



Joseph A. Barreca Sr.



On June 28th to 30th the family of Joseph Barreca Sr. got together for the second annual gathering at Ovenell's Resort near Concrete, Washington. Family from Washington but also California and Georgia were there. Dad's 97th birthday was on June 10th. He loved big family get-togethers and was in good spirits, but a often tired.

In mid-October his health declined rapidly and on November 15th he died in his room at an assisted living facility in Seattle. Several family members were there including myself and my daughter, April. We weren't really able to talk to him but held his hand while he passed away listening to a musician play "Higher Ground". The day before other brothers and sisters were there and although he couldn't speak, he pointed to a poster on the wall for his 95th birthday celebration for "Singing Joe."

We will all miss him and the weekly phone calls he made to each of us. He lived a long good life and for that we are grateful. My 3 brothers and 3 sisters all helped in the many tasks triggered by his departure and for that I am grateful. His death follows 10 years after our mother, Evelyn, died in 2009.

So, more than anything else, 2019 will be remembered for his life and his passing. We are all now orphans but we had parents who from the very beginning wanted to be great parents. Along with the many accomplishments of the "Greatest Generation" you have to respect that. I hope to do as well.

Weather

Talk about the weather is usually classified as small talk. But as a farmer and vendor at an outdoor farmer's market, it is a big deal. In contrast to the previous 3 years, it was wet. Wet and weird. There was only one big fire, the Williams Flat Fire. It was 50 miles away and did not affect us much.

We were initially glad to see some added snow and cold in February after a mild and dry winter. But it kept dragging on and delayed pruning the grape vines, planting a garden and starting construction projects.



The cherry crop was pretty good but a little late. It seemed like summer never really got under way. Every time things would warm up, a few cold wet days would set it back. That was okay for mushrooms in the



nearby Boyds Fire burn. But being nearby the burn was heavily harvested. Huckleberry season lasted a long time but we were too busy to get out much.

Two really big impacts were that powdery mildew and mold

infected

plants that it had never touched before not only in my vineyard but in the neighbors'. With a sudden onset of freezing cold in October, a late harvest became no harvest at all for many varieties.

I was able to try some new techniques using a hydraulically-powered wine press. There is no substitute however for vine-ripened grapes. In two years we'll see how it all came out.



Greenhouse

One big push this year was to erect a greenhouse. Not only will it give us a longer growing season for vegetables, it can house the hundreds of grape plant starts that are becoming a substantial part of our annual income. I applied for a grant from the USDA 3 years ago to build the greenhouse. In the end the grant required a more expensive structure and paid less than I anticipated, but the result is very substantial.

All of the tubing is stainless steel and is held together with thousands of self-tapping screws. Building took time that cut into a lot of other projects. I'm glad that neighbors were able to help on a couple of the most intense days.



Farmers Market

Cheryl and I spent two days of almost every week from May thru October selling wine and map books at the Northeast Washington Farmers Market in Colville. It is a unique experience that we shared with the other vendors preparing the day before, getting up early on market day, setting up, seeing what fate holds in store for us, packing up and unpacking at home. It becomes a large part of your whole social life.



I remember the day in this picture. It was pouring rain most of the day. There was a Ukrainian guy playing accordion under a canopy. (He was very good.) The hard core shoppers came out despite the rain. We sold enough wine to pay for gas. Out of pity the market manager did not charge anyone who set up in the rain for their space. We opened the canopy up under a roof after we got home and hoped that it would dry out.

Cheryl Turns 70



Cheryl turned 70 on November 21st. It was close to the holidays so this picture from a surprise party we sprang for her at a local restaurant has a Christmas tree. It was a fun event with lots of friends.

Critters

As usual we had a host of wildlife visits this year. They included a bear in the spring, sightings of a cougar next door, deer with baby fawns and the eagles with a nest across the road. Some that were not that welcome included a pack rat in our storage shed and 5 squirrels who tunneled into the insulation and then into the interior of that same shed. (The shed crew were all moved without harm to remote locations.)



Wood Rat

Cedar Waxwing

Agricultural Articles

I continued to have articles about regenerative agriculture published in a local free magazine. All of those articles are available under the regenerative agriculture category in the blog portion of my website, BarrecaVineyards.com. I think the topic is more important than most of the political issues we are embroiled in every day. So if you think bacteria, bugs, biochar, mushrooms, compost and cattle grazing might be worth knowing about, check it out. After all, the vast majority of cells in your body are not from your own DNA.