



AMERICAN
Homebrewers Association[®]
THE COMMUNITY FOR HOMEBREWERS

2014 AHA Annual Sub-Committee Reports

Overview

The following includes annual reports from the current AHA Governing Committee sub-committees. This is a comprehensive look at what the GC is doing as a whole, and respectively within the sub-committees. This report is reviewed and shared with the AHA staff, Governing Committee and AHA members via the AHA forum. This report acts as a way to guide topics for our Annual Meeting in June at the Homebrewers Conferences, and gives us a chance to reflect on accomplishments and challenges, while constructing goals and objectives for the coming year.

Sub-Committee Reports

Industry Sub-Com Report 2013/14

Submitted by Jake Keeler- Chair

1. Introduction

The Industry Sub-Committee was formed during the National Homebrewers Conference of 2010. The committee's primary goals are to foster better communication between the AHA and industry entities, as well as provide resources, assistance, and guidance to the AHA based on concerns brought forward by said members of the homebrewing industry.

2. Members

Jake Keeler - Chair (AHAGC, Brewers Supply Group), Justin Crossley (AHAGC ,Brewing Network), Chris Graham (AHAGC, BA Board Designee, More Beer), Reed Antis (Saratoga Zymurgist), John Blichmann (Blichmann Engineering), Juno Choi (BSG Handcraft), Chris Opela (Brewmaster USA), Chris Sjothum (Brewcraft USA), Brian Wright (LD Carlson), Duke Geren (FH Steinbart), Michael Dawson (Wyeast), Brad Smith (Beersmith), Chris Farley (Northern Brewer/Midwest Supplies)

3. Overview

In 2013-2014 the sub-committee continued to focus on programming for the Industry Workshop at the HBC, and the Annual Homebrew Shop Survey. Talk of helping the

AHA create a Trade Org type arm continues - the interest is there, but the drive to take action has faltered. Sub-com members are happy with the output, and the AHA, particular Steve Parr has taking advantage of the groups' domain expertise and consultative role.

4. Accomplishments

- Programming for the Industry Workshop - this has increased and improved year after year. Now in our 4th year of the event, we will have two speakers, survey results, and social hour components along with a trade-only segment of the Homebrew Expo.
- Refinement of Annual Homebrew Shop Survey - cleaning up the questions and finding ways to extrapolate better and more useful data.
- Helped to distribute the First Resource Homebrewer Survey - the Industry sub-com played a critical role in helping to distribute the survey to customers and retail networks.
- Greater participation for the Homebrew Expo at HBC - our wholesale members have pushed their retailers to attend the HBC, and get more involved with the AHA's efforts.

5. Challenges

There is strong interest from sub-com members and the AHA for the sub-com to play a larger role. The challenge of pushing this forward comes from lack of ability on the Chair's ability to split time with GC Chair duties and BA BOD duties. Finding a new Chair, and/or somehow to have efforts driven by other parties may move the sub-com beyond it's current functionality.

6. Next Steps and Goals for 2014/2015:

- Carry through with Industry Workshop at 2014 HBC
- Distribute and review Homebrew Shop Surveys
- Continue to provide consultation and feedback on industry, industry trends, and homebrewing trends to AHA
- Continue to explore the possibility of a trade organization within the AHA

7. Conclusions/Parting Thoughts

It may be the case that the industry sub-com function best as a sounding board and consulting arm for the AHA; a voice for and of the industry. The Industry's reach into a larger swath of homebrewers of the US is undeniable. The AHA may be able to use the sub-com to tap into this larger pool of potential members, and stay on top of critical issues and trends. This would be it's function at a minimal level. At an expanded level, the Industry sub-com could become a springboard for a Trade Org arm of the AHA.

Survey Sub-Com Report 2013/2014

Submitted by Roxanne Westendorf - Chair

1. Introduction: The Survey Subcommittee's role is to support the AHA and other sub-committees by providing data and member input to feed into our programs and activities. As such, the Survey committee works with other committees and the AHA on projects.

