



# HOPLINE

*Newsletter of the Crescent City Homebrewers Club*

**February 2023**

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Location: *Deutches Haus***

**2023 Edition**

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## **PRESIDENT'S CORNER – FEBRUARY 2023**

Hey Buckaroos,

Now that the craziness of Winterfest and Mardi Gras are behind us, it is time to blow the dust off that brewing equipment that has been sitting idle in your garage. The hot summer months are coming; do you want to settle for commercial beers to quench your thirst? Of course, you don't! So listen up, and I will tell you of all the fun homebrew events coming up.

On March 18th, the CCH we will have a table at New Orleans on Tap. There will be great music and even greater beer. This is a benefit for the LSPCA, so your money will go to a good cause. Will Thompson will be leading this event for the club. On March 25th, we will have our first Brewoff, which will be led by Will Lambert, at the 504 Beer reserve. The style will be a Marzen.

April 15th will be Fish Fest, our annual Brewoff/Sausage event. This takes place every year at Monk's Haus in Crown Point. Lots of food and beer will be served. The Brewoff will be in the capable hands of Will Thompson, and the style will be a Rye PA.

In May, we will have another Brewoff, which will be some kind of ale or IPA. The location and style are still undecided. We will get back to you. On May 20th, we will have our biannual Pig Roast. Jack Horne, Hector, and Chad will be spearheading this event at the Mattei homestead in Metairie. This is a lovely location, with great food and homebrew.

June 24th, will be the first BIABS event for the year. For those that do not know, this is Brewing in a bathing suit, and we will make a 50 gallon batch of beer, and cool down in my pool. Honestly, this is the best way to brew in the hot, summer months.

July 1st will be our yearly bus trip, which is a chance to experience breweries outside our area, and not have to drive. This year we will be heading to Mississippi to drink and learn.

In August we will be celebrating Mead day on August 5th, and will have our second BIABS event at Barney's House on the 12th. In all we have a great line up for the first part of the year.

In other news, at our March meeting we presented several past presidents with customized steins, in recognition of their work for the club. Ryan Casteix, Mike Malley, Hector Meier, Alessa Massey, and I handed awards to each other, just like in Hollywood. Since this is my second year in the job, I am a past president along with being a present president. I also did not want to have to wait five years to get one.

We also have a date for the Christmas Party, which will be on Friday, December 15th. The Winterfest is scheduled for Saturday, January 13th, so start planning now. We have a lot of activities in the works, so get involved and have fun. If you would like to sign up for a Brewoff, get in contact with our DUMBO, Chad Bowman. Educational and competition questions will be handled by Hector.

Take care and keep brewing.

Neil



## **CRESCENT CITY HOMEBREWERS – EXECUTIVE BOARD 2023**

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Hector Meier



## BREWOFF SCHEDULE FOR 2022 (Subject to Change, Really)

Date	Style	Host	Location	Brewmaster
1/8/2023	Pumpkin Stout			Cancelled
2/25/23	Golden Ale/Pils			
3/25/23	Marzen	504 Craft Beer Reserve	3939 Tulane Ave NOLA	Will Lambert
4/15/23	Rye PA Fish Memorial	Monk		
5/21/23	Wheat ale			
6/17/23	BIABS Cream Ale	Neil Barnett	5636 Hawthorne Pl NOLA, 70124	
July	Off			
8/19/23	BIABS Hoppy Pale Ale	Barney		
9/23/23	Vienna Lager	Chad Bowman	2700 Maureen Ln Meraux, LA	
10/21/23	Irish Red Ale			
11/4/23				
11/18/23	Oyster Stout			

\*BIABS = brewing in a bathing suit

Standard Wort price \$30.00      Standard Lunch price\$10.00

For any new members, a Brewoff is a group event in which we make 50 gallons of beer with the Club equipment. The wort is then split up into ten, 5-gallon units. The units are given out to the Host(1), Brewmaster(1), Chef(1), Equipment Movers(2), and Grunts(5). Guests and Alternates are encouraged to sign up and join in the fun. Wort participants must bring their own 5-gallon fermenter, and yeast. If you are interested, email me at [cbowman75@gmail.com](mailto:cbowman75@gmail.com) or sign up at the meetings. [Buy a truck](#)

Hello Good People,

Our next brew-off scheduled for March 25th will be hosted by 504 Craft Beer Reserve. I look forward to seeing everyone at the brew-off. This brew-off will begin a little later. We will start brewing at 12 noon. The late start is so we will align with the starting time of 504's festival.

