



## NEWSLETTER – SUMMER 2021

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hi Everyone!

I was trying to come up with some kind of catchy title like, “BACK TO LIFE 2.0,” or “Thankfully, Is This All Behind Us,” or simply “WOW, What a Year!”

Regardless, it is with great pleasure that I address you as the recently elected president of Friends of the Vine, in this, our 30<sup>th</sup> year as a club. It is a great honour to work with such a dedicated group of volunteers to bring you, what we all believe to be, the premier wine club experience – period.

Let me first acknowledge our two new board members Mike Buckley, our new treasurer, as well as Flo Haliburton who joins the Board as one of our Directors at Large. Additionally, I would first like to wish our past, past president Shelley Decker the best of luck as she and husband Neil embark on a new career move in Lima, Ohio. I would also like to thank our now past president Ian Radzichowsky who deftly stickhandled the club through a most difficult past year. Thanks to Ian’s leadership, Friends of the Vine (FOV) has emerged from the COVID 19 pandemic stronger than ever having updated our internal controls, expanded our breadth of services, and kept our club relevant in such a tumultuous year. In addition to continuing to serve on our Board of Directors, I am pleased to report that Ian has agreed to take on the expanded role as Membership Director. As well, our past Treasurer, Michelle Burylo, has volunteered to be this years’ Secretary.

So, what’s new? Well to start, our directors are working hard to quickly kickstart our list of FOV sponsored events. The first of which will be our Summer BBQ, which will also double as a special 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. Details of which are included in this newsletter, along with a list of our currently proposed list of events for the coming year.

Again, thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve you. I look forward to an exciting return to normalcy.

George Davidson

## OUR 2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	George Davidson
Vice President	Ray Todd
Treasurer	Mike Buckley
Secretary	Michelle Burylo
Past President & Membership	Ian Radzichowsky
Newsletter	Marion Hurley
Director at Large	Doug Crapo
Director at Large	Tara Glumac
Director at Large	Flo Haliburton

## EVENTS

Event	Date	Venue	Organizer
30 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary BBQ	August 22	Winston Golf Club	Tara
Plates & Palates	October (1 or 8 TBD)	Willow Park Golf Course	Doug
Christmas Bubbies	November (TBD)	Cassise Bistro	Ray
Mountain Getaway	February 26 & 27	Azure Ridge	George
Highwood Dinner	March (TBD)	SAIT	Ian & Michelle
Ethnic Dinner	TBD	Thai Si	Tara & Michelle

## VERY SPECIAL CELEBRATION - FRIENDS OF THE VINE CELEBRATING 30 YEARS!

**Friends of the Vine Members save the date!**

August 22 (Sunday)

Come help celebrate **30 DiVINE** years of the wine!

Where: Winston Golf Club

2502 6 St NE, Calgary, AB T2E 3Z3

Time: 12:30-3:30pm

Cost: Members \$30 Non-members \$69

The Friends of the Vine Society is pleased to announce we will be kicking off our 2021-2022 season with our annual BBQ.

Please join us in celebrating this historic milestone for the society. The afternoon will commence with samplings of selected wines from our wine vendor partners followed by a buffet style BBQ lunch.

Kindly RSVP by Monday, August 9, 2021. Register by clicking here:

<https://zone4.ca/register.asp?id=26449>

## MEMBERSHIPS 2021

You can still purchase 2021 memberships that are valid for the balance of the year (December 31, 2021).

Memberships can be purchased here: <https://www.friendsofthevinecalgary.com/membership>, and will give you the opportunity to enjoy discounted pricing to all our events (including the Anniversary Summer BBQ), as well as the benefits of our various discount programs.

Please note we now accept MasterCard and Visa. The charge will show up on your credit card as a charge from Zone 4.

