

NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

MEN'S CLUB NEWS

February, 1998

School ~ Church ~ Community

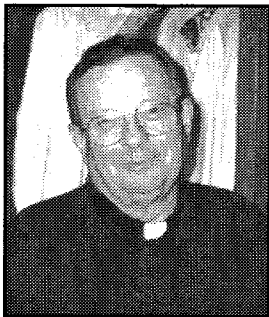
Issue Two

Nativity's Men's Club

“Men of the Year”

Most of the work done by the Men's Club isn't real glamorous. We all have our fun but most of the hours are spent behind the scenes stuffing envelopes, making coffee, and lugging Christmas wreaths around in subzero temperatures. So it is very appropriate that in our inaugural selection of the Nativity Man of the Year (or in this case, Men of the Year), that the honor falls to two quiet Irishmen who have silently gone about the work of performing God's business in our Parish.

Father John Kelley was born in Aberdeen South Dakota. He attended Crosier Seminary and was ordained in 1959. He taught and acted as busi-



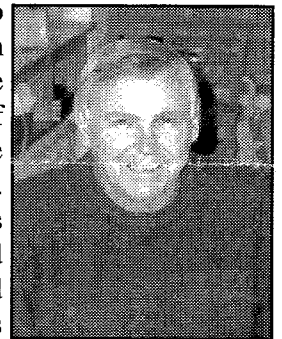
ness manager at Crosier and served as provincial procurator of the Crosier Province of St. Odilia from 1972-

83. In 1977 he joined the Nativity Parish in what can best be described as a match made in heaven.

Last month Father Kelley celebrated his 65th birthday. In recogni-

tion of this event, and unbeknownst to John, the parish administration started a campaign to raise money for a cash gift. Letters were sent to all parishioners in the hopes of raising \$10,000-15,000, no small amount. By last week the amount raised exceeded \$33,000 and it was still growing. It is an overstated fact that money is no substitute for love and friendship, but the amount that was raised and the number of contributors surprised everyone and made us all understand how John has quietly touched the hearts of so many.

Jerry Kelly was born in New Richmond, Wisconsin. He has been a St. Paul resident most of his life and he came to live and then stay here the way many of us do. He attended St. Thomas College and met and married his wife Charlotte, a St. Paul native and graduate of St. Joseph's Academy. He



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Nativity Men's Club

Sport Shirt Stag

Mark your Calendars

Friday February 20, 1998

7:00 PM

This years very special guest:

Glen Mason

Head Football Coach
University of Minnesota

*Please join us for an interesting evening of talk,
food, cards, laughter and comraderie*

Sponsored by the Nativity Men's Club



liked the college atmosphere of the area and Charlotte probably wasn't interested in living any place else. They have four children who all attended Nativity and later Cretin or Derham Hall High Schools.

Jerry is a Certified Public Accountant and he spent most of his career with the United States General Accounting Office where he audited government contracts. He retired from this job ten years ago. Like many parish couples, Jerry and Char had been involved in the usual assortment of Parish activities including the County Fair and the Men's Club, but Jerry's greatest contributions to our Parish came during his retirement.

Since 1987 he has held positions as the Parish Administrator and Finance Director. In these positions, Jerry has been in charge of just about everything. As finance director he is responsible for preparing all budgets and financial reports. He meets regularly with all of the parish's major organizations, conducts periodic fiscal reviews, oversees the Finance Council, and prepares the Parish's annual report. He has supervised the Parish staff, and coordinates the parish insurance, health, and safety programs, and assists in the management of all Parish organization including building management, the day care, and the school.

These are big jobs but he will be remembered more for his patience, wry sense of humor, and consideration of others. He is described by one co-worker as, "The kindest man I have ever known."

Last month Father Kelley turned 65 and Jerry Kelly retired from his second career. Landmark events in the lives of two classy and unassuming characters who have served us well and quietly enriched our lives. The Men's Club takes pride in recognizing these two individuals as our 1998, Nativity Men of the Year.

