

LIVIN' THE BREWS

The Newsletter of the North Texas Home Brewers Association
Volume XXXI Issue III - March 2016



QUICK SIPS FOR MARCH:



*Club Meeting @ Flying Saucer Addison
March 8th @ 6:30p*

THESE AND OTHER EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON OUR [FACEBOOK](#) PAGE.

PREZ SEZ BY JAMES SMITH

Introduction

Welcome to March and Bluebonnet Brew-Off month, Homebrewers! I hope all of you who can plan on attending the event here in a few days. I want to put out a final call for your help at the awards ceremony, serving both at the "Big Thirsty" on Friday and Saturday, as well as the commercial tasting/"room crawl" People's Choice Competition on Friday night. If you have any questions on this, please send me an email at president@nthba.org OR the 2016 Bluebonnet Director, Einar Jonsson at director@bluebonnetbrewoff.org.

Here are some key dates remaining for Bluebonnet:

- **Round 2 Judging**
 - Saturday/Sunday, March 5-6
- **Awards**
 - March 11-12

Monthly Club Meeting/Officer Meeting

Finally, the **March club meeting** will be held on Tuesday, March 8 at **The Addison Flying Saucer**. They are located downtown at 14999 Montfort Dr, Dallas, TX 75254. We have reserved the Pub of Love for our meeting and will get started at 6:30.

The **March officers meeting** will be held on Monday, February 29 at **The Flying Saucer** in Addison. The address is 14999 Montfort Dr, Dallas, TX 75254. As always, club members are welcome to join. We will arrive at 6:30 and get going around 7:00.

Hope everyone has a great month! See you at Bluebonnet!

Cheers!

"Smitty"

THE FIRST SIP BY BILL JAMES

Greeting fellow brewers, ready for the Bluebonnet Brewoff? I am, I have 8 entries, the most I have put in and hopefully I will get a medal.

Thanks to Mike for hosting a great January brewday, I believe that four beers were brewed that day. Also thank to Wally for his great demonstration on how to etch glass

Due to the Bluebonnet Brewoff, Club activities in March are pretty slim. The next scheduled brewday is for April 23 at Dean Weaver's house. However if someone wants to host a brewday in late March, we can do that, just give me a shout and we will get it set up.

The next club party will be at Doug Nett's house and will be on May 14. So get some spring beers brewed for a great spring party.



Bluebonnet Login @ Fred & Sue David's

COMPETITION CORNER BY MATT PARULIS

March is here! The weather is getting warmer and the 2016 competition season is in full swing! This month includes closing of the Bluebonnet judging and the awards event, registration closing for the Lunar Rendezbrew and Cactus Challenge, and the shipping deadline for first round entries going to the National Homebrew Competition.

Bluebonnet Brew Off

First round judging for the Bluebonnet is complete and 2nd round judging continues on weekends between now and the awards event on March 11 & 12. There are still a limited amount of tickets available for the awards event. Visit www.bluebonnetbrewoff.org for more details.

Lone Star Circuit Competitions

Registration closes for the Lunar Rendezbrew on 3/17 (St Patty's Day). Registration for the Cactus Challenge closes a little more than a week later on 3/25. Entries for both competitions will be collected at the Bluebonnet on 3/11 & 3/12. Collection times at Bluebonnet are still TBD. I will pass along more info once it is available. I will also collect entries for both at the March club meeting on March 8th at Flying Saucer Addison for those who can't make it to Bluebonnet.

The Alamo City Cerveza Fest will be coming up in April. Registration for the ACCF will open on April 9th and close on May 3rd. More info is available at the competition website. The link below is to the Lone Star Circuit competition website. It has links and schedules for all of the LSC competitions. <http://www.lonestarcircuit.com/qualcomps.html>

National Homebrew Competition

The National Homebrew Competition is also underway. The shipping window for first round entries opens on Feb 29th and closes on March 9th. The club will have a packing party for anyone sending in entries on Mon Feb 29th at 5pm at Dallas Homebrew in Carrollton. The club will provide packing materials and pay shipping charges to send entries for any current club member.

