

Tapping Your AHA Founding Board's Expertise: Zymurgy Live's Virtual Town Hall Questions Answered

On March 18, 2025, Gourmet Brewing host Doug Piper moderated this [Zymurgy Live](#) featuring your AHA founding board: Shawna Cormier, Chair; homebrew authority and Brewers Publications author Drew Beechum; BJCP Grand Master 11 beer judge Sandy Cockerham; former AHA director-turned-pro brewer Gary Glass; Tau Kappa Epsilon chief risk officer, BJCP judge, and homebrewer Greg Roskopf; and AHA executive director and board staff liaison Julia Herz.

This group was assembled to act as a transition committee to steward the AHA as it finds freedom as a new independent organization. Below are questions asked during the webinar.

The following questions were voiced during the webinar and were answered live—please see this episode of Zymurgy Live at [HomebrewersAssociation.org/zymurgy-live/town-hall-what-an-independent-aha-means-for-you/](https://homebrewersassociation.org/zymurgy-live/town-hall-what-an-independent-aha-means-for-you/) for replies to the following:

30:54

How does the AHA independence affect me, the home brewer? What is the impact I will feel? How can I support the AHA's efforts? Apologies for the narcissism!

32:31

What are plans for the future of Zymurgy magazine and its extensive digital archive? The magazine and archive are an important membership benefit to me--and I understand they are not cheap to provide. I hope that continuing access to the archive can be maintained even if the ongoing publication changes in view of other priorities.

34:27

Will rallies come back?

36:54

What's the last thing you brewed?

39:21

1) How can we attract a more diverse group of people to our club? 2) How are we going to get the next generation of homebrewers interested in the hobby? It seems like most of the next generation doesn't want to go out to socialize and drink alcohol?

42:14

When (hopefully) National HomeBrew Con returns, can y'all spread it out vs rotating it in the North, West Coast and East Coast as it has over the last 1.5 decades? Dallas/Ft Worth, Atlanta, Nashville, etc should all be viable options.

49:58

What are the Founding Board's priorities as the AHA becomes independent? How will you measure success?

48:13

Any possibility of expanding to include home distilling?

54:47

What is your view/outlook on the state of the homebrewing hobby today? Declining? Improving? What are actionable ways to make it better?

55:53

I realize that the first "A" is for American, but roughly how many international members are there? Are there any plans to harness them for diversity and growth purposes?

56:44

With the Hobby Distillation Ruling last July, how do you see distilling moving forward for at home use?

56:51

I have been to several HomeBrew Con's and they were great. But I'd love to see the AHA help organize state or regional, one or two day workshops to get communication/energy going again.

57:21

What kind of volunteer options are available? Thanks! 😊

57:36

Just wondering - How does the Brewers Association support this separation? I think I understand they don't want the AHA but are they OK with the AHA taking their funds and doing their own thing? Or do we lose our money that has been brought in by homebrewers but were really part of the BA.

59:50

How will the governing committee work? Will the governing committee members represent rank and file homebrewer's concerns and have a vote at the governing committee meetings? ...or are they advisory?

UNANSWERED DURING LIVE WEBINAR (Not enough time) - Answers provided post webinar are below:

Q: Is Lifetime Membership still offered? I don't see it on the Renew page.

A: Membership join options have been streamlined to facilitate a smooth transfer to the new AHA management structure. Lifetime memberships, as well as others, may

return in 2026. Regardless, anyone currently a lifetime member will still be supported by the AHA as a lifetime member.

Q: Do you have any thoughts about helping out local brick-and-mortar homebrew shops? We don't have one in Philadelphia anymore.

