



What My Society Means to Me

By: Lu BBQ Holter

As my term as a board member of the MN BBQ Society ends, I beg your indulgence as reflect on the past three years of service, prior years of membership, and what this society has meant to me.

I joined the MN BBQ Society in January of 2014. My husband, Damon, and I had been doing contests together since 2011 and made numerous friends on the BBQ circuit. In January in the mid-west you start getting the itch to get back out and cook. We heard that some society in MN was having a banquet and many of our BBQ friends would be in attendance. In hopes of somewhat scratching the competition itch, we signed up for the banquet and membership into the MN BBQ Society.



Annual Banquet

We had a fantastic time at the banquet and learned more about the society. Two years later I was so impressed with the organization, I ran and was voted into the board.

I have learned so much and gained so much from my experience with this group. I want to share with you some of what I have experienced, in hopes that readers will seek out their local groups and get involved. And, if you're in the mid-west, that you'll join us!

The MN BBQ Society's mission statement reads:
"The Minnesota BBQ Society is a nonprofit, charitable organization dedicated to the promotion and enhancement of the art of outdoor cooking. The Society does this by sponsoring and promoting various events and contests throughout communities designed to highlight the passion of great BBQ and by fostering interest in both members and non-members through educational opportunities and activities. Our members are at all levels of involvement in the art: Casual backyard chef to competition cooks and professionals, all sharing the same passion."

We are a society made up of highly competitive cooks, somewhat competitive cooks, judges, reps, organizers, backyarders, those who just love BBQ, and all walks of outdoor cooking lovers. All are welcome, and all have wonderful ways to make the society better.

It is this hodge-podge of characters that brings depth and meaning to the society. In my short few years as a member I have formed solid friendships with judges, reps, and fellow cooks, beyond what I could ever have done simply by attending competitions in the area. These people have become family to me. I am honored to be a part of this society and to have gotten to know my fellow members through it. I know, in a moment's notice, if I needed assistance, there would be a rush of people from the MN BBQ Society there to offer it and, I know I'd be there for them too.

The MN BBQ Society volunteers annually at a local food bank in the Twin Cities to help pack food for those in need. These events are great fun and a wonderful way for



MN BBQ Society Members Volunteering

judges and cooks to work side by side and get to know each other better. I've made many a friend while sorting potatoes and beans.



Volunteering at the Food Bank

The MN BBQ Society volunteers at the Minnesota Association of Meat Processors' Annual Convention. Members assist with judging, they put on demonstrations, and they help smoke meats for serving at the convention. This has been a valuable method of not only promoting the society but promoting the concept of competition cooking to meat processors throughout the state in order educate them on what competitors are looking for, so they can better serve them.



BBQ Spring Training

The society holds a BBQ Spring Training class every spring in conjunction with the University of MN Meat Science Laboratory. This day long class covers everything from smoker selection and operation to sausage making and the cutting up of a whole hog. It sells out every year and is a fantastic way the society educates and engages the community. It is also a fun way for society members to interact with the general public and with BBQ and grilling businesses in the area. The society hosts MN in May, the largest KCBS competition in the state. They attract around 100 teams (75 pro and 25 backyard) every year from all over the country. This event continues to grow, last year expanding the prize purse and in 2019 moving the location to increase

the availability of entertainment and vending for public involvement. This event does a fantastic job of promoting the backyard cook and encouraging interaction between the backyarders and pros. I have very much enjoyed meeting the backyard teams at this event, getting to know them better, and watching some of them take the leap to the pro side.

Members prepping samples at the MN Assoc of Meat Processors Convention

The society's website and Facebook page provide information throughout the year about their events and other BBQ and grilling events throughout the mid-west. I have watched the Facebook page grow from 240 followers in 2016 to over 2,300 today. It grows every week. It is fun to see the interaction of judges, cooks, reps, and those only slightly familiar with the society on the page. The public response to the society's page, especially around Spring Training and MN in May time has been exciting and helps further the society's mission.

I wish to thank my fellow society members for allowing me to serve them on the board of directors these past three years. It has been a blast. In conclusion, I give you, my list of the

Top Ten Things I've Learned from the MN BBQ Society:

1. TOY standings are not something retailers focus on around Christmas time. Means Team of the Year. Looked that one up after winning 2015 Pork TOY for MN. Had no idea what the heck I just won. Smiled anyway.
2. I can pull together a slideshow in 20 minutes with just my phone if I forget my laptop that I was reminded repeatedly not to forget.
3. The University of MN makes the best ice cream I've ever eaten.
4. Judging a Kids Q is one of the hardest things you can do as a person.
5. I can spell Scharffbillig and Dobosenski without looking them up.
6. Larry always wins. Except when Dick wins. That's all that matters at a steak contest.
7. Someone always has extra parsley. Or kale. Always.
8. In theory, I can make perfectly stuffed sausages. In practice, I can make one heck of a mess.
9. Pop Tarts and Sunny-D are a perfectly acceptable competition breakfast.
10. They say blood is thicker than water, but BBQ Sauce is thicker than both and my saucy brothers and sisters are as near and dear to me as any friend or relative.