

Texas' Texan, columnist Frank X. Tolbert, 72, dies

DALLAS (AP) — Frank X. Tolbert, the "walking encyclopedia" of Texas, has died at age 72.

The long-time columnist for the Dallas Morning News "died peacefully in his sleep between 10:30 Monday night and 8:30 Tuesday morning. I think his heart just stopped," said Kathleen Hoover Tolbert, his wife of 40 years.

Tolbert officially retired from the newspaper in 1978 to devote more time to his Dallas chili restaurant, "Tolbert's," which he ran with his wife, son Frank Jr. and daughter Kathleen Jr. But he continued to write his weekly column, "Tolbert's Texas," for the News.

His friend, the late Paul Crume, also a Dallas Morning News columnist, had once called Tolbert "a walking encyclopedia of the state."

Joe M. Dealey, chairman of the board of A.H. Belo Corp. and a close friend of Tolbert, said Tuesday that Tolbert "in many ways epitomized all that is Texan. Tolbert and Texas are synonymous, if not redundant."

"Frank will be widely remembered through the Dallas community and the state," said Dealey. "He will be sorely missed by us all."

Tolbert was born in Amarillo. He worked on the sports desk of the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal while attending Texas Tech University



FRANK X. TOLBERT
... synonymous with Texas

where he received a degree in anthropology.

After working on the sports desks of the Amarillo Globe-News and the Wichita Falls Times, he joined the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, where he covered sports from 1935 until 1941.

During World War II, Tolbert was a U.S. Marine Corps combat correspondent and edited the Marines' magazine "Leatherneck."

He joined the Dallas Morning News in 1946, but also wrote articles for national magazines such as "The Saturday Evening Post," "Colliers" and "True."

In the 1960s, when the big magazines began to fold, he turned to writing books. His first was "Neiman-Marcus, Texas," an account of the Dallas department store. Next was "Bigamy Jones," a cowboy novel.

In later years, he was known for his books about Texas history: "The Day of San Jacinto," "Dick Dowling at Sabine Pass," and "Tolbert's Informal History of Texas." "Tolbert's Texas" was a compilation of his articles.

His columns on chili cooking and his book "A Bowl of Red" led to sponsorship of an annual celebration of the spicy dish, the "World Chili Cook-off," held in the remote ghost town Terlingua in far West Texas.

Tolbert had requested that his body be cremated and his ashes scattered across the Big Bend area of southwest Texas, one of his favorite areas of the state.

Mrs. Tolbert said a private family service would be held, but no date was set.

Tolbert is also survived by two brothers, Hunter Tolbert of Lubbock and William Tolbert of King Salmon, Alaska.



Tolbert's Texas

World championship chili cookoff will be Oct. 16

By FRANK X. TOLBERT
IN NOVEMBER the weather is almost always kind in Texas' Big Bend country. And the savage mountains and the deserts are painted in autumn colors.

Ludwig Bemelmans, the writer and painter, was there one November. And he wrote about the phallic peaks rising out of the painted deserts:

"In a lifetime spent in travel, here I came upon the greatest wonder.

"The mantle of God touches you. It is what Beethoven reached for in music. It is panorama without beginning or end. . . . It makes you breathe deeply when you think of it, for you have inhaled eternity!"

H. ALLEN SMITH, the late Alpine, Texas, humorist, had this to say about Ludwig Bemelmans' rhapsodizing over the Big Bend landscapes:

"Old Ludwig must have taken on too much tequila when he wrote that." (Despite this scoffing, Mr. Smith, a native of Illinois and a longtime inhabitant of New York, elected to spend the last decade of his life in the Big Bend.)

IN THE past the World Championship Chili Cookoff (the Wick Fowler Memorial) has most often been on the first Saturday in November and always in the Big Bend ghost town of Terlingua.

The early November weather in the ghost town has been uniformly lovely on the days of the chili wars. In recent times, in other regions of this province, and on the approaches to Terlingua, the first storms of the season have happened on the cookoff date.

