

LIVIN' THE BREWS



The Newsletter of the North Texas Home Brewers Association

Volume XXXV

Issue VIV – September

Quick Sips for September:

Officer Meeting	September 1 6:30pm	Holy Grail Pub Plano
Club Meeting	September 8 6:30pm	Rugby House Pub Plano

Prez Sez by Mike Grover

Welcome to the end of summer! While August has reminded us that we aren't out of the hot weather just yet, the arrival of dozens of Oktoberfest beers at our local taprooms and bottle shops bring the promise of cooler weather in the near future. As things slowly creep back towards normality, we are hoping to get back into our normal groove as a club. In that spirit, we will have an in-person meeting this month. We will meet at **Rugby House Pub** located at [8604 Preston Road, Suite 100, Plano](#). We will meet on **Tuesday, September 8th at 6:30 PM**. Come on out and join us and help support a small business that has hosted us many times over the last decade or so.

This month kicks off early as our officers meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 1st. We will meet at the [Holy Grail Pub](#) in Plano at 6:30 PM. As always, members are welcome to join. Please give me a shout at President@nthba.org if you do plan to join us so that we can assure adequate seating.

The Limbo Challenge was wrapped up last month. Everything went very well and we were able to wrap up everything except best of show judging in one weekend. Thank you to everyone who came out and judged. I believe that we learned a few things that will help us complete judging more efficiently in the future. Congratulations to all our members who won awards in this year's competition. The club did very well and is at the top of the Lone Star Circuit standings!

Cheers, Mike

The First Sip by Stephen Tyner

September is here and it has now been six months since the Covid craziness broke out. I don't know about you but it has certainly been a long six months from my point of view.

Unfortunately it has now impacted our beloved fall sports and fans have had to come to terms to a fall season with quite a bit of extra time. I plan to fill the time from not watching football with brewing and camping so I can burn the additional calories I will consume. In an effort to escape the searing TX heat, I got a jump start on the camping and took an impromptu trip to Red River, NM where I sampled some great beer courtesy of The Red River Brewing Company. The only thing better than the beer was the view.



As far as upcoming club events go, at this time we are planning to hold the September brew day however this is subject to change based on conditions and restrictions. Please monitor club emails and the Facebook page as we will use those platforms to inform the club of any changes.

The **September brew day** is scheduled for 9am on **September 19th at James Smith's** home. Details will be shared very soon regarding registration so please be on the lookout.

Beyond the September brew day we are monitoring conditions and trying to coordinate club events. As things hopefully open up we will make every effort to have events once it is safe and appropriate to do so.

As always, stay safe and happy brewing.

Prost,

Stephen

Competition Corner by Fritz Schanz

The Club Only Championship (COC)

The COC is moving forward! We will judge the COC beers for March, May, July, and September later this month, and we will announce the winners at the October meeting. Drop off location:

- Homebrew Headquarters – by September 20 (Sun)

This catchup period includes a large number of beers, hopefully, some of these were dual-purposed for the Limbo Challenge and the Alamo City Cerveza Fest. Given that so much has transpired since the beginning of the year, the COC has been placed on the back burner. Let's bring it forward, brew and enter robustly!

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

LSC Competition Calendar

We have the following “updates”:

1. Cactus Challenge (Lubbock, TX) – canceled
2. Lunar Rendezvous (Clear Lake, TX) – canceled
3. Operation Fermentation (Katy, TX) – canceled, but rescheduled for 2021; see later section.
4. Big Batch Brew Bash (Houston, TX) – canceled
5. Homebrew Inquisition (Austin, TX) – canceled
6. **Limbo Challenge (Dallas, TX)** – awards held on 8-22
7. **Alamo City Cerveza Fest (San Antonio, TX)** – judging in progress; awards on Sep 19
8. **Dixie Cup (Houston, TX)** – communication from Comp Director indicates postponement until later in the Fall – no date yet

Limbo Challenge Results

What a challenge this was in the time of COVID. The collection, logging in, judging preparation, facility preparation, judging, meals, and overall administration – this was a case study on how to manage an event in light of a pandemic and on the personal sacrifices that judges and administrators made. Interestingly, there has been some communication between NTHBA and Dixie Cup administrators on the protocols we implemented, many of which will be implemented at Dixie Cup, apparently.

As a club, we did well at the Limbo Challenge, we won 12 medals for a total of 21 points, and we have preserved our place as the number 1 club on the Lone Star Circuit!

