



# NEWS YOU CAN USE!

*Monthly Newsletter for the Red Earth Brewers*



## TWO-TIME MASTER HOMEBREWER CLUB OF THE YEAR

Red Earth Brewers closed out another incredible season by repeating as MHP Club of the Year, storming back from a seven-point deficit late in the

circuit. The finish capped a year-long team effort where depth, consistency, and big-stage performances all came together at the right time.

### A TRUE TEAM COMEBACK

All year, REB trailed the leaders by a slim but stubborn margin, needing strong showings in the final events to have any shot at defending the title. That chance turned into reality as members stacked medals and points across the closing competitions, erasing a seven-point gap and pushing the club back to the top of the standings. The result: back-to-back Club of the Year honors and a strong statement about the strength of the Oklahoma City homebrew community

### STANDOUT PERFORMERS

Several members were instrumental in the title run:

Garrett Freeman – 9th overall

Dirk Montgomery – 10th overall

Nick & Heather Hartley – 21st overall

These finishes anchored the club's scoring and kept REB in contention all season. Their entries routinely landed on the medal stand, turning key competitions into multi-point hauls when the club needed them most.

Behind them, a deep bench of competitors kept adding crucial points:

Kim Hynek – 52nd

Chad Medford – 56th

Stephen Polczynski – 94th

Ken Morris – 144th

Sean McCanne – 188th

In total, 20 club members scored points on the circuit, underscoring that this wasn't a one-or-two-person effort. That breadth of participation is exactly what carried REB from seven points down to champions once again.

### WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE CLUB

Repeating as MHP Club of the Year validates the time members spend recipe-writing, brewing, refining, and judging, and it showcases REB as one of the most competitive and collaborative

## UPCOMING EVENTS

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**Happy Hour:**  
 Thursday, Jan. 8  
 6:30–9 PM at  
 Flix Brewhouse
- 
**Happy Hour:**  
 Thursday, Feb. 5  
 6:30–9 PM at  
 Beer Is Good (BIG)
- 
**Club Meeting:**  
 Tuesday, Jan. 20  
 7–9 PM at Frenzy  
 Brewing
- 
**Club Meeting:**  
 Tuesday, Feb. 20  
 7–9 PM at Roughtail  
 Brewing Co.  
 (New, Year, New Brew)

clubs in the region. It also sets a high bar for the coming season: more entries, more feedback, and more opportunities for new members to see their names in the points standings.

This is the perfect moment to invite friends into the club, encourage newer brewers to enter their first competitions, and start planning the next run at the title. The cup is staying with Red Earth Brewers for another year—now the work begins to keep it here.

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Red Earth Brewers is getting ready for another great year, and it starts with renewing your membership. **Renewal opens January 1 at \$30 for the year; the rate increases to \$35 after January 15, so renew early to save.**



Membership includes free entry into non-sanctioned club competitions, access to monthly meetings, the members-only Facebook group, and opportunities to brew, learn, and collaborate with top homebrewers. Your dues also support meeting space, supplies, education, and competitions.

Renew online or in person at a club meeting after January 1. Guests are welcome to attend up to three meetings before joining—encourage them to sign up before January 15 for the \$30 rate.



A new year is here, our kegs are empty, and once again somehow no one has revoked my "President" badge. That means one thing: time to set some brew solutions.

### Raising the bar (and the glass)

Last year, this club brewed award-winning beer, cider, and mead, hauled medals home from all over the country, and repeated as a top-tier competition club. That did not happen by accident. It came from recipe tweaks at 11 p.m., stuck

sparges you refused to give up on, and the courage to put your beer in front of judges and say, "Tell me how to make this better."

This year, the goal is simple: more of that. More shared pours, more honest feedback, more "try this, it's weird but I like it." If you want to move from extract to all-grain, from all-grain to decoction, or from single-fermenter chaos to real fermentation control, this is the year to lean on your club and make it happen.

