

TAILGATER

MONTHLY

10 HOT Grills!

page 14

THE GREAT CHILI
COOKOFF

page 24

GADGETS
& GEAR

page 46

5 MUST
HAVE
COOKBOOKS

page 20

THE
PERFECT
BLOODY
MARY

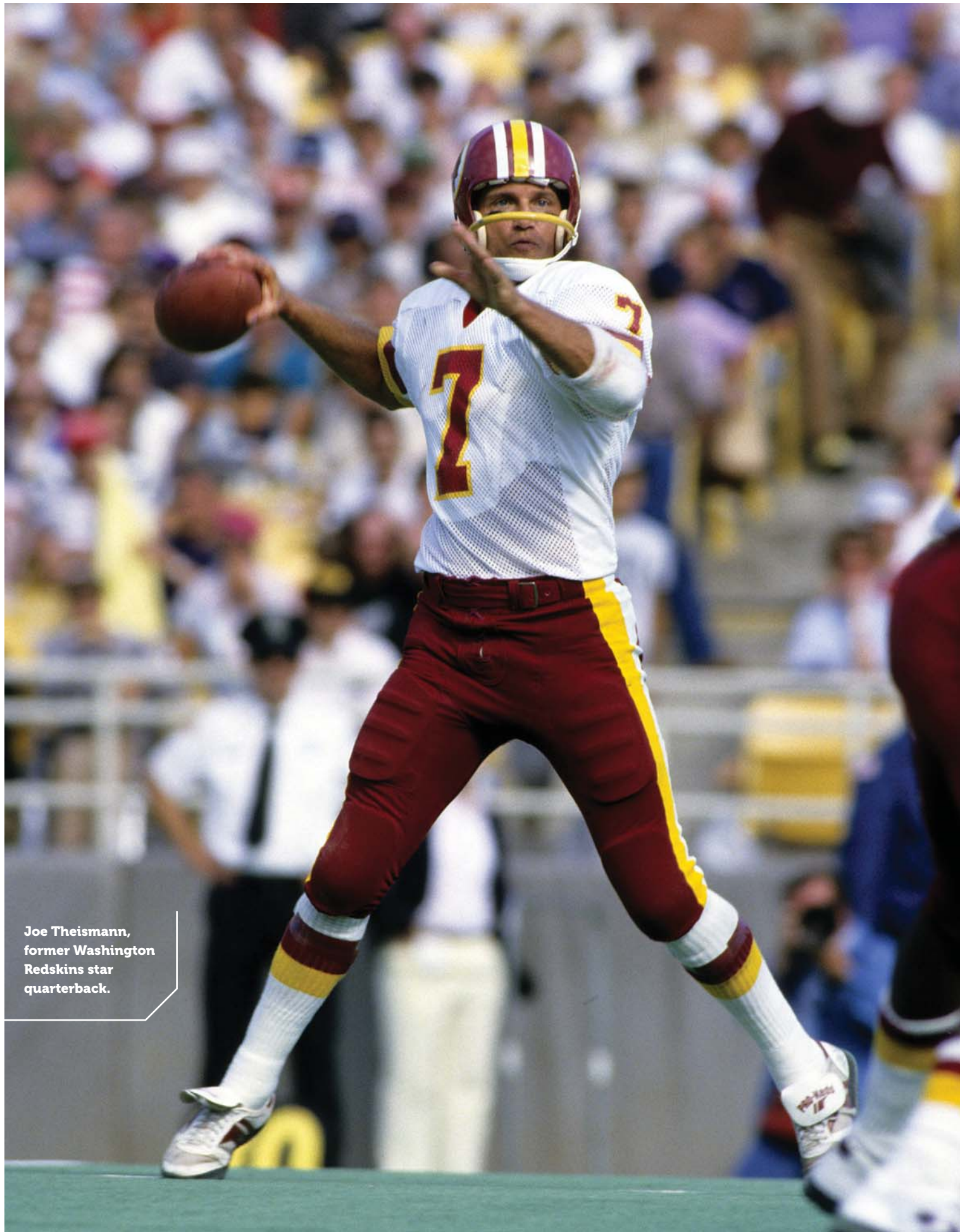
page 18

JOE
Theismann
TALKS
TAILGATING

page 34

Dallas
Bound!

page 30



Joe Theismann,
former Washington
Redskins star
quarterback.