2. Members (2013/2014): Roxanne Westendorf* – chair (AHA GC), Chris Frey* (AHA GC, BA delegate), AHA Staff (varies by project), David Kidd (Midwest Brewing), Chris Graham* (AHA GC, More Beer), Kim Wood**

*returning members for 2014/2015

**new member for 2014/2015

3. Overview: The survey committee has increased its activity over the past year, and has provided a critical element in getting key data for the AHA and the Competition Sub-committee. We provide support for the research to ensure that key questions are going to be asked in a way that provides accurate, meaningful and useful data to help us move forward.

4. Accomplishments:

- First Resource survey conducted among a broader group of homebrewers (AHA members AND non-members) vs. previous surveys. Key standout learning:
 - There are more women homebrewing than the surface numbers suggest. While only about 5% of survey takers were women, 25% of respondents report brewing with their spouse. This fits with shop survey data on shopper data. Women are an underserved group of brewers from an AHA standpoint.
 - AHA members are more likely to belong to a homebrew club and are more active in the brewing community. Club support is important to a healthy AHA membership.
- Competition Survey (with competition committee/Tom Schmidlin)
 - Survey results supported the changes for the 2014 National Homebrew Competition. More participants, entry limits and using the second round scoresheet in both 1st & 2nd rounds.
- Conference Survey

5. Challenges:

- Making sure that the survey committee is involved early enough in the process to be able to provide meaningful input. This has not been a problem, but is always a watch-out with a geographically dispersed group.

- Getting appropriate diagnostics in our surveys without making them onerous or too long for respondents.
- Ensuring we don't make the wrong inferences once we have data. Without additional data, we could be very wrong. For example – even though many brewers brew alone, we cannot infer the reasons for this (which could be highly varied).

6. Next Steps and Goals for 2014/2015:

- Use the key learning from our survey information to help inform our strategy session in the June, 2014 GC meeting.
- Add at least 1 additional subcommittee member (max 2) – either from new AHA CG members or an at large member.
- Continue to add diagnostic questions to our surveys where appropriate to get additional depth in survey information. We will be working on additional questions for the 2014 Conference Survey.
- Conduct small surveys on the AHA website. We have talked about this previously, but have not executed this, yet. With additional committee membership, this can be on our plate again.

7. Conclusions/Parting Thoughts: The Survey Committee increased its role in the past year, and has been providing increasing support to both the AHA and other committees. As the AHA continues to grow and works on programs to better support members, the research needs of the AHA will continue to expand. We have gotten significant, new data this year that will help us define our strategy for the next 5 years.

Web Sub-Com Report 2012/13 Submitted by Denny Conn, Chair, with input from the subcommittee

1. Introduction

The mission of the web subcommittee is to generate ideas for the AHA's web presence and help the AHA test and implement those ideas.

2. Members

Denny Conn (Chair), Drew Beechum, Fred Bonjour, Debbie Cerda, Justin Crossley, Ron Price

3. Overview

Since the opening of the new AHA website and forum a couple years ago, the role of the subcommittee has been minimal. It has consisted mostly of helping the AHA keep things running smoothly on the web by reporting and helping diagnose any problems that have arisen. The administrators and moderators of the forum take care of day to day operations with consultation from the AHA. The forum responsibilities have increased lately with the forum administration needing to manually approve every new registrant.

4. Accomplishments

The most important and satisfying accomplishment of the subcommittee has been the establishment and maintenance of the AHA Discussion Forum. Since its inception a few years ago, the forum has grown to tens of thousands of members and is widely recognized as not only the best source of homebrewing information on the web, but also as having a friendly, collegial atmosphere that encourages membership and participation.

5. Challenges

I think our largest challenge is maintaining what we've got in the website and forum while at the same time making additions and changes to keep things fresh and interesting.