Middle October usually has calm weather. So I am setting the date for the 1978 World Championship in Terlingua on Saturday, Oct. 16.

I received hundreds of letters and phone calls from operators of light planes who say they have had trouble in previous Novembers because of the stormy weather on the route to Terlingua. And the ghost town has mountains all around, some of them 8,000 feet high. David Witts, the Dallas lawyer and mayor of Terlingua, leases each year the five or six planes which fetch newspaper, television, radio and magazine people from Dallas to Terlingua. Mayor Witts thinks flying in mid-October skies will be safer for the voyage from Dallas to the gravel under Hen Egg mountain which is the Terlingua International Airport.

THE LINEUP of officials for the 1976 World Championship is shaping up.

After the next cookoff I'm retiring as director of this World Series for chili. Three prominent chili heads will be the new co-directors. They are Chief Judge Gordon Fowler of Austin, son of the all-time great chili cook, the late

Wick Fowler; Robert (Yellow Dog) Marsh, great pepper (president) of the San Antonio pod (chapter) of the Chili Appreciation Society International, and Hal John Wimberly, editor of the official publication of the chili culture, the *Goat Gap Gazette*.

The defending champion world champion is a decorative young Houston woman, Suzie (Mother Gonzo) Watson.

HAPPY SHAHAN, the Kinney County rancher and outstanding master of ceremonies, will again handle that chore, assisted by Actress Ruta Lee, Mayor Witts and Alex Burton.

Judge Hallie Stillwell of Alpine, "The Law West of Hell's Half Acre," is the cookoff's permanent chili queen, but we re-crown her each time with a garland of chili peppers fashioned by my daughter, Kathleen Tolbert.

As John Anders mentioned recently, Jerry Jeff Walker and Hondo Crouch will be chiefs of protocol.

Hal John Wimberly has a new office. He is the final judge on the eligibility of contestants. You can write him in care of the *Goat Gap Gazette* at 5110 Bayard Lane, No. 2, Houston, Texas, 77006. And if you are a true chili head you should subscribe, \$5 a year, to this unique publication.

CHARLIE FOWLER is scorekeeper and a senior judge, and Ann Fowler is the referee and a senior judge.

The other senior judges are Gov. Dolph Briscoe, Mayor Witts, Bill Neale (who makes the collectors' items Terlingua posters for each cookoff), Dick Hitt, Dick Wheeler, Alex Burton, Alegani Jani Schofield (the 1974 world champion), Wayne Fleming (cookoff chemist), Fred McMurray, Yellow Dog Marsh, Paul D. Smith, Hal John, John Wimberly, Ruta Lee (the gorgeous actress has previous experience judging the Terlingua cookoff), Billy Bob Crim, Kit Goldsburg (of Picante sauce), Tom Tierney (one of the founders of the cookoff), Tom Nall and Fred Lasswell (who draws the cartoon strip, Snuffy Smith).

DR. DAVID Hoy of Paducah, Ky., the world famous psychic, will be a judge and the cookoff clairvoyant. He will "read" the other judges minds' to ascertain if they are being honest. (Long ago we had mentalist Peter Hurkos performing this chore.)

THE CHILI editor of the *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*, James Bacon, will be in Dallas on Wednesday. Chili is a 5-letter word. Mr. Bacon will be in Dallas flogging his new book, *Hollywood is a Four Letter Town*. James is also a long time Hollywood gossip columnist, and he has composed a very spicy book.

True tales of the great chili wars

By TERESA MORRIS
SCENE Staff Writer

To understand the reverence with which such people as the cowhands and Frank X. Tolbert approach a bowl of chili (see the prayer at the beginning of the story on Page 3), you have to know that they are Texans.

Deep in the heart(burn) of Texas, chili is more than just a food. It is a veritable religion; its preparation and eating, a sacrament. The deep-seated Texan addiction to the dish allegedly begins in infancy, when pacifiers are replaced with chili peppers.

