

Participate in the 2012 NHC with your club

Written by Mark Emiley

Friday, 18 November 2011 10:11 - Last Updated Thursday, 01 December 2011 07:32

By now you should have heard the news, the next National Homebrewers Conference will be hosted in Washington state. If you or your members haven't attended a conference in the past, prepare to be overwhelmed by the camaraderie, information, and pure fun that occurs when over 1400 homebrewers get together. Our co-organizers, Mark Emiley and Tom Schmidlin have worked tirelessly (including changing state laws) to bring the conference to Washington and the Northwest. Now, we need the rest of the Northwest homebrew community to help us awe the rest of the country.

If you need a little background on the conference, you can read this article about the 2010 National Homebrewers Conference held in Cincinnati.

<http://www.wahomebrewers.org/news/304-2010-nhc-wrap-up>

Here are some of the ways you can get involved and be a part of the event:

- **Attend the conference!** You will get very few chances to attend a conference this close to home, so take advantage of the prime (at least to us) location. The full conference package was \$230 (plus the cost of your hotel room) this year, and should be similarly priced. That includes 3 days of lectures, access to the hospitality suite, Pro Brewers Night, Club Night and the Banquet. The conference **will** sell out, so be prepared to purchase your tickets early. Trust us, you will regret not attending a conference in your own backyard and it will be a while before it returns to the Northwest. There are cheaper packages available which include mainly social functions but the whole conference experience is something not to miss and is a great chance to expand your brewing knowledge.

- **Participate in Club Night!** Club Night is a beer festival where all the beer is made and poured by homebrewers. This year there were almost 50 different clubs (including 3 from Washington) pouring over 500 different beers. Booths vary from a very simple set-up (jockey box/bottles and sign) to incredible themed setups. Here are photos showing the BREW and GEBL themed booths:

- o GEBL: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/51840622@N03/5855877398/in/set-721576270106220>

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- o BREW: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/51840622@N03/5855353045/in/set-72157627010622016/>

Have your club prepared to serve at least 7-10 beers. The more, the merrier! Embrace your creativity and bring whatever off the wall projects you might have going on – what makes club night so great is the ideas you can gather from someone's prickly pear mead, or double vanilla peanut butter stout. For smaller clubs, we can arrange a shared booth. The WAHA booth will also serve as a home for clubless brewers that want to share their homebrew. Be creative and show off your skills! Mark and Alison Joy will be managing clubs for club night so you can get in touch with them with any questions, thoughts, or to let them know that your club is in! (AlibabaGrl@aol.com

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- **Host a shift in the Hospitality Suite with your club!** The hospitality suite is open to mingle with other homebrewers, visit sponsors booths, and quench your thirst with some homebrew. Hospitality shifts are assigned in 2-2.5 hour blocks to volunteer clubs. You'll "own" the bar and get a chance to slake the thirst of the crowd and show off your brewing prowess. If you are planning on hosting a shift, plan on kegs above and beyond ones brought for club night. This year WAHA poured over 60 gallons of beer in about 2 hours at our Thursday afternoon hospitality shift. For smaller clubs, we can arrange combined shifts with others in the area. Mark Tanner will be helping to manage the Hospitality Suite so you can get in touch with him with any questions or to request a slot for your club. (mbtanner@earthlink.net

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- **Volunteer!** In addition to the club areas, we'll need people to take time from their conference experience to help out in various areas:

- o Pouring beer during lectures
- o Answering questions and providing directions to attendees

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- o Transporting beer from the cellar
- o Acting as beer ambassadors on various tours
- o And many other critical jobs that help the conference function smoothly

We will be asking for volunteers as we get closer to the conference and need everyone to step up with just a little bit of their time.

- **Get brewing for homefield advantage in the National Homebrew Competition.** This is your best opportunity to excel in the Second Round of the National Homebrew Competition because you won't have to ship your beer across the country and will have the advantage of more "West Coast" palates who know and love your brewing style. Have your club members start practice brewing today or get working on those long term beers. Work on a brewing schedule as you get closer to the first round in April and have those beers in peak condition to rock the first round and blow away the second round competition!

We can't emphasize enough how enjoyable the conference experience is and encourage you to read more about it if you're not already convinced. Some of our experienced conference-goers can also provide more detail and could possibly be available to speak at one of your meetings. Clubs can help split up the load and make a great conference showing by forming a "NHC preparation" committee to work on a theme, coordinate beers, and come up with great ideas to represent your club and the Northwest at the conference.

Some links:

- Official conference site: <http://www.ahaconference.org/>

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- Official local planning committee site: <http://www.brewingwithbigfoot.com/>
- Dan Stillwell's conference pictures from 2011. Over 700 pictures of the fun had in San Diego: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/51840622@N03/sets/72157627010622016/>

We look forward to seeing you all at the conference. Once again, this is an event not to miss. Start planning early and get ready for a week of homebrewing fun!

Cheers,

WAHA Executive Board

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