Dana Schnobrich

Glen Mason at Sport Shirt Stag

Mark your calendars to attend the annual Men's Club Sport Shirt Stag Friday, February 20th at 7:00 PM. The stag will be held in the school cafeteria. We had a fabulous turn out last year and expect the same in 1998. This year's special guest speaker will be Glen Mason, Head Football Coach at the University of Minnesota.



Coach Mason played linebacker on Ohio State's 1970 National Championship team and shortly thereafter, earned his master's degree in education from Ball State.

After many assistant coaching assignments, which included working under Woody Hayes and Earl Bruce at Ohio State, he established his reputation for turning programs around at Kent State and most recently at Kansas. In 1995, he led Kansas to a 10-2 overall record and a number nine ranking in the national polls. Come hear why it is only a matter of time before Minnesota's football program returns to its once proud traditions. Join us for brats (no dispensation required this year), beverages and a great time provided free of charge to all the men of the parish. This event is also an ideal time to turn in your dues for the coming year. Anyone interested in donating a door prize for the stag should call Bob Stupka at 698-3496, or bring it the night of the stag.



Just ask Darryl

Every year the Men's Club receives hundreds of letters inquiring about its activities or just looking for advice on life's important questions. A few samplings of these questions are provided along with some wise advice provided by our president, Darryl Rongitsch.

Dear Darryl,

The Men's Club really looks like a great organization that has a lot of fun and makes important and meaningful contributions to the parish and neighborhood. How do I get more involved? - Wondering on Wellesley

Dear Wondering,

Wonder no more. If I had a buck for every time somebody asked me this question, I'd have several dollars by now. There are a number of ways that you can become involved. First of all you can come to one of our meetings. They are held on the second Thursday of the month in the Parish meeting room from 7:30-close. Nothing very important ever gets discussed and I think that you will find the time enjoyable. You won't have to make a speech or anything like that and most of the guys are so self-adsorbed that they won't even notice you're there. You can also show up and work some of our events. The Tree Lot has become one of the great social events of the year. Wreath deliveries, playing on one of the softball teams, or working the Sportshirt Stag. The opportunities are endless. I hope to see you at the next meeting. I'll be the one sleeping in the corner. - Darryl

Continued on page 3....

Dear Darryl,

My wife tells me that the Men's Club is just a bunch of loud-mouthed know-it-alls that spend all the money they raise on beer. Please say it ain't so. - Beguiled on Berkeley

Dear Beguiled,

It ain't so...or at least most of it ain't so. It is a well known fact that most Men's Club members are loud-mouthed know-it-alls. This is a personality trait which is revered and cultivated at every opportunity. It's important for all men to appear knowledgeable even when they are misinformed and the less you know, the louder you should talk. Don't resist these tendencies. They're natural - they're an important part of being a man.

Your wife is dead wrong when she says that we spend all of the money we raise on beer. If you look at the financial report in this lewsleter you will see that most of our money goes to the kids. We do fund a few adult activities but the administrative costs are very low and only a small amount is used for the procurement of barley and malt based beverages.

I suspect that your wife has other motivations in making these derogatory remarks about the Men's Club. She knows that by involving yourself in the club, that you, like thousands of men before you, will realize that it is possible to make significant contributions to your community and obtain a deep(almost Kung Fuish) sense of personal satisfaction and!!! at the same time you will have an absolute blast. You will laugh - you will sing - you will be running with the boys. You will be living life on a different plain - there will be no looking back - you will be a "Nativity" man.

I think your wife has different things in mind for you. She wants you around the house where you will be available to perform a multitude of mindless tasks such as hanging pictures, digging up dandelions, and scraping gum off the bottom of chairs.

Your life lies before you - the choice is yours - choose wisely grasshopper.
- Darryl

Dear Darryl,

I am working on a painting of the Oryx in its natural setting in Africa, and can't seem to get the effect that I want, especially in the background trees and grasses. Should I be using a different color or what? - Stumped on Oryx on Juno.

Dear Stumped,

This is basically an African Watercolor Art question and not a Men's Club question per se. However, I suggest you try painting something simpler, such as a cat or dog, and leave the more difficult animals to experienced artists.