In fact, from a percentage standpoint, we did better than predicted. Recall the June 12 email on “NTHBA: Update on Homebrew Competitions.” Here the mathematics of winning was discussed. It was mentioned that we needed 10 medals to preserve our status, which we improved on with 12 medals and that we assumed a 10% winning percentage, which we again improved on with a 21% percentage.

Performance by Club

Limbo Challenge 2020 Club Statistics					
Club	Total Entries	Total Medals	Total Points	Medals as % of Club Entries	Ave. Points per Medal
North Texas Homebrewers Association	58	12	21	21%	1.75

Cane Island Alers	46	15	32	33%	2.1
Foam Rangers Homebrew Club	22	5	12	23%	2.4
NINJA Homebrewers	20	2	2	10%	1.0
Draft Punk	5	3	6	60%	2.0
Central Arkansas Fermenters	2	0	0	0%	0.0
Central Alabama Brewers Society	2	0	0	0%	0.0
Round Rock HOPS	2	0	0	0%	0.0

From the LSC site, here are the top-10 club standings. The Alamo City Cerveza Fest will announce its medal winners on September 19, and hopefully, our lead will be preserved despite CIA's astonishing momentum.

Club	Bluebonnet Brew-Off	Limbo Challenge	Total
North Texas Home Brewers	38	21	59
Cane Island Alers	20	32	52
NINJA Homebrewers	27	2	29
Cap & Hare	18		18
Foam Rangers	2	12	14
Red Earth Brewers	11		11
Draft Punk	5	6	11
Austin Zealots	10		10
MashRunners	7		7
Prime Time Brewers	7		7

Performance by Individual

From an individual standpoint, here is how our club members fared. Homebrewing in the time of COVID has not been easy and has required extreme commitment, and so these winning achievements are even more precious. Congratulations to the winners, especially, but also to everyone who found the way and time to submit beers. Also, it is worth pointing out that we have 3 brewers in the top 10 of LSC standings: Daniel Boyd, Fritz Schanz, and Don Trotter.

Member	Medal	Category
Andrew Kotas	3rd	30A: Spice, Herb, or Vegetable Beer
Daniel Boyd	1st, 1st	1B: American Lager, 11A: Ordinary Bitter
Fritz Schanz	3rd, 2nd, 3rd	10A: Weissbier, 25B Saison, 26A Trappist Single
Matt Parulis	1st	10A: Weissbier
Mike Grover	2nd	35A: Lawnmower
Nick Thompson	3rd	35A: Lawnmower

Stephen Tyner	1st	21B: Specialty IPA
Steven Franks	3rd	1C: Cream Ale
Walter Hodges	1st	5D: German Pils

Post-Event Review

Finally, it is always beneficial to have a post-event review. So, as a club, where did we do well and where did we do less well. The table below presents a gap analysis showing where we may want to focus some brewing attention as individual brewers and as a club. There are 6 categories in which we did not medal.

Limbo Challenge Gap Analysis				
Beer Styles	Medals Won			
	NTHBA	CIA	FR	Ninja
Table 51: Light Lagers and Ales	2		1	
Table 52: European Lager		3		
Table 53: Pale Bitter European	1	2		
Table 54: Amber/Dark European		2		1
Table 55: German & Belgian Wheat	2			
Table 56: British Bitter & Pale	1			
Table 57: British Brown		1	1	
Table 58: Scottish & Irish		1	1	1
Table 59: American Ale		1		
Table 60: Session IPA	1			
Table 61: Belgian Ale	2	1		
Table 62: Specialty Session Ale	1	1	1	
Table 63: Wild, Sour, Smoked & Woody		3		
Table 35: Lawnmower	2		1	
Total Categories without a Medal	6	4	9	11

The Red Coat Challenge

This is a re-purpose of an August 10th email.

Last year, the Denton County Homebrewers Guild, offered a new competition: The Red Coat Challenge, which focuses on all of the British, Irish, Scottish, and Commonwealth styles. Last year, 40 entries spread over 5 categories were judged. This year, the club expects a 50% increase in the number of entries, and it has expanded the categories to 8. If the competition becomes popular, it may become part of the Lone Star Circuit.

Vital Information

- Entry period: now through October 1 (website indicates Sep 1, but registration is open now)
- Entry limit: 1 beer per custom category (thus, entry maximum is 8 beers)
- Awards: November 7, 3:00 pm, at Denton County Brewing Company
- Competition website: <https://texasredcoat.com/>
- Drop-off location: Homebrew Headquarters, by September 31.

