

SUCCESS!

It is a great story shared by Dante and Karen about a flattering article seen in an airplane seat pocket half way around the world about the Outer Coastal Plain and Coeur d'Est. It was certainly encouraging to hear the story and gives us all a little more energy to promote our great AVA.



The **Membership Meeting** was held at Autumn Lake on May 2nd following a meeting of the board. Kelly shared the new OCPVA/Coeur d'Est brochures and they look great. Other topics of discussion were mainly about the Wine Industry Project Grant, the frost event of late April and of rose wine that were shared and discussed by several OCP producers. The ideas for the current grant included smudge pots, urban market research and promotion of San Marco and Trentina.



Frost News

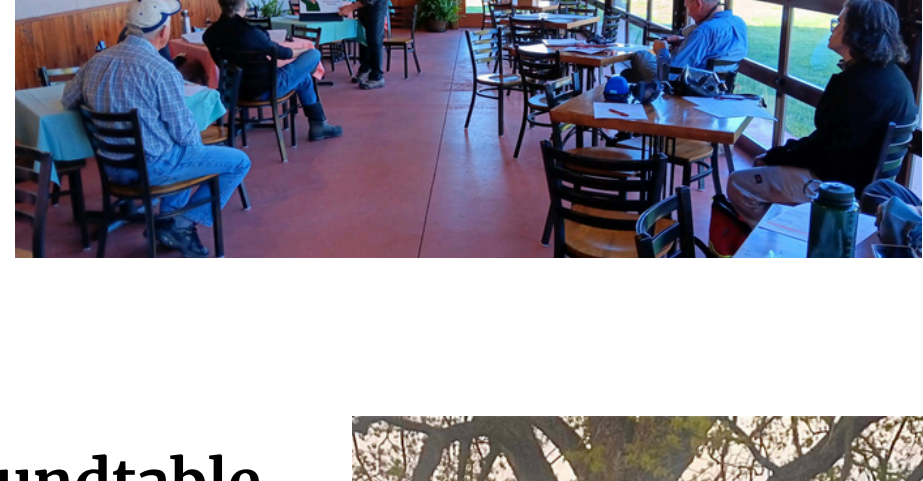
The **Frost Event** of April 25 & 26 where locally low temp near 27F were seen wide spread in the tri-county area. In Williamstown, a low of 28.4F was spotted. In Landisville, 31.2F was seen. Lower temps were



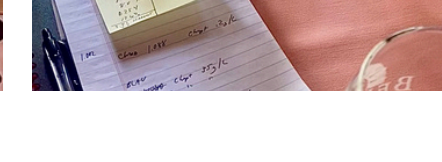
noted in the Winslow & surroundings areas. Several vineyards reported losses, particularly of cold sensitive varieties like Blaufrankisch but many important varieties suffered losses.



The required **Respirator Fitting Session** was sponsored by and held at Bellview Winery on April 24th at 4:00. Jim and Scott walked us all through the finer points of selecting, applying, and fitting of respirator equipment. Then, one by one we were all fitted with this awkward yellow bag and our masks were tested for fit quality.



The quarterly **Wine Tech Roundtable** was held at Bellview Winery on April 30. As a first-time attendee, it was very impressive. Wine makers and winery owners got together with each other's wines and tasted and discussed techniques and processes. It was eye-opening and wonderful to see the cooperation in the wine community.



The **Grant Committee** was formed in the 11th hour as the grant deadlines approached & all involved deserve a bit of recognition as a few late-night meetings were needed to get this done.



Thanks to Dustin & Joe for jumping on the committee last-minute & thanks to Larry for sharing his grant experience. A three-part grant application was submitted and approved to be fully funded!

Did You Know Some areas in the Greek Cyclades like the town of Santorini have maritime winds so fierce, the grape vines must be tied into small basket shapes called koulouri, such that the fruit is protected safely inside the 'basket'.



Don't Skip a Step

I was warned of this repeatedly by my grandmother every time I was sent to do a chore. She'd scold me, "don't throw them potatoes in the pail, you got to move the pail along to where you're digging!" or, "Use two hands to get them beans off or you'll pull up the whole root!". She was right on all accounts and her supervision would keep me squarely in line. Grandmom was born in 1898 (in the farmhouse kitchen) and suffered through the Great Depression so everything mattered and meant something.

It is one thing when you are growing a little produce for yourself to can for the pantry with free child labor, but another world completely when you are growing agricultural products to sell and sustain your family. You need to get the job done quickly and efficiently because there's another job waiting to be done and there's not a big budget for labor and the weather is going to turn on you and the fungus is creeping in... on and on. What you need is a short cut.

The word shortcut has become a dirty word, taking on the meaning of cutting corners or not doing a complete job. I partially agree with this school of thought but raising fruit for wine production has explicitly revealed to me that we need short cuts that are legitimate alternatives to how we maintain and produce fruit. We need to find ways to 'cut corners' and maintain the quality of our product in a balanced manner.

I'll give an example of a micro-short cut we implemented a couple years ago. We are committed to hand-harvest but as the vineyard grew it was clear we could not keep going as we were. We would pick all the grapes for the day and as the lugs became full, the pickers would leave them lie in the middles to be collected later by the young and the strong. Crush pad middles would wait until the lugs were collected and carted up to the winery. Lugs were dumped manually into the crusher. Sometimes there were not enough lugs and they would need to be washed and returned to the vineyard. At the end of the day, staff would need to clean some 150 sticky lugs and store them for the next event. It worked but it was clumsy and cumbersome.

Today, we have half ton bins that ride on small trailers right down the rows as the pickers work. We put a small step on the back of each trailer so the lugs can be dumped from the waist and not overhead. It is only a few steps from the work area to the trailer so it is ok to dump your lug half full.

A few positives of this method are that we get fruit up to the crush pad hours sooner while the grapes are still cool. Fruit is not sitting in the sun waiting to be picked up. The picking staff is less exerted. We only wash 10 or 15 lugs at the end of the day's harvest. The macro bins are dumped into the crusher with a forklift and rotator. We use less staff and less time to pick and process the same amount of fruit.

Yes, there was an investment made in order to do it this way. The three trailer kits, lumber to deck them and a rotator unit for the forklift. I guess any sound shortcut is going to require an investment. The return on this investment came in the first year when you add up all the nickels and dimes and benefits.

The point of this is that just because you have 'always done it this way', it doesn't mean it is the best way. It may have been the best way ten years ago but not so much today. We are taking a hard look at all aspects of our operation and asking a lot of hard questions to try to find some shortcuts. If we find enough of them with value, we just may become a sustainable entity!

Mark Hernandez