

Passionate

For the Pasty

By LESLIE CORY SHOEMAKER

I dearly luv a pasty

a 'ot 'n' leaky wun

Weth taties, mayt 'n' turmit

Purs'ly 'n' honyun

Un crus be made with su't

'N' shaped like 'alf a moon,

Weth crinkly h'edges, freshly baked

'E' always gone too soon!

(*Mining Journal*, March 25, 1971)

On March 20, 1913, in the Marquette Iron Range of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, deep within the bowels of the earth, where darkness is eternal and ore dust penetrates every pore of his body, a Cornish miner shines a lantern on his pocket watch to confirm what his stomach already knows. It is twelve noon. Time to break for lunch. He is too far underground to hear the noon whistle blow. He, unlike his coworkers above ground, will remain in darkness and eat his lunch by lamplight; probably still standing in the same spot he had been working when the clock struck twelve.

This miner, an immigrant from Cornwall, England — known in America as a "cousin Jack" — leans against a wheelbarrow of ore, takes from his pocket a square package wrapped in newspaper, and places it on the same shovel he uses to fill his wheelbarrow full of ore twelve hours a day, six days a week. He positions his lantern underneath the shovel to heat his lunch contained within the neatly wrapped newspaper. It isn't long before the familiar aroma of lean meat, starchy white potatoes, vegetables, and savory pastry rise from the shovel and reach his sooty nose.

In anticipation of the first mouthful, his stomach rumbles. The miner, like all other cousin Jacks will be eating a Cornish pastry for lunch.

The pastry is a portable, well-balanced meal in one package. Wrapped in pastry, its crimped edge makes a convenient handle, therefore requiring no utensils and little or no light in order to consume it — a perfect lunch for the miner in the bottom of a mine shaft. What a comfort and delight to sit down and unwrap your lunch and inhale the aroma of warm crust wrapped around meat and vegetables and savor the taste of a complete meal prepared by loving hands.

Deep ore mining was the work of Cornish miners who brought their skills, sledges, drills, and blasting powder from the mining pits of Cornwall, England, to the prospering shafts of Lake Superior where copper and iron deposits were discovered in Michigan's Upper Peninsula in the late 1840s. Their families brought a way of life that included the pastry, a delectable potato and meat turnover that the miner carried with him and ate with a flask of tea.

According to the Authentic Cornish Pasty Company's Web site, "to the Cornish Miners, the pastry represented an essential part of the daily diet." At lunchtime the miners would arrange for their pasties to be dropped down the mineshaft. Often their wives would make a complete meal of the pastry by structuring the pastry filling in layers so that the men ate the vegetable end first, then he would come across the meat, and finally he would get to a fruit such as apple, blackberries, or mango. According to Robert Hatcher of the Authentic Cornish Pasty Company, the classic Cornish pastry owes its shape to these miners. "The crimped side edge of the Cornish pastry was



THE PERFECT PASTY — Leslie Cory Shoemaker holds a perfectly formed, hot pastry — the inspiration behind her research.

Photograph by Kristi Evans.

not eaten but used as a handle for the miner to hold while eating the rest of the pastry."

The cousin Jack's wife — usually an excellent cook — was known as a "cousin Jenny." For her, pastry making was an ethnic art form passed on from one generation to the next. It still is to this day. The quality of the product did not depend on the written instructions

but rather on the skills and talent of the producer. Unlike visual art, creative derivations and innovations were not to be tolerated, and the criteria for the perfect pastry were standard among its judges. To date, the only derivation from my own Cornish great-grandmother's recipe has been to substitute the cholesterol-laden beef suet in the pastry recipe for vegetable shortening.

It is said that there are as many pasty recipes as there are individuals in the County of Cornwall, but my family has produced the same recipe for generations. The perfect blend of tender juicy steak and pork, layered with thinly sliced potatoes, rutabagas, (known as "Swedes" in England) and onions, seasoned with fresh parsley, salt, pepper, and a pat of butter, wrapped together in a savory pastry crust is a taste sensation like no other.

As the great-granddaughter of Cornish immigrants, pasties were a part of my ethnic heritage, and I have vivid memories of my Nana making

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pasties in her small kitchen. By this time my family was no longer involved in the mining industry, but when my grandfather, the son of the Captain of the Rolling Mills Mine in Marquette County, married my Nana, along with the exchange of marriage vows came the coveted family pasty recipe.