Prost,

DUMBO



**From Carol Rice**

Hey CCH,

My history project is coming along nicely! I NEED PICTURES!

If you have any pictures of events that are distinctive, please loan them to me.

- Brew-Offs with good images of people and equipment.
- Location and date also.
- Trips, like pub crawls.

*I would rather not have large group shots. They all look alike after a while.*

People:

- Good head shots.
- Good action shots.

Past Presidents: I have 19 so far...

- Peter Caddoo
- Harold Hochhalter
- George Parr
- Wayne Rogers
- Dave Macon
- Dave Cooper
- Mickey Giovingo
- Jack Gonzales
- Chris Catherine
- Ryan Castiex
- Mike Malley
- Alessa Massey.

So far, I have been working with snap shots. Often the heads of people are only ¼" square. They do not enlarge well. Not much information in a square that small.

Thank you all!

Carol

## FROM THE DESK OF THE QUARTERMASTER – JANUARY 2023

Okay, less of a desk, more top of a jockey box. Winterfest is over, and a new club year is upon us. As I dig my way out from all these bucket (oh, so many buckets...), and the tangle of hoses, I thought that it'd be a good idea to send out some reminders and updates regarding the club's gear.

### **Club equipment is available for members to borrow:**

Any member in good standing (i.e., has paid their dues for the year) can check gear out for their own use. This is for the serving gear with the jockey boxes, or for the brewoff brewing gear if you want to host your own brewoff or just brew a bunch of beer for yourself. I don't know, maybe you got a barrel that you want to fill. No judgement, just bring a sample to the meeting when it's ready.

If you want to borrow serving gear to represent the club at a beer fest, we can set you up with tents, banners and all the trimmings. Let me know.

Some limitations will apply. There are blackout dates around club events like brewoffs and Winterfest. Also, you must show some proficiency or familiarity with the Brewoff gear before borrowing it.

All loans are at the discretion of the Quartermaster. All gear should be returned cleaned and ready for use. If there are any issues with the gear, let me know so that I can fix it.

### **Brewoff gear containment is changing:**

If you move gear for Brewoffs, or are a brewmaster, please note that the gear configuration is changing. I'm still finalizing how it will look, but it's been sprawling a little bit lately, so I'm trying to get it more contained. All of the normal gear is there, it just might be in a different spot. Brewoff gear in any iteration will just inside the door of the container, stacked up. If you start picking up gear past the propane tanks, you've gone too far.

Brewmasters: please note that we have a hop rocket and pH meter that do not live with the gear. If you'd like them for your Brewoff let me know and I'll make sure that they get packed along.

### **We have enough plates.**

Seriously, we're good on plates and plastic forks. If you're a chef got a Brewoff, please do not buy plates or forks. There is a container of plates, cups and all of that that travels with the Brewoff gear. If you have any questions about what we have on hand or what we may need, let me know.

That's all for now. Inventory continues, and the struggle for organization inside the container seems to be unending.

Cheers!

