



# The BJCP Reporter

Issue Number 4

October, 1998

## New Board Members Elected

Please welcome some new faces to the BJCP Board of Directors. Our by-laws call for directors to be elected on a rotating basis every two years, and this was one of those years.

Bill Slack, the newly elected representative from the Northeast, has assumed the role of President (or maybe that should be Chief Justice?). He succeeds Bob Gorman in this region. Dennis Davison will remain as Midwestern representative on the board as well as Treasurer, so we'll have good continuity there.

Alan Moen replaced Darryl Richman in the Mountain/Northwest region. Alan will also serve as Secretary of the Board, so don't forget to send him hops on Secretary's Day.

Steve Moore took over in the Gulf Coast region from Steve Daniel.

Scott Birdwell hopes to build on the momentum Tom Fitzpatrick built up on the Competition Committee.

The full roster of elected and appointed BJCP officers appears on page 7.



"I am as sober as a judge."

— Henry Fielding

*Don Quixote in England (1734)*

*Act III, scene xiv*



## JudgeNet Is Back Help us grow!

After a prolonged absence due to a server failure and transition to a new operating system, the original JudgeNet is back online.

JudgeNet is a public digest for the discussion of topics of interest to beer competition judges and organizers. JudgeNet is moderated by BJCP master beer judge Chuck Cox ([chuck@synchro.com](mailto:chuck@synchro.com)) and is sponsored by SynchroSystems.

To subscribe to JudgeNet, send a message to

[mailserver@synchro.com](mailto:mailserver@synchro.com)

The body of the message should contain the following on a line by itself:

subscribe judge

You'll receive a welcome message with all the details about how to post messages, etc.

JudgeNet is similar to the well-known HomeBrew Digest. If you've never experienced this kind of electronic forum, here's how it works:

You send a message by e-mail.

The next day, you'll receive an e-mail message that contains all the postings made by all subscribers since the last digest went out. It's a very efficient system, and we're all very grateful to Chuck Cox for providing this service to beer judges.

For those of us who like to keep track of such things, the BJCP is still on a steady growth track. 2,147 of us are receiving this newsletter.

But as anyone who has entered a competition and received a poorly executed score sheet will be happy to tell us (at great length), we still have far too few qualified and experienced judges for the number of competition entries available.

Why not schedule a presentation at your next homebrew club meeting? You could devote 20 or 30 minutes to explaining how to really fill out a first class scoresheet. Chances are, there will be so much input from those present that you'll run closer to an hour at it. But mainly, you'll be generating interest that might lead to some of those brewers becoming judges.

Another good technique is to try some flavor identification experiments. Take two identical pitchers of beer, but add something to one of them to get an off flavor. One good possibility is some light-struck ("skunky") beer. Go easy on whatever you add; you want the effect to be very subtle. That way, you can talk about how everyone has a different threshold for perceiving different flavors and aromas.

The important thing is to show your friends that beer judging is fun, interesting, and worthwhile.



## In Memoriam

With great regret, we report the untimely deaths of two BJCP judges. **Sheldon Jackson**, a BJCP Certified judge, died in August. He was quite active in the program in Nevada and Southern California and was a BJCP proctor in 1996.

**Mark Johnston**, a BJCP National judge, was killed in an automobile accident in July. He was also a beer writer, and a BJCP exam grader.

Please pass the information in this newsletter on to your friends, fellow club members, local suppliers, and anyone else you think might be interested in beer judging. Consider making a photocopy or two.

## Judge Not? A Modest Proposal

**H**aving judged at homebrew competitions for the past seven years, I've noticed one thing that makes me increasingly uncomfortable.

As homebrewers move up in the judging ranks, many stop entering competitions. Worse yet, they stop brewing altogether. Instead of making better beers available to the homebrewing community, some of these individuals seem to have pulled out of the competition process, while still emerging from time to time to accumulate points by evaluating the efforts of others.

That's a shame, in my opinion. There are undoubtedly many reasons for this apparent phenomenon: first of all, life seems to get more complicated as we get older, with less time for our hobbies. And, with all the paperwork, deadlines, packing and shipping involved in entering homebrew competitions, it often seems to take more time than we have available. In addition, if you keg nearly all your beer, as I do, you just might not be able to grab (or fill) three bottles at any given time and send them off.

But I suspect that there might be another reason for this that is a little harder to excuse: namely, that we have created a kind of caste system in the BJCP which allows those who may no longer brew or enter competitions to forever pass judgment on

those who do. These exalted individuals seem to show up at every major contest, regardless of their own involvement in brewing. Strangely, nobody seems to question the opinions of persons who are unwilling to put their own beers on the table for evaluation by their peers.