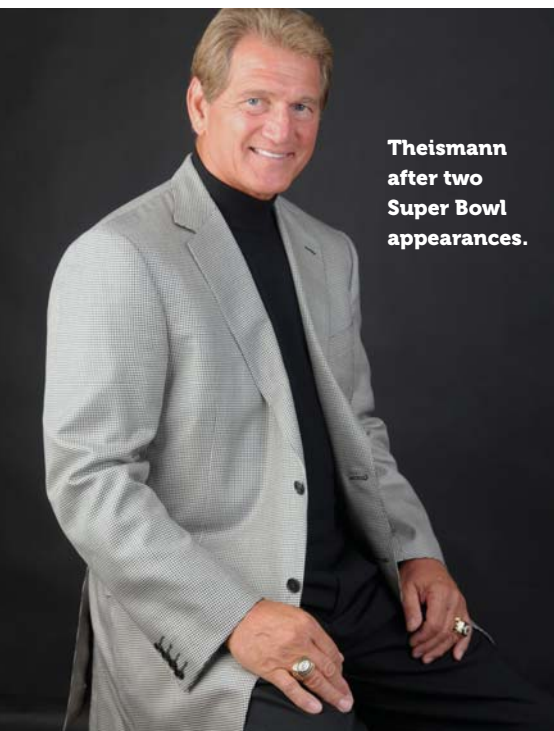
Gentleman

JOE

by margie goldsmith

JOE THEISMANN, FORMER PRO BOWL STAR QUARTERBACK FOR THE **WASHINGTON REDSKINS**, IS A TWELVE-YEAR NFL VETERAN WHO PLAYED IN 163 CONSECUTIVE GAMES FROM 1974–85. HE HOLDS THE REDSKINS' RECORDS FOR PASSING YARDAGE (25,206), COMPLETIONS (2,044) AND ATTEMPTS (3,602). HE WAS ALSO **A TWO-TIME PRO BOWL SELECTION** WHO LED WASHINGTON TO A 27–17 VICTORY OVER THE MIAMI DOLPHINS IN SUPER BOWL XVII.

In 1982, Joe Theismann was selected the NFL's Man of the Year for both his community service and dedication to the health and welfare of children. He won the league's 1983 Most Valuable Player Award for leading the Redskins to an NFL-record 541 points and a second consecutive Super Bowl appearance. His career ended abruptly in 1985 after sustaining a broken leg during a game against the New York Giants on national television.



Theismann after two Super Bowl appearances.

In 1985, Theismann began a career in broadcasting when he helped call Super Bowl XIX on ABC. After spending two seasons as an NFL analyst on CBS, from 1988–2005, Theismann became the color commentator on ESPN's Sunday Night Football. In 2006, he wrapped up his commentator career on ESPN's Monday Night Football and then helped with a variety of pre-season Washington Redskins games on CSN. Theismann presently broadcasts on "Playbook," is the majority owner and president of the Florida Tuskers of the United Florida League; and is owner, operator and financier of the Joe Theismann Restau-

rant in Alexandria, Virginia. Recently, Margie Goldsmith conducted an interview with him:

MARGIE GOLDSMITH: Who were your football idols growing up?

JOE THEISMANN: Joe Namath and Johnny Unitas.

M.G.: Where did you grow up?

J.T.: Toms River, New Jersey.

M.G.: You were 5'11" and 147 pounds when you began your college football career at Notre Dame in 1967. Did people tease you about being little?

J.T.: I never thought I was little. If people looked at me I think they thought I was skinny and little, but in my mind I never felt like I was little.

