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## Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers Association

**Hello Fruit Growers!**

I hope this email finds everyone in good health and ready for winter. Its not too late to inspect or install your moose, mouse, and vole protection for your fruit trees or stake young trees! With the colder temperatures, the fruit trees are finally getting the message to go dormant and drop their leaves. I always worry that we'll get a big wet snow before the leaves are off of the trees.

One of the fun things about growing fruit is sharing with friends and family. We had an abundance of cherries (134 lbs) this season so our friends were the recipients of some extra Evans and Romeo cherries. One couple was kind enough to share a couple slices of pie made with the Romeo cherries. The filling was made with only half of the normal sugar and was delicious.

This was the second year our Romeo and Juliet cherries have been in production. We have been very impressed with their sugar content and ate many of them as fresh cherries. I also find that I like them with steel cut oats. I put the Romeo or Juliet cherries in the bottom of the bowl, cover with the hot oatmeal, sprinkle with sliced almonds, and top with a small scoop of vanilla ice cream. Not a bad way to start a day!

Last March, I mentioned in my [presentation on growing apples](#), that I had storage issues with one of my favorite apples. Our Lee 27 apples would develop soft-scald, a chilling injury resulting in brown skins due to being put directly into cold refrigeration. After consulting with with apple experts at WSU, they recommended that I treat the apples like they do for Honeycrisp, and hold the apples for one week at 50 degrees before moving to cold refrigeration. So this fall, I took out enough wine to fit the two boxes of Lee 27 apples heading for storage. After one week at 50 degrees, I moved them to the refrigerator. So far, they are still looking and tasting wonderful.

We pack our refrigerator with apples and eat them until they run out, usually sometime between Thanksgiving and Christmas. We purposefully chose to grow apples that would store well. They include Prairie Magic, Simonet, Lee 27, Carroll (pick slightly early to store), and State Fair (pictured above). Having grown up in Michigan, I can happily say that these apples are as good if not better than the longer season apples being grown there. Just because we are in a short-season climate, doesn't mean that we have to settle for just apple-sauce.

We sort and store the best apples and press the rest for juice. After pressing, I repackage the juice into square quart bottles that are space efficient in the freezer. This year we also froze little 8 oz bottles of fresh unsweetened cherry and raspberry juice obtained by freezing and then thawing the fruit. This gives us some flavor options with the apple juice. The ratio of 1:4 makes for great tasting cherry-apple cider or raspberry-apple cider.

Aside from titillating your taste buds, the real purpose of this email is to inform you of a time change for the upcoming board meeting. The APFGA Board Meeting (Zoom) time has been changed to 7:30 pm on Thursday, October 22, 2020. Please [email me](#) if you would like to listen in on the meeting and I will send you a Zoom link. You can click the links to view the proposed [agenda](#) and the [minutes](#) from April 6.

Best wishes,

**Mark Wolbers**  
**President, APFGA**