

NEWS

North East family *tells* it through the grapevine

By Christopher LaFuria
 editor-in-chief
 cs15005@psu.edu

It's a hard job. It's a challenging job. But it's a family job. Everyone at the tandem of Arrowhead Winery and Mobilia's Fruit Farm has some sort of connection, be it blood or friendship. This year, approaching the fall harvest, business is starting to accelerate as the tractors roam the fields and owners Nick and Cathy Mobilia get set for another busy season.

"Around this time, we can never be too prepared," said Cathy Mobilia. "But we're doing the best we can to get ready."

The winery and farm has been in the Mobilia since the early 1920s. In the fall months of September through November, every hand at the farm is in some way involved in the harvest. It takes crews of five people and countless other people to prepare the 250-acre farm for the upcoming business boom.

Arrowhead Winery and Mobilia Fruit Farm is located just west of the Pennsylvania/New York border, just south of Lake Erie. Here, the family and the farm employees harvest seemingly infinite rows of grapes, trees of cherries and peaches, and many other fruits to be processed for juices, wines, and other fruit-related products. With over 10 different types of grapes, including Concord and Niagara, the Mobilias are one of the leading sellers to local nationally-renowned distributors such as Welch's and the privately-labeled Cliffstar Corporation.

"We have a lot of our products in our own store, but a lot of it is sent to local manufacturers and businesses," said Cathy.

With the many acres to be farmed and the number of fruits to be picked, the Mobilias remain busy the entire season. With the amount of work that needs to be done, the Farm gives new meaning to the phrase "family business." Each member, from the parents down to the children and children's friends are involved in being farming and picking. No hand is turned away during the endless harvest. Especially with the 26th Annual North East Wine Festival, a weekend dedicated to the celebration of the area's staple, business is extraordinarily busy.

One of the family members who has been a helper since infancy is Nick and Cathy's daughter Jennifer.



Concord grapes, such as these, are the pride of local community North East. North East is famous for their wineries.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

With a fulltime job and a life outside the quaint, picturesque town of North East, Jennifer still finds time to make work easier for the Mobilias. "It is really hard to prepare for all of the work," she said. "Once it is all underway, it goes a lot smoother and ends up being a lot of fun... Until cleanup."

The three of Nick and Cathy's children all lend a hand during this difficult but enjoyable season. Nikki, Jennifer and Adrian have been around the cellar and farm since they were just children. While it may seem like a luxury to have parents as bosses, Jennifer says that sometimes it is actually more difficult. "It's fun having your parents as bosses, but sometimes it's rough," she said. "Parents will talk to you the way bosses wouldn't. But on the other hand, it's good because we can easily make arrangements if we have doctor's appointments."

Cleanup is the finish line for the Mobilia cleanup. But the work that precedes cleanup is what the family lives for. While many people take for granted the joy of sipping grape juice with breakfast or enjoying a red wine with their pasta, the Mobilias

know the routine for production of such everyday luxuries.

Before the juice arrives at the glass, it goes through many processes to ensure the quality and safety of the fruit. It starts with the planting and harvesting. Over the Mobilia's 250 acres of land lies hundred of rows of grape vineyards and fruit trees from which the fruits are picked.

"A crew of five people, the harvester, a driver, two tractor workers- a loader and unloader- and a bin attendant all are part of the harvest," Cathy said. "It takes a lot of people to get the job done."

One of the most well-known farm utilities in town is also the high school team's namesake. The "grapepicker" is more than just a tractor to the town. It does serve the farm well by eliminating the redundancy and strenuousness of the harvest. But the image of the grapepicker is what makes the town unique. After the fruits are harvested, they endure many stages of production from cleaning to peeling to bottling or canning to the selling. One the fruit is picked, it is taken by tractor to

farm's factory where it is processed and a destination is selected. After the fruits go through the cleaning and testing process, they are then sent to the businesses, who will use the fruits to sell to their consumers.

One of the main focuses around this time of year for the Mobilias is the Wine Festival. During the Festival, which lasted from Friday Sept. 28 through Sept. 30, the Mobilias are part of a celebration that includes wine tasting, crafts, cruise-ins, and live music. But do not forget about the most enjoyable spectacle unique to the area- the annual grape-stomping. Here, members of the community, including the year's "Grape Queen," take part in an ancient ritual of stomping the grapes to produce the wine. While many watch in enjoyment, many people keep in mind that this practice was the original method of turning fruit into juice.