- Darryl

Dear Darryl,

I've been playing in the Roger Boland golf classic for years. Every year I continue to have trouble getting the distance from my shots. I am making solid contact, distributing power through the ball, and generally swinging like a wild Banshi. Yet, I am hitting only 25 to 30 yard shots. What gives Darryl? - Baffled on Bayard

Dear Baffled,

It appears that you may be using plastic practice golf balls rather than real golf balls. These are too light and thus will not travel far when hit. Also try acting a bit more civilized both on and off the course.

- Darryl

*If you would like to contact
Darryl and take advantage of his
unique perspective on life,*

Write to:

**Just Ask Darryl
c/o Nativity of Our Lord
1900 Wellesley Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55105**

Business Briefs

Men's Club Bid to Acquire NCCW Fails

The Nativity Parish was stunned last week by news that the Men's Club has been secretly attempting to acquire the Nativity Council of Catholic Women(NCCW). In the biggest media event of the year, Men's Club President, Darryl Rongitsch and NCCW President, Mary Michel, held a joint press conference to announce that talks between the two organizations had broken off and that each would continue to function as separate independent entities.

A weary Darryl Rongitsch stated that, "This was not a hostile take-over, we believe we put together the right package and we regret that the NCCW didn't understand that the Parish would have benefited substantially from their acquisition." Mary Michel responded that while the NCCW was committed to doing the best for Nativity, that the Men's Club was simply asking for too much. "We respect their organization, but they simply weren't willing to negotiate on some critical long-term issues. My organization is strong and committed and if anything we believe this event has increased our resolve to be even better."

The two weary-looking presidents said little else as they dodged past an angry group of constituents and left the Nativity Parish to wonder the whys, hows, and wheres of this incredible idea. What has been one of Nativity's most guarded secrets, actually started six months ago with a directive from the a "high level in the archdiocese." For reasons which are still not totally clear and not being discussed by organizational officials, negotiations secretly began between the two executive committees.

Continued on page 4....

A source, requesting anonymity, stated that, "Over the last several years, both organizations have continued to feel the pressure of their financial obligations and the growing number of events sponsored by the groups has dug deeper and deeper into the available pool of volunteers. Consolidating organizations would eliminate administrative overhead and provide for the strategic use of volunteers. More importantly, the merger of the organizations was viewed as an important symbol for today's youth showing that men and women are standing 'shoulder-to-shoulder' in fulfilling the Church's mission."

After reaching agreement on the major reorganization issues, the Boards of each of groups were informed just after Thanksgiving and most expected the transaction to be completed prior to Christmas. Surprisingly it was a minor point of order that ultimately created a rift which could not be bridged by even the most skillful negotiator. During board meetings, The Men's Club has traditionally offered its members and guests a selection of domestic beers. NCCW meetings have been alcohol free. Talks between the two organizations began to breakdown when the beverage menu for the new meetings was discussed. Next year's NCCW president Sheila Casper stated that "I didn't mind breaking with our traditions, but not for Budweiser. We expected the selections to include imports and microbreweries." An angry Men's Club member responded that "No one is going to tell me what beer to drink" and the rest....is history.

Staffers from both organizations scrambled this week to reassemble their respective calendars and all of 1998 events appear to be back in place. With one exception...Mary Michel announced that this year's "Turkey Bingo" will be conducted under a different venue and has been appropriately named, "Wild Turkey Bingo".

Special report by our business reporter:

...Harold Klemp

WE GET BY WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS.

I want to tell you a little something about a couple of wonderful friends of mine, Ethel Hynes and Mary Ellen Coyle. Ethel and Mary Ellen work for Nativity of Our Lord Parish in the capacity of "Stewardship Accounting"....ah yes, the money.

Anyway, these two women do all of this, "and more than that!" Specifically, they work with the Men's Club Board to help keep track of our money as it comes in, and make sure we get it credited to the correct accounts.



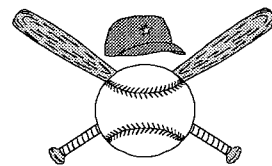
It might not sound like too much, but believe me, they do a big job for us. Whether it's money put into the collection basket on Sunday or sent to the Parish Center for membership dues, wreath sales or the raffle, Ethel and Mary Ellen always do a wonderful job, helping us making sure our money is accounted for.