For instance, there's the fanatic Chili Appreciation Society International, based in Dallas. CASI members refer to themselves as "chili heads," and they open their monthly meetings with a secret cracker-crumbling ritual.

Their slogan: "The aroma of good chili should generate rapture akin to a lover's kiss," a quote from the chili bible, a now out-of-print book called "With or Without Beans; Being a Compendium to Perpetrate the Internationally Famous Bowl of Chili (Texas Style) Which Occupies Such an Important Place in Modern Civilization." It was written by Joe Cooper of Dallas.

Once a year, the chili heads and their leader, George Haddaway, who co-founded the society in 1951, flock to the desolate West Texas ghost mining town of Terlingua for a boisterous "International Chili Cook-Off."

But mostly CASI members spend their waking hours fulfilling their self-appointed, divine mission on earth: to, as long-time member and chili historian Frank X. Tolbert puts it in his Dallas drawl, "spreyad gud chili" to all corners of the earth. "Gud," in this case meaning Texas chili, which is a different breed altogether from what sissified Yankee chili eaters call chili. The more BTUs, the better. But no, repeat no, beans.

When I telephoned Tolbert the other day at The Dallas Morning News, where he works as a columnist when he's not eating chili, he immediately began pressuring me to start a chapter, or "pod," as they're called in veneration of the chili pepper pod, of CASI here in Louisville. My membership card is heading this way from Texas right now.

"We've got chapters all over the world," Tolbert said proudly. "Ah went on a road rally recently and made six pounds of reindeer chili up in Honningsveg, Alaska. Ah wanted to take some down to those primitive Alaskans, wha-daya call 'em, the Laplanders, but when I went back to the kitchen to get it, the old cook and his assistants had finished off the rest of it."

"We don't have a chapter of Laplanders yet," he explained.

Tolbert is the author of "A Bowl of Red," ("Red" is what Texans call chili), an entertaining, albeit more-than-slightly biased, compendium of chili lore.

In "A Bowl of Red," Tolbert attempts to set straight the facts about the origins of the dish. Chili is not, as is popularly espoused, from Mexico, he contends. According to Tolbert, evidence indicates that it originated, you guessed it, somewhere in Texas during the early 19th century, probably in San Antonio. The Mexicans don't even want any credit for it, he adds, quoting a Mexican dictionary as defining chile con carne as "a detestable dish sold from Texas to New York and erroneously described as Mexican." It was not until after a visit from a CASI delegation, Tolbert says, that chili was embraced south of the border.

Tolbert also writes of the hotly contested annual cook-offs in Terlingua, which were originated to separate those who know their beans about chili (the Texans) from those who don't (the non-Texans). In that respect, the Texas chili heads have fared less than spectacularly.

In 1967, the year of the first cook-off, the Texans wanted to pit their king chili chef, one Wickford P. Fowler of Austin, against Beverly Hills restaurateur Dave Chasen, chili maker to the stars.

In Texas chili lore, Fowler is almost a god, famous for a fire marshal's nightmare of a concoction called "Two-Alarm Chili," which can be adapted from False-Alarm up to Four-Alarm or better, depending upon the eater's threshold of pain.

In comparison, the Texans felt, Chasen's typically sweet California chili was decidedly bland. However, the Californian had promised to bring along one of his best customers, Elizabeth Taylor, as a second.

A few weeks before the event was scheduled, though, Chasen fell ill and had to withdraw.

About that time, New York humorist and author H. Allen Smith wrote an article that appeared in Holiday magazine in which he claimed to be the world's foremost authority on chili, as well as creator of the best chili recipe.

After they stopped laughing at Smith's soupy, bean-filled chili, the Texans issued the challenge to the Easterner for a spoon-to-spoon duel at high noon.