Custom Categories

- TRC1 British Bitter: BJCP 11A, 11B, 11C
- TRC2 Pale Commonwealth Beer: BJCP 12A, 12B, 12C, X5
- TRC3 Brown British Beer: BJCP 13A, 13B, 13C, 27A
- TRC4 Strong British Beer: BJCP 17A, 17B, 17C, 17D, 17A
- TRC5 Scottish Ale: BJCP 14A, 14B, 14C
- TRC6 Irish Beer: BJCP 15A, 15B, 15C
- TRC7 Dark British Beer: BJCP 16A, 16B, 16C, 16D
- TRC8 Braggot & Cider: BJCP M4, C1, C2

Previous Year Results

Last year, the following clubs won medals

Club	Medals
Cane Island Alers	4
Cap and Hare	2
Denton County Homebrewers Guild	3

Dixie Cup 37

By brewing beers for the Red Coat Challenge, you will also have the opportunity to enter those same beers in the Dixie Cup, assuming it will be held. The competition director is hopeful that the competition will be held later in the Fall in some fashion, but logistics are difficult in a COVID atmosphere of 100,000 cases. I remain hopeful.

Rescheduling of Operation Fermentation – Major Change in LSC Calender

In 2020, Operation Fermentation, hosted by the Cane Island Alers (CIA), was canceled because of COVID. The competition has been rescheduled for early 2021. This represents a major calendar change on the Lone Star Circuit in that Operation Fermentation will be the first competition of the calendar year. Additionally, many of you will remember that this competition, with a cap of 350 *paid* entries, tends to fill up within 7 days. As a result of high-demand, the competition cap will be extended to 450 *paid* entries.

Vital Information

- Entry Registration: Nov 11, 2020 – Jan 8, 2021
- Entries Due: Jan 8, 2021
- Judging: Jan 8, 2021 – Feb 20, 2021
- Awards: Feb 27, 2021
- No word yet on an individual-limit to entries

I know that the registration period is expansive, but, again, this competition fills up quickly. Please register and pay for your entries on Nov 11 – 13 to prevent from being locked out of this competition.

Regards,

Fritz



Here is our head potentate of competitions clearly flush with victory. I would also like to point out that he combed his hair for the photograph and so has dumbed down the aging hippy look he usually sports. It would seem the club is having a positive influence on the lad.

The Secretary's Missive by Bill Lawrence

As of this writing, we have made it through this year's Limbo Challenge with nothing much damaged except perhaps some of the club member's egos (including mine). It is amazing how quickly time flies and trust me, the older you get the faster it goes; it's not linear. So, what is there to do now given that the excitement has past? I suppose you could hire a pool boy and let nature take it's course or maybe get into politics (like you have a choice). Personally, besides brewing beer I also think it fun to ferment things other than malted or unmalted cereal grains.

For fun, I grow hot peppers every year. I generally can most of the crop but this year I tried growing Habanero peppers and it worked out pretty well, I got a lot of peppers from just two small plants. Since those damn things are way too hot to just eat, I decided I need to make hot sauce with them and I searched the internet looking for ideas. I found this recipe which called for fermenting the peppers for a month or so before actually making the sauce with them. Since I have the gear to do that, I gave it a go; we will see how that pans out (see below):



After getting the ingredients ready to go, here they are in the fermenter (and no, that is not a reservoir tip):



Besides just fermenting vegetables of course you can always do a little baking. Here is a sourdough starter I made up a couple of months ago. You need to feed these things periodically but every once in a while I pull some of this stuff out and make pizza dough or sometimes bread:



This stuff is flaccid right now but it does rise pretty well after feeding although it is somewhat unpredictable. Anyhow, the common thread here is that you can do lactic acid fermentations and make all sorts of good things, including of course beer.

Well, I hope I have given you some ideas for entertainment while social distancing as man does not live by beer alone. As always, be safe and may God bless America.

*Prost,
Willy*

Beer Porn



This month's beer porn is an ebony beauty as you can see. Besides the attractive body it also sports a seductive head with just a bit of that sassy quality which lures the imbiber into at the very least impure thoughts. I think displaying such a gem in a snifter just adds a bit of....oh I don't know, classy eroticism if that makes any sense.

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
Equity April end	\$7,253.62
Equity May end	\$7,264.12
Equity June end	\$7,592.85
Equity July end	\$9,438.47

New members in June: 13.

Current members at the time of this article: 41 members 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.

Homebrew Headquarters may have applications I need to pick up.