Even at best, this is an unfair system. I think that All BJCP judges, regardless of rank, should have to enter a minimum number of sanctioned competitions- say two each year- to retain their status as judges.

I have the utmost respect for notable beer gurus, like George Fix and Byron Burch, who continue to do this. The only exceptions allowed should be for professional brewers, those in the homebrew trade, or writers and critics (I'm not trying to get myself off the hook, by the way - I still entered some competitions last year and have no intention of stopping now.)

### judge and be judged - or judge not!

A change in BJCP policy to this effect would produce some positive results. First of all, it would weed out those in the organization whose involvement might be, shall we say, less than beneficial to homebrewing. Secondly, it would encourage fairer judging, since everyone's beer would have to run the same scoresheet

gauntlet. Third, it would provide far more entries for competitions, since judges would not be able to abstain from the process. And finally, it should (hopefully) provide much better beer for BJCP- sanctioned contests as well.

I think these last two points are particularly important. Although homebrew competitions such as the NHC seem to be increasing in size each year, I've noticed a decline recently in many local and regional ones. Hopefully this change in BJCP policy would help keep the spirit of competition alive to a greater degree, and improve participation in these events from the very people who have already become involved and have learned to make better beer. In other words, judge and be judged - or judge not!

Obviously, this is only my opinion. As I understand it, the question of whether judges ought to enter their own brews to retain their judging credentials has been raised before, without being resolved. It would probably involve more effort on the part of both judges and the BJCP to monitor such a policy, should it be put into effect. Still I believe, for the reasons I have given, that the benefits to BJCP members from this change would outweigh any significant liabilities.

So isn't it about time to revise the current "no entry required" policy? I welcome the comments of other BJCP judges on this matter.

Alan Moen

Northwest/Mountain Rep



## How do I ...

### Raise my score to earn a higher BJCP rank?

All you have to do is take the BJCP exam again. It will be very similar to the one you've already taken, and you probably know more now than you did then.

The good news is that it only costs \$30 to take the exam again, instead of the \$50 you paid the first time.

The even better news is that the official BJCP exam study guide has been revised and expanded.

### Find out when the next exam is in my area?

Here are three good ways:

- Check the BJCP web site.
- Ask your regional rep.
- Contact the homebrew clubs nearby; most exams are scheduled by clubs.

Exams aren't scheduled as often as some people would like, but more often than others (the graders) would like. It's a difficult balancing act.

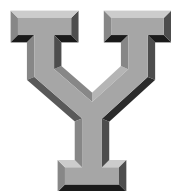
Grading exams is a lot of work, and we're all volunteers here. In practice though, most areas have an exam scheduled within a reasonable driving distance at least once a year.

### Know what to study to prepare for the exam?

You should have a good knowledge of styles and brewing techniques. The BJCP Study Guide helps a lot. It also helps to be familiar with a wide range of commercial examples of various styles. Not familiar with a particular style? Try to serve as a competition steward for judges who know that style. Most judges are happy to let their steward taste along with them, and you can learn a lot by simply listening to their comments.



## Representative Government and the BJCP



You probably know that a few years ago the BJCP reorganized itself as an independent body, run by and for beer judges, for the improvement of brewing and judging. You may also have noticed that the various BJCP publications contain lists of regional representatives. Here's what we're about.

The bylaws of the BJCP break North America down into seven regions. Each region elects a judge from that region every other year to represent them for two years on the BJCP's Board of Directors. Only three or four Directors are up for election in any given year, in the interests of continuity.

The Board sets policy and conducts the legal business of our corporation, but a major function of a regional representative is to serve as liaison between the Board he's a member of and the judges in his region.

Any judge can at any time submit comments or a proposal directly to the whole Board, but most folks seem to find it simpler to deal instead with their regional representative, someone they may know and may see at competitions.

## How do I ...

### Get an updated copy of the BJCP Study Guide or Style Guide?

They're both available on the BJCP web site.

### Schedule an exam in my area?

Contact the appropriate exam co-director. Scott handles them west of the Mississippi, and Jay works the east side. Send an e-mail to exam\_director@bjcp.org to reach both of them at once, and the appropriate one will respond.

We're not that hard to get in touch with. Our contact information is on page 7 in this newsletter, for example.

Many of us feel that the judges in our region are too quiet, most of the time.

