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The Blue Mountains

CHILI COOKOFF

Thornbury-Clarksburg
Rotary Club



Box 94, Clarksburg
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July 5, 2010

A HOT and CHILI time in the Village!!

The 26th version of The Blue Mountains Chili Cookoff was HOT....in every way! The day dawned bright and breezy, then settled in to be one of the hottest days of the year. Next...those beautiful chilis started cooking, and the heat got that much nicer... Add to that a huge crowd of spectators, there to enjoy the festivities, and there it was....a very "hot" event for a summer Saturday!

When the dust had settled, the big winner turned out to be Stephen Perrin's *Rusty's Texas Rangers* team from Rusty's at Blue. Not only did they manage to *defend* their Ontario Provincial Championship by winning the Texas Division for the 2nd year in a row, but they also placed 2nd in the Open Division! Add to that a 3rd place finish in the People's Choice judging and the trophy for Best Booth (a great Texas jail...) and you'll have to agree that it was quite a day for the Rusty's team. Their trip to Terlingua last November really must have helped them "fine tune" both their chili and their presentation!

Because of sanctioning as the Ontario Provincial Championship, the top 3 teams in the Texas Division qualify to cook in Terlingua, Texas on the first weekend in November at the granddaddy of all chili cookoffs -- **The Original Terlingua International Frank X. Tolbert - Wick Fowler Memorial Championship**. Rounding out the "Ontario Team" qualified for Terlingua were Jeannine Holden and her 2nd place *Chili & All That Jazz* team, representing The Blue Mountains Chamber of Commerce, and Rob Lizotte's *Jolly Peños* chili team, who place 3rd!

In the Open Division, John Dicker's *Sailor Phil's Pirate Chili* team emerged as champions, and as with the Texas Division, were chosen through a careful "blind judging" system by the panel of official judges. Following *Rusty's Texas Rangers* 2nd place finish was the popular team of young guys calling themselves *6 Guys - 1 Pot* (despite the fact there were 7 guys!) This team was headed up by Head Cook, Anthony Woodcroft.

The People's Choice Champion, selected for the second year in a row by tasters and voters, was Lyle Cupskey's *Local Wild Bison and Boar Chili* team from Bridges Tavern in Thornbury. It's quite a feat to repeat as champion in any division! Much to *their* delight (and the delight of the crowd), the *6 Guys - 1 Pot* team garnered enough taster votes to place 2nd in People's Choice voting, while 3rd Place went to *Rusty's Texas Rangers*. With just under 1000 tasters, it was a busy, but *happy* time in the plaza, and folks of all ages enjoyed the process.

There is much to recommend the chili cookoff. The food aspect is obvious. Finally however, it comes down to the chili cooks, who not only enjoy the cooking but put so much more into the day! With crazy, elaborate costumes and fantastic chili booths and silly, engaging antics the cooks, with their imagination and energy, are the ones who really *make* the day!

An elaborate Texas Jail booth, constructed with rigid foam panels, looked fantastic and certainly created a great backdrop for the *Rusty's Texas Rangers* team, who went away with the Best Booth trophy. Through photos and stories, Steve Perrin and his buddies were able to share some of their adventures in Terlingua last November. They are already planning for their return trip *this* November!

When it came to costumes, nobody could top the *Brawlin' Betties* team of Sacha Matanowitsch and her "roller derby queens". Complete with team shirts, Band-Aids, bruises, elbow pads and roller skates, these perennial favourites charmed the crowd with their energy and imagination, earning them the Best Costumes trophy for 2010. What *will* they think of next??

Their second year of cooking proved to be the charm for the *6 Guys – 1 Pot* team. Their "World Cup Chili" theme, complete with cheers and "vuvuzelas" entertained and engaged the crowd all day, and in many ways typified the fun of the chili cookoff. The Most Entertaining trophy was well deserved by this team of crazy young guys!

Finally, with their 9th place finish in the Texas Division, Wayne Kipp and his *Peter and the Pumpkin Eaters* chili team from Meaford Rotary went home with the Rota-Chili Challenge trophy for the highest-placing Rotary chili team. (It should be noted that complete results are available on the Thornbury-Clarksburg Rotary Club's website – www.tcrotary.ca. Just click on the Chili Cookoff link in the bottom left corner, then click on "Current Champs".)

The Village was a-buzz all day with the fun and energy of the competing chili teams. And the wonderful interaction between cooks and spectators really represents the spirit of the event – "good serious fun". The fun that the cooks were having proved contagious – the entire day was extremely upbeat and positive, producing precisely what was promised – "a fun-filled family day". Add to that the huge crowd and the terrific music provided by John Eaton and his "Touch of Vinyl" band all afternoon from the Village Stage, and one can understand the positive "vibe" of the day.

Thornbury-Clarksburg Rotarians are delighted with this year's cookoff. The weather was spectacular, the crowd a record and the chili.....delicious. As the day smoothly unfolded, it was obvious what a great partnership the local Rotary Club has with the Village at Blue Mountain. Chili Cookoff Chair, Karen James, was enthusiastic in her praise of that relationship. "We are *so* pleased with the wonderful support and cooperation of The Village staff. It's been a treat to work with Patti Kendall and Heather Harding and their Village Events team!"

The bottom line, after all the cooking and the hoopla, is that important funds were raised by the Thornbury-Clarksburg Rotary Club – funds that will be put to good use by the club on projects either here at home or overseas. Having just completed their \$150,000 pledge to the Meaford Hospital Foundation, the club has now embarked on \$100,000 worth of support for Thornbury's new Medical Clinic. On the international front, the club is a strong supporter of one of Rotary International's biggest priorities -- the **eradication of Polio**. With the \$355 million support and challenge from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Rotary and its partners hope to soon be able to say that polio no longer exists in the world. Its one of many important causes that Rotary is pursuing. For more information, go to www.rotary.org.

For more information, contact: Gerry McGregor at 519-599-6469 or chili@tcrotary.ca

Photos will be posted on the Chili Cookoff website – www.tcrotary.ca/chili over the next few days. If you need larger copies of any of the photos there, or wish any other photo, please contact Gerry McGregor.