Now is the time to renew your 2021 membership. You can renew at Homebrew Headquarters. The membership fee is \$30 in cash or check at Homebrew Headquarters. HBHQ has the new 2021 Camaro membership card. If we can start club events again, I will be present and can take cash, check or credit cards.

The Limbo Challenge is almost complete. This will bring in new funds but we will have additional expenses due to the Covid-19 virus avoidance materials and process changes. July looks really good but Limbo expenses don't show up until August.

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

*Brew Strong,
Jimmy*



The ever-photogenic Mr. Trotter. Looks like he bagged two first place medals, nice job.



Here is another happy lad with his second place finisher, good job. Is it just me or do these newer members look like they were just weened?



Here is what you get if you win the Bluebonnet as a club. Your humble scribe begs your pardon for the model presenting the stein but in the age of Covid, Vanna was not available.

Education by Smitty

Ten Things You Should Never Run Out Of

My better half will tell you she first did not really understand why I am a bit of a commodity and bulk item hoarder. That was until the pandemic came to town. Remember the run on toilet paper and other sundries back in March? Fortunately, I had just made a Costco run a couple weeks prior and we were sitting pretty on the TP and PT for a couple of months. I just do not let certain items get too depleted before restocking.

I have found the same is mostly true in my brewery. There are many things I do keep well stocked, but a few things I have run out of at very inopportune times. During my last brew day, I was down to my last oxygen tank. I assumed I had plenty, but that was not the case. It made a hiss and that was about it. Since I pump from the brew kettle to the fermenter in a closed transfer and in-line oxygenation, there was nothing much I could do at that point but cross my fingers and let it ride. Fortunately, it is a Best Bitter in the low 4% range, so I did not think it would be too impactful, if at all. Still, it bothered me that I was not prepared with another bottle of oxygen at the ready so I could quickly recover. Update: I did run into some diacetyl issues prompting some rousing and extra cleanup time in the fermenter.

As many of you have no doubt also experienced, not having something on-hand during a brew day, or just in your brewery, can be quite frustrating if not just plain inconvenient. My last experience got me to thinking about all of the items I should either keep extra on hand or have redundancy in place. With the help of the Big Rig Brew Crew, we have compiled a list below of ten things you should never run out of, along with some honorable mentions.

- 1. Cleaners and Sanitizers**

PBW, Star San, Saniclean, Iodophor, Barkeepers' Friend, and other cleaners and sanitizers should always be plentiful in your brewery. I used to be pretty frugal with my Star San and keep a bucket going for a few weeks. That is before I learned this can seriously deplete the effectiveness of Star San, especially with the water we have around here. Do yourself a favor and stock up on the bigger bottles of sanitizers available and use it more liberally. I just bought a 32oz bottle of Saniclean for less than \$20 at Homebrew Headquarters. If you use Barkeepers' Friend, stock up on an extra container next time you are at the grocery store. It is cheap and one of the best cleaners for your gear. If you keg and/or clean in place(CIP), PBW or an equivalent cleaner and plenty of it are must-haves.

- 2. DME and Corn Sugar**

Whether it is getting a yeast starter going, priming bottles or a keg, or making an on-the-fly gravity adjustment during a brew day, dry malt extract and corn sugar should always be at the ready. Both are very shelf stable when stored properly.

- 3. Hops**

Three words: BUY IN BULK. If you are fairly consistent with what you brew, buying hops

by the pound or half pound at a time can take some of the guesswork out of formulating a recipe and keep you consistent, not to mention saving you some money. If you are more varied with your brewing, perhaps find a neutral bittering hop you like and stock up. If you seal them up (vacuum sealed if possible) and store them in the freezer, they will keep for quite a while. Your local homebrew store can order these larger packages for you if you were not aware. I have purchased more exotic variety packs online as well and they have motivated me to come up with some new recipes.

4. **Oxygen**

Do you aerate your wort? If not, you should. I will not delve into the methods of aeration in this article, but if you use oxygen, you rely on some form of storage tank for it. While I would like a refillable tank, I must rely on disposable oxygen tanks from the big box hardware store. Without a means of knowing the level of these tanks, it is definitely recommended that a spare always be present in case you run out. Refer to my last brew day experience in the intro. I am sure refillable O₂ tanks pose similar pitfalls, but there is usually the presence of a gauge on the regulator so you can monitor and refill when necessary. That or having a second tank on hand would ensure you never run out at the worst possible time.