If you have a BJCP problem of some sort, we just may be able to help you and would like the chance to try. If there's a change you'd like to see, or you have a suggestion that might help the program, drop a note to your regional rep.

Possibly the worst way to contact your rep is to buttonhole him at a contest. You'll probably only be one of many, and the chances of your well-considered proposal being

remembered to its advantage are not good at all.

It works much better to send him

an e-mail (which he can pass on to the whole Board) or write him a quick note. And please keep in mind that we're a volunteer organization, so it may take some time to get an answer, and the answer may not be what you wish. On the other hand, it just might -- all the suggestions of real value we've enacted since the program's reorganization came from judges.

If the BJCP is really to be your organization, we need to know what you're thinking! So drop us a note. Please.



*Martin Lodahl  
Western Rep*

### Correct errors in my BJCP record?

If your record is missing some experience points, or your BJCP rank is wrong, contact the Program Administrator. If the error can be verified, the correction will appear on your next printout.

### Change my mailing address?

Again, contact the Program Administrator. Russ appreciates receiving these changes, because the Postal Service charges us at least 32 cents extra when your BJCP mail has to be forwarded to your new address.



## Keep in touch

The BJCP is here to help, but no matter how good our representatives are, they can't do what we want unless we tell them. Use the contact information on page 7 of this newsletter, or check the latest information on the BJCP web site.

**BJCP Web site:**

**<http://www.bjcp.org/>**

You can also get the phone numbers of some key individuals, or leave a voice mail message for them by calling the BJCP Hot Line. This number also lets you leave a general voice mail message, if you're not sure exactly who the information should go to.

**BJCP Hot Line:  
414-299-9145**

"How dreadful it is when the right judge judges wrong!"

– Sophocles

*Antigone (c. 442 BCE)*

*Act I, 323*

## What's on the web?

The BJCP web site is an especially useful source of information. If you have access to the web, this is probably your best bet for getting the answer to any questions you may have about the program.

Web sites tend to be dynamic, but the last time I looked at it, here's what I found:

- list of the regional reps
- complete BJCP by-laws
- schedule of upcoming exams
- list of sanctioned competitions
- exam program guide
- competition program guide
- online competition registration form
- current official style guidelines
- new 1998 scoresheet
- complete exam study guide





## Letters

On 1 September, the position of President and Chairman of the BJCP Board of Directors passed from Dennis Davison to myself. On this occasion I want to make public note of the substantial contribution Dennis has made to the program by stepping up and taking over this important responsibility at a critical time in the program's history. By giving his time and energies he has added to the stability and strength of the BJCP and we all are in his debt for this.

In addition to being President, Dennis was also the BJCP Representative for the Midwest, the BJCP Treasurer and the webmaster of the BJCP home page. Happily for us, he continues in these last three positions.

Thanks again, Dennis.

*Bill Slack*

*President and Northeast Representative*



Beer judging needs to come of age. Three important criteria have already been met.

1. The level of judging skill has reached a point where greater maturity is possible.

2. The general quality of entries, be they AHA, GABF, or WBC, is sufficient to the need for higher standards. 3. The objective criteria for making awards have been refined.

But one area continues to lag. Competition organizers (and sometimes judges) still tend to apply an amalgam of sometimes inadequately focused subjective criteria when actually ranking beers and making awards.

For example, who hasn't sat on a judging panel and felt the "need" to fill all available award categories. This felt need is seldom articulated and even more rarely counterbalanced by cautionary words from competition organizers. In fact, competition organizers sometimes impose conditions which favor filling award categories. This tendency can, in some cases, invite judges to nudge a questionable entry into a slot it doesn't merit.

Case in point: GABF judging panels who find they may not fill all

their medal slots are told to summon competition organizers who will "sit in" on final deliberations. The stated reason for this is to give the organizers means to fend off questions from disappointed entrants.

But the actual exercise of summoning outside observers tends to clearly, I think, notify the judges that, all things being equal, it would be better if all three medals were awarded. One can ask, of course, why competition organizers would bother "explaining" themselves and the judging to disappointed brewers but that's another matter.

Is the practice of routinely filling award categories good for brewing? I contend it is not. To the extent possible it is the goal of a competition to serve brewing first. To me this means to give a brewer accurate ranking and useful feedback. And it means giving consumers quality indicators which are reliable. When a borderline beer is tarted up to make it presentable enough for an award, these goals are subverted.

Do BJCP judges find this issue worth discussing? I'm sure there are opinions and stories out there which would be helpful.

