



AWOnews



Produced by The Amateur Winemakers of Ontario

**A forum for the exchange of news and opinions on home
winemaking in Ontario**

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The 1998 Festival edition

"The merry cuckoo, messenger of Spring, His trumpet shrill hath thrice already

sounded."

-Edmund Spenser ("Amoretti")

IN THIS ISSUE:

by Paul Dunseath



AWO Festival 1998 is now only weeks away, and in this issue you will find the latest information from the organizers.

Of particular interest as well will be the two items to be discussed at AWO 98; the "Restructuring" of AWO (which we have covered extensively in previous issues); and the upcoming motion to have "Tasting" a competition class for club standing. In part, the two motions present different perspectives, which your club reps will need to take into account; if "Tasting" is a competition for club points, can it be logical to remove clubs from the AWO organizational structure (or vice-versa)?

The issue of AWO Restructuring has generated a great deal of discussion, and in

this issue we present three viewpoints for your consideration before the crucial vote in June.

Be sure to read both the Chief Judge's column, as well as that our esteemed Prez; they have wisdom and information to convey.

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

by Dan Ostler

Our web site (<http://www.makewine.com>) has now had over 1000 "hits". Many of these are from non-members even though we have yet to do any promotion via the various search engines. The 1997 Point Totals are there and the pages that Rowan Shirkie has designed for the AWC will be added shortly (I have updated the Point Totals for Canada as well). The one thing that we need most now is MATERIAL on winemaking, the hobby, club news, our suppliers etc. etc. Paul Dunseath (and Paul Jean) before him know the frustration of getting contributors to put pen (or keyboard) to hand and write something. We have received permission from Better Wmemaking magazine to reprint articles from

all back issues, so we will be scanning some of that in soon. And of course all back issues of AWOnews are already on the site.

Each member has received a mailing from the Festival group which included the Agenda and proposed motions from our Restructuring committee (see elsewhere in this issue). Please discuss these important topics at your next meeting and come prepared to vote your club's wishes at the Annual General Meeting on Saturday June 6th in Peterborough.

At that same club meeting how about nominating a member to be a Director of the AWO. We have a few openings for the new year and "many hands make light work".

We are very fortunate to have our next two Festivals now confirmed. The London/St. Thomas clubs will be hosting in 1999 and Ottawa will be the venue for 2000. If we govern ourselves by the "correct" calendar definition the Festival in 2001 should be the Millennium Festival (even though most people will be celebrating incorrectly in 2000). Ottawa agrees; year 2000 will be our "Eve of the Millennium" Festival.

Ludvik Furbacher is offering a special price to AWO members for 2 models of

hand-held breathalysers. Our Pickering club just purchased one and it proved very educational when used after our club judging. Check the web site for more details.

Looking forward to seeing you all in Peterborough in June!

CHIEF JUDGE'S COLUMN

by Peter Pigeon

There are now three official "Master Judges" in the Commission - Bill Thornton, Rodney Nicholson and myself. More Masters will soon follow as many judges are completing their presentations and testing. Once a Master, not alway: a Master, as retesting occurs every second year.

AWO winemakers now have a choice of judges who have displayed their competence over the years in club and provincial final judgments, and those judges who have also expanded their skills and knowledge to the equivalent of Intervin and other commercial judging qualifications.

Why do judges who are also winemakers win such a large proportion of medals in AWO and other competitions? Because, of course, they are better equipped as winemakers. Learning the unique attributes of each class and becoming a trained taster, capable of blending and balancing wines, is a tremendous advantage! This advantage is open to all AWO members.

The Judges' Commission will be offering another "New Judges' Training Session" this fall. If you would like to learn more about wines, improve your tasting ability, or serve in the Commission, an initial taste test is the first step. The test cost is \$10.00, and you must pre-register by May 31st by sending a cheque to me, Steve Gunning or Paul Dunseath. The Taste Test will be held in Peterborough on June 6th at Festival '98.

