

Dave Barrons interested in meteorology, cherries

BY COURTNEY BERTRAND

Special to the Record-Eagle

Who knows whether the weather is going to fare well for cherries? Doppler 9 & 10 Chief Meteorologist Dave Barrons, that's who.

Barrons, who joined the Weather Team in September of 1991, has been an active meteorologist for over 20 years. Looking at his credentials would not indicate that, however: Bachelor of Political Science from Miami University; Masters in Political Science from Purdue University; and Masters in Education from the University of North Carolina.

"I have never had a weather class in my life," admitted Barrons. "Weather was just a hobby."

After doing a lot of emcee work at college concerts, Barrons felt confident speaking in front of an audience. And since his initial pursuits in education were not very lucrative, he thought he would try his hand at broadcasting. After nine months of "knocking on doors," Barrons finally got a job with a television station. He worked as a news reporter but after filling in several times for the meteorologist, it became evident that he had found his fit in meteorology.

"This is my news beat," Barrons said about meteorology. "It's a good job."

Since then, Barrons has made it his objective to educate his viewers about the ins-and-outs of the cherry

industry. Cherries are very susceptible to weather so he found that it was only natural to focus his reports on the cherry industry.

"The cherry industry is big business around here," Barrons said, "it's a natural news hook."

Alan Rios, TV 9 & 10 meteorologist, knows that viewers connect with Barrons.

"I would have to say what makes Dave popular with our viewers is that he appeals to a wide audience. He not only provides the weather forecast for our area, but he can also tie in how the weather affects Northern Michigan's agriculture and ecology," said Rios.

This year, the Cherry Promotion Committee decided to honor Barrons for his efforts by presenting him with the Very Cherry Promotion Award.

"Dave was chosen for his ongoing dedication to reporting weather concerns for the cherry industry and also for his promotion of cherry products," said Judy LaCross, director of the Cherry Promotion Committee. "He is always very supportive of farmers and fruit growers."

Barrons says his interest in the cherry industry started when he was young.

"We always summered in the fruit belt. My father was very involved in agriculture. He was an agronomist (field crop production and soil management) and directed research and development for Dow AgChem,"

said Barrons. "I grew up knowing more about agriculture than most suburban kids."

His televised agricultural commitment started in the early '80s with a 13 part series on the northwest Michigan fruit industries. The series ranged "from cherries to raspberries, to exchange students in horticulture from England, to news about cherry and apple production."

Barrons also contributes to the cherry industry on his own time. A few years ago, he was invited to participate in his hometown of Suttons Bay's Rotary Cherry Initiative. The Initiative is a plan to keep the rural character of Leelanau County. He wrote, produced and spoke in two videos introducing the region and products to attract interest in the cherry industry.

Every year, Barrons speaks live from the Cherry Festival. He said that he likes to take this time to show viewers the agricultural side of the festival.

As for the promotion of cherry products, Barron's interest stemmed into his own line of cherry salad dressing. After speaking so much about the sweet fruit, Barrons decided it was time to start "sticking his own feet in the water."

About four years ago, Barrons created a cherry honey salad dressing. He recently stopped distributing the dressing because marketing it was too time-consuming and he wanted more time to dedicate to his career and his elderly parents.

Cherry Memories

I was on the Board of the Cherry Festival for years, and my favorite story is about the Coronation Ball held one year at the Resort. I had WLDR ask some questions of the finalists and tape them, unbeknownst to the contestants. I also had their families send me pictures of them while they were growing up. Glen Peterson did the taping, and as each gal was introduced, they stood up in the spotlight and as they slowly walked up, the huge screens had their pictures, past and present, and their voices. It was awesome. They all loved it, and the former queens who were there wished it had been done during their time. Also, when I was a little girl, St. Francis had a float. Believe me, the floats then were primitive. The theme was holidays and ours was Thanksgiving. I have a black and white picture with me, my brother Patrick, Roberta Garthe and Gary Harpe. It's still a scream.

Susie Janis, community philanthropist and activist

Junior Royal marshal's dogged determination

MELANIE TACOMA

Record-Eagle staff writer

Riding at the front of the Touchstone Energy Junior Royale Parade on Thursday, July 10, will probably be one of the easier activities that Lindsay Baccus, 17, has participated in the past few months.

Baccus, who will be a Touchstone Energy Junior Royale Parade Marshal this year, spent two months in Alaska training and participating in the junior Iditarod, a 172-mile dogsled race. One of her dogs will join her in the parade.

"We went to Alaska the second week in January, and stayed until the second week

in March," Baccus said. "We were the only team from Michigan. Everyone else was from Alaska — we were the only out-of-towners."

Baccus placed 12th out of 18 teams. After the race, she and her family stayed to watch the full Iditarod, which stretches from Anchorage to Nome, a distance of over 1,000 miles.

In Alaska for two months, Baccus did all of her schoolwork over the Internet. When she finishes high school, Baccus plans to go to Baker College and get a vet tech degree, then perhaps to go on and get a veterinarian degree.

In the meantime, she is caring for and training her 24 dogs, as well as teaching an obedience class. She would

like to participate in the Iditarod after college, but has no plans to return to Alaska.

"I plan to take it easy this year, and mostly do races around Michigan," she said.

Baccus explained that she loves every aspect of dogsled racing, both the animals and the race itself.

"I have a thing with dogs, I guess," she said. "They're my buddies. I have two house dogs that lead the team and they go everywhere with me."

"There's just something about being with the dogs, you have to train them to trust you," she continued. "It's a good stress reliever; it's very peaceful. When you're training, you're pretty much out there by yourself."

Classic Car and Truck Show set at GT County Civic Center July 6

BY SARAH HENRY

Record-Eagle staff writer

Tires will squeal on July 6 at the 6th annual Cintas Classic Car and Truck show.

Patrons to the National Cherry Festival will be able to observe classic cars such as a 1957 Olds 98 Convertible, a Ford Woody or a Ford Model A.

New to the show this year is a Motorcycle Division featuring Original, Restored and Modification classifications. All motorcycle entries will be judged along with the automobile divisions.

The show is from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Civic Center in Traverse City.

Antique, stock and modified classes of automobiles are eligible to participate, and each entry must register either in advance for \$12 or at the show for \$15.

Check-in will be from 8-11 a.m. and trophies will be awarded in 38 classes at 3:30 p.m.

For event and registration information, call 947-4230.

The Classic Car and Truck Show is presented in cooperation with ABC 29&8 and the Fox Radio network.