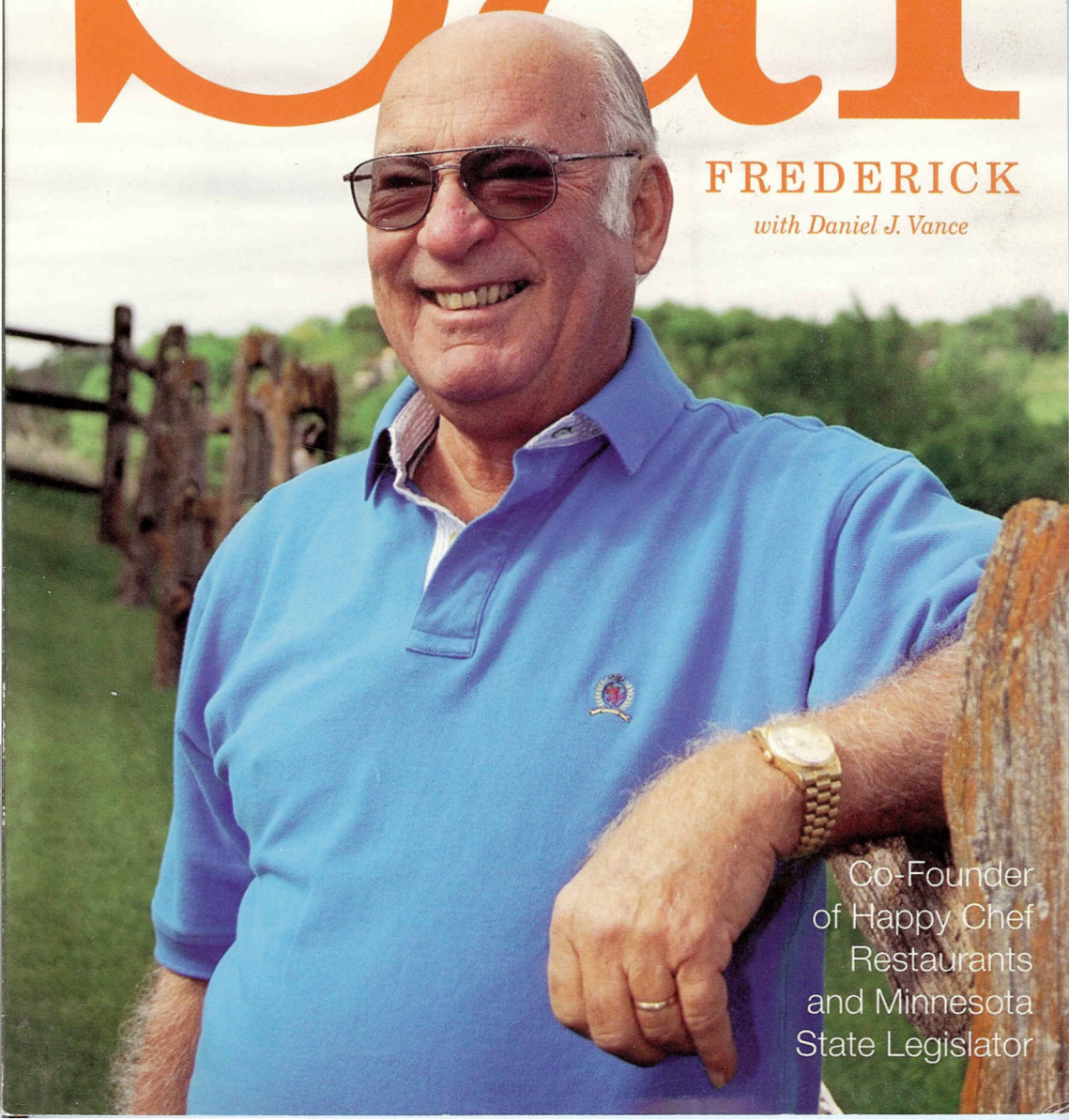


THE OFFICIAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF

Sal

FREDERICK

with Daniel J. Vance



Co-Founder
of Happy Chef
Restaurants
and Minnesota
State Legislator

THE OFFICIAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF

Sal Frederick

To Jim Hoyer
With my Best Wishes
In Remembrance of The Hennessy
Travelers 50th Anniversary
May 19+20, 2006

Sal
FH
8-30-06

Rose Dec 2, 1931 + Jan 20, 2003

Frederick memoirs top local non-fiction

The following books were the best sellers for the week of Oct. 29 at Barnes and Noble in Mankato:

Non-Fiction

1. "Sal Frederick: The Official Autobiography" by Sal Frederick.

2. "Who Moved My Cheese?" by Spencer Johnson.

3: "Nothing Like It in the World" by Stephen Ambrose.

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AdVance Creative
P.O. Box 154
Vernon Center, MN 56090

First Printing

Photos for chapters one through eleven provided by Sal Frederick
Cover photo by Kris Kathmann
Book designed by Kris Kathmann

ISBN 0-9672014-1-1

CHAPTER FIVE

Even when Happy Chef had only one location I realized the need for an organization like the Minnesota Restaurant Association (MRA) that brought restaurant owners under one big tent. There was strength in numbers. I worked on the MRA board and was named its president on January 1, 1968.

Not quite three months later, on March 31, I was reattaching a rain gutter to my home when the telephone rang. A caller bore sad news: MRA's executive director had died of a heart attack. He had been the only person knowledgeable about our finances and the sole owner of our annual trade show. No one knew quite what to do, but since I was the president, the task of "doing" something fell on me. The next six months would be the worst of my life; the rain gutter would remain unattached for six more years.