For the last eight years or so, I've been involved in our annual fund raising raffle. In this regard, Ethel keeps wonderful records for the Men's Club, and can tell us at any given time, exactly how much money has come in of late and how it compares with the last few years, at that same point in time of the project. She is always cheerful about her work, very encouraging, and just a joy to work with. They may be behind the scenes, but they do a tremendous service for us, and I want all to know how much I/we on the board truly appreciate Ethel and Mary Ellen's help.

Dan Murray

Sports Corner

The First Base Coach



"There's one out, we need the run, so don't do anything stupid out there on the base paths, okay?!?!?" or, "You know, you guys are really playing horse*#!& tonight, what's with you? Maybe if we could get some runners on base, we might be able to win this game!"

Can anyone argue with your base coach, especially if it's the same guy who baptized your children, or said your Mass last Sunday? We on "Nativity 2" softball team have the good luck of running to first base, and listening to Fr. John Kelley as he cheers us on, or give us the raspberries as we play another game in the "Slow Timers Church League" summer softball circuit.

Make an error, you get "the look." Make a particularly brain dead move, and you can be assured of some pointed but friendly ribbing by our very own Padre. Afterwards, enjoying a cold beverage at the field, or perhaps a nice bite to eat at O'Gara's, we can always count on the Padre to help us have a fun night. Actually, it couldn't work out better....Wednesday night softball is also Fr. Kelley's night off. You know what? He looks darn good in pin stripes!

Dan Murray

**Come and Get
involved in the
Nativity
Men's Club**
*(It will be the hardest job
you will ever love)*

Getting Involved !!

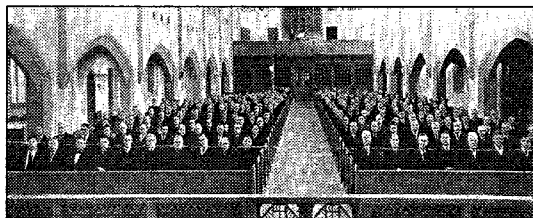
The Nativity Men's Club brought meaning to my life.

(A true story)

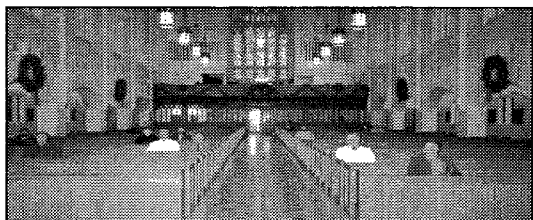
It started out when my twin sons were in 3rd grade. I got a call from someone asking me, would I help them deliver some wreaths the Saturday after Thanksgiving? I was going to be around for the holiday, and I had heard something about the "Men's Club," ...sure I said, I'll deliver some wreaths. I did this for the next couple of years, and then a man on my block, Jerry McElroy, called me and asked would I like to help sell some raffle tickets over the phone? I had been called to purchase a raffle ticket in the past, so I agreed to help work the

little effort, but together, could get a lot of things accomplished. I joined the board nine years ago. My twin sons have long since graduated Nativity, but I am still glad to be involved. I have met some wonderful men, and their wives and families. We have worked hard over the years, raised a lot of money, and accomplished so many great things together. Nativity has been a wonderful place for me and my family. The Men's Club Board has given me a vehicle to give back to the parish and school that means so much to me.

Our meetings are always the second Thursday of the month, September through June, in the second floor conference room of the Parish Center. Meetings begin at 7:30 p.m....come and find out how you can have lots of fun, and give back to your parish and your children's school, through volunteering for the Nativity Men's Club Board. Won't you come and join us? We'd love to see you!



Nativity Men's Club - 1939



Nativity Men's Club - 1998

phones a couple nights for "The Men's Club Board."

Well, I met some real characters. People who were working hard, but geez, they were sure having a good time. Using the "script" to help sell the tickets, I started to learn all about the money that was raised, the computers that had been purchased for the lab up at school, the books, sports uniforms, the Communion Breakfasts, the donut Sundays...on and on, all the good things being accomplished for my school and parish. All coming out of an organization called, The Nativity Men's Club Board.

