

2014 BJCP Members Meeting Notes

AHA NHC, Grand Rapids, MI

Mike Dixon

Communications Director

Gordon Strong started the meeting by mentioning the Annual Report which can be found on the website.

The Style Guideline update will be out for review in the next week or so and that he had presented an overview of the updates in one of the conference seminars. The exam questions will need to be updated and the Exam Directorate will call upon the graders for assistance with updating the question pool.

The website is being updated and the BJCP Forums were migrated to the new host earlier this year. After the conference the data driven portions of the website will be moved to the new host. The content for the new website will be driven by WordPress and will incorporate a new look and theme which should go live in July/August. Having the site in WordPress will allow several people to manage the content.

After the members meeting in Philadelphia an effort was taken to create more push communications and Jeff Sanders was added as Assistant Communication Director to create and distribute the newsletter as well as determine the best provider to use for the email client. Comments regarding the newsletter and comment are welcomed.

Introductions of Regional Directors and Staff followed.

Special recognition was given to Susan Ruud as she retires as Assistant Exam Director. Susan held the position from 2008 until this year and is opening her meadery, Prairie Rose Meadery.

Two notable promotions were mentioned, Frank Barickman and Brian Joas recently advanced to Grand Master II and they were presented with their pins.

Next the floor was opened to comments.

*What is being done to reduce the turnaround time on tasting exams?

Gordon mentioned we are working to reduce the RTP complexity and held grader training at the NHC. Frank Barickman discussed the agreement with the AHA to use Dropbox to eliminate mailings from the EDs to the graders. AWOL graders still continue to be something which is out of our control.

Gordon also mentioned the Exam Directorate has expanded with additions and has shifted responsibilities of some staff. The Mead & Cider exams will be moved to an online entrance format followed by a tasting portion.

*Does the checkbox score sheet save time and does it affect scores by suggesting things which are not present?

Gordon indicated no study had been done to determine if there are variances between the traditional sheet and the checkbox score sheet. Competitions are free to use any format they choose, but we prefer entrants be notified which sheet will be utilized.

*Will there be grader guidelines for the written exam similar to what is available for the tasting exam?

The EDs will look at possibly implementing a grader guide.

*Please discuss international growth in the program.

South America – eager group, uses the guidelines as a handbook for brewing. Australia – more or less self-sustaining and closing in on as many judges in OZ as in CAN. South Africa – also self-sustaining.

We now have the entrance exam offered in both Spanish and Portuguese. Translations are difficult and time consuming since some words are not easily translated.

*Can we have punitive action for judges who sign up to judge and no show?

Gordon mentioned we had a committee in the past, but the focused more on punitive action than on encouragement to change. We can set up a Judge Ethics committee and solicit member opinions and inclusion on the committee. The Judge Procedures Manual could be updated and a Code of Conduct could be established.

*What is the Mead Exam online format timeline?

Steve Piatz is working on it but no exact timeline has been provided. There are already several thousand questions prepared so it may finish later this year.

*For the Cider Exam will there be a syllabus and study guide?

Bruce Buerger indicated they are working on question for the online exam and materials should be produced once that process is complete. A trial cider tasting exam was given during the conference and is going through the exam process and grading to ensure we are prepared to give a cider tasting exam similar to the beer tasting exam.

*Can we create a Steward rank structure?

This was discussed several years ago and deferred at the time, but there is some prior material which can be reviewed. Gordon promised to have the Board discuss to determine if it merits allocating resources.

*Can we use Dropbox to send the scanned exams to the EDs and save time?

If the exam scan quality is such it meets the criteria set by the EDs it may be possible. That would be the EDs call.

Gordon concluded by mentioning the Style Guidelines will be published in approximately two weeks and the forums opened up to comments from the members. Really looking for factual errors, misspellings, and pointed specific comments. Gordon's presentation on the styles was videotaped by Chip Walton of Chop & Brew and he will provide the presentation and video for viewing later next week.

Randy Scorby discussed the new structure for the Siebel kits. He also discussed grader training which will ultimately be available in each region.

Mike Dixon suggested anyone interested in providing newsletter content should contact Jeff Sanders. Jeff is welcome to articles and input.

Don Blake made a plea for additional graders for the next few month since the grader calendar is not full.

Ryan Thomas reminded everyone there is grant money available from the BJCP and the information is on the website.