April Club Only Competition (COC)

Our next club only competition will take place in April. The category for the competition will be IPA's which is category 14 in the 2008 BJCP guidelines. The drop off deadline at Dallas Home Brew and Homebrew HQ will be Friday, April 8th. I will also be collecting entries at the April meeting on 4/12. Time is short if you haven't brewed yet but you may still have some time to get an IPA ready! We hope to have a good turn out next month for this popular style of home brew. The rest of the 2016 COC schedule is listed below. Start planning your brews now for the rest of the year!

Photos from Bluebonnet Login @ Fred & Sue David's



THE TREASURER'S REPORT BY WALTER HODGES

Along with my treasurer duties, I am also working on a new website for the club. If you've been to the current site, you'll remember that it is very one-directional. I'll post data and documents and you read them, very cool...in the 90's. While our current site has served us well, it's time to move on. The new site will be much more interactive. You'll have the ability to post comments to topics, register attendance for events, participate in polls and even contribute your own content. Getting the new web site up and running has been painfully slow, mainly due to my learning curve (old dog, new tricks). I am currently testing functionality and moving content from the old site. I'll move all of our education documents, newsletters and other club documents. Unless I hear an outcry, I am not planning on moving or implementing the discussion forum. Activity in the forum has been non-existent for months. If you really want to see the forum continue, please send me an email (treasurer@nthba.org) and let me know you just can't live without it. Below is a sample of the front page of the new website. Remember, it's a work in progress. Don't try to go to the URL you see here, it won't work.

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the new website for the North Texas Homebrewers Association (NTHBA.org). The browser address bar shows 'newnthba.org/?q=home'. The website has a dark red header with the NTHBA logo on the left and navigation links for HOME, GROUPS, and EVENTS on the right. Below the header, there are 'Sign up' and 'Log in' buttons. The main content area features a large heading: 'Welcome to the North Texas Homebrewers Association' with the tagline 'Making good friends and good beer since 1985.' Below this, there are three columns of content: 'Contributors' with a profile picture, 'Most active groups' listing 'Limbo Challenge' and 'Limbo Challenge Planning', and 'Recent site activity' showing several recent posts about creating groups and newsletters.

As for my other job, here are the financials for January.

Financial Summary

Equity ended 12/31	\$5702.59	New Members February	5
Equity ended 1/31	\$5225.78	Membership as of 1/31	155
		Membership as of 2/23	160
Note: Financials trail the newsletter by one month. Current financials are available at: http://nthba.org/content/club-documents			

Additional financial information may be requested by club members by emailing the treasurer at: treasurer@nthba.org.

Club memberships are effective for one year from June 1st through May 31st. If your membership is not current, please renew at either Homebrew Headquarters or Wine Maker's Toy Store. You may also obtain membership forms and cards at most club events.

Prosit!
Walter

EDUCATION - BREWING NOTES BY JAMES SMITH

I thought I would share some of my notes, observations, and goings on about my brewing. First, it has already been an active year of brewing for me, and I'm happy to say I have already surpassed the three beers I did in 2015. Technically, I FERMENTED three beers last year, but one of them was the Rye Pale from the big brew, so I'm not really counting that.

Second, I made some fairly significant upgrades to my equipment in 2016. I'm mentioning this ONLY to point out that most upgrades are effective, but can also be quite affordable. I volunteered to lead a talk about systems at a brew day later this year....stay tuned. Here's what I did:

- valves and thermometers on HLT and boil kettle
- new silicone hoses with stainless hose clamps
- chugger pump – the only luxury upgrade as I see it
- 500 pound capacity shop cart converted to brewing cart with added onboard electric powering an outlet and the chugger
- Propane splitter to utilize two burners instead of just one
- tool boxes for organizing everything

I must say these upgrades have proven to be a great return on investment thus far, even though the investment really was not very significant compared to a turnkey

system. In fact, I was sort of kicking myself for not doing this sooner. So, if you are considering making the upgrade from a very basic/manual setup to a more gravity or pump fed system, it's not too hard or expensive to make the leap. Sure, you can purchase a complete turnkey system, and those are probably worth every penny and very nice. However, I'm on a budget! With just a little DIY know-how and repurposing of store bought items and the miracle of local suppliers(**including our own members!**) and Amazon, you can achieve the same or similar results for a fraction of the cost.

