



A memorable birthday for Dory

What a birthday I have had! It was like it would never stop. Birthday cards, flowers, visits, phone calls, emails and my family together for one wonderful day, my dream of a lifetime in that it was a surprise party in which I had absolutely no reason to believe it could happen. And now I've reached that 95th year, which surprises even me.

As I go forward and as a wonderful aftermath of the celebration, the newspapers seem to keep their hold in that 65 of the nearly 200 cards contained wonderful little notes about the years Dory's Diary was to be found on the pages of The Observer and the Baker City Herald. Oddly enough, now an email has come from someone who wanted to thank me for an article I had written back in June of 2015.

The young man was doing research about his uncle, who died in World War II when lightning hit a training plane over New Mexico and blew the craft apart. All but two of the flight members died, the fortunate ones parachuting before the crash.

The name of the man from La Grande was to be found in my Grandmother's diary in her preparation to attend the funeral along with some of my other relatives, and I needed to know more. None of them were still living so I had no one to ask the particulars. It did lead to a mystery search. What was the man's full name, where was he in the war, why had he died?

His name was Eugene Rochester and he had attended La Grande High School before going off to train for the military back in 1942, age 22 and engaged to be married. He died a violent death and I sought the particulars, then ending up with the story in Dory's Diary in three issues of the June 2015 newspapers as a mystery search.

Now, in 2021, my story had surfaced to the young man's nephew who had written to thank us at the newspaper for the story, and I was still here to receive his message. What a wonderful way in which to bring closer to my birthday celebration.

The story had evidently surfaced through the internet, of which my attitude hasn't always been most gracious, being reluctant to embrace all of its features and learn its demands, but I'm glad in this case that it was there for this young man's family history search.

It makes me wonder if anyone out there in readership happens to remember that story that came out for Memorial Day in 2015. The new information I have received builds the story and my own information even further.

The nephew is related to the families of Snodgrass, Hughes, Geckler, Gerber, Rochester and Taal, which could spread relationships far and wide.

A funny thing, this idea of relationships in this valley. They say we are all related, one way or another. Could it be? I'm a Taal relative, too.

Does this make Mark and I cousins?



John Dusch displays his burgers in front of his Mobile Tailgating Unit in the parking lot before Pitt takes on University of Massachusetts on Saturday, Sept. 4, 2021, at Heinz Field in Pittsburgh.

Food and football are a classic fall pairing

By GRETCHEN MCKAY
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

PITTSBURGH — Football fans love to throw tailgates both big and small before games. Whether it's a humble spread of chips, dip and chicken wings out of a car trunk or a catered smorgasbord feast, the goal is the same: to have a good time while cheering on the home team.

Such is the energy of a tailgate that it's often the backdrop for other important celebrations, like the bachelor party Dave Brandon of Georgetown, Beaver County, threw for his cousin, Daniel Mackall, at the Steelers' preseason game against the Detroit Lions on Aug. 21. Organized at the last minute, it featured a simple menu of grilled bratwurst, chicken and shrimp from Costco with plenty of Miller Lite beer to wash it down.

"It's a fun time. I love to entertain and cook," says Brandon, principal at Western Beaver Junior/Senior High School in Industry.

A few spots down the parking lot, North Side native Lamont Copeland also was taking it relatively easy with a pre-season menu of hot dogs, hamburgers and chicken-on-a-stick. His menu stood in stark contrast to the grilled shrimp, steak and crab legs Marissa Corradini of Somerset was feasting on.

"It's my first time [tailgating], so I wanted to really experience it," she says.

Then there are people like Johnny Dusch, who approaches his pre-game parties with such vigor that you might call him a tailgate fanatic.

The Greenfield resident and volunteer diving coach at the University of Pittsburgh, where he was a standout diver in 1984-87, has been throwing tailgates ever since the late 1980s, when the Steelers still played at Three Rivers Stadium. It wasn't until 2009 that he figured out how to do it right, after running into a University of Pittsburgh tailgater partying out of the back of a Winnebago.

"He showed me how to do it with class," he says.

Dusch then bought a retired 1980s ambulance and turned it into the Pittsburgh-themed Mobile Tailgating Unit. Upgrades included a 20-inch flatscreen TV and onboard restroom inside the cabin. The vehicle with a custom paint job paying homage to Steel City sports teams quickly became a fixture at Steelers and Pitt Panthers tailgates in Red Lot #6 near PNC Park.

It's got such a wow factor that it's been featured on the NFL Network and KDKA TV's Fan N'ATion. The cast of "Rock of Ages" also visited when the show was in town a few years ago. In 2011, the Mobile Tailgating Unit earned him a spot as the Steeler's rep in the Tailgating Hall of Fame, an organization of premiere tailgaters from across the country.

