



HOPLINE

Newsletter of the Crescent City Homebrewers Club

April 2026

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 6th

Location: *Deutches Haus*

2026 Edition

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER – APRIL 2026

Greetings All!

Spring has sprung, and festival season is upon us. I encourage you all to get out and enjoy this weather while we have the chance... and maybe do some brewing too.

With all of the events going on around town, don't forget about all of the great things that we've got going on! We have the bi-annual CCH crawfish boil happening on Saturday June 6th, the Brewery Bus Tour on July 25th, and the return of the beer dinner in August. That's in addition to the regularly scheduled brewoffs and meetups. See the calendar pages for more information.

One thing that all of these things have in common, other than being a fun time, is the beer. We'll have signups at the meetings for the club events, and for Larryfest, which is on June 27th at the Castine Center in Mandeville.

Our next meetup will continue this year's theme of doing something different. We will be gathering in Woldenberg Park to take in the sights of the tall ships that are assembling for the New Orleans leg of [Sail 250](#). Eight ships will be moored in the river, with tours being offered beginning at 8 AM. Let's meet at the Riverwalk Gazebo (or nearby if it's occupied), at 11 AM. This is kind of a BYOB/picnic thing, so bring some beers to share. There are also many purveyors of assorted vittles in the area if you want to partake of the local offerings.

Until next time, keep brewing!

- Will

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BREWOFF SCHEDULE FOR 2026 (Subject to Change, Really)

Date	Style	Host	Location	Brewmaster
January 1/17/26	Winterfest Break			
February 2/??/26	--	--	--	--
March 3/28/26	Porter	Fish Fest Sausage Stuffing Brewoff	Deutsches Haus	Mike Mailey
April 4/18/26	Stout	Cancelled	--	Craig Laginess
May 5/16/26	Amber Rye Beer	Greg Hankenberg	3422 Annunciation St New Orleans LA 70115	Will Thompson
June 6/13/26	BIABS Saison	Neil Barnett	5636 Hawthorne Pl NOLA, 70124	Neil Barnett
July 7/25/26	BUS TRIP	--	--	--
8/1/26	Mead Day			
August 8/8/26	BIABS Oktoberfest	Barney and Diane Ryan	10 Garden Road River Ridge, LA 70123	Peter Caddoo
September 9/??/26	--	--	--	--
October	Octoberfest Break	---	--	--
November 11/7/26	LTHBD	Matt and Rachel Ault	--	--
November 11/??/26	Oyster Stout	Charles Sule	6325 Perlito Dr NOLA	--

*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 DUMBOS at jack.horne@gmail.com or sign up at the meetings. [Buy a truck](#)



Hey Buckeroo's,

I'm just back from a two week, circumnavigation of Florida. I got to see Blue Angels, Skunk Apes, one Dolphin*, and the longest Burmese Python skins you can imagine. But now that I am back, it is time to set my sights on Homebrew.

The last scheduled brew off had to be cancelled, due to lack of interest. Let's try not to let that happen again. Looking forward, we have an Amber Rye IPA event at Greg Hackenberg's house. Will Thompson will be leading this one. The date is May 16th, and we still have openings.

After that will be the first BIABS event at my house, on June 13th. We will be making a Saison, a true summer time style. It is a fun day of being social and getting wet. Remember, that swimsuits are NOT optional in the pool.

August will bring on two events: Mead Day, and the second BIABS Brewoff. Will Lambert will lead Mead day, which is August 1st, by making a small batch of mead to be split up by the group. You will need a one gallon container for this. Detail will follow. On August 8th, it is back to the pool at Diane and Barney's house. This will be an ESB with Peter Caddoo as Brewmaster. As you all know, this is a world class style and one that most home brewers try to master. I am looking forward to it.

September and October are wide open if someone would like to host, or be Brewmaster. Please let me know. We will also have "Learn to Homebrew Day", and the Oyster Stout event in November.