M.G.: What was it like playing for Notre Dame? Did you have a life or was football as time-consuming back then as it seems to be now?

J.T.: Well, actually because I wasn't that good a student in high school, I put a lot of time and effort into my academics as well as my athletics. As a matter of fact, my first two years at the University of Notre Dame, I went on only two dates with the same girl. My whole life was staying eligible to be able to play football my first two years.

M.G.: And after?

J.T.: I made up for it my last two, but my first two I focused solely on being able to academically qualify. I learned two things going to college: how to be a student and how to play football.

M.G.: Okay. So did you marry the girl?

J.T.: No, I didn't. I married the Public Relations Secretary in 1971.

M.G.: And do you have children?

J.T.: I have three children: Joey, 38; Patrick, 31; and Amy, 37.

M.G.: As the starting quarterback with Notre Dame, you set school records for yards (2,429) and touchdowns (16) in a season. Your record for passing yards in a game (526) still stands today. That's a record that's lasted 40 years. How do you feel about that?

J.T.: I mean, it's very special, because it isn't just my record. It's a record that stands for the guys that I played with. When we were in college, freshman were ineligible to play varsity football, so I really only played three games of my sophomore, junior and senior year. Today most guys play four years of college football.

M.G.: After getting All American honors and leading the Fighting Irish to consecutive Cotton Bowls, you were runner-up to Jim Plunkett in the Heisman Trophy. Did you consider beating him up and taking the trophy?

J.T.: No, never. First of all, Jim was bigger than I was. That was quite a year of quarterbacks. Archie Manning came out of Mississippi that year. Rex Kern came out of Ohio State. Jim Plunkett out of Stanford. Dan Pastorini out of Santa Clara. There was a quarterback out of UCLA by the name of Dennis Hammett. I came out of Notre Dame, so we had quite a class of quarterbacks in 1971.

M.G.: Did being inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 2003 make up for not getting the Heisman?

J.T.: Being inducted into any Hall of Fame is a great honor, because it means that you are able to be a part of something very special.

M.G.: Yes, it is. In 1971 you were selected both as an NFL Draft by the Miami Dolphins, and as a shortstop in Major League Baseball by the Minnesota Twins. So you chose neither; you signed up with the Toronto Argonauts of the Canadian Football League. How did that happen?

J.T.: Well, football was going to be my first option, anyway. I felt like if something happened in the world of football, it would happen quickly, and then I'd have a chance to fall back into baseball if it turned out that way. But when I was drafted by the Dolphins, I didn't have an agent and ran into some difficulty with a bonus in my contract that took a protracted period of time to settle.

I got disillusioned with the process, and wound up going to Canada. They gave me an ultimatum my last trip up there and said if I didn't sign that night, the deal would be off the table. The monetary difference in the deals was minimal so it really had nothing to do with that. I wound up spending three years in the Canadian Football League and loved every minute of it.

M.G.: In 1974 you left the CFL and joined the Redskins.

J.T.: I'd always wanted to come back and play in the NFL—it was in the back of my mind. If the economics were right I would have stayed in Canada, but they didn't work out, so I came back and in 1974 and '75 I returned punts for the Washington Redskins.

M.G.: And how long did it take before you took over the starting position as quarterback?

J.T.: I played very little quarterback in '76 and '77, and in 1978 when Jack Pardee took over the ballclub from George Allen I was given my opportunity to be the starting quarterback.

M.G.: What was the most exciting moment in your football career?

J.T.: I would have to say, winning the Super Bowl. I mean, it's a childhood dream of every kid to be able to walk off a field and be called a world champion. But I will say the most exciting game I ever played in was the NFC championship game in 1983 against the Dallas Cowboys.

M.G.: What made that so exciting?