Just a group of guys like you and me. People who were willing to put forth a

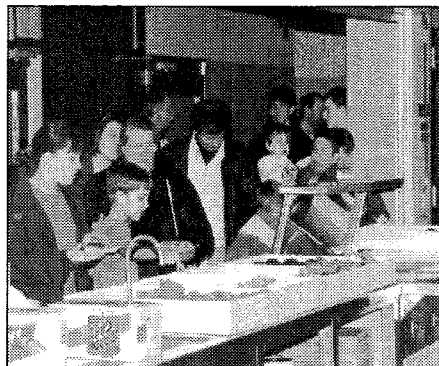
Dan Murray

Donut Sundays A Sunday Tradition

Perhaps the Men's Club should adopt the Used Car Salesman's Electric Blue Plaid Sport Coat as it's official uniform. After all, we sell Christmas trees, wreaths, raffle tickets and ask for dues. For some parishioners, contact with a Men's Club member may seem to always involve parting with some cash. But the Men's Club's support of the scholarship fund, purchase of wish list items (for both the school and the parish) and other uses of the earnings from these fund raisers benefits many groups and individuals in our parish family.

In addition, once a month, the Men's Club gives back to the parish in appreciation of their support. From October through April, the Men's Club hosts Donut Sundays. Donuts, coffee, milk (regular and chocolate) and juice are given to anyone who wants to stop over in the school cafeteria after the 7:00, 8:30, 10:00 and 10:30 masses and have a donut (or two or three).

Okay, okay, at first blush, dollars for donuts doesn't seem to be a great trade. Donut Sundays, however, are much more than simply a way to add another layer of insulation for the winter. Donut Sundays give Mom and Dad a day off from fixing Sunday breakfast. Mere mention of it can get the kids out of bed, dressed, in the car and at church five minutes before Mass starts. And talk about a motivator for good behavior! Fr. Baer recently compared the back part of church to "The New York Stock Exchange" and "a lot



more exciting than the front of church." He obviously didn't make his observations on Donut Sundays, when quiet children heed their parents warnings of "behave or no donuts." Most importantly, Donut Sundays provide parishioners a chance to visit with friends and neighbors, and children an opportunity to have breakfast with friends (followed closely by running around on the stage and through the halls until the sugar wears off).

The next Donut Sunday this year is February 11. Watch the Sunday church bulletin for March and April's Donut Sunday dates. The Men's Club hopes to see everyone there.

John Buckley

Men's Club Honor Roll

The Men's Club would like to acknowledge the following business for the contributions that they made to our organization in 1997.

Davanni's (Bob Stupka)
Coldwell-Banker Realty
SAV Enterprises (Joe Speltz)
Keys Well Drilling (Jeff Keys)
Widmer's Supermarket
UHL Company (Maury Vitek)
Thomas Liquor

NATIVITY MEN'S CLUB

1997-1998

Board of Directors

Chaplain	Rev. John Kelley
President	Darryl Rongitsch
Vice President	Bill Richtman
Secretary	John Buckley
Treasurer	Bob Stupka
Past President	Dana Schnobrich

Jay Amundson
Paul Berrisford
Steve Doughty
Kevin Leehan
Keith Meyer
Brian Moser
Dan Murray
Tim Nelson
Peter Polga
Jeff Russel
Mike Ryan
Mike Skilrud
Dan Thees
Jim Thuente

1996-97 Fiscal Year Summary

Beginning Year Cash Balance \$1,000

Fundraisers - Net of Expenses

Dues	\$6,722
Raffle	14,668
Wreath Sale	13,746
Tree Sale	7,963
Dan Ashton Memorial	2,555
Interest Income	814
Total	\$47,468

Events, Activities, and Gifts

Administration	2,572
Donut Sundays	2,881
Golf Tournament	1,242
Summer Sports Program	4,154
Christmas Gifts	860
Sport Shirt Stag	1,537
Men's Softball	976
Cribbage Tournament	370
Alter Server Recognition	1,178
D.A.R.E. T-Shirts	552
Kindercamp	1,200
Total	16,685

Donations and Wish List Items

Scholarship Fund	10,001
School Computers	10,000
CD ROM for Library	600
Art Room Sink	700
Uniforms and PE Equipment	2,010
Swim Team Pool Time	1,000
Parking Lot Electric	597
Boy Scouts	905
Folding Machine and Printer	890
Dan Ashton Donation	2,555
Risers for Auditorium	276

Total 29,533

Total Expenses and Donations 46,218

End of year Cash Balance 1,250

A Christmas Story



Nativity is a place with long standing traditions: There will be a County Fair every September; there is Perpetual Adoration; two Irishman will always be living in the Rectory; and a kid named Thuente or Runyon will always win the Christmas Wreath sales contest.

