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Grapes & Grains Growler July 2025



We're gearing up for ACI International! It's not too late to sign up for the G&G luncheon or join the waitlist for the Mega Tasting!

From the Desk of G&G President Mike VanBuskirk

Hello, Grapes & Grains Family,

Tammy and I have had an incredible time serving as your 2024-25 President and First Lady. It has been a year filled with great connections, meeting new members and reconnecting with old friends throughout the G&G family. As our term comes to a close, we are excited to pass the torch to the next leadership team.

Steve Turley and his wife, Cheryl, will step in as your new President and First Lady. With three years of experience on the Executive Board, Steve brings a wealth of knowledge and insight that will be invaluable as we move forward. I would also like to extend my deepest thanks to the current Board for their unwavering support throughout the year. Your dedication has made all the difference.

Reflecting on my time as President, one thing stands out above all else: the incredible support I have received from friends like David Lorenz. From day one, David has been by my side—offering wisdom, guidance, and a helping hand whenever I needed it. Whether it was brainstorming new ideas, navigating tough decisions, or just being a sounding board, he was always there. His support went far beyond what I could have hoped for, and I truly could not have done it without him.

As our Immediate Past President, David will be stepping down from the Board this year. His leadership, insight, and friendship have been immeasurable, and he will be greatly missed. If you see him at International, be sure to say hello and thank him for his many years of service to our club.

We invite you to join us at the upcoming ACI International Rally, where you will have the chance to meet our new officers. The leadership team will be officially installed right after our BBQ luncheon on Thursday, August 28th. We will also present the “State of the Club” during lunch, followed by our annual business meeting and the installation ceremony at 12:30 PM. Even if you are not attending the luncheon, we’d love for you to join us for the meeting and ceremony.

Looking ahead, we are already working on our 2026 rally schedule. If you are interested in hosting an official Grapes & Grains rally, please reach out to an Executive Board member or your regional representatives.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone in York!

Cheers,
Mike



Our current 2025 G&G Executive Board attending the Sip of Kentucky II in May.
From left to right: 2nd VP Cynthia Karkoska, President Mike VanBuskirk, 1st VP Steve Turley, Treasurer Cindy Schwefel, Webmaster Matt Marquand, Past President David Lorenz, Corresponding Secretary Priscilla Harrell, and Recording Secretary Leonard Huff.



G&G Mega Tasting 2025

SOLD OUT!

It's almost time for International in York, PA which also means it's time for Grapes & Grains premier annual event, the Mega Tasting. This event is officially **SOLD OUT** but cancellations do happen so please [join the waitlist](#) if you are interested in attending. Come experience *The World's Largest Speakeasy* at this year's Mega Tasting and be prepared to be amazed. See you on Monday, August 25th from 4:00 to 6:00 PM at the Memorial Hall West.

G&G Luncheon and Annual Business Meeting 2025

In addition to the Grapes & Grains Mega Tasting, members also have the chance to connect with other members at International during the Grapes & Grains luncheon on Thursday, August 28th from 11:30 to 12:30 PM. Join us for lunch to learn more about the "State of the Club" and afterward from 12:30 to 1:30 PM, for our annual business meeting and installation ceremony for new officers. We hope to see you there!

The cost of the luncheon is \$25 per person and [registration is still open](#).

From Past President

David Lorenz

Greetings to all our Grapes & Grains members,

It is hard to believe that I am submitting my last contribution to the newsletter as a member of the Executive Board. Three years has gone by so fast! We have grown from a membership of less than 100 BRNs to roughly 1,000. Having been an

attendee at the very first Grapes & Grains rally of less than 20 rigs and then a member of the board supporting the transformation and growth of the club has been a great privilege. Our Executive Board has evolved into a cohesive group of professionals donating their time and talent to build the largest Intra-club in ACI. We have supported and hosted Rallies in all 4 corners of the Continental US and even one in Canada this summer. There have been two caravans created from our shared interests of grapes and grains. Our Mega Tasting event at the International Rally is one of the most popular and well attended offerings each year. Working with and meeting so many of our Grapes & Grains members, many who have become dear friends, has been a true blessing to my life. I look forward to many more years of Streaming with the G & G folks and thank each and every one of you for the kindness and support you have shown.

