

SISTER SARA, RIP

As bmaz noted, we have learned that long time commenter and my blogmate at Next Hurrah, "Sister Sara," passed away last year. If you're familiar with her comments and posts, you'll remember that she was incredibly knowledgeable with long experience in progressive politics (including in Wellstone's early career). It was a tremendous gift to have spent so much time online with her (and meet her in person last year).

There is perhaps no better testament to who she was—and the kind of impact she had on people's lives—than this post she wrote in 2006 about her kitchen cabinets and loyalty.

The Saga of my new Stove

By Sara

Much is being made these days about the dirty old hippies. I have a loyalty saga to tell.

About 29 years ago I remodeled my kitchen. I bought what was then a very expensive stove, (micro on top, real oven below, and 30 inches wide cooking space.) I've since done some cooking—I helped found an AIDS home delivered meals project, and to that objective I calculate I cooked at least part of 90 thousand meals. I remember the Thanksgiving when I did up 7 donated Turkeys, and much else that would be processed into servings to be delivered.

Alas, last year my oven and broiler failed, the microwave ceased to deliver power you could count on, and two stove burners ceased to function. Simply put, time for a new stove. The whole stove was pre digital, and 29 years later, no

parts.

I went to some appliance stores, and very discouraging. Tap my 29 year old Tappen, and it was heavy steel. Tap the new ones, much like a can of pop.

Finally I went to the place where they discount everything and bought a 5 Star – a Commercial Stove, twice what I paid for the Tappen, but at least it could take a missed pan. But because the micro was incorporated into the old stove, I had to buy a new micro. (I think I have one that if I miss a step in programing will launch a rocket)

Aah but the problem of moving the 29 year old stove out, and moving the new one in. To understand it all you have to appreciate how I got a kitchen with cabinets copied from Frank Lloyd Wright designs.

Back in the dark days when the Feds were looking for draft evaders, and worse, moms who harbored draft evaders put posters of J Edgar Hoover as Evil Man Number One, on their front door saying he was an enemy of the people, the guy who became my master cabinet maker (dresser, stereo cabinets, book cases, file cabinets, and yes, the kitchen) refused the Draft. It was difficult, he almost went to the Federal Pen, but I got him the right lawyer and in the end, the lawyer got him off. I wish I could reconstruct the several hours I spent with his dad who was a submariner during World War II, and who was detailed to film Hirshoma. Which he did. What I had to do was take this dad to look at the Federal Pen in our area, Sandstone, and get him to comprehend his first born inside because he would not accept the draft for vietnam. (You want a dad to stand up for CO Status for Son – well let them look at the walls of a Fed

Pen.)

Back to the saga of my stove. The utility men pulled the old one out, and immediately the kitchen cabinets around it began to cave in. And they caved and caved and caved. Ten feet of cabinets up to the 10 foot ceiling caved in. You know what supermarket bags are made for – pulling out everything in cabinets that are in total collapse.

Of course I immediately asked if the stove pullers intended to repair, but then I realized they were going to call insurance and all that, and so I put in a call to my cabinet maker who had mounted the cupboards 29 years earlier, when he was actually still on the run from the FBI. Voice mail. But within a few hours he called me back. Yea, he would remount, moreover he wants to do the other side of the kitchen too. (Not many of us who have Frank Lloyd Wright copied Kitchens – well at least mostly a copy), Anyhow within two days I got the cabinets remounted and my grand new stove and micro installed.

Now I told the installers and all why It was I could call a cabinet maker I had employed 29 years earlier, and he would come quickly and fix. It was because of Vietnam, and how those of us who opposed, supported each other then when and how we could. It was deeper than that. It was about finding that old Norwegian Cabinetmaker up north who would take in a mad Catholic Irish war protester for about a year (who needed to disappear) and teach him the arts of cabinetmaking. But it is also about the traverse of Bishop Shannon from where he started at the end of Vatican II to when he just left the church and priesthood.

I look at my new stove and appreciate

all this, and the teaching moment I was again granted with the 19 or 20 year installers to whom I could message it all. My cabinet maker came, he brought appropriate jacks, he moved everything back into place, and we ran bolts through the wall to make everything super secure. Then we remounted the Frank Lloyd Wright copy doors on the cabinets. And I did explain to my commercial installers that this was a war protester I helped stay out of the Federal Pen back in the 60's, but instead learned an arts trade that could make him a living. We've looked at it, and the other side of the kitchen needs a re-mount too – so we'll be doing more.

In the meantime, I have a fantastic new stove – a super new stove – where all the burners work, the oven works, the broiler works, and a new micro which is also combined with combination features such as convection cooking – which I fear might launch a rocket. (have not yet tried). When the men came to take away the old one – finally – all I could think about were the 90 thousand AIDS home delivered meals I had helped to cook on the old one. Peeping out the front room shutters I watched it get wheeled up into the disposal truck, but I was thinking about the day the Department of Natural Resource called and told me they had shot me ten deer. I had to get busy pulling together my butchers and roasters. My butchers were employees of a Catholic Hospital, (recruited by a nun), and my roasters were all gay men who had a huge argument about how to cook venison, but then did it well, after they reviewed all the possible recipes. After my mother died, I taught my dad to cook with a microwave, on my old one of course, he has been dead for many years. – but

teaching him, and then installing one in his kitchen kept him out of nursing homes. (given the 8 Heart Attacks).

Watching my old stove trundle out meant moving out the memory of that critical teaching that saved both of us much pain.

“Do you micro a cup of rice for 7 minutes or 17 minutes? Daddy – you micro it for 17 minutes if it is a full cup.” One wonders what the nippers listening in on the phone lines made of such. My Dad had one of those Q clearances which was beyond Top Secret. Yes, how do you ask the child who opposes war the proper time for cooking rice?