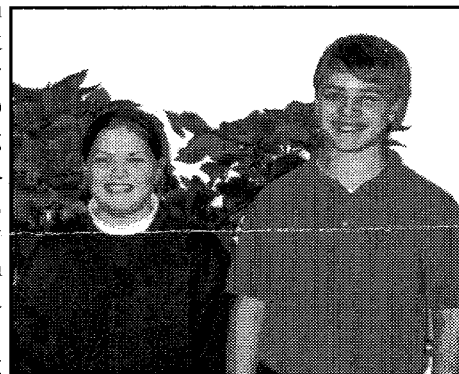
The Men's Club awards prizes every year to the top wreath sellers from the grade school. The prizes have changed over the years, but for a long time one thing never changed - one of Colleen and Jim Thuente's kids always took first place. The Thuente dynasty started with the oldest son Pat who quickly realized the value of keeping track of old customers. Pat kept a notebook with past names and orders, and this notebook, like the family bible, has been carefully passed from sibling to sibling - first to Lisa and now to Greg.

Greg is one of the most endearing kids you'll ever meet. He has a broad inviting smile that conceals the earnestness with which he approaches certain tasks. If you've ever seen Greg play football, you know what I mean. Greg feels the same way about the Wreath Sale and he doesn't take the previous work for granted. A true entrepreneur, he studies the previous year's grade school directory to see which families had their youngest child graduate from eighth grade and he contacts a number of them to "procure" their sales market.

Everything seemed to be in place for Greg to continue the family tradition. That is until he ran into a buzz saw named Patricia Runyon. The Runyon wreath order is the stuff of legends. It usually takes several drivers, preferably with trailers, to get all their order delivered. Like the Thuente's, the Runyon children have built their busi-

ness over a long period of time. Each of the kids, Matt, Jim, Mark, Rob and now Patricia, have dutifully assisted their older siblings with the understanding that some day they would have their chance to snatch the brass ring. Patricia is the last and according to informed sources, the best salesperson (and maybe the best hockey player too). Each fall, mother Chris's address book disappears for a week and come Christmas anyone remotely connected with the family is assured of having a house draped with holiday greenery. Patricia is one of the friendliest and most easy-going kids you'll ever meet, but she's a charmer and she doesn't take no for an answer.

The Thuente's were first dethroned in 1996 when Mark Runyon beat Greg by about \$100. Greg isn't the type who



dwells on failure and in 1997 he increased his sales by about 25%. Unfortunately for Greg, Patricia decided she was also going to make her mark and in addition to the normal telemarketing campaign, she also hit the streets and made money going door-to-door. When the tally was completed, Patricia beat Greg by....\$100.

Next year both Patricia and Greg will be eighth graders but this may not be a dual meet. In 1997 some new names emerged and the Ryan, O'Halleron, and Edge kids might have different ideas about who brings home first prize. After that the Runyon era will draw to a close and the Thuente book will get passed along to their youngest, Laura. If you ever see Greg or Patricia around school remember to be REAL polite - someday your going to be working for them.

The Joy of Cooking

Master Chief Kevin Leehan

This edition of the Men's Club Newsletter breaks new ground with my fabulous column on Eating and Drinking. As all of you readers know, here in Minnesota it is traditional to eat and drink to excess during the winter months, if not year round. I know eating and drinking is big up here, because, down South, where I grew up, everyone is slim, tan and good looking. In the North, particularly Minnesota, everyone is not slim and are, well, rather pasty looking if you know what I mean. But, y'all like to swill, so here we go!