While pasties are not made in the household on a weekly basis anymore, when they are made, the whole family is told in advance, and no one is late for dinner. Pasty dinners are as much an event in modern Cornish American homes as the American Thanksgiving turkey dinner; however,

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pasty dinners happen much more frequently than once a year!

Just mention the pasty in conversation with a U.P. native and a "pasty story" usually follows. No other food evokes such vivid memories, nostalgia, and intense debate as the Cornish pasty in the U.P. The pasty speaks to us of home, of grandmothers and mothers in the comfort of their warm kitchens, and of hard working fathers at the mine. It speaks to us of our youth and school lunches, of church bake sales, of picnics, of college days (when many people who came to U.P. universities first experienced them), and of something that was carried with you no matter how far you might stray from the U.P. or how many new foods you may have come to love.

Perhaps the original "fast food," the Cornish pasty is the ultimate finger food as it is so portable and easy to eat. According to John Owen of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, "You need only pronounce the words "Cornish pasty" and devotees around the world begin to sniff, salivate and generally behave as though they've been surviving on sunflower husks and vinegar water since the last millennium."

In February 2000, I started soliciting "pasty memories." I was overwhelmed with the response. I received 75 responses from all over the United States, including telephone calls, e-mails and personal letters. I even received a hand written letter from a 100-year-old Cornish woman living in

the U.P. who still makes her own pasties from a recipe her mother had received from a Cornish woman in 1905. Not everyone I heard from was of Cornish heritage; however, roughly 75 percent of my respondents were direct descendants of Cornish families.

Two common threads ran through all the memories. The Cornish pasty had deeply embedded itself to the very core of people's life stories, and nobody had ever made pasties as tasty as their mothers had. No matter how far away from the Upper Peninsula people's lives had taken them, they took the pasty with them in their hearts, memories, and taste buds. What follows are a few of the pasty memoirs taken from my research, some nostalgic, some humorous, some historical, but all in all — passionate for the pasty!

Khrist Kennedy, a flight engineer for the U.S. Air force, flies on the C-5 Galaxy, the free world's largest airplane. During Operation Desert Storm, he cooked up one of his mother's frozen pasties aboard the C-5 while flying 37,000 feet over the Red Sea on the way to Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

"The wonderful aroma coming from the galley oven made all the rest of the crew envious of my lunch!" he said.

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Kathleen Olivier '83 of Marquette wrote, "My favorite pasty memory is the time my mother was chatting with a group of women who were bragging about their pasty recipes. After listening to glorious exaggerations, she calmly mentioned that her pasties were so good, the

recipe had been requested from all over the world. Upon further inquisition, it was discovered that my uncle, who at the time was a chaplain in the Air Force and traveled all over the world, loved my mother's pasties and always gave the recipe to the air base's cook in fervent hopes the cook could duplicate them. Unfortunately, my uncle was fairly unorganized and managed to lose the recipe repeatedly, forcing him to re-request it whenever he got transferred to a new base."

Charles DeRidder wrote that he grew up with the pasty in Norway, Michigan, and cannot recall a time growing up when he couldn't find a pasty if he tried hard enough. While attending Michigan State University, he only found a few classmates who had ever heard of the pasty.

"After my military time and graduate work at Oregon State University, I took to making my own. Ha, the crust was my downfall! However, I had to introduce my bride (a native Oregonian) to pasties other than mine. On one of our earlier trips back to Northern Michigan I took to purchasing an ice cooler along with twelve pasties and put them in the trunk of the car and departed for Oregon. Yes, I eat them cold; however, my wife and daughter didn't think much of this idea. They wanted them warm — IDEA — I wrapped one in foil and placed it on the engine manifold for about 20 miles, and it came out tasting good. No gasoline and piping hot."