6. Next Steps and Goals for 2014/2015

Use of social media to drive traffic to the website and forum. Although this has been happening to some extent, we recommend a focused plan of regular posting to Facebook, Twitter, etc. specifically to get traffic to the website.

- Continuing to grow the membership of the forum
- Finding interesting new topics and ways to present them
- Broadening the range of how content is promoted and shared -- cross-browsers and cross-platforms. Not only to create a unified message, but ensure that members have equal access. That is to say, not all active forum members are Facebook users and vice versa. So how to ensure dialogues are inclusive rather than exclusive.
- An AHA app with things like About the AHA, Alerts, Member deals based on either chosen location or current location, Zymurgy, forum, BA member breweries nearby and all tied into one app. A centralized way to access all the AHA content. The subcommittee could play a role in this by beta testing the app and offering feedback on both content and usability.
- Provide regular support to and solicit needs from our Web Coordinator Duncan Bryant, who is quite responsive and productive. This may simply be through general interface with the web assets, or identifying additional

- formats or options for providing resources including supporting documentation for our programs (forms for REF grants, Radegast club award application, etc.)
- Improve upon the usability and accessibility of our website across platforms, and fine tune interfaces (login issues)

7. Conclusions/Parting Thoughts

As mentioned, the role of the sub-committee has been diminished since the new website and forum opened. But we need to keep looking ahead, anticipating trends, and finding ways to add value to AHA membership through the website, forum and development of apps.

Competition Sub-Committee Report 2013/14 Submitted by Tom Schmidlin - Chair

1. Introduction

The competition subcommittee sets the rules for the National Homebrew Competition.

2. Members Tom Schmidlin (Chair), Fred Bonjour, Bruce Buerger, Steve Cook, Harold Gulbransen, Ron Price, Susan Ruud, Curt Stock, Gordon Strong, Peter Twigg, and Jamil Zainasheff.

3. Overview

Registration for the National Homebrew Competition ran much more smoothly this year than in years past due to the changes that were made in the registration and entry process. Large gains were made in understanding the overall demand for the competition, although meeting the demand will still be a significant challenge for the future. The largest problems from this year's first round came from problems with the competition management software.

4. Accomplishments

- By changing the registration process from a first-come first-served model to a lottery the registration process was much smoother for members without the software and hardware problems of the previous year.
- Changing to a lottery and limiting entries to maximize participation resulted in a 47% increase in the number of entrants compared to the previous year. Increasing participation was a common member desire according to the survey from last year.
- The number of entries possible was increased from 8250 to 9000 by adding a 12th region to the first round of the competition.

- Switching to checkbox score sheets allowed for faster judging in the first round.
- Further changes are planned for next year in order to streamline the process and help meet demand. These changes will be determined over the next several months.

5. Challenges

Once again, the biggest challenge we face is one of growth. While we were able to drastically increase the number of participants this year, this left a number of members unable to enter as many beers as they would like. We are faced with the following limitations:

- The number of first round sites available
- The number of entries each first round site can judge well
- The number of entries the final round site can judge well

We currently have 9000 entries available for over 38,000 members, or less than one entry for every four members.

A further challenge is the back end software for running the competition. Many of the first round organizers have complained that it is not adequate for actually running the competition and have designed their own workarounds to manage the competition more effectively. For example, due to the user interface of the competition software, some judge coordinators found it easier and faster to create their own excel spreadsheets for assigning judges to flights. There were also issues with the types of data and how they were tracked, with some data types sharing fields so that only one could be tracked.

6. Next Steps and Goals for 2014/2015

At the completion of the second round of the NHC, we plan to send out another competition survey to members, targeted to those who tried to enter this years' competition. This will be a more targeted survey when compared to the survey from last year which went to all members. The goal of this survey will be to determine how the members feel about the changes that were made for this year and will guide us for future years.

The competition software is in need of professional help. We will help determine the best course of action for making this software adequate for the needs of the competition organizers.