### Competitions, circuits, and friendly pressure

2026 is stacked with opportunities: Bluebonnet, KCBM, IBU Open, the National Homebrew Competition, and a whole slate of High Plains and MHP circuit events. Whether you're chasing points or just want one set of scoresheets that doesn't say "needs more carbonation," there's a place for your beer on the table.

### Here's the presidential challenge:

- Enter at least one external competition if you never have.
- Enter one more competition than you did last year if you're a regular.

- Bring those entries to meetings so the club can taste what the judges tasted—good, bad, and "what the heck happened here?"

### Club nights and community

Beyond the medals, this club runs on shared pints and shared time. Make it to meetings when you can. Bring a friend who's homebrew-curious. Volunteer to pour at an event, help run a comp, or show a new member how to not melt a bucket with their first batch of sanitizer.

If you love lagers, bring lagers. If you're deep into mixed ferm, bring something funky. If you brewed a disaster, bring that too—we've all been there, and sometimes the best lesson of the year comes in a glass that smells vaguely like a Band-Aid.

### Your president's "brew-solutions"

To keep myself honest, here are mine:

- Brew at least two styles I've never attempted before.
- Submit entries to every major competition the club is targeting this year.
- Make sure every meeting has at least one structured feedback moment where a beer gets real, constructive notes—not just "that's good."

If you see me slacking, remind me. Loudly.

### Here's to 2026

Thank you for making Red Earth Brewers the kind of club where new brewers feel welcome, experienced brewers feel challenged, and everyone's cooler somehow goes home emptier than it arrived. May your yeast be healthy, your mash temps steady, your transfers oxygen-free, and your drafts always pull clear.

Let's make 2026 our best-tasting year yet.

## REB'S HOLIDAY WRAP FOR 2025

Red Earth Brewers wrapped up 2025 with a festive Christmas party at Roughtail Brewing, bringing members together for good beer, great food, and well-earned recognition. **A huge thank-you goes to Rachel Silver**, Event Coordinator, for all the hard work she put into making the night a success. Rachel and her crew of volunteers handled everything from cooking and decorating to check-in, raffle tickets, teardown, and cleanup, leaving the space spotless as if we were never there.

The evening also included the presentation of the club's annual awards. **Challis Club Member of the Year** honors went to Heather Hartley in first place, followed by Stephen Polczynski in second and Ken Morris in third. **Brewer of the Year** was awarded to Garrett Freeman, with Dirk Montgomery in second place and Nick Hartley and Heather Hartley took third place honors.

Thank you to the businesses and breweries that donated raffle prizes and awards. **Special thanks to Sean McCanne** for his beautiful award work and **Cheryl Burleson** for capturing photos of the event. It was a memorable night and a great way to close out another year for Red Earth Brewers.





## FOUR REB EARN MIDWEST HOMEBREWER CIRCUIT TOP 100

Red Earth Brewers placed multiple members inside the top 100 of the 2025 Midwest Homebrewer of the Year

standings, underscoring both the quality and depth of the club's competition program.

### REB names on the leaderboard

From the published 2025 standings, REB finishers in the top 100 include:

- Chad Medford – 24th overall, with 7 medals from 13 entries and a 53.8% win rate.

- Garrett Freeman – 44th overall, with 17 medals from 57 entries and a strong 29.8% win rate.
- Nick & Heather Hartley – 54th overall, with 9 medals from 50 entries.
- Dirk Montgomery – 83rd overall, with 10 medals from 64 entries

These results place REB members alongside some of the most successful homebrewers in the region across a circuit that logs thousands of entries each year.

Major circuit competitions routinely draw 300–900 entries apiece, with medal percentages often in the mid-teens to mid-20s, so every point on the standings represents beating deep, talented fields. Having four REB members in the top 100—and several more in the broader top 200—highlights the club's ability to brew, refine, and win at a high level, and sets a strong foundation for pushing even more names up the leaderboard in 2026.



## THE DUNKLES UNCLE

Tim Bickel and Nick Hodge present this internal competition celebrating dunkles beers. Choose from:

- 6C – Dunkles Bock
- 8A – Munich Dunkel
- 10B – Dunkles Weissbier

People's Choice voting will take place at the March club meeting, where a winner will be crowned.