Arrowhead Wine Cellars is one of the award-winning wineries that are showcased during the festival. Many more local wineries and cellars are showcased, such as Penn Shore Vineyards, Mazza Vineyards, Presque Isle Wine Cellars and Heritage Wine Cellars, all located in the town of North East. The festival, which is held at Gravel Pit Park and Gibson Park, is only one of the steps in the grand scheme of the weekend. While the winery has employees working the tasting booth at the festival, many others remain at the winery to handle the countless customers who visit in search of the area's finest.

With all of the work that is involved, the Mobilias still appreciate the family aspect of the job. While the job is challenging, it does produce more than just fruit juices and wines. It produces the memories and family togetherness that many families are deprived of. "We can all work together. We aren't just working for someone else," Jennifer said. "It gives us the opportunity to explore new ideas when we wouldn't have the chance otherwise."

The Behrend Beacon is looking for new people who are interesting in writing.

E-mail Lenny Smith at lrs5046@psu.edu if you want to join our staff!

Turning 21: Dangerous and Deadly

By Lea Yadeski
 contributing writer
 luy104@psu.edu

Gordon Walker sinks into his chair as his eyes slowly begin to close. The sound of the music beating in his chest causes him to reopen them for a few seconds. He barely touches the glass to his lips as the contents of it slide down his throat with ease. He slams the glass down on the counter and takes out a red marker as he marks another dash on his arm. He's keeping track of the shots he takes tonight as his friends cheer him on. Happy 21st birthday.

Gordon Walker isn't alone. Every year, more adolescents move from the days of fake IDs to the nights of legal drinking. The celebrations on this day can be dangerous and deadly. As the clock ticks, those who just reach the magical age of 21 consume as much alcohol as their bodies can tolerate. Alcohol poisoning is far from their minds as they strive to black out and hear the stories

from their friends the next day. Many see a hero in the one who makes it to 21 shots.

According to the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, alcohol poisoning is the cause of 317 deaths per year and a contributing factor in more than 1,000 deaths. Still, the threat of alcohol poisoning and even death doesn't stop many 21-year-olds from going to the extreme. Parents sit at home worried and hopeful that their child will make it home safely. "I've been worrying about this night all year," Walker's mom explains. "I'm not sure kids will ever change their ways on their 21st birthdays. No matter how much you try to scare them with stories or facts, they're going to do what they want to do until something happens to them," she continues.

Colleges across the country have tried different techniques to get through to their students. One college sends out an electronic birthday greeting that includes information on alcohol poisoning

and reminds the student to stay safe on the big night, while other schools stick to programs and classes around campus geared toward alcohol awareness. The problem with these programs is the lack of interest by the student body. When asked if he would ever attend a program about alcohol awareness, Walker chuckles and responds "hell no."

Many parents will stay awake until the wee hours of their child's 21st birthday rocking nervously in their seat with a tight grip on their pillow and an ear that hears every creak in the floor boards and every gust of the wind, hopeful their child will walk through the door in one piece. As for Gordon Walker, he didn't quite make it to 21 shots as he hoped. Gordon admits with disappointment, "I was trying for 21, but I only got to 16."

Behrend student continued

see the kind of difference the United Way has had in our own community. Since her 8-year old daughter suffered a cerebral hemorrhage at one week of age, Jane Brady, Assistant Director of Admissions and staff representative for Behrend's United Way campaign, has been able to look to United Way for support. United Way makes contributions to the Achievement Center, which provides therapeutic services to children with mental conditions and disabilities. Personally, Brady has been able to receive speech therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy for her daughter through this local resource,

along with occasional recreational activities.

"Just having those resources available in a time of need [is important.]" explains Brady. "[So is] having somebody to turn to in a situation that is frightening or sad, something you've never experienced before." Brady feels that with this treatment her daughter is continuing to reach her fullest potential. She explains that when a person gives to United Way through Behrend, it doesn't feel like writing a check just to watch it disappear. It all goes right back into the local community, to support our neighbors and friends.



Little Caesars®

BEHREND STUDENT APPRECIATION DAY
EVERY TUESDAY
\$3.99



STUDENT MUST SHOW THEIR I.D.