Or, you may wish not to become a judge, but realize the importance of tasting skills as the most valuable tool of the winemaker, and support the motion at this year's AGM (Annual General Meeting) to make "Tasting" a competition class for "Club Point Standing in AWO". The biggest single weakness in AWO winemaking quality is the lack of importance accorded by most winemakers to component tasting and balance, a trained palate, as a tool for making wine!

AWO RESTRUCTURING: PART I

by Gordon Barnes

The Committee was not unanimous in all the recommendation presented in the report delivered with the Festival registration mailing. I feel it is important that alternate views be presented for consideration.

Firstly, it is my belief that by-law changes are required when the existing ones prohibit actions or are unable to be followed. Therefore I note that these recommendations fall into three groups. The first group is worthy of thoughtful consideration but no structural (by-law) changes #3 (Competition Classes) and #5 (Insurance). In substance, the minority agrees with the majority.

Recommendation #2 (Terms of Directors) and #6 (Judge's Commission) form the second group. They are commendable suggestions. I believe that the end results are achievable under the existing by-laws. In substance, the minority agrees with the majority.

The third group is very different. Recommendations #4 (Mission Statement) and #7. (Membership) seek to make fundamental changes to the AWO.

The "Mission Statement" does two things. The positive one creates a succinct statement of purpose, the negative one says "Drop Beer" If individuals choose to join CABA, that option is open. If the AWO chooses to suspend beer competition, that can be done with a procedural decision. If beer competition is later reinstated, that procedural decision is easily reversible.

After years of debate, I find no way that this change would improve the AWO or better serve its members - be they clubs or individuals. I believe that a renewed vitality will come from a renewed level of activity.

Therefore I urge each club TO CONSIDER these recommendations, TO DEFEAT the motions on Membership change and Mission Statement and TO ORDER the Directors to move forward on the other proposals.

AWO RESTRUCTURING: PART II

by John Harris

The club mailing has the seven motions detailed. Gord is correct there was not unanimous consent on all the issues. The motions however do state that only #6 -Judges Commission and #7 - Membership require Bylaw change. Motions can be changed as Gordon points out, by laws are somewhat more permanent. The easiest way to adapt to a changing relationship is through a motion, hence motions were used in motion #1 thru #5 . Where there is more basic disagreement is in the Mission Statement and Membership issue. The mission statement is a fundamental issue. We, a corporate entity, have no guiding principle of purpose. The mission statement is to clarify that purpose. To make the evolution of a statement easier, the motion is not a by law amendment, rather a motion, which Gord points out correctly can be changed or fine tuned over time as we change. In that sense I do not see what Gord disagrees with. Our new web site does not mention beer in its focus, for example.

The membership issue is the most serious and deserves to be addressed first. Currently the AWO is a federation of autonomous clubs. This is the "small government" structure that keeps power at the club level rather than

concentrating it at the centre. Neither structure is functionally more democratic than the other. Individual memberships would support them.

The membership issue is more complex in some ways. Those who remember Better Wmemaking, Paul Jean's magazine, will know he had about 500 AWO subscribers and about 500 separate individual members. Paul Jean had in effect a "club" of individuals who equalled the AWO in size, yet none wanted to be members of the AWO. The AWO is basically a corporate umbrella of respectability for a group of clubs.

The function of the AWO is to have an AGM and a annual competition for the clubs. That mandate is carried out every year and done quite well. However, in an era when home winemaking has exploded and become in my terms "middle class" respectable, the AWO has not grown in numbers or percentage. The membership issue is not a magic bullet. It is meant to recognize changing demographics and how we do business. The change is to allow us to evolve and change if we want to. In the short term or even the long term, if there is no interest in further evolution, the current club focus will stay and the AWO will not change.

However if at some time there is recognition of change and the desire to move forward, then the structure will be in place. In effect, this By law change is to create a structure that is there for the taking if members wish. If not, no effect.

