



# From the Grape Vine

Volume 07 - Number 4

Autumn Issue - 2007

## *Onward & Upward: Excelsior!*

by Mike White

Our Iowa native winery industry has grown dramatically over the last eight years. We all have heard these numbers before, but they are worth repeating.

In 1999 Iowa had 13 wineries and approximately 5 winegrape vineyards covering about 15 acres. Most of the juice and grapes used to make wine at this time was coming in from out-of-state. This week's call to the Iowa Alcohol Beverage Division (IA-ABD) informed me that we have 66 state licensed wineries. To my knowledge, 55 of these wineries are currently open for business. Native wine sales have also increased dramatically over this time.

Reports taken from the IA-ABD for state fiscal year sales ending in June of 2002, 2005 and 2006 showed dramatic increases of 51,500, 123,000 and 246,000 gallons per year respectfully. Total wine sales for our state ending in June of 2006 was around 3.3 million gallons. This would indicate to me that Iowa's native wineries held a 7.8% market share of wine sold in Iowa at this time. The law of diminishing returns also can be attributed to market share.

Each consecutive market share point becomes increasingly difficult to attain and maintain.

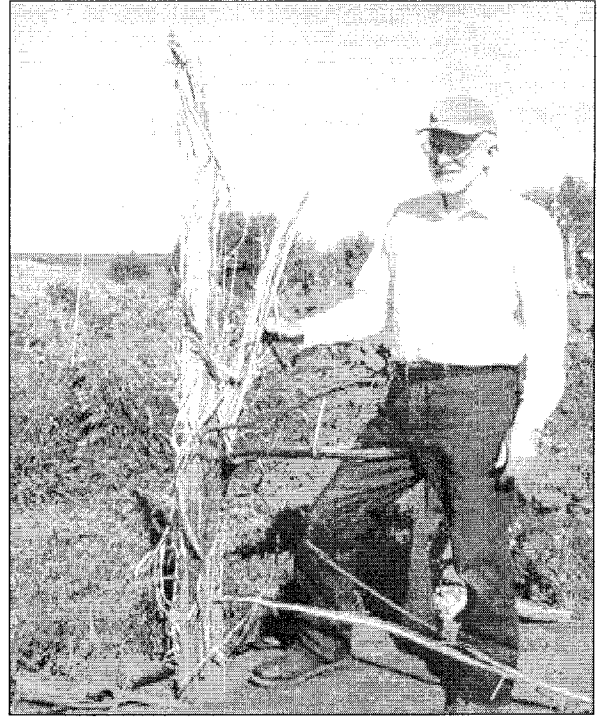
I spent some time massaging the state census data projected for 2006 and came up with a state population of 2.98 million with approximately 2.08 million Iowans over the age of 21 years. This tells me that the average adult over the age of 21 in Iowa is consuming around 1.6 gallons of wine per year compared to the national estimate of around 2.8 gallons per year. We still have some growing to do.

So, . . . how are we going to grow this industry? In my opinion, it is a no-brainer. Do what other successful wine regions do.

Concentrate our efforts on:

1. Quality Grapes
2. Quality Wine
3. Positive Experience
4. Telling our Story
5. Educating ourselves and Sharing our knowledge
6. Positive Image

You see, its pretty simple. Now lets go do it!



## *"Lightning Art" in Black Squirrel Vineyard*

It was raining on August 17th and Charlie Caldwell was looking out the window at his vineyard. Suddenly there was a bright light, something like a camera flash-bulb going off - then the sound of thunder. Lightning had struck a 6-inch trellis post! After the storm, when he examined the post, Charlie found a grape vine 2 feet from the post that appeared to be dead, and all the weeds around the post were dead, too.

So now Charlie can add lightning to his list of vineyard menaces - along with deer, insects, birds, and raccoons.

He's undecided, but may leave this artistic addition in his Black Squirrel Vineyard.

As time passes, he'll examine to see: 1. if the grape vine lives, and 2, if the genetic code of the grape has changed. "Electrical energy can go that," he says.

