



BJCP Mountain/Northwest Region Representative Candidate Statement for:

Charles Simchick
Seattle, WA

The success of the BJCP as an organization depends largely on the volunteer contributions of its members. As with any volunteer effort, maintaining an appropriate level of motivation is critical for long-term support and satisfaction of the volunteers. To achieve this motivation, I believe that the value that the BJCP organization offers to its members must be obvious and substantial.

As BJCP representative for the Mountain/Northwest Region, I will work toward creating a culture of sustainable motivation for the members by advocating for initiatives that can improve transparency, communication, and feedback in any areas where our volunteer judges are most concerned. There are two specific topics which would capture my initial focus.

The fundamental feature of the BJCP is its advocacy and support of homebrew competitions, and specifically in providing high quality feedback to the competition entrants. As a BJCP judge however, value comes from the education and support toward growing your personal appreciation and understanding of beer styles, the characteristics associated with different ingredients and processes, and the improvements that will lead to exceptional beer.

Most current BJCP judges have probably participated in an educational workshop or course early in their career. But homebrew competitions throughout the year serve as regular opportunities to review and improve on these skills. In practice, many competitions struggle to find a sufficient number of qualified judges to support their goals. As a result, flight sizes tend to be larger, and even those judges with limited experience are being asked to mentor new, inexperienced judges. This increased workload distracts the experienced judges' efforts to improve their own skills. I believe that the BJCP can do more to ensure that these opportunities for self-education are not diluted.

Another area for improvement is in the support of BJCP examinees. I think we can all appreciate that there is a real burden to volunteer exam graders, and the BJCP has made significant improvements in the turn-around time and consistency of the grading process. But in its present form, the exam feedback provides only high-level guidance to improvement, and there is no effective mechanism for sharing the more specific and in-depth feedback that examinees are often interested in.

These are arguably the people that are most motivated and most likely to benefit from some added attention at this stage, since they are already primed for study and have demonstrated interest by their participation in the process. We need to give these judges the support to further encourage their participation with the BJCP, and critically, to avoid any discouragement resulting from the lack of effective feedback.

If elected, I will do my best to represent the interests of the Mountain / Northwest members and to advocate for their needs in all BJCP board discussions. I hope to provide effective representation, giving the members a clear voice, and transparency into the decisions which can affect their ongoing participation.