Dusch created a second MTU in 2013 after crashing the original into a wall Downtown and totaling it on the way

to a game. "But we tailgated anyway," he says, noting how all the food and supplies were transported in friends' cars to Heinz Field.

While the old MTU was a vintage ambulance made to look like a box truck, the new unit is a brand-new box truck made to look like an ambulance, with a swing-out back door that allows for easy movement of a gas grill. A side door provides access to a two-room bathroom tent. "And we add new details every year," he says, pointing to the names of the Pirates, Penguins and his various sponsors. He keeps it parked on the street in front of his hilltop house on Montclair Street.

But what really makes the Mobile Tailgating Unit special is the food Dusch dishes up in it before each game. For the Steelers' first home game, he plans to serve his 50 guests five or six main courses, including grilled lobster and steak and mac 'n' cheese with either shrimp or lobster. Per tradition, friends will also nosh on Dave McIntyre's legendary pulled pork, which he smokes the night before, and slices of Mineo's hand-tossed pizza (he's been friends with co-owner John Mineo since they were kids).

"And we'll have two giant containers of the most gorgeous desserts you've ever seen" from Joe Porco's Lincoln Bakery in Bellevue. "A wedding would be jealous," he says of the cupcakes, cookies and other pastries.

Dusch, who's a human resource director at a plastics company, also regularly serves

pierogies, kielbasa and other dishes that pay homage to the city's strong Polish roots.

He loves to go all out on tailgates, he says, because nothing beats a good party. And the people who come together before games at Heinz Field "are a blast."

"It's the atmosphere. We're all like a big team, helping each other out and having a great time."

The moratorium on tailgates in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic was a bummer, he notes with a sigh. "We couldn't do anything, and it was horrible."

There's only one Mobile Tailgating Unit and few of us share Dusch's passion and/or cooking skills. But anyone can create a pretty fine tailgate spread with a few good recipes. We offer four that are easy to prepare, taste great and can be transported from the kitchen to the parking lot without too much trouble.

As my niece Amanda Jandrovic, who supplied the taco salad recipe, noted, "The atmosphere of Steeler Sunday is too exciting not to tailgate. Everyone is hyped up, and it always gives us a chance to see and connect and party with the opposing team."

TACO SALAD

Who doesn't love crunching on a taco and not having to worry that it will fall apart in your hand? This simple salad has all the flavors of a hardshell beef taco but can be eaten with a fork.

"We love it because it's easy to throw on a plate with Doritos, or eat

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Tired of dry chicken? Try some thighs

By JEANMARIE BROWNSON
The Daily Meal

Let's make a deal: No more dry, tough, bland chicken breasts for dinner. Instead, it's time to embrace moist, flavorful dark meat chicken thighs.

Chicken thighs, readily available at most grocery stores with skin-on and bone-in, are an excellent value. Though price varies by region, these often sell at \$2 per pound and can go as low as 89 cents per pound or less. The bones and skin lock in moisture and flavor, making chicken thighs a particularly delicious piece of meat. Use these convenient cuts in the oven, on the grill, in stews or in braises. You can also cook a bunch in advance to have delicious cooked chicken on hand for salads, sandwiches and quick meals.

If bone-in, skin-on meat isn't your thing, boneless, skinless chicken thighs are a great option and might be the easiest protein to cook. Because of chicken thighs' inherent moistness and rich flavor, they are nearly impossible to overcook. Pair the meat with bold flavors, spicy sauces or sweet barbecue. Chicken thighs are incredibly versatile, as these four very different recipes prove.

First, there is a basic roasted chicken thigh. Seasoned simply with salt and pepper, they are a great base for meal prepping. You can also add whatever seasonings you prefer or have on hand; garlic powder, paprika, Italian seasoning or lemon pepper all work wonderfully for a basic bone-in thigh.

Next, a sticky sesame-baked chicken will

make you skip takeout or frozen dinners. Seriously, this recipe packs so much flavor into the chicken and the broccoli that it has become part of our weekly recipe rotation. The sesame sauce can be made up to a week in advance, really reducing preparation time. Purchase tomato paste in tubes for easy measuring and storage. Check the international section of most large supermarkets for black bean garlic sauce. If you can't find it, don't stress; substitute hoisin sauce, sambal oelek or more tomato paste and sriracha.

Supper club-inspired chicken with artichokes and cream makes a luxurious (yet easy) weekday meal. Fresh thyme and grated lemon rind blend with cream and reduced wine



Kristen Mendiola/The Daily Meal-TNS

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Sticky Sesame-baked Chicken With Broccoli and Rice.