## “THE STORY OF A LITTLE WINE CLUB THAT COULD”

*... As shared by Donna Radzichowsky (with tribute and love to Walter)*

Like most incredible, rewarding, and successful things in life, the Friends of the Vine wine club started as an interesting idea, was fueled by a need and a love of something special, had a perfect storm of circumstances happening at the time. However, it was kept going primarily because of the dedication, hard work knowledge and perseverance of its primary founder, Walter Radzichowsky.

The story, as I remember it, goes like this ...

Walter was relatively new to Calgary, having been transferred here in the late 1980s for work. He had a great interest in the hospitality business with tentative plans to own a B&B in retirement so, he signed up at SAIT to take a Hospitality Management Certificate. He took a bicycle tour of the Bordeaux wine region around that time as well and invariably developed a keen interest in quality wines, wine-making, and good food.

Will Hlymbicky, who was Willow Park's wine expert at the time, Craig Matthews a friend, Walter and two other friends, whose names have unfortunately slipped my mind, got together for a glass of wine and an evening out.

One was a fellow, who Walter worked with, who also wrote plays and short stories on the side. Interesting note, he wrote a Murder Mystery for the Friends of the Vine in the first few years, called 'The Case of the Lost Lafite.' The event was held at the Deane House. In those days we were able to take over the whole house, with the 'body' and the Case of Lafite in the attic! It was an amazing event!

The other individual was Walter's SAIT Hospitality instructor who was so knowledgeable about wine and very supportive and helpful with the wine choices and pairing.

This motley crew of great enthusiasts drank a few too many bottles of good wine that night and got really excited about how great it would be to start a wine club in Calgary.

Walter, the key organizer, recorded everything on a proverbial 'paper napkin,' held them to their word, arranged for another meeting, and the Friends of the Vine was born.

Unfortunately, I have never found the original 'paper napkin,' but from what Walter told me those original founders wanted some key things. They wanted it to be accessible to as many people as

possible who were interested in learning about and drinking good wine, in a relaxed, social atmosphere, that was fun.

Now it's the spring of 1991 and Walter and Donna meet. He was pretty suave and debonair, and I remember well his words, "Would you like to be my social director?"

As the first social director, I remember organizing a German wine tasting in an atrium in the northeast of Calgary. We had sausage and sauerkraut, potatoes, an um pa pa band player, and a variety of German Rieslings. It was the first event pairing the food with the wine of the country, and people really enjoyed it.

At this point the club was very informal and consisted of a bank account, Walter the treasurer and key organizer, me, and the few other enthusiastic people. In the next 2-3 years the original group splintered off into other life pursuits, or moved away, but Walter kept going. We recruited new volunteers to help us. He developed his knowledge of wine, relationships with wine merchants, restaurant owners and wine stores. New members like Phil and Goretta Lo came on board, I met Goretta at my son Brandon's school and now 29 years later they are the longest standing members of the club, besides myself.

We tried to be more creative and did questionnaires to find out what people wanted. We started organizing a few events in restaurants, pairing the wine with the food.

People from the club started buying more, and better quality, wine. Although Walter used to often say "The value of the wine is in the bottle and how people enjoy it and not in the price!" However, some merchants and stores took notice and, with a little persuasion from Walter, agreed to give a small discount. Today the discount program is a key part of the membership.

The club starting hosting between 4-6 events a year depending on volunteer's time and availability, concentrating on giving people the best wines possible for the price. Even today, the events focus on 50% wine education and 50% social and fun, as the original founders wanted. This basic tenet of education, socializing, and good wine became the framework for the mission statement of the club, when it became an official non-profit association in 2003.

About 15 years after the club started, Walter and I realized that it was a busy time for us in our own lives and we needed others to take more leadership roles, with Walter always remaining in a position on the board.

To remember some is not to forget others, who have volunteered in any capacity and have given generously of their time, contributing to the success and continuation of the club over the past 30 years. Some are still members, some unfortunately have passed away, and some have had to move on for a number of reasons, but their contribution is recognized and appreciated.