7. Conclusions/Parting Thoughts

Although we are barely through the first round of this years' competition, it is apparent that there are still a number of changes that will need to be made to

the competition for the future. We will gather additional information and discuss the best way to address the challenges of competition growth.

Research & Education Fund Sub-Com Report 2014

Submitted by Crispy Frey - Chair

1. Introduction

The R&EF was created, approved and funded for launch in 2013 to:

- Provide a new member benefit,
- Create a unique and sustainable source of knowledge and learning for members
- Help offset member's costs of providing fermentables at AHA NHC presentations, and
- Because it is a really cool thing to do.

2. Members

Chris Frey (chair), Martin Brungard, Debra Cerda, Sandy Cockerham, Harold Gulbransen, Jake Keeler, Adam Lauver, Randy Mosher, Aimee Richard, Susan Ruud, Troy Stevens and Roxanne Westendorf.

3. Overview

Conceived in 2012, the R&E officially launched in 2013 when AHA Web Coordinator, Duncan Bryant, was hired by AHA. The R&EF is a member benefit that supports AHA members who perform research, experiments or create unique educational concepts on brewing subjects and produce reports or presentations to the AHA membership. Research, experimental or educational proposals are vetted by the R&EF sub-committee for approval. Members are reimbursed when they submit satisfactory research results suitable for presentation to AHA members. The current annual budget for R&EF program is \$10,000 and the program is supported and administered by the AHA Web Coordinator.

The twelve member sub-committee receives notification from the Web Coordinator when a member proposal has been submitted. Sub-committee members review the on-line submission and vet potential concerns with the research or experiment goals or procedures. A sub-committee member is assigned as a coach of a proposal. This coach then is the single point of contact for the member for the entire process.

4. Accomplishments

- The sub-committee has received and vetted 19 proposals.
- In addition to the current AHA website area devoted to completed R&EF projects, the AHA has added additional pages to Zymurgy devoted to research outcomes.
- Several completed studies were presented at the 2013 AHA NHC and more will be presented in 2014.

- McDermott Will & Emery LLP developed and the AHA instituted a copyright agreement for proposers to agree to ensure intellectual property was maintained.
- The program's reimbursement cap of \$250 was revisited and it was decided to remove that cap. The total reimbursement for any proposal will be decided by the sub-committee based on its merit.

5. Challenges

There are a couple of significant challenges for the R&EF program and the team continues to fine tune this young program. The current challenges include ensuring members who submit a proposal understand these basic tenets of the program:

- It is not intended to promote craft beer or breweries.
- It is not a way to obtain free equipment that is readily available on the market.
- Proposals should be focused and have limited variables.
- Results are due by a specific date originally agreed to by the proposer.
- The right to publish the research and results is the property of the AHA.

The sub-committee needs to identify and create a more formalized process of assigning coaches in the event the program participation picks up.

The stated commitment is a full response within 60 days and we would prefer to shorten this expectation.

The sub-committee will adjust the program as unique and one-off proposal submissions bring questions and inquiries that will continue to finesse the program.

6. Next Steps and Goals for 2014/2015

- Continue to market program as a member benefit differentiator
- Communicate to the membership that this is an attainable member benefit and not just for the uber geeks

7. Conclusions/Parting Thoughts

Excitement and enthusiasm for this program continues to be strong within the sub-committee. This was evidenced by the proud inclusion of participation on the committee in AHA GC statements written by sub-committee members who ran for AHA GC this year.

However, there are concerns as to why so few members have actually reached out to seek funding for projects.

It is expected that with several presentations at the conference, the pages Zymurgy dedicated to the program, and other marketing efforts will lead to increased member involvement and executed projects.