In closing, I will take one more opportunity to encourage each of you to move from the sidelines and share your talents and energy with the club. With our ever-growing membership, we need more and more rallies. The board is here to support you in turning your ideas into a memorable event. We have created templates for planning and have implemented a host reimbursement program. Yes, it is work, but I will tell you from firsthand experience, you will be host to the kindest, most joyful and gracious attendees you have ever met.

Thank you all for being a part of this intra-club and the memories it has brought to my life. I hope to meet each of you somewhere down the road.

Cheers,
David Lorenz

The Sip of Diamond Valley



Doug and Carol Whiteside Host First Grapes & Grains Rally in Canada

The Sip of Diamond Valley

By Steve Turley, Grapes & Grains First VP

Taking on the task of hosting a Grapes & Grains rally is no small endeavor, but Doug and Carol Whiteside decided they were all in. All in for not only hosting their first rally, but hosting the first-ever Grapes & Grains rally in Canada. A tall task that turned into a big success. So much so that the organizers of the Calgary Stampede Rally believe the Sip of Diamond Valley contributed to additional interest in their rally, and have asked that Grapes & Grains do it again next year!

After meeting twenty new Grapes & Grains friends at last year's Sipping Across Missouri Caravan (Led by Dave and Denise Lorenz), Doug and Carol began thinking of what they could host back home in Canada. The idea that they knew their home area extremely well, combined with an already-established national rally at the Calgary Stampede spawned a brilliant idea: The Sip of Diamond Valley.

According to Doug, "The Sip of Diamond Valley rally was held as a prelude to the National Event, Calgary Stampede Rally. It included an initial information-gathering, 'getting to know you' session and a meal at the Aspen Crossing Campground. A one-day bus trip to the venues mentioned above followed this. The purpose of the rally was to provide Grapes and Grains Stampede Rally participants with an opportunity to socialize and experience Alberta's rural life. It was also an opportunity to sample local beers and spirits. Overall, the feedback on the rally was

quite positive. Participants enjoyed the opportunity to socialize with Grapes and Grains Intra-club members, adding to their Stampede rally experience."

Even having trepidations about living up to the quality standards set by previous Grapes & Grains events, Doug and Carol felt their extensive local knowledge could provide an amazing experience. In addition, the remote location and crossing an international border presented obstacles to planning and executing a high quality event. To overcome this obstacle, Doug and Carol provided an abundance of information to prospective attendees regarding available activities, ensuring plenty of fun for everyone. Doug explained, "A large number of participants travelled a significant distance to attend these two rallies. Copies of the information emails can be provided upon request. Having hosts who are familiar with the area and providing area information well in advance is, we believe, of significant value to the participants."

Doug and Carol also mentioned how much the Grapes & Grains "Rally Template" made planning and communicating so much easier. Doug mentioned he just collected his ideas and typed them into the template and ended up with a finished product that was used to communicate directly with all attendees. He also mentioned the Stampede organizers loved the template and may have tried to poach it to help with their rally organization.

*** Note from author: The Grapes & Grains Rally Template is a set of tools we have created to assist rally hosts organize and execute Grapes & Grains rallies. If you are interested in hosting a rally, contact any Grapes & Grains officer or Regional Representative to obtain a copy.*

Rallies are a lot of hard work. There is no way around that. But we wondered if Doug and Carol were able to have fun during the rally. Or did they work the whole time? Doug said they undoubtedly had a great time and were able to enjoy the experience. Doug felt he was much more at ease during the rally than other hosts he has seen. The enjoyment was certainly because of the excellent planning, but Doug says hosts should always prepare for issues, and be willing to adjust on the fly.

Doug and Carol are adamant that rally hosts have to own their rally and be prepared to step up, make decisions and make sure the attendees are having a great time. For example, the bus Doug had rented broke down on its way to take the rally attendees on their excursion. Doug got on the phone and worked with the bus company to get a suitable replacement in short order, and continue pretty much as planned. Even with the mechanical hiccup, the attendees were only 15

minutes late for one stop, and nobody even noticed because they were having such a good time!

Doug also mentions that building relationships with the venues and vendors for the rally is critical. Quickly remedying the bus issue is a great example of how such relationships pay off when it is game time. Another issue we often face with Grapes & Grains rallies is distillery and tasting rooms that are not used to hosting groups of 40 to 50 at a time. Working with the venues and building those relationships helps the businesses get better and makes the rallies more fun. Win - win!

