

QUAFF Wins AHA Homebrew Club of the Year for 2001

QUAFF Members Steamroll through AHA Second Round

Going into the Grand Banquet of the American Homebrewers Association's National Homebrew Conference on Saturday, June 23, the 25 attending QUAFF members were anxious and excited. With the final round results of the AHA's National Homebrew Competition tallied, but unannounced and carefully guarded, QUAFF held a slim 4-point lead over the Brew Rats homebrew cyber-club, 30 points over the Urban Knives of Grain of Illinois, and 70 points over the Kansas City Bier Meisters. (All other clubs had been mathematically eliminated after the first round.)

But starting with the announcement of the first category, QUAFF started adding on to their point total, never giving up the lead. Still, we didn't clinch our win until the final eight category results were announced. Here are the second-round medals awarded (in the order of their announcement).

Randall Barnes	1. American Lager	Gold Medal
Joe Buchan	4. Bitter and English Pale Ale	Bronze Medal
Antoinette Hodges	7. India Pale Ale	Silver Medal
Mark Densel	11. English/Scottish Strong Ale	Silver Medal
Greg & Liz Lorton	13. European Dark Lager	Gold Medal
Richard McLaughlin	16. Stout	Silver Medal
Mark Alfaro	16. Stout	Gold Medal
Peter Zien & Harold Gulbransen	22. Spice/Herb/Vegetable Beer	Silver Medal
Peter Zien	23. Smoke-Flavored Beer	Bronze Medal
Tyce Heldenbrand	24. Specialty/Historical Beer	Silver Medal
Mark Densel	25. Traditional Mead	Silver Medal
Greg & Liz Lorton	25. Traditional Mead	Gold Medal
Chris Toth	26. Fruit Mead	Bronze Medal

In summary, 11 members won 13 medals for QUAFF. With six points for gold, three points for silver, and one point for bronze, QUAFF added 45 points to their total. At the same time, the Brew Rats collected 6 points on two silver medals, the Urban Knives of Grain collected 4 points on four bronze medals, and the Kansas City Bier Meisters collected 16 points on two golds, a silver, and a bronze. The final point totals were:

QUAFF	177 points
Brew Rats	134 points
Urban Knives of Grain	106 points
Kansas City Bier Meisters	78 points

QUAFF destroyed the previous record total of 135 points by any club in the AHA Homebrew Club of the Year contest, earned last year by the Kansas City Bier Meisters. This year, we also destroyed the previous QUAFF records of four medals collected by four members in the final round, and one gold medal.

How QUAFF Earned 177 Points

Club Only Competitions	
Harold Gulbransen (third in Best of Big Brew)	1
Greg & Liz Lorton (third in Dunkelmania)	1
Club-Only Total	2
AHA NHC First Round	
Harold Gulbransen (1 first, 4 seconds, 1 third)	19
Peter Zien (2 first, 4 thirds)	16
Tyce Heldenbrand (1 first, 1 second, 1 third)	10
Randy Barnes (1 first, 1 second)	9
Mark Densel (1 first, 1 second)	9
Chuck West (1 first, 1 second)	9
Jon Peterson (3 seconds)	9
Joe Buchan (1 first)	6
Mark Alfaro (1 first)	6
Dion Hollenbeck (1 first)	6
Chris Toth (1 first)	6
Pat McIlhenney (2 seconds)	6
Greg & Liz Lorton (1 second, 3 thirds)	6
Loren Miraglia (1 second)	3
Cher Cunningham (1 second)	3
Horace Bixby (3 thirds)	3
Antoinette Hodges (1 third)	1
Richard McLaughlin (1 third)	1
Jim Weiner (1 third)	1
Dana Edgell (1 third)	1
First-Round Total	130
AHA NHC Final Round	
Greg & Liz Lorton (2 firsts)	12
Randy Barnes (1 first)	6
Mark Alfaro (1 first)	6
Mark Densel (2 seconds)	6
Antoinette Hodges (1 second)	3
Richard McLaughlin (1 second)	3
Tyce Heldenbrand (1 second)	3
Peter Zien (½ a second, 1 third)	2.5
Harold Gulbransen (½ a second)	1.5
Joe Buchan (1 third)	1
Chris Toth (1 third)	1
Final Round Total	45
Total	177

From the National Homebrew Competition Coordinator

Congratulate the rest of the club for me, no one can say you guys didn't earn it... I don't know if your performance in the second round will ever be repeated!

Cheers
Gary Glass

American Homebrewers Association

---Some Quotes---

70 members? No kidding! Damn, you dudes really do rule!"

Jeff "Metal" Mila, Brew Rat

It was a great conference and I'm glad QUAFF had such a large contingency at the Awards Ceremony--it made it a lot of fun for me to be able to announce the awards you guys won. It was great to see Antoinette win the Siebel Scholarship too. She seemed pretty excited.