Lastly, I wanted to share a learning experience I had recently with gravity readings. Credit to Mr. Barrett Tillman for pointing me in the right direction on this. So, on my second brew this year...an Irish Red...I took the FG reading with my refractometer. After plugging it in to Beer Smith, something was clearly wrong, indicating that the beer had not reached the FG I had anticipated. Fermentation was visually as expected, and tasting revealed that there were no signs of under attenuation. However, the reading said otherwise. Around the same time, I was re-organizing all of my equipment into new toolboxes, and came across my hydrometer, which had not been used in quite some time. By then, the beer was already kegged up, but nevertheless decided to take a sample, de-gas it, and take a hydrometer reading. Sure enough, that reading lined up with original expectations, and once I entered that reading into Beer Smith, all was right with the world again.

Many of you probably would have immediately pointed to the need for me to recalibrate my refractometer. For everyone else, hopefully this will help in knowing that from time to time, you do need to ensure that your refractometer is re-calibrated using distilled water. They are very convenient tools, but are also prone to going out of alignment. As for me, it will be worth drawing off a cup of wort or finished beer from time to time just to ensure my OG and FG readings are correct.

Cheers!

"Smitty"



February Meeting @ Community Beer Company

EDUCATION - BJCP STUDY GROUP BY DEAN WEAVER

At the February meeting, I announced the effort to put together a BJCP Study Group. Currently, I'm trying to get a gauge of interested people to figure out the cost as well as a venue to have the Study Group meetings.

James Lallande from Cap & Hare with a BJCP ranking of Grand Master has been gracious enough to share some his past Study Group materials as well as some insights to questions that were posed at the February meeting. James has also offered to visit one or two sessions to discuss what it takes to get an 80+, which he feels should be the goal of every test taker. James and I will be meeting after Bluebonnet to discuss the subject in more detail.

Set out by the BJCP Study Guide, the group would have 10 sessions lasting 3–4 hours per session. Each session will have tastings in a grouping of styles with discussions about the beers as well as a technical topic, and we would sample 8–10 beers per session. As an example, the BJCP Study Guide suggest a course outline as such:

- Session 1: Light Lagers with a Technical Topic on Malt.
- Session 2: Amber & Dark Lagers with a Technical Topic on Water.
- Session 3: Bitters & Pale Ales with a Technical Topic on Mashing.
- Session 4: Brown, Scottish & Strong Scotch Ales with a Technical Topic on Hops.
- Session 5: Stouts & Porters with a Technical Topic on Yeast.
- Session 6: Barleywines & Old Ales with a Technical Topic on the Brewing Process.
- Session 7: German Ales, Wheat Beers & Rauchbiers with a TT on Troubleshooting I
- Session 8: Strong Belgian & French Ales with a TT on Troubleshooting II
- Session 9: Other Belgian Ales with a TT on Recipe Formulation
- Session 10: Doctored Beer Seminar of Off Flavors

This gives you an overall idea of how the Study Group would progress. Although, the outline I received from James differs slightly. I look forward to getting some of his insights when we meet.

The biggest variables, at the moment, are cost and location. The cost will depend on the amount of participation. If we get 20 participants, the cost would be roughly \$150/person, which doesn't cover the BJCP exam. If participation falls around 10, we would assign beers purchases to each group member and do some bottle swapping with the leftovers.

Unfortunately, scheduling an exam immediately following the conclusion is highly unlikely, because scheduling is currently 1.5–2 years out.

Please email me at education@NTHBA.org with your interest along with your contact info, and I will compile the list hopefuls.



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**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 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.



Quality Control @ Bluebonnet Login



www.NTHBA.org