**The Missouri Winemaking Society Newsletter for December, 2016**
Next Meeting:      Saturday, December 17, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.
Meeting Place:     David and Barbara Anderson’s home
                             521 Taylor Young Dr.
                             Kirkwood, MO 63122
MWS Website:     www.mowinemakers.org
Submitted by:       Steve Kintz

 The results are in from the first MWS Favorite Red Wine Competition (aka, The Redheaded Beauty Contest)!  Bernard Cleve took home top honors with one of his famous Nortons.  Mark Brenner placed second with one of his highly acclaimed Nortons.  Both were 2015 vintages, and this is continued proof that the official grape of Missouri stands proudly in the face of all competition.  (btw, if you are interested in a nice read, The Wild Vine by Todd Kliman is a nice book about the Norton grape; it will make you enjoy it even more.)  Mark had a funny, and sad, story about the making of his entry, and seeing Bernard accept his medal while wearing the just recently purchased beauty contest sash and tiara was well worth the trip, regardless how far you came from.  Ok, that last part didn’t happen because I still haven’t been able to convince them to get a sash and tiara for the winner, but those of you that don’t have a visual imagination don’t know what you’re missing.
 Congratulations Bernard!

**Business:**  All the nominated officers were elected unanimously.

**Program:**  See the attachment for details of the eagerly anticipated 2016 MWS Christmas Party.  David and Barbara Anderson will be graciously hosting it this year, and they live very close to the church where we regularly hold our meetings.   There are lots of details in the attachment, but for those that always seek a short cut, and are looking for a Cliffs Notes version…
·    We are each asked to bring a bottle of wine to share (though I suggest bringing two…), and though any type of wine is appropriate and appreciated, there has been a lot of talk about bringing sparkling wine, which always enhances the festive atmosphere.  So its up to you, but if you take my suggestion, one bottle of sparkling wine, and a bottle of another personal favorite, would be wonderful.
·    Optional – Bring a wrapped commercial wine (or a “premium” homemade wine for those of you that make really fine wine) to be offered as a “Secret Santa” gift.  If you choose to participate, you will leave your wrapped bottle on a table at the beginning of the party, and at the end of the evening you’ll be able to pick up a bottle someone else left.  And if you choose not to participate, you’re not allowed to be a Grinch and steal someone else’s Christmas.
·    Also – and very important, please be sure to remember to bring some tasty snacks or appetizers to share.
·     …and wearing festive Christmas attire wouldn’t go amiss either…

For more complete details see David’s invitation, which is attached.

In the past I have also provided a link to MapQuest or Bing Maps that you could use to find customized directions, but last time I discovered that differences in software, browsers, etc., occasionally produce inconsistent results.  So, not wanting to get anyone lost, I will just suggest that you use David’s map on the attachment, or enter David’s address into the map tool of your choice if desired.  Another alternative, though with possibly a little less reliability, would be to drive to the church where we normally meet, park, shut off your engine, then listen for the festive sounds of people enjoying themselves and follow that sound.

There are a few of you that haven’t been to meetings in a while, and this would be a perfect opportunity to reconnect.  People have been missing you, and you’ll enjoy it.  So clear your calendar for Saturday, December 17, and we can catch-up.

**Future Meetings:**  In January the meeting will focus on “the other red wine”; Chambourcin.  More details will follow in next month’s newsletter.

**Ramblings:**I really think this is a wonderful time of the year!  Hopefully you had a really nice Thanksgiving, and maybe even enjoyed eating or drinking something you made from the bounty of the things God provides on this earth.  The weather is finally turning colder, and it no longer feels like just an extension of fall, though I still have concerns about whether we will have a “proper” winter this year.  I know lots of you like to escape the winter, but I really enjoy the different seasons.  I have a walking path that kind of meanders around my property and I like seeing the changes in nature throughout the year.  Before putting my brush hog away for the winter I also mowed a path down one of the hills that I hope to be able to use tobogganing if the weather cooperates.  I have an old 6’ wooden toboggan that is a lot of fun when the snow is deep enough.  After a few runs down the hill and the snow is slightly packed, you can get some good speed going – goggles are always a must with a toboggan.  And before any of you go too far down the mental path of thinking that I am too old for something like that – perhaps I should remind you that there’s no reason to abandon good, simple fun just because you’re no longer a kid.  I’ve always thought it was a mistake to give up things you enjoy just because of advancing age.  It’s a glorious part of winter to be able to play in the snow as you make runs down the hill on a toboggan, enjoying the crisp air and taking in the beauty of a white blanket softening everything, and then warming up in front of a fire with some of my famous hot chocolate.  Nothing could be more perfect.

Why would you leave something that much fun to the young?

Hopefully some of the more adventurous of you will consider rediscovering your ‘inner child’ this winter.  If sledding/tobogganing doesn’t work for you, there is always ice skating, winter hiking, or simply sitting next to a small bonfire under a clear winter sky and enjoying the stars as “they put on a show for free” (to quote James Taylor (Up On The Roof)), or enjoying any number of indoor things you can do while being warmed by a fire in the fireplace or wood stove such as reading a great book or listening to an audiobook, watching a classic old movie, or listening to some music – there’s lots of stuff you can do to enjoy this time of the year.  (And the hot chocolate is a completely appropriate accompaniment for any of these, I might add…)  One of the beauties about winter is that since it’s too cold to do work outside, you can do all of these types of things completely guilt-free.  So don’t dread winter – celebrate it!  It’s a glorious time to be alive.

Just in case you decide to take me up on one of these suggestions, I have included my hot chocolate recipe below to make your enjoyment more complete.

Steve’s Ultimate Hot Chocolate

SERVES 4
 Ingredients:
4       cups whole, low-fat, or skim milk
1       cinnamon stick
6       sprigs fresh mint
2       split vanilla beans (optional – but good)
10     ounces semi-sweet, or milk chocolate (my favorite), cut into small pieces
Whipped creamChocolate shavings
 1.     Heat milk to scalding in a medium saucepan.  Add cinnamon stick, mint, and vanilla beans (if desired).  Let steep 10 minutes.
2.     Remove saucepan from heat; strain, and return to saucepan.
3.     Reheat milk, and using a whisk, stir in chocolate until melted and milk is frothy.
4.     Serve immediately with a dollop of whipped cream garnished with chocolate shavings.

This is also the end of my run as MWS secretary.  John pretty much had to twist my arm and shame me into accepting the job a couple of years ago – and even then I misunderstood and thought it would just be for a year.  But I have to say that once I got past the resentment of him using my sense of responsibility against me in order to manipulate me into doing this, I discovered that I enjoyed it.  Or at least I enjoyed part of it.  I’m still a pretty naturally lazy and fairly disorganized person, so this was yet another thing that needed to be done at specific times each month, and was therefore an additional opportunity to fail, but I’ve had some fun with it.  Which prompts me to say “thank you” to all of you that have fought back the desperate urge to say, “that isn’t how we do it” to me when I took a bit of literary license from time-to-time.  And I know that a few of you wanted to – ok, maybe more than a few of you.  But I genuinely appreciate your patience with me, and your general forbearance in all of this.  I’m sure God will reward you in some way for that.  (And just to let you know, in case you are still wondering whether it would have been better if you had told me to stop; it wouldn’t have worked.  A somewhat “trying” part of my nature, or so I am told, is that I stiffen noticeably when told what to do.  So it’s probably best that you just try to focus on the positive, and simply be pleased with yourself that you showed so much maturity, patience and restraint.)

I hope to see you at the Anderson’s for the Christmas Party!  Drive carefully.