Well, let's see, we already have ice wine - how about a vat of lightning wine.

And, depending on the grape, he may have red or white lightning. (Moonshine! I hope that you wine/grape experts have tasted really good corn liquor!)

*From the Grape Vine* is the newsletter for the Western Iowa Grape Growers Association.

### *WIGGA Board Officers 2007*

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### *From the Editor's Desk*

I had hoped to make this issue of the *Grape Vine* a forum on attitudes and opinions, of needs and expectations, of WIGGA members. I am grateful for the **two people** who responded to a request for articles. Thanks, Darrell Morse, Breezy Hills Winery, for your response. Don't the rest of you have opinions on the problems and possibilities that you would share?

Mike White has written a glowing report on the Iowa grape/wine scene.

Charlie Caldwell had a lightning experience.

George Fischer sent a welcome article on the August Round Table.

It's not too late to enter the Schleswig wine competition, and sign on as a wine taster.

I read an interesting article in the *New Yorker* on wine counterfeiting.

Mike Bevins has information on scholarships that are available for further studies, new visions, in viticulture and oenology.

There will be another Western Iowa Trail event on November 3rd & 4th.

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Are grape seeds a possible cure, or at least a deterrent, for cancer? Research is being done in this area.

I've placed a "Wanted" ad asking for a new editor for this newsletter. It takes me about a week for each issue - to get information, make it fit, work with the advertisers, print, mail, etc. Four issues! That's a month of my year, and I simply don't have that much spare time.

Here, also, is some information on Western Iowa Wineries that won awards at the Mid-American Wine Contest - thanks to Sheila Rohatsch.

This issue ends with more "Wine Quotes".

I hope there is something here for everyone.

Floyd Pearce

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### *Welcome Comments on August Round Table*

After spending most of my early years on a farm in Monona County, Iowa where my grandfather grew grapes, I decided that since we were now in the grape growing business in Warren Co., central Iowa, that I would like to attend the "Round Table" meeting being sponsored by the State Wine Growers Association at the Prairie Crossing Winery on August 8th.

Since there seemed to be some disagreement between the wine growers in Eastern, Central, and Western Iowa, I felt that since I'd spent a lot of time in the central and western parts of the state, I may have some insight into the thinking of the western Iowa growers and their complaints.

As the meeting progressed, I could see that the purpose of the State Board sitting down with the western growers to hear a lot of their concerns and some of their disagreements was a good thing. I could see that much of the air was being cleared.

*As to the major item of disagreement or misunderstanding: that of whether or not to allow transporting and subsequent blending of grapes or juices from one area to another either within the State or from outside Iowa, I thought there still remained some disagreement which may be based on a misunderstandings as to how it could be handled in a more simple way.*

It seems to me that it is a labeling matter. Each bottle of wine could simple state that the contents were all Iowa grapes or contained juices from out of state. The percentages could easily be shown. In years where there are shortages of grape production in Iowa, as this fall's (2007) current tonnages are demonstrating, it's almost a necessity for the smaller vineyard/wineries to go elsewhere for grapes in order to maintain their normal production.

*I think all we have to do is look to the south in Missouri where they have few limiting State regulations, resulting in a large, highly successful wine industry and then to look westward to Nebraska where their industry is strangling on an over regulated situation.*

We growers and winemakers in Iowa need to get our heads together and pull in the same direction. I think the Round Table discussions between growers, winemakers and the Board members are an excellent device to accomplish this goal. My only suggestion is to have more of these meetings and more often.

George D. Fischer  
Fischer Vineyards  
Norwalk, Iowa 50211  
Ph. 515-981-4177

### *Annual Schleswig Wine Contest*

The 32nd Annual Schleswig Wine Contest will take place on Sunday, October 21st at the Schleswig Country Club. Judging begins at 1:00.

Those who submit wine must not be associated with commercial wine making.

Exhibitors may make as many entries as they wish. There is a \$3 charge for each wine preregistered. There is a \$4 charge for entries entered on the day of judging. Entries must be received by 12:30 to be eligible.

Eighteen different classes of wine are considered for judging.