J.T.: That was at RFK Stadium. Here we are in January of 1983, and we were going to play the Dallas Cowboys at our stadium for the right to go to the Super Bowl. So you've got your archrival, the most hated rival that we had as Redskins. They were a great football team, we were a great football team, and it was a strike season. We'd gone through a lot of turmoil, and now we had an opportunity to play. And the thing that made that game so memorable to me was around the field they had aluminum seating set up, about seven or eight rows of aluminum seats. And as the game drew towards the end and we had a substantial lead, the fans were banging their feet on the aluminum seats, and the ground beneath my feet as I stood on the sidelines shook.

M.G.: Describe the game when you went to Super Bowl XVII and beat the Dolphins 27-17 in Pasadena. What was that like for you?

J.T.: Oh, it was a fulfillment of a childhood dream and truly funny. I don't remember the first five minutes of that football game.

M.G.: Why?

J.T.: I was in such a zone. We ran a reverse, and I tried to throw a block, and I got kicked in the head. And then all of the sudden I became more conscious of everything that was going on. But the funny part of that thing was that during introductions, the one thing I didn't want to do was trip over the goal line when I ran under the goal post. So as I approached the goal line I almost hopped over it, because I figured the most embarrassing thing that would happen to me in the game would be running out there and tripping over the goal line flat on my face during the introductions to the Super Bowl. And another thing happened in the game. I did a public service announcement against drunk driving, and Drew Pearson, who was my high school teammate, and also a receiver with the Dallas Cowboys, did it with me. So I'd just thrown an interception, I walk back out on the football field and on the big screen in Pasadena all of the sudden you hear, "Hi, I'm Joe Theismann." And I'm thinking, oh no, they're not going to play this PSA now! And they did. That's sort of an embarrassing moment when after you do something bad, the last thing you want to do is jump up on the big teletron and say hi to everybody.

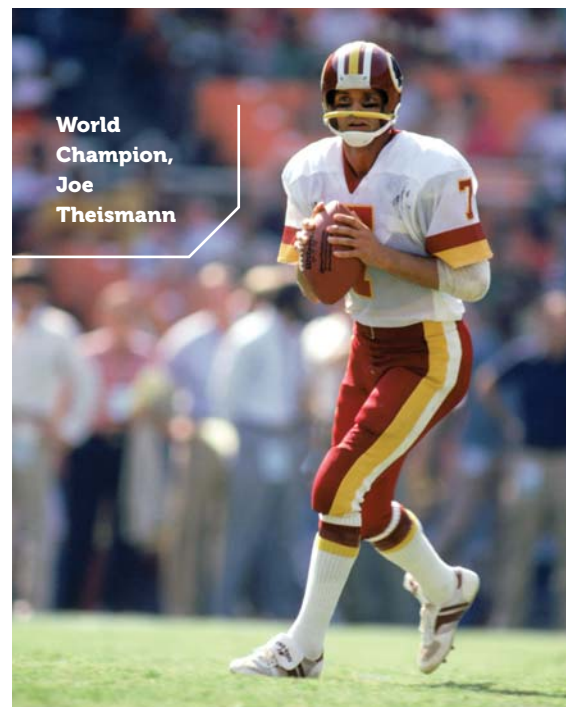
M.G.: You played with the Redskins for 12 years. Who were some of the players on your team that made the biggest impact? And who were your closest friends on the team?

J.T.: My closest friend was Mark Moesely, our kicker. You have to understand, it's like a fraternity, and you can imagine what goes on in a fraternity. But just as an example, Dave Butz was also a good friend, a defensive tackle. And I used to ride to the games with Dave and Mark in Dave's van. Dave would drive, Mark would sit in the passenger seat, and I would lie in the back. And all of a sudden there'd be like a thump. I came to find out that Dave used to

drive over roadkill on the way to the game, and depending on the size of the roadkill, that would determine how he felt like he was going to play that day. You have to understand something, Margie—I think a lot of athletes are very superstitious. And this was one of Dave's things.

M.G.: In 1982 you were selected Man of the Year by the NFL for your dedication to the health and welfare of children. What groups did you work with, and how did you get involved?