Diane Vasquez '74, an administrative associate at The University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan, wrote, "I grew up in Iron River, Michigan, with a mom in the house who was the best cook in the whole world — as evidenced by the fantastic pasties she'd make once a week. My brothers, sisters, and I were spoiled;



Pasties for Four: The Cory Recipe

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| <p>Pasty Crust 3 cups flour 1 t. salt 1 cup suet (chopped fine or ground) 1/4 cup Crisco 1 stick (1/4 cup) butter or margarine 1/4 cup cold water, as needed</p> <p>Pasty Filling 1 1/2 lbs. sirloin steak, cubed 3/4 lb. pork loin or pork steak, cubed 3 onions, chopped 1 rutabaga, peeled and sliced 5-6 potatoes, peeled and sliced butter, salt & pepper parsley, chopped</p> | <p>For Crust Roll suet into flour. Place in mixing bowl and add shortening. Mix as for pie crust. Add enough water to make right consistency. Divide into four portions and roll out for pasties.</p> <p>For Filling In layers, starting with potato, then rutabaga, onion and lastly meat (on top), fill pasty dough. Sprinkle with salt, pepper, butter, and parsley to taste. Fold dough over filling, crimp, and vent top of pasty with a knife. Place on baking sheet and bake at 375° for about one hour.</p> |
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didn't children everywhere get pasties for supper?

"I had a rude awakening when I got married to a Marine Corps officer and left the U.P. Pasties were no longer part of my existence. We could only indulge our pasty-tooth when visiting the U.P. After Mom died, we were fortunate that Dad remarried another great pasty-maker, and we were often given a supply of frozen pasties to take us through until the next visit. But these had to be rationed carefully. Finally, in self-preservation, my sister began to make pasties, perfecting her attempts until I could finally say that they are just like Mom's."

The deeply rooted tradition of pasty making and eating in Michigan's Upper Peninsula runs like a strong current through most all the memories. Jeff Kleinsmidt tells the story of his grandmother's immigration from Cornwall, England, to the U.P.

"Pasties have always been a part of my family history. My grandmother immigrated to the U.S. from Cornwall, England, when she was eight years old. She remembers that her handicapped mother was on Ellis Island

trying to get in the country when the judge asked her where she was going and what skills she had to support herself. She said that she was going to Calumet, Michigan, and that she could bake pasties. The judge was very familiar with Calumet and agreed that she could make a living selling pasties there and let her in."

Mary Allwin Tuisku and Jeanne Allwin Lantto also wrote of their grandmother.

"Our grandma Prideaux, whose family came from Cornwall, was the best pasty maker in the world. She died when I was 8 and my sister was 6. One of our fondest memories was climbing the steps to her upstairs apartment and being greeted with the smell of fresh baked pasties. She would store the pasties in a cabinet, and the first thing we did was run to it and search for those pasties. We'd sit on the floor where she couldn't see us and eat the pasty as fast as we could before we got caught. As we grew older, we realized the pasties were placed there for us to find, and the whole thing was a type of game she

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My Favorite Teacher

By DAVID SEVICK '81, COLLEEN MAKI '81, VICKI STEIN '92, GERRY GOERLITZ '62, KATHLEEN FOSTER '92, GAYLE SULLIVAN '80, FRED FISHER '76, and SHERMAN KEMPP '84

In the last issue of *Horizons*, we asked you to write us about your favorite teacher during your years at NMU. Your response was tremendous. What seemed common to many of your responses is the strong connection of learning and friendship that developed between you and your professors. This is only a partial listing of your letters and e-mails. To read all of the responses, go to the Alumni Association's Web page at www.nmu.edu/alumni and click on the "My Favorite Teacher" link.



Richard "Mike" Gorski, Art and Design

My years at NMU gave me memories that will last a lifetime. Those memories include many great professors. But there was one who helped me chart a course in life, and for that I am forever grateful. His name is Richard Gorski although for some reason, which I never quite figured out, everyone calls him Mike.

Mike was not only the head professor of my major concentration, graphic design, he was also my adviser. He wasn't one of those popu-

lar professors — liked by all who met him. In fact, several students in his classes simply could not relate and, as a result, dropped his course.

He was tough, demanding, and rigid, but he was oddly comical at times. He told strange jokes and puns, so many of which he was the only one laughing at. But that made him all the more lovable. And I finally realized why he was so tough. He knew it was his job to "weed out" the students who, in his opinion,

didn't have what it would take to be successful in the field.