For further information about entries: Coleen Russell, 6196 - 190th Street, Ida Grove, IA 51445.

### *Wine Tasters Needed in Schleswig*

Wine tasters are always needed for the contest on Sunday afternoon, October 21st. Dr. Dennis Crabb will host a tasting seminar at the Schleswig Club House on Saturday evening, the 20th, at 7:00.

This event is lots of fun and a great learning experience. Dr. Crabb is highly knowledgeable about wine and he has one of the most discriminating palates in the Midwest.

For further information contact:

Don Thompson, 208 South 11th Street, Dunlap, IA 51529, 712-643-5333, tommytee@iowatelecom.net

## **WANTED!**

**From the Grape Vine wants an editor, beginning with the April issue. The present editor will continue through the January issue - because advertisers are paid through that date.**

## **REWARD!**

**The satisfaction that comes from doing a difficult job.**  
**Contact: Secretary Sheila Rohatsch**  
**sheila@loesshillsvineyardandwinery.com**  
**Floyd Pearce floyd\_pearce@yahoo.com**

## Wine Counterfeiting

Below is some material from an article on wine in *The New Yorker*, September 3rd & 10th.

In December, 1985, a bottle of 1787 "Lafitte", with the letters "Th.J", was auctioned off at Christie's in London for about one hundred and fifty-seven thousand dollars. A new record! The bottle was purported to have been originally consigned to Thomas Jefferson, but the provenance of the wine is being disputed.

The extraordinary inflation in rare wine prices has led to an explosion of counterfeits. In many instances, modern scientific techniques are inadequate to prove or disprove anything.

Of a 1995 wine tasting celebrating the fiftieth year of the 1945 Mouton vintage, it is reported that more wine was probably consumed than was produced to begin with.

Snobbery, in some wine circles, coupled with thinly disguised ignorance is enough to give wine drinking a bad name. Exactly who are the experts!

The experience of smelling and tasting wine appears to be susceptible to factors that have nothing to do with the wine being considered. Several years ago a Ph.D. candidate from the University of Bordeaux served fifty-seven participants a mid-range red Bordeaux from bottles with labels indicating that it was a modest *vin de table*. A week later, he served the same wine to the same people but this time poured from bottles indicating that the wine was a grand cru. The tasters of wine from the first bottles found the wine "simple," "unbalanced," and "weak," but found the wine from the second tasting "complex," "balanced," and "full."

The interesting article is replete with cases (a pun IS intended!) of wine forgeries, and in some instances, legal action.

This bull bleep will always be with us. I'm sure that readers of *The Grape Vine* are as comfortable as I am - a Mid-western primitive - with what their palates and noses tell them is a good wine.

## Grape/Wine Scholarship Program

The Iowa Grape and Wine Development Commission in conjunction with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship are offering a scholarship program to individuals associated with Iowa wineries and vineyards. The deadline for applications is November 2007. This information can be downloaded at <http://www.agriculture.state.ia.us/grapeAndWine.htm>

Please help me and distributing and publishing this information to interested individuals associated with the Iowa grape and wine industry.

Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Mike Bevins

State Horticulturist

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## Western Iowa Wine Tour - November 3 & 4

The Western Iowa Wine Trail is having its next Trail event, Sat & Sunday, November 3rd & 4th: "Holiday Entertaining with the Western Iowa Wine Trail".

Enjoy holiday food & wine pairings at 6 participating wineries along the trail. Discover recipes & ideas for holiday entertaining with Iowa wines. Bring your holiday shopping list and give the gift of Iowa wine this year! Check the [website@www.westerniowawinetrail.com](http://www.westerniowawinetrail.com) for further details & a map.

Passports: \$25/single \$45/couple

10 am - 6 pm each day

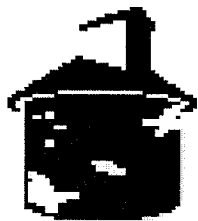
## Theory about Grape Seeds & Cancer

“• Isn't it interesting that our food supply has been stripped of the natural medicine in grapes through the promotion of seedless grapes? In many grocery stores, it's impossible to find grapes with seeds. This is what denies the public access to healing nutrients that can protect them from heart disease, cancer, inflammation and

other health problems.