Will Lambert  
Quartermaster





WINTERFEST IS OVER, AND IT'S TIME  
FOR THE SPRING

# CONTAINER CLEAN UP

**100%**  
sick of  
tripping over  
this stuff!

email [whlambert@gmail.com](mailto:whlambert@gmail.com) for inquiries



Beer Nuts

**\$1**



Tail Pieces

(1/4", 3/16"  
or 5/16")

**\$1**

Keg parts  
Faucet parts  
Regulator parts  
Disconnect  
parts

Misc repair

parts

**Ask**



Stainless **\$5**  
Tasting cup



Coozies

**\$2**

## SWEET DEALS!

**WOW!**



Secondary  
Regulators **\$20**

Homebrew Favorites  
Beer style books  
Brewers Publications  
and more

Brewing  
Books **\$5**



Winterfest Tee  
Shirts ~~\$10~~

Purple & Blue **\$5**

### Stir Plate

(needs some rewiring)



(stir bar not included) **\$10**



Embroidered  
Ball Cap **\$20**

### Gas & Liquid Tubing



Asst sizes  
& lengths **\$0.10/ft**

# 2023 CCH Homebrew Competition

**This is a competition for those in the Crescent City Homebrewers, to foster some competition, get brewers to investigate different styles, brew outside their comfort zone, and to practice evaluating different beer styles.**

**This is open to all CCH Members in *good standing*.**

*This starts in January* with an introduction to the competition and to announce the beer styles for the upcoming months.

Beers will be due at the following month's General Meeting. (e.g. February is Irish Stout, entries are due on the March 1st Meeting.)

Beer submissions should be in bottles, growlers, cans, any vessel, but please bring at least 60 oz (5 X 12 oz bottles, or 4 X 16oz bottles, or 2.3 wine bottles, etc....)

Judging will follow the 2021 BJCP Style Guidelines in a BJCP-esqe format, but this is NOT a BJCP sanctioned event.

Anyone interested in judging is welcome. A few weeks out I will send out an email calling for Judges, and If you are interested please respond. I aim to have a judging the following weekend or shortly thereafter. A location will be selected before the judging, anywhere friendly for beer judging, more than likely a brewery.

On Judging day the plan is to start with the beer judging followed by a beer education session.

Scoring will go as follows:

The beer with the highest score (through the BJCP grading) gets 1st place for that month and is awarded 3 points. The second highest score is 2nd and is awarded 2 points and 3rd place is awarded 1 point.

These points will be recorded and tallied up at the end of the year where the winner (The person with the highest accumulated points) will be announced.

Any questions or concerns please email me at [hector.meier@gmail.com](mailto:hector.meier@gmail.com)

Let the brewing begin!

Prost!

Hector the Education Czar

# 2023 Crescent City Homebrewers Competition

**January**    *Introduction of the Competition*

**February**    *Irish Stout*  
                    *Bring to 1 March Meeting*

**March**        *Witbier*  
                    *Bring to 5 April Meeting*

**April**         *Belgian Golden Strong*  
                    *Bring to 3 May Meeting*

**May**          *American IPA*  
                    *Bring to 7 June Meeting*

**June**          *Dark Mild*  
                    *Bring to 5 July Meeting*

**July**          *English Porter*  
                    *Bring to 2 Aug Meeting*

**August**       *Baltic Porter*  
                    *Bring to 6 Sept Meeting*

**September**   *Black IPA*  
                    *Bring to 4 Oct Meeting*

**October**      *Barelywine*  
                    *Bring to 1 Nov Meeting*

**November**   *NONE*

**December**   *Winners Announced*

## BREW FOR THOUGHT – FEBRUARY 2023

### Pressure Cooker Decoction

By Mike Retzlaff

Some 25 years ago, I read about a mashing technique which fascinated me. The process involves using a pressure cooker to effect decoction mashing. Instead of pulling a portion of the mash, heating it to a mash temp, resting, then heating to a boil (all while constantly stirring) before returning to the main mash, the plan is to use a pressure cooker. This technique wasn't new even back then.

The traditional decoction mash has been done based on three different systems. The Bohemian, Vienna, and Bavarian systems are used to produce the types of beer usual in those regions. In Bohemia, where lighter colored beer was the style, a shorter decoction boiling time of 10 to 20 minutes was made; in Vienna the decoction boil lasted about 30 minutes; in Bavaria a decoction boil would last as long as 45 minutes. By variance of decoction boil times, a range of wort color can be made with a very simple grist bill. Times change and many of the traditional breweries have reduced or eliminated decoction mashing to save time, labor, and fuel. Today, in lieu of decoction mashing, we generally add all sorts of color malts to our grain bill to attain color and simulate that hearty malt flavor.