My email is neilwbarnett@yahoo.com .

Take care, and keep brewing, DUMBO

UPCOMING EVENTS

HERE ARE SOME
GREAT EVENTS
THAT YOU MAY BE
INTERESTED IN:

May 2	Ron Zappe International Beerfest 3 PM - LSU Rural Life Museum - tickets
May 6	General Meeting 7 PM - Deutsches Haus
May 16	Brewoff - Rye Beer 8 AM - TBD
May 30	CCH Meetup 11 AM - Woldenberg Park - BYOB
Jun 3	General Meeting 7 PM - Deutsches Haus
Jun 6	Crawfish Boil 10 AM setup - First batch at 12 PM - 233 Labarre Rd
Jun 12	CCH Meetup 7 PM - The Swamp Room
Jun 13	BIABS Brewoff 8 AM - 5636 Hawthorne Place
Jun 27	Larry Brew Fest 4 PM - Castine Center, Mandeville
Jul 1	General Meeting 7 PM - Deutsches Haus

Jul 10	CCH Meetup 7 PM - Abita New Orleans
Jul 25	Brewery Bus Tour TBD
Aug 1	Brewoff - Mead Day TBD
Aug 5	General Meeting 7 PM – Deutsches Haus
Aug 8	BIABS Brewoff - Festbier 8 AM – 101 Garden Rd, River Ridge
Aug TBD	CCH Meetup TBD
Sept 2	General Meeting 7 PM – Deutsches Haus



We have many more events in the works for later in the year. Watch this space, or check out <https://crescentcityhomebrewers.org/calendar/>.

Know of any events going on that we might be interested in? Let us know at crescentcityhomebrewers@gmail.com



BREW FOR THOUGHT – APRIL 2026

Those of us who have been brewing for years tend to take many things for granted. The thoughts offered here are intended for the brewers among us with fewer miles on life's odometer.

Separating the Wort

By Mike Retzlaff

Mashing converts starch to sugars, degrades proteins and gums, and precipitates a number of other associated reactions. Unless you are strictly an extract brewer, at some point in the brewing process it becomes necessary to separate the spent grain from the sweet wort. The term for this is **lautering**. There are a number of ways to do it but virtually all systems work like either a tea bag or kitchen colander.

LAUTERING HARDWARE

False Bottom. This is probably the most often used piece of equipment for this particular brewing chore. Most often it is a disk with a multitude of holes drilled or punched through it. They are usually domed. Some false bottoms utilize nearly punched through disks which look like the knock-outs in electrical junction boxes. In commercial brewing, false bottoms are often made in pie-slice slotted sections which sit no more than an inch from the bottom of the mash or lauter vessel. Commercial units usually draw wort from several areas below the false bottom and convey the wort to or through a grant which is simply a pre-collection vessel. Some false bottoms feature laser or machine cut slots.

Charlie Papazian's *The Complete Joy of Homebrewing* illustrates his Zap Pap lauter tun which consists of two nested plastic pails. You simply drill a "kajillion" holes in the bottom of the inner pail which nests in the outer pail. The outer pail has a hole drilled in the side near the bottom for a short section of plastic tubing which is fitted with a valve. I used such a contraption for years. It's bare bones but works surprisingly well.

Manifold. These are generally constructed from PVC or copper tubing. Normally, slip fit joints are used to facilitate cleaning and the tubing is either drilled or slotted with a saw. They can be fitted to most any sort of vessel you would desire as a mash or lauter tun but are usually used with an ice chest.

Bazooka Tube. These wire mesh tubular screens come in a number of configurations. Some are a single closed end tube while others form a loop. Some form a tee shape. The run-off usually clears faster with these but they are a bit more prone to clog and cause a stuck lauter.

Mesh Bag. These bags come in an assortment of materials (usually nylon) and mesh sizes. This is the normal set up for the Brew in a Bag style of brewing. It works like a large tea bag and contains the grains during the entire mashing portion of the routine. The mesh bag can also be used for steeping grains for extract and partial mash recipes.