*Hubert Smith*

*National Judge*



I have developed an algorithm which I submit for consideration. I don't know if it is possible to code an algorithm like this in the latest Filemaker Pro (which the BJCP uses for its judge records), but judge names and rank could be easily exported from the DB and sent to competition organizers in a generic format, or input by the organizer. If someone wants to take a crack at coding this (preferably in either a widely available application, or as freeware the BJCP could redistribute) it would help out a lot of organizers wrestling with how to steer clear of conflict of interest (i.e. can't judge a category you're in) problems, and make good pairings that try to accommodate judge's preferences and match experienced judges with less

experienced ones so the latter can learn.

The assumption here is that judges have specified preference based on their skills. It becomes very difficult to maintain some grand database of knowledge about what categories judges are skilled at, and of course such a rating becomes controversial (who gets to decide what categories a given judge is good at?). Therefore the registration forms the judges fill out should specify the judge be honest about their preferences with regard to experience.

The following algorithm isn't perfect, but I believe it goes a good way towards putting at least one experienced judge in each category on the first pass of the category for loop, then with continued passes, touching each category once on each pass, to assign successively less experienced judges to the categories until all judges are included. By randomizing the order of the category list (something I haven't done in this implementation) you can also ensure that the highest ranked judges don't always get, say, pale ale.

*Jay Hersh*

*Exam Co-Director*

*Ed Note: Please see the box on the next page for Jay's algorithm.*



This is a brief excerpt from a letter I sent to the owners of Alaskan Brewing Company, thanking them for not only flying the proctor from Anchorage, but paying the exam fees for all 13 examinees. Yes, most were employees, but it was extremely generous and is the type of interaction I'd like to see more of.

*Scott Bickham*

*Exam Co-Director*

The BJCP would like to thank you for the unprecedented donation you have made to further the education of beer judges in your area. Please accept this letter as a receipt for your payment of \$520 in exam fees for the thirteen people who took the exam, plus \$290 for the round-trip airfare of the proctor, Shane Docherty.



### Jay's Competition Algorithm

```

For all judges
  for each category
    check entered status
    if judge is not entered in category
      if judge_pref = category
        add judge to tail of judgepreflist[cat]
      else
        add judge to tail of judgebackuplist[cat]
  for each category
    sort judgepreflist by experience points (highest first)
    sort judgebackuplist by experience points (highest first)
While count != numberofjudges
  pass = 0
  while pass != number_of_judges_needed_per_category
    for each category
      while stilljudgesinthiscategory (ie preflist or backuplist)
        if judgepreflist not empty
          nextjudge = head of judgepreflist
          judgefrom = pref
        else if judgebackuplist not empty
          nextjudge = head of judgebackuplist
          judgefrom = backup
        else nomorejudgesincategory report error
        if nextjudge not on alreadypulled list
          judge[pass][category] = nextjudge
          add nextjudge to alreadypulled list
          move head of list specified by judgefrom
    end for each category
    increment pass
  end pass while loop

```

## Have you organized a competition in the last two years?

**T**he most common question I get from judges in my region is, "Why haven't I received credit for judging in the xxxxx competition?"

I don't know why our region (the southeast) seems to be particularly afflicted with this problem, but it seems that there have been a number of competitions where the organizer did not get the information regarding judges back to the BJCP.

If you have organized a competition recently, be sure that you have wrapped up your duties as organizer by filing all of the proper reports.

If you have judged a competition where you do not believe you have received points, speak to the organizer to find out if he has done his job.

Updates generally may not include competitions for the 4 months leading up to the date they reach the judges.

I would suggest that judges give

the benefit of the doubt and not ask about any competition within the preceding 6 months.

If, however, you have judged in a competition more than 6 months prior to the most recent points update and have nothing on your record for that event, please get in touch with us so we can rectify the situation.

Finally, if you are going to be the organizer of a future competition, please be thorough and prompt in returning all reports for the competition. It will make things much easier for everyone involved.



Roman Davis  
Southeast Rep

### BJCP authors needed

The BJCP Reporter (this miserable rag you're reading) needs judges to share their feelings with their comrades. Ever wonder why we publish on such an erratic schedule? There simply hasn't been much in the way of contributions from people like you. The more we get, the more we can publish. That's a hint.

## Did you know?

Here are a few of the most commonly heard questions at the competitions I've been at lately. The answers are from the BJCP Competition Guide. See how many of them you could have answered for a new judge.