A: This is an important question. The AHA Founding Board needs to assess the opportunities and goals tied to retailers. Local Homebrew Supply Shops (LHBS) are essential to the AHA and homebrewing ecosystem. Examples of recent AHA support include: publishing the leading [Supply Shop directory](#); work to engage LHBS owners related to annual homebrew holidays that can boost their business, including Big Brew, Home Fermentation Day, and Learn To Homebrew Day; and the recent Retail Supply Shop Survey conducted in 2023. This survey's data was analyzed and shared with respondents. During the last Homebrew Con in San Diego, we also hosted an Industry Coalition Meeting designed to bring shop owners together to discuss challenges and opportunities. Shops are an important part of the future AHA and homebrewing.

Q: AHA Member Deals are almost nonexistent in my area. Are there any plans to work on expanding the reach of this program to provide a realistic member benefit?

A: In 2025, members can access an estimated 1,800 Member Deals, including nearly 20 online-only deals. In 2026, the AHA will assess the discounts with the potential to refresh, evolve, and apply new standards to currently offered deals. We realize this program has incredible potential to do more and improve.

Q: I attended the AHA rally Gary Glass ran at Kane Brewing in N.J. It was one of the highlights of my brewing experience. Are there plans to bring back the rallies?

A: Rallies are on the Founding Board's mind. We are currently discussing their place in AHA's future programming and events. Stay tuned!

Q: I've read that Millennial and Gen Z drinkers prefer NA or low-ABV drinks. Do you see more NA and low-ABV recipes being offered?

A: The AHA is a leader in information regarding NA beer and lifestyle beer recipes. See our [March/April 2024 issue of Zymurgy](#), which is devoted to this topic; the 2023 Homebrew Con seminar "[No Alcohol, No Problem](#)"; and the [2024 Zymurgy Live](#) with Meagen Anderson, entitled "Risks, Rewards and Recipes for Non-Alcohol Brewing" as recently available resources. Based on surveys, member communications, and marketplace events, we see the interest in NA and lower-ABV beverages increasing. That said, brewing NA beer is different from brewing beer with discernible alcohol and has unique safety issues. NA beer is a food product that is not as stable as fermented beer. Storage and shelf life are essential aspects of NA brewing, so safe NA brewing is critical. The AHA's resources on brewing these beverages will continue expanding in future years.

Q: Will lifetime members still exist, or do we need to re-join the new and independent AHA?

A: Anyone currently an AHA lifetime member remains a lifetime member and will retain the same account access and member record as other membership terms.

Q: Here in the Islands, we lost three of our major clubs during the pandemic, with members changing over to spirits and beverages, and adopting other hobbies. We are in the process of starting an Island-wide association of “fermenters,” not just beer brewers. We hope this brings back the enthusiasm and keeps our existing BJCP judges active, engaged, and current.

*A: COVID-19 had a significant impact on homebrew clubs. Some dissolved, some became more social, and some new clubs were formed. It is exciting to hear you are broadening the beverage reach of your new clubs. As you read Zymurgy, you may notice that AHA regularly provides recipes and resources beyond beer, mead, and cider. It is common for us to feature food fermentation and beverage alcohol recipes and content outside traditional styles. This also fits with the pending new AHA Vision shared with members (the comment period ended March 25, and now the Founding Board is evaluating member input). The new vision is drafted as follows: **“We celebrate, educate, and promote the art, science, and joy of fermentation, championing a united community of today and tomorrow’s homebrewers.”** We hope this attracts and retains a wider membership of people passionate about home fermentation.*

Q: What is the possibility of having regional representatives?

A: That is an exciting option for the future and is on the running list for the board to discuss. Please consider adding your name to the growing AHA volunteer leader list at HomebrewersAssociation.org/membership/volunteer-opportunities/

Q: Regarding declining AHA membership, there was a spike in homebrewing during the pandemic. Now that COVID is behind us, it is understandable that some folks didn’t stick with homebrewing, but how do today’s membership numbers compare to pre-COVID numbers?

A: AHA’s height of membership was 2016 to 2019, with an average of 46,000 members each of those years. In 2025, the AHA has 23,000 members. We need your help to increase AHA membership so we can do more and grow this fantastic community.