The Sip of Diamond Valley seems to have been a huge success, no matter how you might want to measure it. Some key feedback from rally attendees was:

- The choice of venues was well received.
- Everyone loved the Get Acquainted Meeting (GAMs for all you caravaners). If you didn't arrive as friends, you left as friends.
- In general, Grapes & Grains members love the social aspects of these rallies.

If you are thinking of hosting a rally in your location, you should do it. Doug and Carol agree! Doug says everyone has skills they can put to work for the betterment of the club, and hosting a rally is a great way to help out! When you host a rally, attendees genuinely appreciate the work you put into planning and hosting, and the results are very satisfying. And, without a doubt, you will make new, lasting friendships with more of our great Grapes & Grains members.

We couldn't agree more! Thank you, Doug and Carol, for stepping up to host our very first Canadian rally, the Sip of Diamond Valley!



The Sip of Kentucky II



The Sip of Kentucky Trifecta Wraps up in Louisville

The Sip of Kentucky II

The Sip of Kentucky II rally is now in the history books. The Trifecta of the Sip of Kentucky rallies was a great time. With 28 rigs and 53 people, it was just at full capacity. People made reservations in January, and the rally was sold out in less than a couple of days. Even though the rally started on Wednesday, several people showed up early so they could relax a bit or check out some of the distilleries that were not on our schedule. The opening night featured so many great heavy appetizers as well as a presentation and discussion by Dennis Van Horn, a founder of the Frankfort Bourbon Society. The weather was perfect, and many first time Grapes & Grains Intra-Club rally attendees were given garden flags with the logo and learned all about what it is like to attend our rallies, which are something quite special. Bottle shares continued back at the campground well into the night.

Thursday morning, after breakfast on your own, we boarded the motorcoach for a short drive to our first stop, the Frasier Historical Museum, the official start of the Kentucky Bourbon Trail. We learned about how bourbon started in Kentucky but can be made anywhere in the United States, as long as it consists of 51% corn, distilled no higher than 160 proof and is aged in a new white oak barrel for at least 3 years. The museum was very interesting, and we even saw a Kentucky Long Rifle that was actually a whiskey decanter! The wall of Kentucky Bourbons was impressive, especially the part that opened into the speakeasy bar where we enjoyed some local bourbons.

We took a short walk to the Louisville Slugger Museum where we learned how the world-famous Louisville Slugger bats are made to order for the professional baseball players. We enjoyed a box lunch at the museum before the tour. Then we went to the Boards and Billets Tasting Room where we designed our own customized drinks by mixing different flavors together.

Another short walk took us to the final destination of the day, the Evan Williams Distillery. This tour is one of the most Disneyesque tours on the Kentucky Bourbon Trail. It really feels like you are in that meeting room listening to Evan Williams talk about increasing production at his distillery. The tasting rooms are all unique, from a roaring twenties bar to a 60's bar, complete with a jukebox. Some in our party were able to procure some bottles not available in the gift shop. The motorcoach took us back to the campground for a social hour followed by an outstanding BBQ dinner from a local award-winning restaurant. We had another bottle share around the campfire.

Friday morning came early as the motorcoach rolled into the campground to take us to Churchill Downs for the day. We all had our derby hats and dresses as if it

were the Kentucky Derby. We posed for another picture just outside the museum and were escorted inside for a movie in a round theater watching the horses race around the track. All of the seats swiveled so you could easily watch the action. This was followed by a quick trip to the track where we learned that all horses have the same birthday of the year they were born. This was followed by a buffet lunch on Millionaires Row, with access to the finish line of the track. With mint juleps and old fashioned being consumed, odds were calculated, and bets were being placed. Some were winners and some just fed the horses, but it was a spectacular day at the races. With stomachs full and wallets empty, we walked back to the bus and back to the campground.

The social hour was followed with more pizza than we could eat. The weather later that night would turn ugly as the storm bulletin indicated tornado watches and warnings around us. Luckily, we were spared from the tornadoes and only had heavy rain. The worst of the storms were in Kentucky. Only on Sunday would we find out how close the storms were and how lucky we were to emerge unscathed.

Saturday was a day on our own, with some venturing out to explore more places and some just chilling. We had a pitch in dinner which showcases just how well Airstreamers eat at rallies.