### How many points will I get for judging?

Judges earn 1/2 point per session, but:

- at least 1 point per competition
- at most 1 point per calendar day

### How many Best Of Show (BOS) judges are allowed?

It depends on the number of entries in the BOS round:

- From 5 to 15 beers: 3 BOS judges
- More than 15 beers: 5 BOS judges

### Does a BOS judge get more points than a regular judge?

You bet! A BOS judge earns an extra 1/2 point on top of judging points. Watch closely (but silently) while the BOS panel deliberates. This is a tough job, and each one is mentally juggling dozens of different parameters while evaluating the BOS candidates. They take it very seriously, and work hard at it.

### I did a lot to help out at our club's competition, and I was too busy to judge or steward. Can I get some credit for my work?

Absolutely! The Organizer can (and should) award Staff points to people who help make a competition work. Staff points go to such jobs as assistant organizer, head steward, registrar, cellar master, data entry, lunch caterer, and committee member. They're not judging points (for upgrade purposes) of course, but they are still BJCP points.



Judge not according to the appearance.

John 7:24

So that's why they made it only 3 points.

# The BJCP's Birth Revisited

by Patrick Baker

**F**ew people know the details about the start of the BJCP.

Where was the first exam? When was it given? How many people took it? Who was there?

You may know that the BJCP began in the mid-80s, and that it was jointly sponsored by the AHA (American Homebrewers Association) and the HWBTA (Home Wine & Beer Trade Association), although today it is completely independent.

For the record, and the benefit of BJCP history freaks, here's the story.

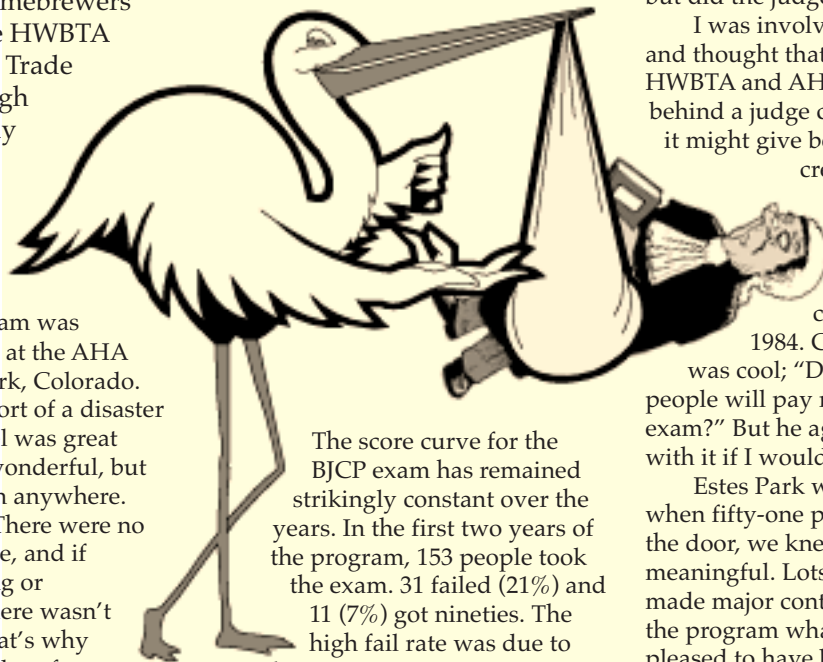
The first BJCP exam was given on May 31, 1985 at the AHA conference in Estes Park, Colorado. That conference was sort of a disaster for the AHA. The hotel was great and the scenery was wonderful, but it was a long way from anywhere. Attendance was low. There were no pubs around to explore, and if you weren't into hiking or mountain climbing, there wasn't much to do. Maybe that's why so many people signed up for the exam. The Estes Park exam was the biggest exam ever given by the BJCP. Fifty-one people took it!

The exam itself wasn't much different from those we give today. Obviously, there was no BJCP question, but the weighting between brewing and style questions was fifty-fifty, like it is today. Rather than ten equally weighted questions, there were twelve questions of varying weight. The type of question was what you are familiar with now; rather simple, allowing lots of room for demonstration of beer literacy and depth of knowledge.

For example, "Name two Trappist beers and describe the style." was worth five points. "List the AHA style categories and subcategories, and state two commercial examples of each subcategory." was worth 30 points.

You could say that trickiness started with the first exam. "What is the difference between a Märzen, Oktoberfest and a Vienna style beer?" The gist of the desired answer was "Not much."

People like to say that exams were easier in the old days. Not true! There were no 90s on the first exam, and nine takers failed.