Gary Glass, AHA

Okay, Fair enough, Peter gets blue hair, Tyce gets liberty spikes, and Mark Alfaro gets a nose ring. :-)

Gary Glass, AHA (about altering our club photo)

Do you guys have a chance at winning the Homebrew Club of the Year?

Dave Dixon, Cowtown Cappers (Texas) brew club
(to Peter halfway through the Awards Ceremony)

Congratulations to QUAFF for taking homebrew club of the year you kicked ASS@!#\$!\$^@!\$!

Steve Casselman, AHA Conference Organizer

...a hearty congrats again to your club for your outstanding accomplishment at the Nats last weekend! Truly astounding! A well deserved win. You have raised the bar for us all."

Joe Formanek, Urban Knives of Grain

Yes, this ranks as a night to remember. Hell, I thought that it would be really tough to top the Anchor party, but I think we did it!

Randy "Randal" Barnes, Infamous QUAFFster

Congratulations on your personal awards and on QUAFF getting the homebrew club of the year honors. You certainly deserved it.

John Aitchison, Maltose Falcons

Again, congratulations on your club's success in the NHC Finals. I was glad to see a local club win, especially one with such a great bunch of brewers.

Kevin Koenig, Pacific Gravity

A Total Club Effort

by Peter Zien

As we revel in the promised land of homebrewing heaven, it is important to recognize that the entire club is responsible for making QUAFF the AHA National Homebrew Club of the Year. The first and second round points in the AHA competition were no doubt important, but there are many other ways that members have helped the club throughout our championship year. I have overheard a few people say things such as "I didn't do anything" or "my beers didn't win anything". Maybe so, but every QUAFF member has contributed in one way or another to help the club achieve this award.

The simple act of attending a club meeting contributed to the cause. A club is only as strong as its membership, and if no one attended the meetings then we'd hardly be a club. Attending the events, parties, and numerous other club activities helped make those events successful and generate club enthusiasm. Have you ever helped a fellow QUAFFer with a brewing problem or a beer recipe? If so, then you have contributed to raising the quality standards of our brewing membership as a whole. Sharing a homebrew at the monthly meeting is another good way of contributing to the success of our club. Perhaps your homebrew sparked some interest in other members who appreciated it and went on to brew the style. The more diverse and knowledgeable that our membership became, the closer we inched as a group to the coveted titles that we have received recently.

Those of you who participated in the first round of the AHA National Homebrew Competition are to be commended for entering the largest and most competitive contest in the world. It was very hard to place in the first round and advance to the second round with the current level of competition. If you were fortunate enough to advance, congratulations on a job well-done. However, many QUAFF entries did not advance to the second round (182 to be exact!). These beers were equally important to QUAFF reaching the ultimate goal of accumulating points towards the title of Homebrew Club of the Year. By having multiple QUAFF entries in single categories, we increased the odds of a QUAFF entry placing. Many quality QUAFF entries were sacrificed, as the judges mentally ranked the entries in their categories. If a QUAFF entry ranked higher than a non-QUAFF entry, then it aided in establishing a QUAFF beer at or near the top. Unfortunately, everyone cannot win. But rest assured, your entry was important to QUAFF whether it earned points by placing or not.

Additionally, the "old guard" (QUAFF members since the early 1990's and before) had an important role in putting the "Quality" in QUAFF. Their instruction, encouragement, and quality brewed beer was a continuous lesson to the rest of us on how to conduct a good homebrew club and brew quality beer. Frequently, a recipe is shared or a brewing trick explained that many in the club find beneficial to their brewing. The example set by the earliest generations of QUAFF members provided the club with the blueprint for success that we currently employ. In a natural progression, we are standing on the shoulders of those before us who set the standards for conducting a well-organized and quality-minded homebrew club.

By now, you see what I am getting at. We are all responsible for QUAFF being the Homebrew Club of the Year. Every QUAFF member has lent his or her unique perspective on brewing to the club. Our talent for brewing, commitment to the hobby, and belief that we're the best all combined to create a powerful force in the homebrewing community that future clubs will strive to emulate. Congratulations to all for making the dream of AHA National Homebrew Club of the Year a reality. Long live QUAFF and homebrewing - we've reached the top of the mountain. Enjoy the view!

Greg and Liz Lorton Tie for Ninkasi Cup; Lose on Tie-breaker

by Peter Zien

In a major achievement, Greg and Liz Lorton vied for winning one of the most coveted individual distinctions at the 2001 AHA Homebrewers Conference. The Ninkasi Cup recognizes the brewer or brewing team that accumulates the most points in the AHA second round of the National Homebrew Competition. Their 2 gold medals in the AHA second round put them in a tie with 12 second-round points. In a night full of memorable achievements, Greg and Liz's shot at the Ninkasi Cup kept us on the edge of our seats until they lost the tie-break at the end of the evening. (Brian Cole of North Carolina won the title.) The tie-break system apparently reverted to the first round point totals. Greg and Liz didn't seem to mind though, as they were consoled by a gold medal around each of their necks. Congratulations to QUAFF's premier brewing team!