The decoction mash was developed at a time before malting science was well developed and understood. Today under-modified malt is relatively hard to find. Weyermann Malting in Germany, among others, still produces it but the demand for such malt isn't high which makes it less available. The good news is that modern Pilsner malt is widely available and perfectly usable with this technique. All sorts of other normal malts work well also.

The decoction portion can't be dumped directly into the pressure cooker as it would certainly scorch. This portion is placed into a smaller vessel first. A trivet (or canning rack) is placed in the pressure cooker with some water. It is heated as a water bath and the smaller vessel holding the mash portion is placed into the pressure cooker. Once the decoction is heated to the target mash temp, it is rested. After the rest, the lid is attached to the pressure cooker and heated again. The cooker gets to work and the physics of the pressure cooker will cause the decoction mash temp to rise to about 250°F @ 15 psi. The decoction will boil for 10 to 30 minutes, is cooled, and then returned to the main mash. This cycle is repeated until the mashing is complete.

Why bother to go to all this trouble in the first place? The reason is that decoction mashing doesn't produce more malt flavor but instead, better malt flavor. If skeptical, do a side by side comparison of a decoction mashed beer against an infusion mashed beer and you will immediately recognize the difference. Decoction mashing also increases mash efficiency. The pressure cooker eliminates the stirring of the mash with the associated weariness of arm, neck, and back muscles. Manual stirring does not guarantee that the mash won't scorch anyway. You still have the choice of single, double, and triple decoction. It all depends on what you're trying to accomplish.

Decoction mashing also has its place among many beers normally not associated with European lagers. Such candidates include Alt, Baltic Porter, English IPA, Dunkelweizen, and Scottish Ales. A single decoction works well with Kölsch and Weissbier. Even the standard American lager utilizes a cereal mash, which is a form of decoction, for rice and corn and usually done in a pressure cooker.

This technique is for those brewers interested in quality over speed of production. A single infusion mash can take perhaps 1½ to 2 hours to complete. Decoction mashing can take between 4 and 6 hours to complete – depending on the number of decoctions and the length of rests.



The standard for a “traditional” decoction mash is a liquor to grist ratio of 3.25 liters to 1 kilogram or 1.56 qt. per pound. There isn’t any hand stirring involved during the heating in this method so we can tighten up on the ratio. This also allows for pulling smaller decoctions.

Let’s deal with the set-up for a 5 gallon batch of Helles or Pilsner with a target OG of 1.050. You’ll need a pressure cooker large enough to contain a trivet and a vessel capable of holding up to about 4 quarts of mash. The internal vessel works like a bain-marie (or double boiler) and keeps the mash from direct contact with the bottom of the pressure cooker. Direct contact with the heating surface can only result in a scorched mash. Covering the top of the internal vessel with aluminum foil keeps the mash from spitting and plopping which may clog the pressure relief vent and generally make a mess within the cooker. Add water to the pressure cooker after each decoction usage so it doesn’t run dry.

- Start with 8# of crushed German Pilsner malt. Mash-in with 10 qts. strike water (1.25:1 ratio) to achieve around 131 °F. The mash volume will be about 3.14 gallons (12.56 qts). Adjust the mash pH as needed. Let rest for 25 min.
- Pull the first decoction (2.8 qts.) and place in vessel. Place vessel in the pressure cooker and heat water bath to bring the decoction to 150 °F; rest for 25 min. (check the temp of the mash; not the water bath)
- Put lid on the pressure cooker and heat. Boil decoction at 250 °F @ 15 psi for 15 min.
- Remove from heat and allow it to cool before venting pressure. (Venting quickly can cause the decoction to boil over [erupt] inside the pressure cooker!)
- Once the lid is off, remove vessel and return decoction to main mash. After mixing, the temp should stabilize at 149 °F. Rest for 25 min.
- Pull a second decoction (1.8 qts.) and heat to 158 °F. Rest for 25 min. Boil the decoction at 250 °F @ 15 psi for 15 min.
- Cool as before and add to the main mash which should stabilize @ 158 °F. Rest for 25 min.
- Pull a third decoction (2.8 qts.), seal lid and heat to 250 °F @ 15 psi. No rest. Cool before venting. Add back to the main mash which should stabilize @ 170 °F. Rest for 10 min.
- Transfer to the lauter tun and process like any other mash. Be sure to acidify your sparge water to 5.8 pH to alleviate astringency from the hulls.