Conference Sub-Committee Report 2013/2014

Submitted by Bob Kauffman - Chair

1. **Introduction** - Assist local committee in any capacity we are capable of.
2. **Members** - Bob Kauffman, Jim Homer, Fred Bonjour, Tom Schmidlin, Ron Price, Debbie Cerda
3. **Overview**- We were tasked by the AHA Events Dept. to come up with an alternative to Pro Brewers Night at the NHC. We had extensive discussions both during our monthly phone calls and via e-mail about Pro Brewers Night. We were tasked with finding ways to spread the benefit to both AHA Members and the Pro Brewers alike, while avoiding a situation where the event would devolve into something the AHA, members and/or Pro Brewers would not want to manage or be a part of. We were also deeply involved in the selection process of conference speakers for the 2014 conference.
4. **Accomplishments** – It is the opinion of the committee chair that we still provide an excellent conference for all attendees for the money spent on the NHC. I am unaware of anything but isolated cases of attendees not feeling like the value is a good one. The recent explosive growth in conference attendance would stand as evidence that we are meeting this goal.
5. **Challenges** – To continue to provide a quality event for all attendees and to assist the AHA in whatever we are asked to do. The increased attendance makes this a much bigger challenge but one we have met so far.
6. **Next Steps and Goals for 2014/2015** – The committee's goals will depend on how the upcoming conference in Grand Rapids comes off. We have no reason to expect anything but a highly successful NHC in 2014.

Zymurgy Sub-Com Report 2013/14

Submitted by Drew Beechum

1. Introduction

The Zymurgy committee serves to provide feedback and input to Jill and the rest of the Zymurgy crew. We review themes and offer suggestions where we find them.

2. Members

Drew Beechum (chair), Debbie Cerda Denny Conn, Tom Schmidlin, Gordon Strong, Roxanne Westendorf, Jamil Zainasheff

3. Overview

As always, our editor in chief is the one who holds the reins. We help in brief stretches as needed.

4. Accomplishments

1. Began collecting data on internet trends for pinpointing possible topics and authors
2. Spread the word on Zymurgy App launch, Gadget issues, best beer, etc

5. Challenges

Need to find a better formula for collecting, pinpointing new topics and authors for possible inclusion in Zymurgy.

6. Next Steps and Goals for 2014/2015

1. Email, email, email – all of us on this committee are online mavens, so we need to use it more to help find more stuff for the magazine

7. Conclusions/Parting Thoughts

The focus in the coming year should be to provide to Jill precisely the level of engagement and service she needs. Beyond that, it may be helpful to also help focus discovery of pieces for the website as well.

Radegast Sub-Com Report 2013/14 Submitted by Drew Beechum

1. Introduction

The Radegast committee is the group responsible for formulating the rules and procedures around the Radegast Homebrew Club of the Year Award. The award will be given to a single club annually that best demonstrates (and documents) all of the awesomeness that homebrew clubs can wreak.

2. Members

Drew Beechum (Chair), John Blichmann (Blichmann Engineering), Fred Bonjour Martin Brungard (newly elected GC member, just added), Denny Conn, Justin Crossley, Melody Meyer (Hop Union), Ron Price, Jeff Rankert (newly elected GC

member, just added), Roxanne Westendorf, Kim Wood (newly elected GC member, just added)

3. Overview

The primary challenge of this inaugural year of the award has been to set parameters around the competition and get the word of the award out to the clubs. By the time of the application deadline, we had twenty-five clubs fill out forms and provide testimonials to their club year.

4. Accomplishments

1. Announced the award in June of last year.
2. Began accepting entries in the fall of 2013.
3. Judging panel decided in January
4. Deadline of 3/31 for Radegast submissions.
5. Design of the judging criteria finished in March
6. Judges to determine winner by end of April

5. Challenges

Promoting the award originally got crossed with the end of the COC program leading to grumbly moments. Additionally, there was a rumor started at the last convention that this was a “anti-BN” award that had to be squashed. Biggest challenge though was still promoting and generating entries. We’re very pleased to start with 25 entries.

Next big challenge is making sure that we keep the judging pool fresh and full of folks who’s clubs aren’t applying for the award. (To this end, Drew has recused himself of all judging duties and is acting as a competition organizer.)