Happy Chef was aggressively adding units, MRA was floundering, and I was splitting my time between the two, averaging three days a week in the Twin Cities holding MRA together when I should have been building Happy Chef. That's when my brothers really moved to the forefront. We had meetings, made our decisions and if I had to be at MRA they got the job done without me. Even during the darkest of days I could always see the light at the end of the tunnel.

To protect MRA from hemorrhaging in the future, its board, along with Earl Jorgenson, president of the state hotel association, and Dutch Cragun, president of the state resort association, formed an umbrella organization and hired a director to oversee all three organizations and to manage the trade show. Each group maintained its own identity and name. The umbrella organization was named the Upper Midwest Hospitality Association. I stayed on for two years as president of MRA and seven more as a board member to finish what I had started. From that moment on, the Minnesota Restaurant Association, under the Upper Midwest Hospitality Association, increased in membership over the years from 400 to 4,000 today. I am deeply proud of the new organization.

In 1971 the National Restaurant Association (NRA)

asked me to join its board, the most prestigious in the industry, and to represent its membership in the Dakotas and Minnesota. Restaurant owners needed a lobbyist organization to inform Congress of industry issues. Even though my volunteer service on the board cost me nearly \$6,000 a year in personal travel and lodging expenses, I could easily justify the cost and time spent because the work ultimately benefited not only Happy Chef, but also the industry. The board met three times a year in different parts of the country, about four days each time, and I served the maximum three terms, nine years in all, through 1980. My brothers tolerated my absence because I was able to complete all my necessary Happy Chef duties. (Unlike so many executives, I wasn't tied to a time-consuming hobby that could distract me from my work duties. Work was my "hobby.")

In 1972 I was named to the Hennessy Evaluation Team, the NRA's annual present to the air force that evaluated the quality of some of their dining halls. The morning I was to fly out from Mankato I almost missed the plane. A snowstorm had hit the night before and I had neglected to figure in a longer driving time from my home to the airport. The airline knew I was trying to get there, but it couldn't wait forever. I boarded as they were closing up the plane for take-off. It was an ominous start to a world tour that would end in like fashion.

Two Air Force captains involved in food service escorted me around the world and through ten dining halls in a thirty-four day period. From Minneapolis I flew to orientation in Philadelphia, after which the captains and I flew a commercial airliner from LaGuardia to Germany. From there we visited bases in Turkey, Greece, Italy, Spain, and two bases in Taiwan — one of which monitored Mainland China from a mountaintop. Then we flew to a base in Oregon, to California, Texas, Alabama, Arizona, and finally to the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. It was fun wearing the star of a brigadier general, albeit for a short time. Our Hennessy Evaluation Team set four records that year: the youngest team ever (average age 45), most days traveled (34), most miles traveled (50,000) and

most bases evaluated (10).

Never fly a Turkish airline. In Turkey, the U.S. Air Force instructed us to stand by the gate an hour before take-off and make a mad dash for the plane when the gate opened. The airline was first-come, first-served, with all the slowest runners left behind. When the gate finally opened, my traveling companions were away so it was up to me to run to the plane with all the other "potential" passengers nipping at my heels. I wrestled up the stairway, wormed in and saved two seats. When the plane was ready for take-off, a few of the people that had lost the mad dash for seats refused to leave, standing firm in the aisle. Soldiers were summoned, and one of them clubbed a passenger and blood from the wound splattered my jacket. Never fly Air Italia either. Our pilot must have been a former fighter pilot. Soon after take-off the stewardess walked the aisle carrying but one cup of coffee at a time and we figured out why when the pilot began making sharp turns in the rough air, a few passengers screamed bloody murder, and luggage became leather missiles that littered the aisles.

On the final leg from New York to Chicago, our Delta pilot announced that he might have to land the plane on its belly because his landing gear didn't seem like it was fully locking. He spun circles around O'Hare for forty-five minutes, giving the control tower a good view in the hope they could visually inspect it. In desperation, the flight engineer wiggled through a floor opening, and he determined that the landing gear was "probably" locked. We were ordered into crash position while the pilot attempted to land into a sea of foam sprayed from an armada of firefighting equipment. After the first bump the landing gear held and we veered into the grass. An airline worker ran up to insert locking pins into the landing gear as we stopped.

It was a once-in-a-lifetime trip in which the air force literally rolled out the red carpet all along the way. Using information our team provided, they began serving fast food, in addition to regular cafeteria food, at all its dining halls. Many newer airmen appreciated the fast food because it helped them make an easier transition to military life.

We ate with airmen, scrutinized their kitchens, and monitored menu, food taste and general procedures.

At a dining hall in Europe, 4:30 in the morning, I watched as an airman poured a whitish substance into a coffee urn. I introduced myself to him, and explained that in all my years in the food industry I had never poured anything like that into coffee. He said it was salt and that he was doing it on purpose. "I'm a line mechanic, not a damned cook," he said. His actions went into my report.

In 1979, the Japan Foodservice Association invited the five chairmen of the key committees of the NRA to a two-week tour of Japan. As chairman of the Education Committee my colleagues and I participated in eight seminars in eight different cities on a variety of foodservice subjects. It was a real learning experience, both culturally and professionally, for both associations. Rose and I marveled at the comfort and speed of the bullet trains, the hydrofoil boats and the well-maintained and clean taxis, but by the end of the trip we were looking forward to sinking our teeth into a good ol' American cheeseburger. Raw fish and plain white rice is not our favorite meal.