The score curve for the BJCP exam has remained strikingly constant over the years. In the first two years of the program, 153 people took the exam. 31 failed (21%) and 11 (7%) got nineties. The high fail rate was due to

there being no study guide at the time. The high ninety rate was because many experienced brewers took the test. The first ten years of the program saw an average of 15% failures and 3% nineties on the exam.

Who was there at the first exam? Ted Whipple was first in the door. Ted lived in Newtown, Connecticut at the time and was a member of the Underground Brewers. He didn't get a 90 on the first exam, but he did later and became one of the early Master judges. Jim Homer was number two. Jim was a long time AHA stalwart, and served as the AHA Co-Director of the program for seven years.

A number of people who became commercial brewers are on the list for the first exam, including Terry Dennis, David Norton, John Maier, Roger Gribble, Marty Velas, Ron Downer, James Klisch, and Peter Caddoo. Dave Welker, long time organizer of the AHA National Homebrew Competition also took it.

Estes Park was the first exam, but how and when did the program get started? Lots of people have good ideas. I am sure I wasn't the only one in the early eighties to think that it would be nice to have "legitimate" judges to evaluate home brews and pronounce that they were good. We were having competitions and were putting commercial "ringers" in the flights. It was great when Guinness came in third behind two homebrews, but did the judges know anything?

I was involved with the HWBTA, and thought that perhaps if the HWBTA and AHA joined forces behind a judge certification program, it might give beer judging some

credibility. I wrote up a plan, and discussed the idea with Charlie Papazian at the AHA Mini-conference in October 1984. Charlie's response was cool; "Do you really think people will pay money to take an exam?" But he agreed to go along with it if I would do the work.

Estes Park was the next step and when fifty-one people came through the door, we knew we had something meaningful. Lots of people have made major contributions to make the program what it is today. I am pleased to have been involved at the start, and proud to see what we have all achieved.



*Patrick Baker lives in Westmoreland, NH. He was the HWBTA-appointed Co-Director of the BJCP from its start until August 1995. During his term as Co-Director, 2,034 people took the BJCP exam.*



# What's My Region?

Mountain/Northwest: Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan.

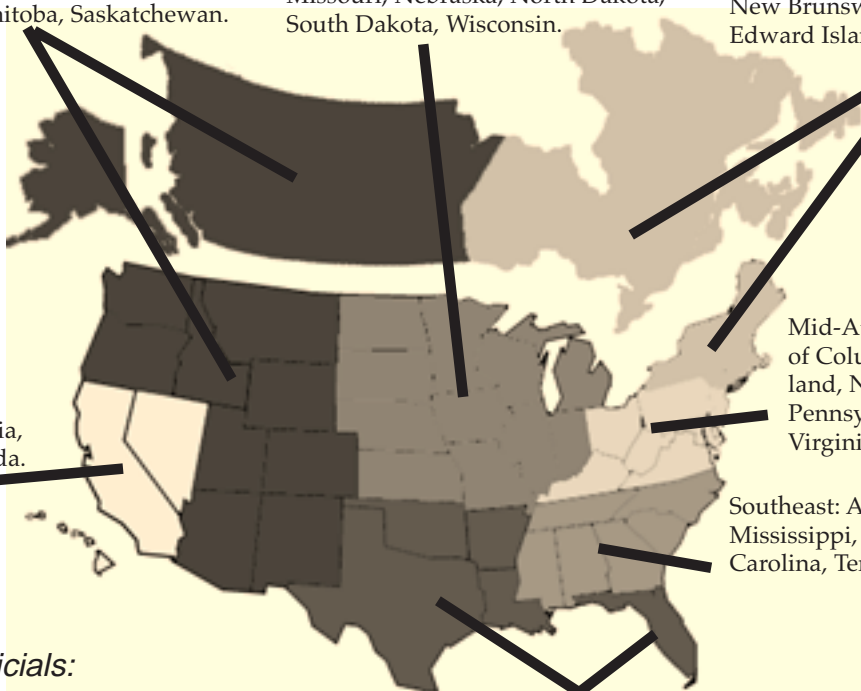
Midwest: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin.

Northeast: Connecticut, Maine, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, Ontario, Quebec, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island.

West: California, Hawaii, Nevada.

Mid-Atlantic: Delaware, District of Columbia, Kentucky, Maryland, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia.

Southeast: Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee.



Gulf Coast: Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas.

## Elected Officials:

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## The Homebrew Competition Identity Complex

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