5. **Spare Filled CO₂ Tank**

Much like oxygen, if you are keggering, CO₂ is not something you want to run out of. Yes, many local beer stores do CO₂ tank exchanges and it is pretty convenient to run down the street and get a freshly filled tank. However, why not keep an extra tank on hand so you are never without? It is a bit of an investment but the investment is worth the piece of mind.

6. **Keg Connectors and Barbs, Hose / Fittings / Stainless Hose Clamps**

Again, if you are keggering and dispensing from a kegerator, you know there are many connections required with air and liquid hoses. Not only that, if you are using hoses (preferably silicon) when brewing, you want to ensure they are secured. I always have extra air and liquid keg connectors and stainless barbs around in case I need to replace one or some other use like pushing a beer from keg to keg or venting a keg when filling. Having to “borrow” one just becomes a hassle if you do it enough. Oh, and don’t forget to keep a few little plastic “fish eye” flare washers handy.

7. **Rice Hulls**

What is the solution to a stuck sparge? Best and easiest answer: rice hulls. What if it happens and you do not have any around? Need I say more?

8. **Water Salts / Acid / Fining Agents / Yeast Nutrients**

As discussed in last month’s article, adjusting your water profile can turn a good beer into a great beer. Keeping plenty of those water additions you may need for the next brew will ensure you always have what you need to make that next great beer. Likewise, always have acid on hand for adjusting water pH to keep within that 5.2-5.4 mash pH range. Fining agents like whirlfloc and yeast nutrients will ensure your beer clears and the yeast are nice and healthy.

9. Spare Filled Propane Tank

If you brew with propane, it is just like owning a gas grill. Murphy's Law will inevitably rear its head and you will run out mid-boil. Why not have the extra insurance of a spare FILLED propane tank lying around for you to quickly recover. Oh, and I'm not referring to the spare tank on your gas grill. This is one specifically devoted to brewing and nothing else. I am an electric brewer now, but still keep 3 spares around and filled for the grill and various other propane powered devices. If you can, find a place that fills propane by the pound so you can always completely fill or top off your tanks when necessary. At least find one that does complete fills instead of just exchanges. Exchanges have a reputation for not being complete fills.

10. pH Meter Calibration/Storage Solution

If you use a pH meter, this one's for you. If not, consider one or at least use test strips. Some calibrate their pH meter every brew. I am not that obsessive, but maybe I should be. I am pretty obsessive about keeping the probe clean after each use and submerged in storage solution. Still, I calibrate every few brews just to make sure everything is in order. I use the bottled solution, but packets are fine as well as long as they match the calibration on your meter. I am unaware of anywhere locally to purchase calibration solution, though I am sure a retailer exists. Wherever you get it, be proactive and stock up on plenty. Packets are on-time use and liquid solution can run out pretty quickly.

Honorable Mentions:

- **Bottles and Caps**
Sometimes a competition creeps up and surprises you, or if you bottle, it is always a good idea to have more than you need.
- **Spare Pump**
If you push your wort through a pump, you are beholden to said pump. Therefore, keeping an extra on hand if you can just in case could potentially save your brew day.
- **Water filter replacement**
They do not last forever and you should probably change them more often than recommended anyway. Next time you're at the big box hardware store, pick one up or better yet order a couple off Amazon.
- **Base Malts**
If you brew all-grain frequently enough, you probably already buy 55lb sacks of base malts. Then again, maybe not. There are debates about the viability of grains sitting around, especially in your garage, but I do not pay much attention to that. You do want to be concerned about animals though. I just keep it unmilled of course and sealed up well. If you are going to use it up within 6-9 months max, take the discount from buying in bulk.
- **Scale**
Fred David mentioned this and I think it is a pretty good one. Scales can become unreliable or stop working entirely, especially if you bought a cheap one. Nothing wrong

with an inexpensive scale since even these work relatively well. Still, you get what you pay for. Sometimes it could be just the tare button no longer working and if you are math challenged like me, that can be no fun. Keep a backup around, or having one in the kitchen is never a bad idea where it can serve double duty.

Planning is key successful and stress-free brewing, and it can save you a lot of frustration when you are creating all those great brews. Hopefully, this was a pretty exhaustive list, but if you think we left anything off or you have any suggestions, please drop me a note at education@nthba.org. Until next month, or the brew day, or a club meeting, happy brewing.

Cheers,

Smitty



Ok so here is a shot of judging at the Limbo this year. If you ever wondered how it's done, well, this is where the "sausage gets made". The lads are doing the final judging for one of the medals and as you can tell they are devoting their souls into doing a good job here.

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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.



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