On Sunday, we didn't say "Good-bye" but, "See you later." We stayed an extra day because as rally hosts, you want to make absolutely sure that everything goes as planned.

Part of every Grapes & Grains Intra-Club rally fee goes to charity. Due to overestimating this year's rally fees, this rally was able to not only donate \$1,000 to the Kentucky Tornado Recovery Efforts, but also a sizable donation to the customized Grapes & Grains Intra-Club brick for the new Airstream Park at Jackson Center. I believe that the Grapes & Grains Intra-Club leads all Airstream clubs in charitable donations, which was an important part of our mission when the club was started just few years ago. We will be celebrating our 4-year anniversary in January 2026. Last year, we donated nearly \$7,000 to charities.

Karen and I are very thankful for all of our Executive Board, rally hosts, caravan leaders and our wonderful friends who attend all of our events and help make our club the best and largest club in ACI.

Sincerely,
Karen & Mark Kruer BRN 18757



From Matt's Cocktail Bar



From Matt's Cocktail Bar: *Spring Forward*

Lisa and I have been going through a serious kitchen remodel that started back in November 2024 and has just recently been completed. My bar and my ability to do much experimentation has been seriously hampered by the extreme clutter. We'd moved everything out of our kitchen and two large closets impacted by the construction and our downstairs, basement, and garage were essentially converted into storage space.

But, in the few flat spots I could finagle (we had to wash dishes in the basement!) I started working on a cocktail creation of my own that I've dubbed the *Spring Forward*. I wanted it to be light and refreshing while still being a bit spirit-forward, easy to make, and contain only readily available ingredients.

To accentuate the refreshing and light features I chose gin as the primary spirit but I still wanted it more citrusy and a bit sweet. After several experiments I stumbled across a gin/Italicus combination that was clearly in my target direction but I struggled with a final ingredient to give it depth and a hint of bitterness.

I tried Campari but that wasn't quite what I was looking for but then I saw a recipe for a white Negroni that used Suze and that not only added the depth I was looking for but it also provided the benefit of a beautiful yellow color.

How to make Matt's *Spring Forward*:

Gin: Use any boldly citrus forward gin (e.g., Watershed Four Peel, Tanqueray IO)

Italicus: An Italian liqueur known for its aromatic and lightly citrusy flavor profile, often described as a modern aperitivo. It's made with bergamot, a citrus fruit, along with other botanicals like chamomile, lavender, and yellow roses.

Suze: A French apéritif. It's known for its distinctive bright yellow color and its bittersweet, herbaceous flavor derived from gentian root.

Spring Forward:

1.25 oz gin

0.5 oz Italicus

0.25 oz Suze

Orange bitters (1 dash)

Stir with ice, strain into a chilled coupe, garnish with lemon peel expressed over the cocktail.

Alternative:

1.25 oz gin

0.75 oz Italicus

0.25 oz Suze

0.25 oz lemon juice

Orange bitters (1 dash)

Stir (yes, even though it has citrus juice in it...stir it) with ice, strain into a chilled coupe, garnish with lemon peel expressed over the cocktail.

I hope you enjoy my first attempt at making a cocktail!

Cheers!

Matt Marquand #3044

Meet Your New ACI International Officers

Last month, the ACI International Board of Trustees announced the election of the new International Officers. Congratulations to the new Officers and 2025-2027 Executive Council.

International President



Jenifer Schnettler

International Vice President



Jan Heavener

International Secretary



Kendall Felder

2025-2027 Executive Council

Kendall Felder	Dendy Jarrett	Millie O'Donnell
Bill Hamblin	Kenneth Johansen	James Schaal
Jan Heavener	Rachael Miller	Jenifer Schnettler

Upcoming Rally & Event Lineup 2025-2026

Sip of Pennsylvania - August 14 - 18 ([Click](#) for more details)

Sip of the Finger Lakes II - Sept. 25 - 28 ([Click](#) for more details)

Sip of the Mitt, Michigan - Oct. 8 - 12 ([Click](#) to join Waitlist)

Sipping Across California Caravan - Oct. 11 - 18 ([Click](#) for more details)

Sip of Calistoga - May 21 - 26, 2026 ([Click](#) for more details)

Don't see what you are looking for? Host a rally!

Contact gandgpresident@gmail.com



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