J.T.: I specifically worked with the Children's Hospital National Medical Center in Washington, D.C. and any other children's organization that I could lend assistance to, but the Children's Hospital was my passion and my love. I was on their corporate board. We were raising money for a new hospital in D.C., and it came about because my daughter, at the age of three, had open-heart surgery at the older children's hospital downtown in D.C. I had a chance to see firsthand, not just the science of medicine, but the people that worked in the hospital—their genuine nature, who they are and what they did. It was just amazing to me that not only did they take care of the children, but they took care of the entire family. And I wanted to do what I could to try and give back, and today I'm a member of the Advisory Council,



World
Champion,
Joe
Theismann

the Swartz Advisory Council of St Jude's in Memphis. We treat catastrophic diseases of children, and Danny Thomas started it many, many years ago.

M.G.: Okay, speaking of catastrophes—you knew this was coming—when Lawrence Taylor ended your football career on November 18th it was the tackle heard round the world. Did you know when you were hit how bad it was?

J.T.: No, not really, because the body's an incredible machine. I'd broken my

face it, as professional athletes we live in a fantasy world.

M.G.: How do you feel about the opening scene in "The Blind Side," which is, of course, the game as the accident happens?

J.T.: I'm flattered, actually. That's a little bit of a story, too. Frank Smith is the founder of FedEx, and it's the production house of his daughter Molly that bought the rights to "The Blind Side" from Michael Lewis. When they were doing the movie, Fred called me just out of

And then all the different colors, the banners that are up. I know at the University of Notre Dame, the people park in the same spot and they have their flags that designate their family flag. And that's exciting, and it's the same thing when you go to pro games. The smells just really jump out at you, and the food is great. You'd have to be—I swear some people just starve themselves and wait to tailgate.

M.G.: Yes!

J.T.: That's all they do. And I'm always amazed. Sometimes I used to get to the stadium five, six hours before a game, and there would be people setting up getting ready to tailgate or they would already start to have the charcoals on the grill. And really, some of the other things too—now you have some of these trucks that are set up like they're full barbecue stations. One of my favorite commercials is the one where these guys push this car to the stadium. And the guy says, "Oh, you have a problem with it, can I look at the engine?" It doesn't have an engine. The engine is actually a grill. The gas tank is attached to a beer keg. And you flip down the grill and there are the condiments—that's the ultimate tailgating vehicle.

right leg once before, so I thought, okay. I broke it in Canada in 1972, only one bone then, though. And I thought, well, I came back from that one I can come back from this one. So in my mind I thought, all right. I can come back from this injury, and I never did. I tried to come back for many years. And the first two television contracts I signed had clauses in it that if a team wanted me to come play quarterback, I would be able to get out of my television contracts.

M.G.: Amazing.

J.T.: So the dream still lived on.

M.G.: Yes.

J.T.: And I never was able to come back.

M.G.: Taylor has said that he will not watch the replay. Have you seen it?

J.T.: Only once.

M.G.: You said in an interview that it was the most defining moment in your life. What did you mean by that?

J.T.: I had become a very self-absorbed, egotistical maniac prior to that injury. I thought the world revolved around me. The success of the Redskins was dependent on me. It was an "I want" world I lived in. The things I focused on were all about me. Once I got hurt, all those things that I thought were important, all the material things that I thought were important, were gone. I had a chance to become very introspective, and look at who I was, and the direction of my life. I mean, I wasn't a nice person. I really didn't understand the real world, because truthfully, let's

courtesy and explained that they were going to use it. I appreciated it. If you read the book, basically the book has to do with the left tackle position and the importance of it. And it was because Lawrence came from my left side that the book really had its foundation. So I was flattered even when I went to the movie, though, I closed my eyes, and I just listened to the audience groan.

M.G.: Okay, on a happier note. A lot of young kids play football. Do you have any advice for the coaches and the young players?

J.T.: Absolutely. Let the kids play. It's a game. There was only one Vince Lombardi. I think that you want to teach them how to compete. You want to teach them discipline. You want to teach them how to work together. You want to teach them that life isn't all about winning, but how you handle adversity.