Oh, there were times when even I thought he was cruel. Now that I am part of the business he knew so well, I understand why he had to be the way he was. It's a cruel business. In the world of advertising and media communications, you have to deal with an almost inhumane level of pressure, deadlines, and a variety of personalities. The tough make it. He knew that. We didn't.

By the time I reached my junior year, those of us left in the program were the ones who had survived "the wrath of Gorski," as we sometimes called it. It was also that year that we discovered something wonderful about Mike. He was, in fact, human, and a very considerate one at that.

Once he saw us commit to our careers, he

opened up as a friend and counselor. For the next two years, Mike Gorski was our most valuable resource, and I for one tapped into it more than was my fair share.

The day before my graduation, I walked into his office to thank him for his wisdom and insight over the years. As I reached out to shake his hand, he threw his arms around me and gave me one of the most comforting bear hugs I had ever received. He looked me in the eyes and with the utmost confidence said, "You're going to make it, David. You really are."

He was right. I owe so much of my success to him. But Mike Gorski didn't just teach me how to succeed in the business, he taught me how to survive. For that, I am forever indebted to him.

—David Sevick '81
Lakewood, Colorado

Rolande Graves, Languages

I have to say that Rolande Graves, my French professor, was always my favorite professor. Mme. Graves inspired me to do my best in everything. She was always so enthusiastic in French class, I couldn't help but be interested in the language. She helped me to enroll in a French university as a graduate student. It changed my life forever.

I traveled throughout Europe and Africa. I ended up working in France and living there for three years. Upon returning to the United

States, I decided to obtain my teaching certificate in French. I had spent my years at NMU as an art major. I switched to secondary education/French. I have been teaching the language in lower Michigan for 12 years now.

She probably has no idea, but she was my role model. I use things she taught me in my classes. A big part of the reason why I'm here teaching French is her. Merci, Mme. Graves.

—Colleen Maki '81
Sandusky, Michigan



James Livingston, English

Jim Livingston wins my vote. For one, he was funny. I always thought he looked like one of the Whos down in Whoville. I used to melt when he read Chaucer in Middle English. I couldn't understand a word he said, but he certainly captivated the class with his style. He was informative, he was personable, and he

was compassionate.

He encouraged us to dig deeper, to question reality, and to write about it. Of all the instructors at NMU he was my favorite. I had him for four classes!

—Vicki Stein '82
Grand Rapids, Michigan



Dr. Edgar Harden, NMU president (1956-1967)
F.L. "Frosty" Ferzacca, Head Football Coach (1957-1965)
Jim Rapport, Theatre



I'd like to highlight three individuals who, while in school and since graduation, have made a difference.

First, there was President Edgar Harden, whose "right to try" initiative allowed me to come to NMU in 1958. He was a gracious and decent man who treated students with a great deal of respect, even during times when we may not have been deserving. To us students, he was not just the "Prez;" he was an educator, visionary, and friend. He believed a sound, competitive intercollegiate program was healthy for the university and the region it served.



Second would be my head football coach, F.L. "Frosty" Ferzacca. Dr. Harden recruited Frosty to build a football program of student athletes that would raise the visibility of then Northern Michigan College. With the support of Dr. Harden's "right to try" initiative and Frosty's basic trust in young people, he molded teams out of some "blue chippers," some castoffs of other programs, and some questionable players. Some didn't make it, but the majority did. Frosty's '61 team missed out on



being in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletic Championship game by 5 yards. We played Lenoir Rhyne to a 20-20 tie, and the game was decided on total yardage.

Third is Dr. Jim Rapport, better known as "Daddy Bear" — another one of Dr. Harden's recruits. This "Buckeye" and lover of theatre came to have a look and never left. He did for the theatre what Frosty did for football. In his first few years, the athletes may have looked upon being in the theatre as less than macho, but Dr. Jim changed all that. He persuaded me to try out for the part of the bailiff in *The Night of January 16th*. After that questionable performance, he got me to try out for the role of Stewpot in *South Pacific*. That was the ice breaker between athletics and theater.

These pioneer leaders brought a vision of what could be to a small, remote college campus. One result is this proud Wildcat grad, who will forever be indebted to Dr. Ed, Frosty, and Daddy Bear — educators, motivators, and friends.