The old English style of lautering relies entirely on simple drainage of the mash tun. This is the original no-sparge method. It is very inefficient but seems to be the quickest method.

SPARGING

Efficiency in lautering is assisted by sparging. The first documented sparging was done in Scotland. Sparging is simply rinsing the sugars from the mashed grains into whatever collection vessel is chosen. Most brewers lauter and sparge directly into the brew kettle. In general, the collection of wort begins

with recirculation or vorlauf. The first few quarts of collected wort are gently added back to the top of the grain bed. The grain bed itself is the filter media. When the wort runs clear, the vorlauf is done.

Batch Sparge. The wort is steadily drained. Additional brewing liquor is prepared, heated, and added to the mash tun in one, two, or even three stages (dependent on the volume of the lauter tun). Each time additional sparge water is introduced, the mash should be stirred and another vorlauf performed before further collection.

Fly Sparging. In fly sparging, the grain bed is set with the vorlauf and additional heated brewing liquor is sprayed or trickled over the top of the grain bed. This can be in the form of a spinning lawn sprinkler shaped device, an inverted cone, or a deflection plate which keeps the sparge water from cutting a channel into the grain bed. Usually, the liquid level in the mash tun should be ½” to 1” over the grain bed during the sparge. This helps to negate channeling. Too much liquid over the top of the grain bed can cause the mashed grain to compact which can cause a stuck lauter.

LAUTERING PROBLEMS

Channeling. This occurs when the wort seeks the path of least resistance and cuts a channel toward the bottom of the mash tun. Much of the grain bed is bypassed by the sparge water. The wort in other areas of the mash tun doesn't drain properly and far too much of the sugars in the grain bed are left behind. Lautering relies on the grain bed to filter out the non-liquid components in the mash tun. If that grain bed is compromised, you lose gravity points and efficiency. The usual cause is lautering at too fast a rate.

Stuck Lauter. This occurs when everything gets clogged up and the wort refuses to process through. There are two main reasons for a stuck lauter.

Lautering too fast. If the flow of the wort is excessive, it compacts the grain bed. How much time are you saving if you have to dig out the mash tun, layer the grain bed back in, and restart the lauter? Patience is a virtue! Too many brewers continually plot to hurry up the process. If you're that pressed for time, go to the store and buy a six-pack.

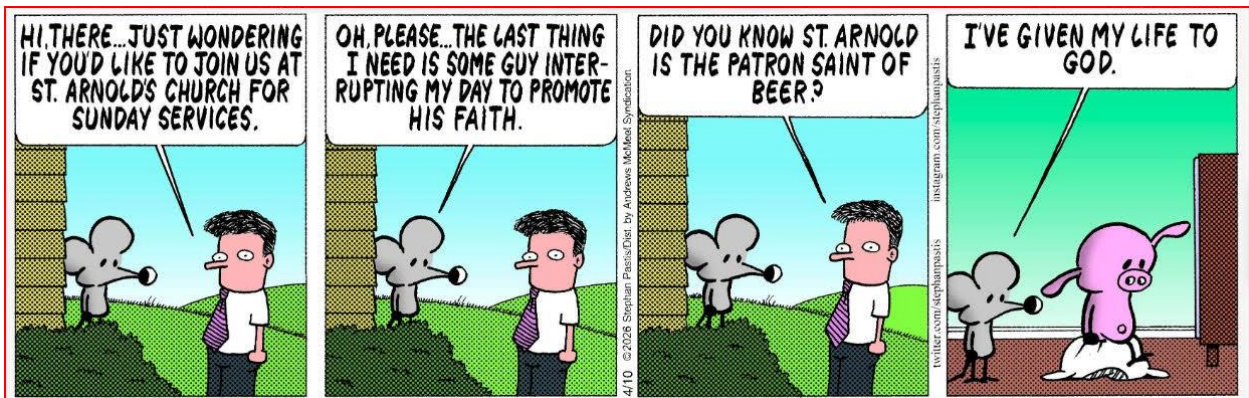
Insufficient filtering media. The grain hulls are the normal filtering media in a mash. If you're using a large amount of hull-less grain like wheat or debittered roasted grain, you may need to add hulls from rice or oats as a substitute. If the hulls of your malt are being shredded by the milling procedure, you may need to add rice or oat hulls. This addition is cheap insurance.