Now, I have been told, by sources, perhaps even reputable sources, that Father Kelley besides holding the world record on the fastest Mass, is a master of the charcoal grill. When originally approached about sharing his insights into these mysteries, he was a bit reticent. He was unworthy to be in the column, didn't have any insights and so on. Finally, after presenting him with an original, genuine, authentic, tooth from St. Peter himself (which I found years ago at a flea market in Delta Junction, Alaska and which has a little book giving the history of this relic and an address where you can send off for more), he said he would give me some tips. We didn't connect before press time (keep the tooth Father) so these are the tips he would have given me, had we talked. Trust, me.

1. Use a charcoal grill.
2. Make sure you light it before you start cooking.
3. When the charcoal is hot, drop the steak on the grill.
4. Say Mass.
5. Turn the steak.
6. Cook two more minutes and serve the steak.

Legal Notice: this recipe results in a rare steak, which can result in food poisoning and/or parasitic infestations. Let the reader beware!

Now to go with this bit of "steak sense", you need a fine wine. For most of you, I recommend Night Train. It has a really cool label and is a type of red semi-wine. Just put it out in the snow to chill and then serve fresh from the bottle. In Saint Paul, it is permissible to drink from the bottle as it is passed around at the table. This saves you the trouble of washing wine glasses and is what most of you do anyway.

For myself, I consulted with noted wine expert Mike Thomas, scion of the Thomas Liquor store Thomas. In his opinion, and for the few educated palates among my readership, there are several Spanish red wines that

would be worth drinking with the steak. Yes, I'm sure that most of you were thinking that all Spain produced was olives and peanuts. Maybe the guys that went to Cretin will know that Spain also produces cork, the same type of cork which goes into wine bottles. The guys from St. John's probably think that Spain was the brand name for the olives or peanuts.

The first wine is from the Rioja winery and is a Codice, which is a type of grape. The second Spanish red is a 1995, Bodegas Sierra Cantabria Codice. Notice that the word Codice appears in the second wine also, this means that it too is made from the Codice grape! Imagine, two different wines, but both made from the same type of grape! Mike told me that Merlot drinkers will appreciate the soft, yet lush, flavor of these two wines. You Night Train drinkers can make either of these foreign wines shape up, by adding two parts of grain alcohol and one part Old Spice to one part of either of the Spanish reds.

This column was written during the last snowfall and it looked so much like Minnesota outside, and my fingers were cold and I started thinking about going South, way South, all the way down the Mississippi to New Orleans (New Orleans) for gumbo. Fortunately, I make a fabulous gumbo and I want to share the recipe with you.

Gumbo's can be made of about anything that will fit into the pot. You can make a fine wild game gumbo with possum or raccoon (be sure and parboil before adding to the gumbo as they are both greasy critters), squirrel and some rabbit. You can make seafood gumbo, mixed gumbo (meat and seafood), why I suppose that you could even make a gumbo with ludefish, but not in my house!

Traditionally all gumbos start with a roux, which is a cooked paste of oil and flour. One cup of oil (not olive, but lard is OK) is added to one cup of flour in a heavy cast iron skillet. You cook this, stirring constantly, for a couple of hours over low heat until it is a deep dark brown, but not scorched or burned. Or you can put the flour and oil in the skillet and bake in the oven at 300, stirring occasionally until it is nice a brown. Or you can do what I do, which is to put the cup of flour in a skillet, no oil, and bake for several hours at 300, stirring occasionally. This roasts the flour and gives it the necessary flavor, without the oil calories (which means you can drink more beer with the meal and come out even).

An eternal source of controversy is whether gumbo has to have okra in it. I have eaten gumbo with and without okra, and I do like okra in gumbo, but only fresh okra tastes right. So, if you have some fresh okra (not likely on the tundra) throw it in, otherwise, don't worry.