—Gerry Goerlitz '62
 Exton, Pennsylvania

Kurt Kynell, Criminal Justice

In my final year at NMU, I signed up for a class in my law enforcement major called Police Stress Analysis. The instructor was Dr. Kurt Kynell, and I had heard from a few of my fellow law enforcement classmates that he was pretty tough, so needless to say I was a little nervous.

As I walked into the classroom in Carey Hall that night, I saw my professor at the blackboard. Here stood this huge man with gray whiskers in casual clothing. I thought he looked more at home in the outdoors than lecturing in a classroom. But when he started to speak, I was dead wrong.

Dr. Kynell was the most intelligent, most interesting instructor I'd ever encountered. He

taught in such a way that even a 2 1/2 hour lecture didn't get tedious. He used an exercise in mock blindness to teach us about trust. He had the class do something outrageous in front of other people — I walked up campus with a bag on my head — to teach us about non-conformity. He showed us films and made us write essays. He was easy to confide in about schoolwork problems. He offered to write me a recommendation (and did) upon my graduation. He was, in short, the best professor on campus.

I hope this somehow finds its way to him so he knows how much he was appreciated.

—Kathleen Foster '92
 Alpena, Michigan

Mary Ellen Powers, Nursing

While I knew many outstanding professors at Northern, the one who made the most lasting impression on me was my mental health nursing professor, Mary Ellen Powers.

Everyone admired her strength and self-confidence. At the end of the semester, she taught me a lesson I have never forgotten. She asked each of us to grade ourselves and meet with her individually to go over our grades. After all of the hard work and hours I put into the class, I definitely thought I deserved an A.

However, either out of modesty or a desire to hear her sing my praises, I said I

deserved a B. Professor Powers then said that she thought I deserved an A but that I would know best, and she changed my grade to B! Seeing my reaction, she firmly said, "Gayle, always give yourself what you deserve. Don't underestimate yourself because if you don't have faith in yourself, no one will."

For the past twenty years, I have carried that message in my heart and used it as a lesson to my two sons. Thank you Dr. Powers, for helping me become self-confident and proud.

—Gayle A. Sullivan '80
Salem, Massachusetts



Fred Stenkamp, History

I had just returned to Northern in September 1973 after flunking out in January 1969 and spending the next four years in the U.S. Air Force and seeing a lot of Southeast Asia.

One of the classes I took the following spring '74 term was a humanities class covering the ancient Greeks. Dr. Fred Stenkamp of the History Department was the teacher, and in the first class he asked us to identify how we first came into contact with the various stories in Greek mythology. I put down the *Classic Comics* series that I had read as a young boy. Dr. Stenkamp mentioned it aloud in class, and several of my younger class-

mates giggled, but he dismissed them with a gruff disjuncter that the *Classic Comics* were indeed a valid source.

I took another class from him a year later, and he still was able to captivate the class as he related the discoveries of Heinrich Von Schliemann (the ancient city of Troy) as well as offering tacit, yet probing meanings behind the dialogue of the Greek playwrights.

I liked his classes because they made me think of ideas that I did not have before class that morning and every morning of the semester.

—Fred Fisher '76
San Antonio, Texas



Mokhlis "Mo" Zaki, Economics

As a newly declared economics major, I was struggling with many of the concepts of microeconomics. Dr. Mokhlis "Mo" Zaki used a unique blend of humor, personal experience, and thorough knowledge to bring the subject matter to life. Whether simple supply and demand examples drawn from his birthplace for sophomores, or complex equations drawn from his research for his graduate level students, the various theories Dr. Zaki taught came alive under his tutelage.

Dr. Zaki would often joke in his lectures, "okay now, pay very close attention, this is very, very interesting — besides it is on the test!" Dr. Zaki understood the demands on his

students and delivered his lectures at the pace he wrote the notes on the blackboard. Though many of his students have burned into their memories the back of Dr. Zaki's sports coat covered in chalk dust as he blazed across the blackboard, those lessons are burned in as well. Dr. Zaki's style of communication and mentoring, have played an important role in making my banking career successful.

Dr. Mo Zaki is one of those rare professors who one remembers fondly even years later. Dr. Zaki, thank you for all you have done for us.

—Sherman Kempp '84
(formerly Sherman Kemppainen)
Manitou Springs, Colorado

