

Please, help me give Yanks chili reception

Illinoisans believe they are bona fide chili kings and queens.

I know this because last fall the Illinois Senate in Springfield passed a resolution declaring the Land of Lincoln the "Chilli Capital of the Civilized World."

"Chilli" is the cutesy way Illinoisans spell the Southwestern delicacy.

It provides an excellent example of why Texans should try very hard not to lose a war.

Victors are rarely satisfied with despoiling property, appropriating wealth, carrying off daughters and sending Republican officials and Episcopal bachelors into respectable communities.

They also take great pleasure in adulterating the culture and the language.

The "chilli" insult is a case in point, and after reading it, I suggested that Illinoisans "wouldn't know a Bowl of Red from a tureen of warm spit."

Somebody sent the gibe to a Springfield Journal-Register columnist, Toby McDaniel, and he printed it for all literate Illinoisans to read.

They got pretty hot.

Three of them wrote me immediately, and I received a letter from the fourth Monday.

His name is William Colclasure, and he has decided to "put this controversy to



Roddy Stinson

rest" with a personal taste test.

To wit:

"My lovely wife Ariene and I will be in your great city for the Fiesta. Upon arriving in San Antonio, or shortly thereafter, I will taste the chilli that you feel is the best San Antonio has to offer. My mind will then be able to rest although my digestive tract may not. I WILL know which is the best."

Dream on.

This Illinois fellow wouldn't know genuine chilli if it burned off his taste buds. And I have conclusive proof.

See if you can find it in this excerpt

from his letter:

"(Prior to traveling to San Antonio) I will dine at the two most famous chilli parlors here in Springfield. Once I have digested that stuff, I will make notes about the effects of the beans and spices."

So much for the authenticity of Illinois "chilli."

Four hours after eating it, you go through a little extra "I."

Show me a man who would enjoy a bowl of chilli with beans floating in it, and I will show you a guy who would eat a taco with a fork or nibble the shuck of a tamale.

Excuse me, tamale.

Having said that — and in the cordial spirit for which Texans are known around the world — if the Colclasures are sincere about putting their spoons in the real thing, I propose we help them do so.

I know several places where outstanding chilli is served, and I will send the Colclasures my list sometime next week.

However, I have lived in San Antonio only 24 years and eaten in just a couple of hundred restaurants, and I may have missed the best Bowl of Red in town.

If you know of a cafe or hole in the wall where the Illinois couple could experience the true meaning of "chilli," call my ExpressLine number and give me the name and address of the place.

Before sending your recommendation to the Colclasures, I will taste the eatery's fare personally.

Please, no chilli with beans.

I'm painfully aware that it's possible to order a Bowl of Red in San Antonio and get a bowl of sepsia.

Reconstruction left Texans with afflictions other than Republicans and Episcopalians.

But let's not make the digestive tracts of William and Ariene pay for any of those sins.

To leave a message for Roddy Stinson, call ExpressLine at 554-0500 and punch 4408.

WORD

APRIL 11, 1994

MR. RODDY STINSON,
SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS NEWS,
SAN ANTONIO, TX.78205

Copy

DEAR RODDY:

I COULD NOT MISS YOUR PLEA FOR HELP " PLEASE HELP ME GIVE YANKS CHILI RECEPTION". BOB AND ANN ANGEL, TWO OF THE MOST AFFECTIONATE HOSTS IN SAN ANTONIO HAVE AGREED TO HAVE WILLIAM COLCLASURE AND HIS LOVELY WIFE ARLENE AS GUESTS IN THIER HOME TO TASTE SOME SAN ANTONIO CHILI. THE COUPLE ARE MEMBERS OF SEVERAL CHILI CLUBS ASSOCIATED WITH CASI.

SOMEHOW I THOUGHT THE "CHILI-BEANS " DISPUTE WAS SETTLED LONG AGO. AS I RECALL ONE OF THE FIRST WORLD INTERNATIONAL CHILI COOKOFFS WAS IN 1967 AT TERLINGUA, TEXAS. TWO COOKS COMPETED, WICK FOWLER, A WAR CORESPONDENT FROM AUSTIN, TEXAS AND H. ALLEN SMITH, A BRAGGART NEWS MAN FROM NEW YORK CITY. HE SAID " NOBODY KNOWS MORE ABOUT CHILI THAN DO I " C.A.S.I. MEANING CHILI APPRECIATION SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL WAS FOUNDED AROUND 1952 AND IN 1964 IT INSTALLED CHAPTERS AROUND THE WORLD. SOMETIME IN THE EARLY 70S CHAPTERS WAS CHANGED TO PODS AND THE SAN ANTONIO CLUB WAS THE SECOND POD TO BE NAMED.

THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL CHILI COOKOFF SPONSORED BY CASI WAS IN 1967 AND THE REFEREE FRANK TOLBERT WHO HAD HELPED ORGANIZE THE AFFAIR HAD TO DECLARE THE CONTEST A DRAW BECAUSE THE THIRD JUDGE TASTED SMITH'S CHILI FIRST AND WENT INTO CONVULSIONS AND WAS NEVER ABLE TO TASTE FOWLER'S CHILI. YOU SEE HALLIE STILLWILL, A DISTANT RELATIVE OF SMITH ONLY HAD TO TASTE A PINTO BEAN FROM HIS CHILI AND SHE VOTED FOR SOUPY SMITH. SHE THEN ATE APLENTY FROM FOWLERS MAGNIFICENT CHILI.

IN 1968 "WINO" DE SILVA COOKED AGAINST FOWLER AND WITH SOME HELP FROM HIS CALIFORNIA FRIENDS AS JUDGES WON THE CHAMPIONSHIP. IN 1969 C. V. WOOD CAME FROM CALIFORNIA AND AGAIN BEAT FOWLER WITH ALL SORTS TRICKS AND GIMMICKS. WICK FOWLER FINALLY WON THE CHAMPIONSHIP IN 1970 WHEN THE JUDGING RULES WERE IMPROVED.

IN 1973 JOE DE FRATES FROM SPRINGFIELD, ILL. WON THE CHAMPIONSHIP. HE HAD LEARNED TO COOK CHILI FROM HIS FATHER WHO WORKED IN A DALLAS PUB THAT SERVED CHILI. MR. DE FRANTES HAD HOOKED UP WITH A WEST COAST GROUP. IN 1975 HE WON THE I.C.S. CALIFORNIA CHAMPIONSHIP. HE CALLED HIS CONCOCTION " CHILLY " EXPLAINING THE DOUBLE LL.

WITH TWO CHAMPIONSHIPS MR. JOE DE FRATES RETURNED TO SPRINGFIELD AND DECLARED HIS STATE THE CHILI CAPTIOLO OF THE WORLD. HE OPENED A CHILI PARLOR AND STARTED SELLING CANNED CHILI.

SINCE 1975 ABOUT 19 CASI COOKS HAVE RECEIVED CHAMPIONSHIPS, TOLBERT-FOWLER MEMORIAL HAS NAMED 10 CHAMPIONS AND I.C.S HAS NAMED ANOTHER 17 or 18. WITH ALL OF THESE CHAMPIONS SINCE JOE WON. COME ON SPRINGFIELD THE CHILI CAPTIOLO OF THE WORLD. NO WAY

SAN ANTONIO AND TEXAS ARE RICH IN THE HISTORY OF CHILI. SOMEWHERE I READ THAT THE DEFENDERS OF THE ALAMO LIVED OFF ARMADILLO CHILI DURING THE BATTLE IN 1836. WHEATHER THIS IS FACT OR FOLKLORE I DO NOT KNOW. WHAT I DO KNOW IS THAT THE TEXAS TRAILDRIVERS ATE LOTS OF CHILI STEW ON THE CATTLE TRAILS TO KANSAS. IN THE 1860s, 1870s AND INTO THE 1880s THOUSANDS OF LONGHORNS WERE DRIVEN UP THE TRAIL BY TEXAS COWBOYS TO KANSAS MARKETS. THE RANGE COOKS WHO THE COWBOYS ALWAYS NAMED WITH SUCH TITLES AS "VINEGAR JOHN" "GRUB WORM" AND "KITCHEN SALLIE" COOKED A CHILI STEW USING BEEF OR BUFFALO MEAT AND WILD SPICES ALONG THE TRAIL. AS TIME WENT ALONG THEY WOULD GATHER OREGANO, ASSORTED WILD PEPPERS, GARLIC AND WILD ONIONS AND REPLANT ALONG THE TRAIL SO A SUPPLY WOULD BE AVAILABLE THE NEXT YEAR. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE TEXAS TRAILDRIVERS WERE VERY IMPORTANT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILI.

NOR SHOULD WE FORGET THE " CHILI QUEENS " OF SAN ANTONIO WHO OPERATED FROM ABOUT 1870 TO 1943. THEY MADE CHILI IN THIER HOMES AND TOOK IT TO THE STREET SQUARES, KEPT IT HOT WITH MESQUETE WOOD FIRES AND SOLD IT BY THE DISH TO THE PUBLIC.

WOLF BRAND CHILI CANNED AND SOLD MORE CHILI THAN ANYONE. WITH HEADQUARTERS IN CORSICANA, TEXAS THEY STILL USE A RANGE COOK RECEIP. CHILI POWDER WAS INVENTED EITHER CLINTON PENDERY OF FT. WORTH OR WILLIAM GEBHARDT OF NEW BRAUNSFEL'S TEXAS AND BOTH ARE STILL IN OPERATION.. THE TEXAS LEGISLATURE ADOPED CHILI AS THE OFFICIAL DISH OF TEXAS IN 1977.

I CAN ARRANGE FOR JUDGE ROY BEAN (JOHN COLLINS) TO ISSUE THE GUESTS AN HONORARY CITIZEN OF TEXAS PROCLAMATION DURING THIER STAY IN TEXAS.

SINCERLY

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