“• Chewing grape seeds is a natural way to consume more proanthocyanidins. Seek out grapes with seeds, and chew the seeds. (They're crunchy.)

“• In laboratory tests, grape seeds have been considered to have possible anti-inflammatory, anti-cancer and anti-atherogenic properties.”



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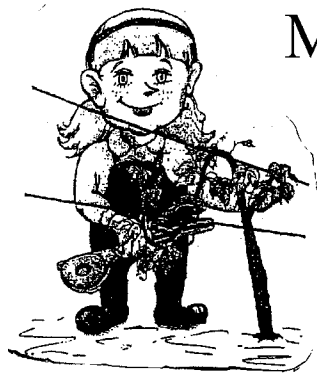
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### *Good Stuff at Sugar Clay Winery. . .*

Sunday, October 14th - "Arizona's Eddie Elliot" returns for the last stop on his Midwest "Without Blue" concert tour. Call to reserve your tickets for an awesome & intimate indoor show.

Tickets \$10. 2 - 5 pm  
Light appetizers provided.

Saturday, October 20th - "The Man in Black" party! Join us to pay tribute to the music of Johnny Cash! All black attire REQUIRED as we listen to live & original Cash tunes. Best Johnny Cash look-a-like prizes awarded!

Soup buffet provided by "The Diner."  
No admission charge. 5 - 11 pm

Friday & Saturday, November 23rd & 24th  
"Sugar Clay's Holiday Open House" - Enjoy a break after Thanksgiving with family & friends! Enjoy new vintage releases paired with artisan cheese, soup & dessert samples. Bring your Christmas shopping lists as we'll have great deals on Sugar Clay apparel, wine gift baskets, & wine accessories. 2 - 8 pm each day.

### *1st Annual Mid-American Wine Competition*

*Ankeny, July 14-15*

Western Iowa wineries certainly garnered their share of awards at the Wine Competition.

**Gold & Best of Class** (in white hybrid blends) for

Loess Hills' *September Sweet*

**Silver** for Breezy Hills' *Catawba* and Sugar Clay's

*Cynthiana*

**Bronze** for Breezy Hills' *Frontenac*, Danish

Countryside's *Crystal Springs*, King's Crossing's

*Edelweiss & St. Croix*, Loess Hills' *Sunset Blush &*

*Vignoles*, Prairie Crossing's *Windswept*

A note: None of the wineries from the Western Iowa Wine Trail were able to attend the competition on July 14-15, as there was a record-breaking Wine Trail event that same weekend (3rd Annual "Grillin' with Iowa Wines").

Another note: Don't be disappointed if your favorite Western Iowa wine wasn't a winner. Perhaps not every Western Iowa winery entered; and your favorite wine may not have been among the wines *that were* entered.

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## Darrell Morse Speaks Up. . .

Just recently, members of the Board of Directors of the Iowa Wine Growers Association met with local grape growers and winery representatives at Prairie Crossing Winery. The purpose of the meeting was supposed to be an opportunity for the Board to communicate the current issues facing Iowa grape growers and wineries and an opportunity for the western Iowa folks to express any concerns they may have to the Board.

The meeting seemed to be well orchestrated on the part of the Board, bringing all but one of the Board members to the meeting as well as the Board secretary, some family members of the Board, representatives from DMACC and Dr. Murli's office, and ISU Extension Specialist Mike White to drive home the points they wanted to make. The issues of importance to the Board were geared mainly toward the wineries – Iowa's proposed quality assurance program for wine including education, some sort of certification, analytical services available through Murli and his staff, the fear of losing our current distribution system to a three tier system, their opinion of the need to have tax revenue allocated by the Wine Commission to Murli and his staff rather than the Department of Agriculture, and the growth rate of the wine industry in Iowa and its economic impact on the state. Writing this article several weeks post-mortem, I apologize if I've missed something.