Dave Olson, Treasurer for 20+ years and wife Sheryl; Doug Crapo, past President and long-time member who has worked diligently and tirelessly in so many capacities for years and wife Judy Hunt; Conrad Porth, past President, and wife Mary, the third longest standing members. Brian Smith, past President who introduced Tara Glumac, a board member for 15+ years; Maryanne Smith; Boyd Russell,

past President, and wife Gayle; Joe Pellan, past President and wife Vicki Yamamoto; John Nixon, past President and wife Lynn; Shelly Decker, past President and her husband Neil Murdoch; and Ian Radzichowsky, our current past President.

With new Presidents, came new creative events, which combined with the old, continue in some form or another today and have stood the test of time. I only name a few key events...

- The Wine Weekend started at the Rimrock Hotel in Banff, lasted for 11 years then went to the Post Hotel in Lake Louise, the Chateau Lake Louise, and the Azuridge Estate Hotel in Priddis.
- The Champagne Brunch at the River Cafe, the Ranche, and most recently Casisse Bistro.
- The Summer BBQ
- The SAIT Highwood Dining Room
- The Christmas party at the Petroleum Club

New Presidents, Board and Club Members have a rich history behind them and all the challenges and successes of those in the Past. I know they will do their very best to continue the warmth, camaraderie, true love for and education about wine that was the original mission of the club and will have fun taking it into the future!

## WHO DOESN'T LOVE A DEAL?

One of the advantages of *Friends of the Vine* membership is the convenience and incredible savings of our discount programs. We work with the leading wine stores in the Calgary region to arrange these privileged discounts, typically on ALL items in the stores except sales items. The savings on even one case of wine pays your FOV membership for that year – what a deal!

Simply show your FOV membership card at the till. Most stores will record your information and key future purchases to your phone number. While you are there, sign up for their email sales programs. What a great excuse to visit these stores and view the best selection (and prices) in Canada. Our current retail partners are:

- Craft Cellars
- Crowfoot Liquor Stores (all locations)
- Kensington Wine Market
- Highlander Wine & Spirits (all locations)
- Market Wines
- Metrovino
- Richmond Hill Wines
- Rocky Mountain Wines/Spirits/Beer
- Willow Park Wines & Spirits (main location)

Each store has a different personality and focus – visit them all and check them out. Discount privileges vary by store and are subject to change. One example discount program is Highlander Wine & Spirits Corporate Wine Club Program for *Friends of the Vine*. This program offers a curated selection of wines

at exceptional values, available exclusively to Corporate Program participants through email and online purchase. Wine club offers are emailed out on Mondays.

Discounted pricing will be provided to participants when shopping in-store at any of their 9 stores, 8 of which are in Calgary and include Bin 905, plus their newest Highlander location in West Edmonton, beside the Italian Centre Shop. Discounted pricing is offered on regular priced wine, spirits and beer and is calculated at cost + 16%. On average, retail pricing on wine in Alberta is calculated at cost + 50%, so cost + 16% provides a significant discount. Most often the wine discount will work out to 20-30% off on regular priced wine and up to 15% off on regular priced spirits and beer. When shopping online, pricing is calculated at 20% off on regular priced wine and 10% off on regular priced spirits and beer.

To join, just sign up at [sales@highlanderwine.com](mailto:sales@highlanderwine.com) prior to shopping in-store or online. Please make sure to select *email* when using the sign-up link. *Friends of the Vine* should be entered into the *Company* field on the sign-up page.

This Corporate Program is in addition to their regular Tuesday/Thursday online sales program. For that program you sign up in-store.

***Need a gift for that hard to buy for person? What better way than with a Friends of the Vine membership giving them the privilege of these discounts?***

Reminder...

**A GREAT WAY TO  
PROTECT YOURSELF  
FROM THE SUN IS  
DRINKING WINE IN THE  
SHADE.**



Failing that ...



**PUT A GLASS  
OF WINE IN  
EACH ROOM  
OF YOUR  
HOUSE AND  
CALL IT A  
WINE TOUR.**