

The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual A-1 Autumn Leaves Asheville Scrabble Tournament is over! With 80 in TWL and 12 in Collins, we couldn't have handled many more! As usual, we were very lucky with our weather during the first weekend in November, having had snow and a low of 30 degrees just the weekend before! We had a high around 70 both days, saw the sun a lot, and thanks to a delayed season, beautiful fall colors were everywhere!

There were Scrabblers from 22 states and one Canadian province! Several chose Airbnb to beat hotel prices, as Asheville is almost too popular this time of year.

There were lots of compliments about our improved venue at the Stephens-Lee Recreation Center. Katy Bernardina did all the data management for 7 divisions using TSH, and any little discrepancies were quickly resolved. On Saturday, Doc Brown's Barbeque Food Truck efficiently fed many of us at lunch, and on Sunday, we enjoyed grilled cheese sandwiches from the Melt Your Heart truck, although with a slightly longer wait because of the preparation time. Good food!

We are considering a shorter lunch break on Saturday for next year's tournament, and get you out of there by 5 PM Saturday instead of 6 PM. For Sunday afternoon, we could start announcements at 1:50 PM, ensuring that clocks start at 2 PM. Especially since the food truck options turned out to be a good idea.

The "A-1 Cash" awards for high game in each division for rounds 1-12 were popular again, and credit Ryan Fischer for using that idea years before we did, and Jacob for encouraging that we move ahead with it again this year.

Thanks to all who put up with the usual extended wait-time before the awards ceremony. Why does it take so long? Because we have more divisions! Instead of three or four first-place winners we have seven! And we do pay down several places.

I won't reiterate results, as those are available in multiple other places, but congrats again to David Gibson who just couldn't manage to lose even one game out of fourteen! And he had some great competition. Thankfully, there were many other "winners" as well, sharing in the prize pool of approximately \$8500.00. The coveted clipboards were again used as first place trophies, with special Scrabble mugs as an option.

Players really pitched in with “take-down” and we were out of there by 6 PM. Thanks to so many who helped make this tournament a good one: Jacob Cohen, Ruchi Gupta, Mark Schmidt, Leslie Bradshaw, Jay Jacoby, Katy Bernardina, Matt Bernardina, T.L. Allen, D Pedroza, Mike Leippe, Knox Daniel, Kate Fukawa-Connelly, and Winter, who was willing to be the “evener” of either TWL or Collins! Thanks to the staff at Stephens-Lee: Kim, Max, Destiny and Tamilya! Thanks to those who came from so far away! And to those who put up with division changes last minute, really wishing that they were playing in the one above or below!

We are going to do this again! November 3-4, 2018, same location!