*Local entities expressed concerns of the Board's primary focus being upon winery issues and the lack of focus upon the issues facing the grower segment of the organization. The response to these concerns usually turned the table back to the wineries by pointing out the future of each is totally relevant to the dependency of one upon the other. I'm sure that makes sense?*

The issue of the Board's aggressive legislation efforts was also brought up. In case you're not familiar with this issue, it dealt primarily with the introduction of legislation to allow wineries to bring in out of state wine, blend such wine with their own, and still call the resultant wine a Native Iowa Wine. The Board stated that this effort was a necessity for all of the wineries to avoid a possible sticky situation in which the Iowa Alcoholic Beverages Division was considering filing action to recover back taxes from wineries that had imported bulk wine and treated the wine as "juice". The result of the Board's legislative efforts was amnesty for those particular wineries and relief from the taxes they could have been forced to pay.

Another issue brought to the floor was that of guiding the Board with member-submitted resolutions. If you recall, is the proposed method of getting grass roots input to the Board that the Western Iowa Grape Growers introduced at the past annual meeting. Supposedly, this issue is not dead and the Board intends to do something with it prior to next year. Some asked about accessibility to the minutes of Board meetings so we know what's going on. At first we were told that the minutes were available if we contacted the Board Secretary, but then there was some concern voiced about the minutes and the Board's strategies to combat negative issues becoming public knowledge as it may negate the effectiveness on some very important issues – one being the effort to maintain direct sales and fight the introduction of a three tier system in Iowa.

*Just before my wife and I left the meeting (not out of disgust but because I had to get up the next morning to go to work), we were told that our cooperative effort to block the Board's legislative works last session was actually detrimental to the whole organization. The Board's consensus was that those who opposed their efforts sent a message of discord in the industry and as a result that we entrust them and their efforts in the future will be genuine and in the best interest of all.*

My reply to that is – If the Board of Directors of the Iowa Wine Grape Association wants to represent the grape growers and wineries of Iowa, they need to put the pieces of the puzzle together to signify them as the voice of the industry in Iowa. There is not, at this time, adequate verbiage in the bylaws or constitution to justify this organization as our sole representative. Unfortunately, it has slithered into that position via convenience. Iowa's grape growers and wineries need to express the fact to the Board that we are a rapidly growing industry in need of representation – representing all of us and not just the personal agenda of a few. If the members of the IWGA can't come to an agreement on that issue, maybe it's time to inform our legislators and state government that we are ready to form a new organization to be our voice.

*I was a little disappointed that there weren't a large number of our members present at this meeting. There may have been as many Board representatives as there were growers and winery personnel. Folks, whether you're a grape grower or a winery owner (or both), if you've made a significant investment out there. You need to attend meetings of this sort to keep attuned to what's going on – and voice your opinion.*

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*For more information, see Bruce and the Gang  
at Old Highway 6 Tractor & Equipment.*

“Sorrow can be alleviated by good sleep, a bath and a glass of wine.” — Thomas Aquinas

“I made wine out of raisins so I wouldn’t have to wait for it to age.” — Stephen Wright

“Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for it is now that God favours what you do.” — Ecclesiastes 9:7

“Sparkling Muscatel. One of the finest wines of Idaho.” — Steve Martin, in *The Muppet Movie* (1979)

“My dear girl, there are some things that just aren’t done, such as drinking Dom Perignon ’53 above the temperature of 38 degrees Fahrenheit. That’s just as bad as listening to the Beatles without earmuffs!” — Sean Connery as James Bond, in *Goldfinger* (1964)

“In vino veritas.” — a Latin proverb (“There’s truth in wine.”)

And now, for a contrary opinion: “There is a devil in every berry of the grape.” — Koran

*From the Grape Vine* is a quarterly publication, page size 8 1/2 by 11 inches.

Price of Ads: Full-page - \$25 per issue or \$75 for one year

1/2 page - \$20 per issue or \$60 for one year

1/4 page - \$15 per issue or \$45 for one year

Business card: \$10 per issue or \$30 for one year

Classified ad: \$5 per issue, 25 word limit

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