M.G.: Do you get a chance to get out and visit any tailgates?

J.T.: When I broadcast, I do try and walk around a little bit. And when I go to Notre Dame games I certainly do tailgate, absolutely.

M.G.: What's it like on campus on a big game day?

J.T.: It's unbelievable. What strikes you first are the aromas: the smell of all the hamburgers, and hotdogs, and brats, and chicken, and steak and lasagna. The blending of all the different food flavors is the first thing that hits you. When you get to a stadium its like, wow, it's just like a feast we're going to.

And then you see vehicles like that at stadiums, you see them with the big screen TVs, they have flatbeds that flip up that have a 60" LG screen.

M.G.: Do you have any favorite rituals at a tailgate party?

J.T.: I try not to drink much.

M.G.: Okay. What's your favorite tailgate food?

J.T.: Well, I love hotdogs at a ballpark.

M.G.: Yes?

J.T.: Just where it's laying on the grill, and it's just a little bit charred. I'm a simple hotdog eater; I just like a lot of mustard on mine. And I don't necessarily like the bun roasted, I like it fresh out of the bag where it's squishy and fresh.

M.G.: Are you a grill out person?

J.T.: Yes, we grill out at home.

M.G.: What do you like to cook on the grill?

J.T.: Chicken. I'm a chicken and fish guy.

M.G.: And are you a charcoal guy or a gas griller?

J.T.: I'm a gas griller.

That's another thing for tailgating,
Continued on page 58.

Gentleman Joe — continued from page 38

we're in a change of seasons right now so it's always good to have that colorful blanket. And that's another thing about tailgating is the colors, the pageantry of it. The different types of displays of team paraphernalia, whether it's hats, pillows, sweaters, jackets, blankets, scarves, flags. It really is, it's truly one of the most exciting elements when it comes to that.

M.G.: You've had a very long and successful broadcasting career in addition to your professional career. What's ahead for you for next season?

J.T.: Well, starting November 11th this year I'll be doing the games on the NFL network. Matt Dillon, Bob Costa and I will be doing the Thursday night football games. We open with Baltimore at Atlanta. Then we hit Chicago at Miami, and then Cincinnati at the Jets up in the new Meadowlands, and we've got the Steelers on tap, the Cowboys are on tap, the Chargers are on tap. We've got a lot of great football teams that will be vying for play off spots the last half of the season on our schedule.

M.G.: My last subject is about AAA. Your father battled with Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm. Is that why you got involved with the campaign?

J.T.: Well, partially. Really, the people involved with the campaign asked me first if I knew someone that had an aneurysm, and specifically an abdominal aortic aneurysm. And I said I think I did because I heard my father talk about it, but like a lot

I came to find out that Dave used to drive over roadkill on the way to the game, and depending on the size of the roadkill, that would determine how he felt like he was going to play that day.

of people, when you hear the term "aneurysm" the first thing you think of is a brain aneurysm.

M.G.: Yes.

J.T.: And so I talked to my dad about it he said, "Yeah I had one down here in the chest area." And I thought wow. I didn't know they had them there. And so I had more conversations with my dad about it and came to find out that my father actually does have an abdominal aortic aneurysm. And if it weren't for continuing physicals that he has had after his heart surgery, it probably would have never been detected.

M.G.: So you think that saved him?

J.T.: I am 100% convinced today that because of the ultrasound screening that my father had, that he is with us today. If not, I probably would have lost him a number of years ago. We really try and get people to get out and do screenings. We've partnered with Kmart pharmacies, and there are free screenings around the country. You can also find out where the screenings are by logging onto our website: www.findtheaaanswers.org. ■



Don't let 
delay of game
get you penalized
at the next tailgate!

Make the Out and About House one of *your tailgate necessities*. It's a **personal portable bathroom** that you can customize to support your team! **Special early-season tailgater price — \$14.95!**

Call 217-468-2396 or visit
www.OutandAboutHouse.com