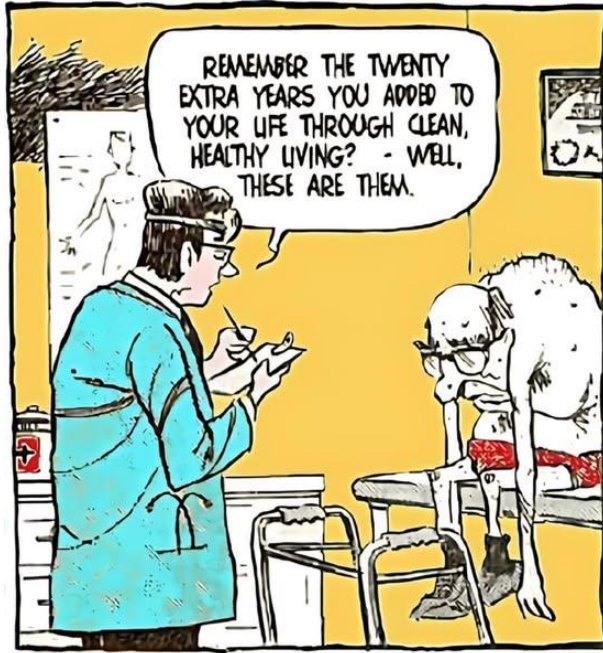
Another helpful tip is to preload the lauter tun with enough sparge water (brewing liquor) as to fill the void under the false bottom, in the manifold or bazooka tube. This keeps the mash liquid from rushing into that void when the mash is loaded into the lauter tun and causing the mashed grain to clog the screen, holes, or slots in the lautering hardware.

CONCLUSION

Brewing good beer on a consistent basis requires a knowledge of physics, chemistry, and to some observers, can appear to be alchemy. The lauter and sparge is just one facet of a typical brew day. Improve your skills and knowledge on each facet of brewing and maybe you'll be as good a brewer as I hope to become one day.

Oh, what a Day!!





Thought for self Improvement

“Those who can make you believe
absurdities,
Can make you commit atrocities.”

Voltaire

SITES OF INTEREST

Crescent City Homebrewers:

[Crescent City Homebrewers](#)
[CCH Member Application](#)

Local Brewing Supply:

[Brewstock](#)

Louisiana Craft Beer Info:

[Louisiana Craft Brewers Guild](#)

Breweries:

[Big Easy Bucha](#)
[Brewery Saint X](#)
[Bayou Teche Brewing Company](#)
[Brieux Carre Brewing Company](#)
[Broad Street Cider & Ale](#)
[Bywater Brew Pub](#)
[Chafunkta Brewing Company](#)
[Courtyard Brewery](#)
[Crescent City Brewhouse](#)
[Deadbeat Brewing](#)
[Deutsches Haus](#)
[Ecology Beer Creative and Taproom](#)
[German Coast](#)
[Gnarly Barley Brewing Company](#)
[Kingfisher Cider](#)
[Miel Brewery and Taproom](#)
[New Orleans Lager and Ale Brewing Company](#)
[Nine Toes Brewing Company](#)
[Oak Street Brewery](#)
[Parish Brewing](#)
[Parleaux Beer Lab](#)
[Port Orleans Brewing Company](#)
[Second Line Brewing](#)
[Skeeta Hawk Brewing](#)
[Urban South Brewery](#)
[Zony Mash Beer Project](#)

Member Pages:

[Crescent City Brew Talk](#)