hot topic these days with hazys being all the rage. If you are a clear beer lover like me though, it is one more process you should use to ensure the beer you are producing is true to style. Beautify your beer!

*Brew On,  
Smitty*



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## Beer Porn

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Do any of the members like brunettes 'cause I sure do. This is of course a fine example of a Munich Dunkel which was submitted by one of our members. This raven haired beauty just screams out to be ravaged by somebody sitting in a biergarten listening to polka music.

## The Treasurers Report by Walter Hodges

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MONTH ENDED	EQUITY
JANUARY	8048.59
FEBRUARY	8040.71
MARCH	7670.46
APRIL	7760.38
MAY	7993.45
JUNE	8190.97
JULY	8166.17
AUGUST	9733.52
SEPTEMBER	9705.25
OCTOBER	9742.88

Current Membership: 49

Beginning this month, I will acknowledge new and renewing members from the last month. Thank you all for your support of the NHTBA.

New and Renewing members for November:

Andrew Walters

Layne McBeath

Collin Burns



Cost of membership remains \$30. Memberships may be renewed at club meetings and events or by following the directions at: <https://nthba.org/?q=content/membership>

Financials trail the newsletter by one month. Financial reports are available on the club web site at:

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

If you have any questions about the financials, contact me and I will be happy to share club financial detail.

*Cheers,*

*Walter*

## NTHBA Officers

### President

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### Secretary

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### Past President

Mike Grover

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## 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](http://www.NTHBA.org)