

Outdoor griller dons chef's hat all year

The aroma of sizzling steak on a grill may permeate through Maryland neighborhoods mostly in warmer months, but it's a scent Parkville residents – who live near Bob Delisle's home – smell all year.

The avid outdoor chef and St. Matthew, Northwood, parishioner doesn't need to dust off his two grills in the late spring because he cooks on them even when snow blankets his back lawn.

Dinner served on the family's dining room table gets its start from the backyard grill at least three evenings each week, and it's not only the meat prepared outside.

"I can easily make the whole meal on the grill," said the 50-year-old married father of three. "Typically, I put a bunch of vegetables in a tin foil packet with some butter, salt, pepper and other seasonings, and it all steams up nicely while the meat cooks."

Potatoes, corn on the cob and a host of other non-meat items are also primed on his gas and charcoal grills.

"The trick is to get everything done at the same time," said Mr. Delisle, owner of a financial services company. "You just have to know when to start each course. It's one of the talents I do have."

Knowing how to gauge the temperature of the meat is a little more scientific, he said.

Using one's own hand as a guide is the easiest approach, said Mr. Delisle, who routinely holds backyard barbecues and has cooked for as many as 300 at St. Matthew's events.

A raw steak should feel like the area below the thumb on the palm of an unclenched hand; medium rare feels like the same part when the thumb touches the index finger; medium feels like the same part when the thumb touches the middle finger; medium well feels like the same part when the thumb touches the ring finger; and

well done should feel like that same part of the hand as the thumb touches the pinky, he said.

Since Mr. Delisle gets different results from a gas and a charcoal grill, he uses both. The charcoal grill gives meat the best flavor because the fat drips onto the coals, which in turn burns up and the smoke provides a more favorable taste to the entrée, he said.

“I like the gas grill for the things that you cook slower,” Mr. Delisle said. “Vegetables and fish are always better on a gas grill, in my opinion