Now, let’s deal with the set-up for a 5 gallon batch of Märzen with a target OG of 1.056. The difference in this one is a bigger grist bill and subsequently, larger mash and decoction volumes. Virtually everything else is the same. Because the style requires a darker wort color, the grist bill has changed as well as the length of the decoction boil time.

- Start with 6# of crushed German Munich (6°L) and 3# of Dark Munich (9°L). Mash-in with 11.25 qts. strike water (1.25:1 ratio) to achieve around 131 °F. The mash volume will be about 3.53 gallons. Adjust the mash pH if necessary. Let rest for 25 min.
- Pull the first decoction (3.2 qts.) and place in vessel. Place vessel in the pressure cooker and heat water bath to bring the decoction to 150 °F; rest for 25 min. (check the temp of the mash; not the water bath)
- Put lid on the pressure cooker and heat. Boil decoction at 250 °F @ 15 psi for 20 min.
- Remove from heat and allow to cool before venting pressure. (Venting quickly can cause the decoction to boil over [erupt] inside the pressure cooker!)
- Once the lid is off, remove vessel and return decoction to main mash. After mixing, the temp should stabilize at 149-151 °F. Rest for 25 min.
- Pull a second decoction (2.2 qts.) and heat to 158 °F. Rest for 25 min. Boil the decoction at 250 °F @ 15 psi. for 20 min.
- Cool as before and add to the main mash which should stabilize @ 158-160 °F. Rest for 25 min.

- Pull a third decoction (3.2 qts.), seal lid and heat to 250 °F @ 15 psi. No rest. Cool before venting. Add back to the main mash which should stabilize @ 170 °F. Rest for 10 min.
- Transfer to the lauter tun and process like any other mash. Be sure to acidify your sparge water to 5.8 pH to alleviate astringency from the hulls.

In both cases we're using well-modified malt. There is no real purpose for a mash-in of "blood temp" of 95 to 100 °F. We're starting with a proteolytic rest (131 °F) which will produce free amino nitrogen and degrade high molecular weight proteins into body & head supporting polypeptides. The beta-amylase degrades amylose to maltose & glucose while amylopectin is reduced to  $\beta$ -limit dextrins. We move up from that to a compromise mash temp (149 °F) to utilize both the alpha and beta amylase enzymes. The next rest (158 °F) is to utilize the alpha-amylase to full advantage. The last decoction is to raise the main mash to a mash-out temp. Adding boiling water will do the same thing but while everything is out and being used, we simply take advantage of a little extra color, flavor, and aroma.

Many brewers act deathly afraid of what seems to be an ideal way of loading their wort with tannins and the associated astringency. Polyphenols (tannins) are certainly a component of grain husks but these bad little dudes really aren't encouraged to leach out until the pH goes above about 6.0. During the mash, the pH is mostly around 5.2 – 5.5 pH even during the boiling of the decoction.

I can still remember my apprehension when first starting an all grain single infusion mash. After doing it a few times, I calmed down and it became second nature. This technique is surely more complicated than a single or a step infusion mash and takes more time. However, the quality of the resulting wort and the finished beer, is well worth the effort.

*nota bene* – A modern "Instant Pot" using a S/S mixing bowl as an inner vessel works flawlessly when used with a trivet. Without the inner vessel, it would scorch just like a stove-top pressure cooker. Newer Instant Pots also have a programmable control (sous vide function) to set the temperature of the decoction rest which simplifies things a bit.

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