This change, in essence has no cost to the organization, just potential benefit. In that sense, Gord and I agree, today there will be no immediate change.

Tomorrow, in the future, individual membership allows for change. Better Winemaking magazine proved that individuals interested exist outside of our club structure; the U Vints on every corner show the public interest in the hobby. Note, the proposed by law allows for considerable latitude for the future, by allowing the directors to create membership categories. As Gord points out, this becomes a motion and motions allow for change and response to the members.

Please consider the motions carefully and come to the AGM to express your views and consider the views of others. This is a good organization, that deserves to grow and prosper.

AWO RESTRUCTURING: PART III

by Don Weekes

(Editor's note: the following has been edited for length, but not for content)

The dissertation on the History, Background, Overview etc. which was sent to all members with the Agenda and proposed Motions expose a lack of knowledge of the subject. Etobicoke Oenological Society is one of the founding members of the AWO (Incorporated 1971). By-Law No.1 was ratified in June 77 for clarification.

We have the following comments. They follow the same order, point by point.

OVERVIEW: There is no need to revise our structure to reflect how we operate and to provide improved service to our membership. By-Law No.1 was written the way it is to be flexible and to provide a guideline for the operation of AWO.

One of the regulations is that there shall be a booklet known as "Amateur Winemakers of Ontario Handbook" which shall set out rules and regulations regarding membership, dues, competition rules and other matters which may be relevant either to the functioning of the AWO or its member clubs. If there is a need to change the rules, revise the handbook, not By-Law No.1.

PROCEDURE: The procedure is flawed and misleading because it asks the members' representatives to vote on changes which are the responsibility of the Directors.

HISTORICAL CLEANUP: Agreed that over the years there have been a few changes in things such as wine classes. They should be recorded in the Handbook. The changes refer to operating procedures so it is just a matter of housekeeping.

TERMS OF OFFICE: Agreed that some organisations elect half of their Directors for a two-year term at annual elections to maintain continuity. The Directors could pass a resolution to make that kind of change, if they wish. The By-Law has flexibility; after every election the Directors elect the officers from among themselves, so they control who they elect.

CLASS DEVELOPMENT AND DESCRIPTION:

Establishing a committee which reports their recommendations to the Board is the proper way to do that. You don't have to have a vote by the members and no By-Law change is required.

MISSION STATEMENT: We have an official statement of purpose. It cannot be changed because it is part of our Letters Patent, not part of the By-Laws. Ours is as follows:

To promote interest in, and the study of, winemaking, brewing and cider-making as home crafts and hobbies;

To sponsor, conduct and encourage research into the art of wine making, cidermaking and brewing on an amateur basis;

To conduct in Ontario and elsewhere competitions for the judging and grading of wines, brews and ciders made by amateur winemakers, brewers and cider-makers;

To provide a committee of qualified judges to establish standards for the judging of wines, brews and ciders and to officiate at competitions organized by the Corporation as judges; and

For the objectives above, to carry on printing and publishing and to sell literature.

AWO is committed to serving winemakers, brewers and cider makers in the

Charter. It also establishes a Committee of qualified judges.

PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY: What is the definition of an "event"? Is it a Club meeting, a Club competition? An Annual Meeting? A County Fair? Is a risk management plan required for all events where wine is consumed? What about club meetings?

JUDGES COMMISSION: AWO needs the Judges' Commission and recognizes it by giving the Chairman a seat on the Board. They run competitions under AWO's rules. AWO defines the classes and how they are judged, and maintains control. The Judges' Commission trains judges as part of their mandate.

Without the Judges' Commission AWO could not operate. It is only when they work for AWO that they must follow AWO rules.

MEMBERSHIP: AWO is an organization of Clubs, formed to service the Clubs by organizing competitions for them. If individuals in which there are other clubs, and even other provinces, are allowed to join, AWO is not operating in the best interests of its members.

Elected Directors have a legal responsibility to serve and protect the Aims and Objectives of AWO. Recommendations to the members should come from the

Board, not from a Committee.