Basic Gumbo

Procure the following ingredients:

1 chicken, cut all the meat off bones, cut into chunks, boil bones for stock,

1 pound of andouille sausage, cut into chunks. I can not find the real thing, so I use Widmer's kielbasa and it works fine (parboil for 8 minutes in another pot to reduce the grease, less grease = more beer),
Two cups of cubed ham, or smoked pork chops will work, One quart, more or less, chicken broth, add condensed chicken broth or use the chicken soup base in the plastic jars to get the flavor right, don't use bouillon cubes, they are too salty,

1 big onion, chopped,
4 stalks celery, chopped,
Two green bell peppers, chopped,
2 cans whole tomatoes,
3 garlic cloves, roast on griddle or pan until skin is brown, peel and chop,
3 bay leaves,
2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce,
1 teaspoon dry Thyme,
1/2 teaspoon salt, or less, or none if you use bouillon cubes,
1/2 teaspoon white pepper,
1/2 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper,
1/2 teaspoon file powder, which is ground sassafras leaves and is hard to find. I have mine sent from Dallas. Try a Byerly's or Lunds. This is not really critical to the dish.
Pepper sauce, like Tabasco or Louisiana brands. To be honest, most of you are better off setting the bottle on the table and letting everyone season their own plate of gumbo.

Put a large (2 quart) heavy pot on the stove. Add some oil (1 teaspoon) and sauté the celery and green peppers. When they are a little soft, add the onion and garlic. Cook until the onion is a little brown and then place the vegetables in a bowl with some paper towels to catch the grease. Add a little more oil and heat. Take the chicken and a quarter cup of the roasted flour and coat the chicken with the flour. Add to the oil and let brown. Add the sautéed vegetables and the rest of the ingredients to the pot, hold back one cup of stock. Mix the rest of the roasted flour with the cup of stock and after the gumbo is simmering, pour the flour/stock mix through a sieve (to catch any lumps) and stir until mixed. Simmer for an hour and adjust the seasoning to taste. The gumbo should be fairly thick, like a good gravy. If it looks to thick, add some more chicken broth. If it looks to thin, mix some corn starch in water and add while stirring. Cook for an additional 30 minutes and serve over rice. Splash on the Tabasco until you feel faint and dig in.

Beer is the only drink that really goes with gumbo. I consulted with Tim "The Beer Guy" over at Thomas Liquor and he made several suggestions. For a spicy dish like gumbo he recommended a Summit India Pale Ale. This is a "spicy" beer with extra hops. It also has a higher alcohol content, which helps to cool the palate. Another good choice is Full Sail's Very Special Pale Ale. He also recommended the Schells Pilsner for a lighter, milder flavor.

Until the next column, keep eating and drinking, its your Minnesota heritage!

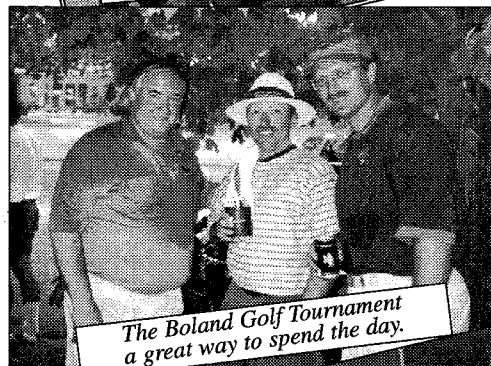
Nativity Men's Club in Actionnnnnnnnnnn



Dan, Mike and "The Man"



The Schneeman Family celebrates a traditional Christmas event.



*The Boland Golf Tournament
a great way to spend the day.*



*Donut Sunday!!
Doesn't anyone ever feed these kids?*



The Boland Golf Tournament at Highland Golf Course



Summer Sports Program keeps on rolling along



*A man with Dreams & Vision
yet very little talent!*



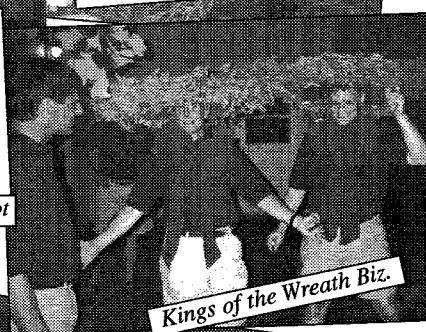
It's very hard to believe that they could find a good tree.



**John Kelley's 65th
Birthday Party**



Proposed plans for '98 Tree Lot



Kings of the Wreath Biz.



Pam Ryan Holds Court at President's Dinner



No Comment!



Boland after Golf Dinner