Questions? Contact Tim or Nick. Fire up the kettles and embrace your dark side.



## GALENTINE'S BREW IS BACK!

Galentine's Brew returns this February, celebrating the creativity of our women brewers. Female members lead the recipe, brewing, and presentation, with one male partner allowed per team to assist.

Beers will be featured at the April 21 club meeting, where everyone can taste and vote in the People's Choice competition. Gather your crew, plan your brew day, and let's make Galentine's Brew 2026 the best yet because nothing says friendship like fermentation!



**FRIENDLY REMINDER ABOUT INTERNAL COMPETITION RULES:** Please remember that all entries must be handcrafted by hobbyist brewers using their own private equipment. Ingredients should be readily available to the general public, and entries cannot be made using commercial facilities, Brew-on-Premise operations, or other commercial supplies. Thanks for helping keep our competition fun, fair, and true to the spirit of homebrewing!



2916 N Pennsylvania Ave  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma  
(405) 528-5193  
[thebrewshopkc.com](http://thebrewshopkc.com)

**ANNOUNCEMENTS, NEWS & MORE ...**  
If you have an announcement or know of a festival, dinner, beer event, or whatever you think may be interesting to fellow brewers, please let us know at [RedEarthBrewers@gmail.com](mailto:RedEarthBrewers@gmail.com). We are always looking for things to include in the newsletter.



## UPCOMING COMPETITIONS

### HARTLEYS DELIVERING KCBM ENTRIES TO KC

All entries for the Kansas City Bier Meisters (KCBM) competition need to be **dropped off at The Brew Shop during the week of January 25–29, with a hard deadline of 12 p.m. (noon) on January 30 for inclusion in the club delivery to Kansas City.**

To maximize storage space in the Hartleys' vehicle, please keep your entries loose (boxes will be available for drop-off) and clearly labeled according to competition rules. Any entries received after noon on January 30 will miss the group shipment and will need to be shipped on your own.

### BLUEBONNET BREW-OFF 2026

Bluebonnet is one of the largest and most competitive club-run homebrew events in the country, so this is a prime opportunity to put your best beers, ciders, and meads on a big stage and represent Red Earth Brewers in Texas.

Red Earth Brewers will coordinate a club delivery to Texas on the final weekend for entries, allowing members to **drop off entries at the Brew Shop January 19–23** instead of shipping individually.

### IBU OPEN 2026: ENTRIES OPEN JANUARY 24

The 27th Annual IBU Open hosted by the Iowa Brewers Union at Confluence Brewing Company in Des Moines opens on January 24, at 11 a.m. It is also the second of seven High Plains Circuit events, making it an important early-season stop for anyone chasing circuit points.

Registration and capacity: The competition is capped at 400 paid entries; only entries that are fully paid count toward the cap. Each brewer is limited to six (6) entries total. Two (2) bottles/cans are required per entry.

With its long history and High Plains status, the IBU Open draws a strong field from across the Midwest and offers an excellent opportunity to earn early points toward both individual and club standings. Members planning to compete should start selecting and packaging their best beers, ciders, and meads now so they are ready as soon as registration opens and the entry cap starts to fill.

*Give yourself a reason to crack open a beer!*

### BALTIC PORTER DAY JANUARY 17



Winter calls for dark, malty goodness. Celebrate Baltic Porter Day on January 17 by cracking open a rich, smooth porter and toasting one of beer's most flavorful styles. Think roasted malts, deep color, and big winter vibes. Perfect for gathering friends and warming up with something bold.



### NATIONAL BEER CAN APPRECIATION DAY JANUARY 24

Not all heroes wear foil, some wear aluminum. Celebrate National Beer Can Appreciation Day on January 24 by popping the top on a cold one and enjoying the convenience, history, and pure joy that beer cans bring to every brew session and backyard hang.



Join the AHA Today!

Lots of good perks.

[homebrewersassociation.org](http://homebrewersassociation.org)



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