AWO FESTIVAL '98: PETERBOROUGH

Time is running out to get your registration in for Festival' 98. The 1998 Convention will be held at Trent University in Peterborough on the weekend of June 5,6 & 7. If you haven't already sent in your registration, fill in the form on the back page of this newsletter and get it in as soon as possible. It promises to be a weekend you don't want to miss.

Friday night will feature a barbecue dinner and the annual Club Showcase. Join your fellow winemakers for a social evening of tasting and conversation as the AWO member clubs provide a sample of their wines. Those clubs interested in participating in the Club Showcase should contact Burton McClelland at (705) 755-1360 (days), (705) 740-1709 (evenings and weekends) or email at bmcclelland@sympatico.ca.

On Saturday we have a full range of seminars on the following topics:

Ontario Wine Council's Wine Course

Grape growing for the amateur

Blending to improve your wines

Matching yeasts to grape and wine types

Avoiding fermentation problems

Sparkling Fruit wines

Matching wine with food flavours

Experimenting with Oak

Mysteries of Mead

Gewurztraminer trials Botrytis-

Bringing out the best in Gewurztraminer Making Muscat wines

In addition we will have a number of juice and concentrate suppliers providing seminars and tastings of their products.

The following suppliers will be there with wines made from their juices or kits:

.. ..

Peter Broehm juices

Festa Juices

Kamil Juices

Lindstroms

RJ Grape Products

Spagnols

Vin Bon

Vineco (Niagara Grape Products) Wine.Art

Sunday will feature the annual Awards Brunch where the medals and trophies from the 1998

Competition will be awarded. Enoy the sumptuous Brunch and perhaps even take home some hardware if your wines do well in the competition.

Remember to get your registration in right away and join us at Festival '98

HOW WINE IS PRODUCED: **COMMERCIALLY**

by Paul Dunseath @ 1998

Almost all commercially-produced wine is made from fresh grapes, grown in the area of production (we say "almost", as there is a small amount of commercial wine which includes juices or concentrates imported from elsewhere, but it is such a tiny part of the world's wine production that it can effectively be ignored for our purposes).

World-wide, a considerable variety of wines is produced: red wines, white wines, rose wines, "sparkling" wines such as Champagne, oxidised wines such as Sherry, fortified wines such as Port, flavoured wines such as Vermouth and Retsina, and various specialty wines. All of these, however, are variants of the basic red and white wines, so we will begin our examination of commercial practise by looking at these. If you were to ask most people where red and white wines come from, the usual answer would be "white wine comes from white

grapes, and red wine from red grapes". That answer is wrong. While red wines do indeed come from red grapes, white wines can come from either white grapes or the juice of certain red grapes. The Pinot Noir grape for example is the preeminent grape of Burgundy, and is the primary ingredient in some of the finest red wines in the world. However, the Pinot Noir, while having a red skin, actually has white juice, and as such is used widely in the production of Champagne (to the point that Champagnes made exclusively from white grapes bear the additional identifier of "blanc de blancs"). Similarly, Zinfandel - the huge red wine grape of California - is also used to make white or "blush" wines. This is important point, because underlying it is a key difference in the production of red and white wines.

In some cases, such as in most European production, the vineyards are owned by the winery, and the grape types and proportion of various types is consistent from year to year. In North America, and especially in Canada, the vineyards are owned by independent farmers who sell their production to the winery each year. The winery's resident vintner identifies the type of wine to be made, and the type of grapes and proportions to be used; the winegrower, in turn, monitors the degree of ripeness of the crop by measuring the sugar content and acid level

of the juice on a daily basis as the winemaking season begins. When the "numbers" meet the specifications of the winery, a contract is struck and the grapes are picked, usually by mechanical harvesters in this part of the world. In those cases where the vineyards are owned by the winery, there is of course a much more intimate relationship between grower and vintner.

(To be continued)