6. Next Steps and Goals for 2014/2015

Finish the judging, see who wins and figure out where to go from here. Some concerns that we have to address.

1. During last years member’s meeting, concern was expressed that smaller clubs wouldn’t have footing on which to compete with the more member stuffed clubs. This year’s judging instructions included a reminder to the judges to weight things differently. If it appears to be a problem, we’ll want to include size data, figure out a weighting strategy or potentially create a separate category (ala Brewpub of the Year / Brewery of the Year at GABF)
2. Need to tabulate the data/events gleaned from the reports and use it for further club education.

7. Conclusions/Parting Thoughts

I’m glad to see us shepherding the next in what hopefully grows to a trend of recognizing and promoting clubs and brewers for things other than their ability to compete!

Club Support Subcommittee

The mission of the AHA Club Committee is to provide the AHA with ideas and advice to support and enhance current and potential AHA recognized homebrew clubs.

Members: Justin Crossley & *Curt Stock* (Co-Chairs), Drew Beechum, Fred Bonjour, Roxanne Westendorf and *Stuart West*

Overview: As with the 2012 – 13 year, sub-committee activity has been minimal throughout the 2013 – 14 year due to most club needs being currently met. All activity has taken place on the AHA forum and via email inquiries from existing and prospective clubs. In such cases, answers were typically delivered quickly and accurately by Janis Gross. There were only two such email correspondences that the sub-committee is aware of.

For the most part, club inquiries from AHA members are asked and discussed in the “Homebrew Clubs” sub- topic in the AHA Forum and self-regulated by the community there. This, in addition to direct email inquiries to Janis and the committee, seems to be efficient and prudent given the large number of members continuing to utilize the forum and share information. Topics there are diverse, but mostly include members seeking out clubs in their local areas.

Accomplishments: Accomplishments were made in the form of direct answers to questions from current and prospective members. No problems left unsolved.

We were tasked in 2012 -13 to evaluate whether or not to create a forum “sticky” in the “Homebrew Clubs” topic outlining common steps and advice to creating a homebrew club. Based on a revue of email questions and forum topics throughout the year, it does not seem necessary at this time to spend resources on developing such a topic. Many of the recurring issues are of a different nature and seem of greater priority.

Challenges (faced by clubs, for us to be aware of and look to assist with): The recurring challenges faced by clubs based on forum input, direct emails and general discussion remain more of a legal nature than anything else. These include:

- **Meeting Places for Clubs:** As the hobby grows in all areas, so does the size of many clubs. As this happens they move from houses to commercial locations as meeting places and face legal challenges (state by state) with

regards to liquor laws. This is indicated in several forum posts from several states with clubs looking for common answers to such challenges.

- Liability Insurance: There is still a common question among clubs in how to address liability insurance for meetings, events, etc. Coupled with fast growth and evolving alcohol laws as described above, clubs are increasingly concerned about liability. There is a forum thread around this topic but it has not been updated since 2011, possibly due to a lack of new information on the subject.
- Finding Local Clubs: Based on the large number of forum topics asking if there are any clubs in an individual's area it appears that the "Find a Club" feature on the AHA website is being under-utilized. A simple fix for this is to add a "sticky" topic to the top of the clubs forum linking to the "Find a Club" page.

Next Steps, Recommendations and Goals

- One of our sub-committee members, Roxanne Wesetendorf, identified an educational problem in competition that could be addressed at the club level. It seems that many "non-standard" beers were entered incorrectly. Some guidance to clubs on how to educate their members on proper entry could help alleviate the problem and keep brewers from being disqualified for mis-entry.
- Continue to work with Gary Glass and the AHA to generate current and future answers to legal questions clubs have with regard to meetings and homebrew outside of the home.
- Add forum "sticky" linking to "Find a Club" page. Needs to be completed by a forum admin with ability to make post permanent on top of page (i.e. sticky).
Status = Complete