

THE SPOKES SPEAK - GEARED TO SERVICE

Rotary Club of the North Fork Valley

POB 1543, Paonia, CO 81428

WEB SITES: www.rotary.org www.rotary5470.org www.paoniarotary.org

Meeting Thursdays at Noon in the Paonia Town Hall

District 5470

Club 1180 - Chartered 12/20/22

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LAST MEETING: September 26, 2019

Visiting Rotarians: none

Key Guest: Marsha brought Corrie Stroud who is co-owner of Valley Care. Corrie mentioned that Valley Care is moving to a home next to Wink Wink. The new Key holder is Deana. (Deana will be in Rome from now until November 1, 2019.)

Other Guests: John Coombe brought Clinton Clock a previous Rotarian in Paonia for 28 years and former President

Two new members were inducted today:

- Betsy introduced Nick Lypps, a 35-year member of Crested Butte Rotary, whom she will be sponsoring. Nick is renovating a 1904 home in Paonia.
- James reintroduced Annette Choszyk, whom he will be sponsoring.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Evan – Public Input Process of Master Plan
First public input meeting tonight 6:00
Will draft survey after meeting. Will be available on-line or can request copy.

PROGRAM: Growing Wine Grapes in the North Fork Valley

John introduced Brent Helleckson who will be talking about the knowledge he and his wife have gleaned from 25-years of grape growing and wine. Brent mentioned that he was a Rotary Scholarship recipient and a recipient of the 4-Way Test Award.

He and his wife purchased the property in 1994 from Plum Creek. They built their home and cellar and decided to start growing grapes. He dispensed the following kernels of wisdom...

Kernel 1: High elevation and intense sunlight cause grapes to grow very differently.

Kernel 2: Growing high quality Vinifera wine grapes in the North Fork is hard; you have to learn to prune differently and water stress is common.

Kernel 3: Growing high quality Vinifera wine grapes in the NFV is easy (Rarely)

There are fewer diseases

Fewer pests

Most pests are easily controlled except Crown Gall & Phylloxera. Phylloxera came over in the early 1800s and are aphids that live on the roots of the vine.

Kernel 4: There are at least 3 distinct kinds of “cold” in the NFV.

Typical spring and fall frosts

Mid-winter low

“Continental Crash” cold – sudden drop in temperature to very cold. No large body of water nearby to moderate temperature.

“Continental Climate is where the temperatures fluctuate a lot.

They withhold water to force the grapes to think their season is finished—even though the season isn’t finished—so the grapes become winter hardy.

Kernel 5: Making top quality wine from NFV grapes is more complicated than rocket science.

Kernel 6: Vinifera grape growing by itself is not a viable business in the NFV. You must make and sell wine.

Kernel 7: 1 in 1000 people know we grow fine wine in Colorado. 1 in 10,000 know we grow fine wine in the NFV.

Kernel 8: Marketing is key.

Customers can get good wine anywhere.

We cannot compete on price.

We are selling wine wrapped in the experience in the NFV

Kernel 9: Synergy Matters

Wine and food (Mountain Harvest Festival)

Wine and outdoor recreation (Western Slope SUP)

Wine and music (Pickin' in the Park)

Wine and Dine Escape

West Elks Winery Association/Creative Coalition/Pickin'/MHF

Kernel 10: Grape growing and wine making in the NFV is unlikely to make one rich, but the lifestyle can make you wealthy

Camaraderie

Excellent customers

You can make a living in agriculture without an external, supplemental job. Since 2013 Brent and Karen haven’t had a second income—they’ve only made and sold wine.

Q&A:

Q: Is there a market for grapes as edible fruit?

A: Difficult to compete with low-cost producers in California.

Q: Are there differences in grapes grown on different sides of the valley?

A: There are various micro-climates in the valley.

Need a slope so the cold air does not accumulate.

Grapes are grown better on the North side of valley. Near Lamborn Mesa on the South side is not as good. The same is true for orchards.

Q: Have you ever had an ideal season when everything clicked?

A: No, but last year was quite good. This year is looking good so far if there is a long fall. Do not have classic vintages every year like in California. Temperature and water are two variables. Wine grapes need a bit of stress and adversity.

Q: Is progress at Stone Cottage tied to economic growth in the valley?

A: Yes. 800 cases 3 years ago. 1200 cases this year. The number of wineries in the valley has increased from 9 to 12 in last 3 years. \$10M-15M in economic activity is attributable to the wine industry in NFV.

Q: How late is the crop this year.

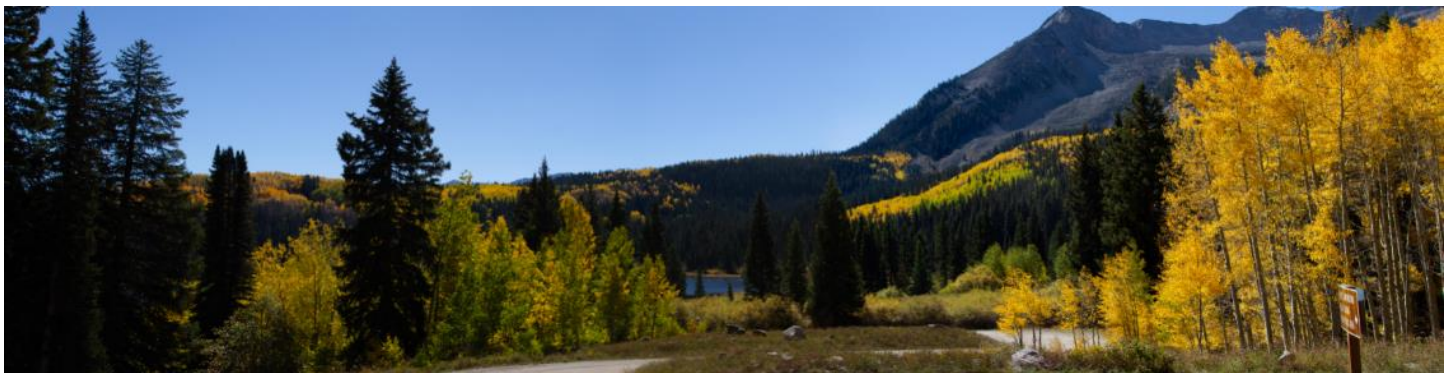
A: 2 2-1/2 weeks at this point. Hoping for a long fall.

Q: Do you grow all of your own grapes?

A: We use all of own grapes and also obtain grapes from Palisade that cannot be grown here.

Q: Would the local wine (from grapes grown here) be better if the wine were kept in a cellar for a while?

A: Depends on how the wine is made. High acidity wine produced in the NFV can withstand longer aging. Wine with lots of tannin needs to be aged to be drinkable.



Lost Lake Campground

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

Date	Speaker	Program	Member
10/31/2019		Marsha and Don Grant's house	Fifth Thursday
11/7/2019			Mike Heck
11/14/2019			Ulli Lange
11/21/2019	Debra Bianchi	Alzheimer's Association	Bob Lario
11/28/2019		no meeting	
12/5/2019	Emily Wassell	Paonia Experiential Leadership Academy	Ed Bliss
12/12/2019			Jackie Parks
12/19/2019			Kevin Parks
1/2/2019			Karri Polson