The confrontation ended in a draw. One judge, Alpine, Tex., Justice of the Peace Hallie Stillwell, voted for Smith. Another, Floyd Schneider, a Lone Star Brewery executive from San Antonio, went with Texas' boy, Fowler. The third judge, Mayor David Witts of Terlingua, collapsed into convulsions after tasting Smith's brew and declared his taste buds impaired and thus unable to cast a deciding vote.

Neither was there a winner in the second stand-off a year later, in which Woodruff, chief chili head of the Cucamonga, Calif., chapter of CASI and California state chili champ, and Fowler competed. Smith dropped out, claiming a case of the hives. That year, just as the judges' ballots were to be read, masked men arrived on the scene, stole the results and dropped it down a Terlingua mine shaft.

In 1969, there was a winner: California and Arizona businessman and chili head C.V. Wood, president of McCulloch Oil Co. (Wood is the man who brought the London Bridge to Arizona.) In

1970, C.V. arrived in his private jet, wearing a crown of red peppers and escorting a bevy of Hollywood starlets. He said he was too tired to cook and sat on the sidelines of that year's contest, during which Fowler finally won what the Texans believed was a long-deserved victory.

However, Wood and the California chapter turned out to be a derisive factor in chilidom.

The 1970 cook-offs, which resulted in Wood defeating Fowler in a Chili Cook-off of the Champs, ended in a peppery session of good old Southwest name-calling. As a result, Wood loaded his starlets back into the plane and returned to Los Angeles, where he started his own chili society. Today, both groups claim that its cook-off is the official arbiter of the supreme chili.

According to Bill Kennedy, who describes himself as director of special services for the International Chili Society, based in Los Angeles, the 10th annual international chili cook-off will be held Oct. 24 at the Tropic Gold Mine near Rosamond, Calif. Kennedy says that the event "just outgrew Terlingua, a little ghost town. The population there is two," he added, "and I think one of them is a prairie dog."

ICS is the real "international" chili society, he added. "That Texas group is just regional."

"Hah," scoffed Tolbert in Dallas. "Are those California copycats still usin' our name?"

According to the Texan, the official 10th annual international chili-cook-off will be held Oct. 16 in Terlingua, as usual.

MISSIONARY OF CHILI

Crusty Frank Tolbert still spreading word of a hot bowl of red

By David McLemore
Staff Writer of The News

BRACKETTVILLE, Texas — The South Texas sun shines brightly from a pale blue sky, braising scrub oaks and winter-pale faces with equal grace. The acrid aroma rises like an avenging angel from 24 simmering chili pots, wafting through a crowd gathered around alleged adults throwing tortillas in the air.

And Frank X. Tolbert, wearing a deer-

■ Tolbert in Brackettville. Page 2AA

stalker cap and a bemused expression, saunters through the throng of chili addicts, in search of the elderly gentleman from Rock Springs who was looking for a fight.

Let Capistrano have its swallows. Forget the bluebonnets spreading like a carpet along I-35. Friends, Frank Xavier Tolbert is in his element, and springtime has returned to Texas.

In his 71 summers, Tolbert has been many things. He was a Marine correspondent during World War II. A *Dallas Morning News* institution for 30 years, he also found time to write six books. He's angered the Daughters of the Republic of Texas and survived.

But do not be deceived by the silver hair and the saintly expression. For Tolbert's most important contribution to civilization, as we know it, has been to spread the glories of chili to a waiting world.

In 1966, he wrote *A Bowl of Red*, a paean to all things chili, in which he glorified the fiery pepper-meat combination and chronicled the first chili cookoff in the world at Terlingua. "That book started a subculture of chili that spread all over the world," he said. "There's more than a thousand cookoffs in the U.S. now. Hell, there's even one in the U.S. Embassy in Nepal."

See COOKOFFS on Page 7AA.



The Dallas Morning News: Clint Grant

Frank X. Tolbert, the guru of Texas chili, poses with the ingredients for a bowl of red.

Cookoffs add to devotees of hot dish

Continued from Page 1AA.

On a recent windy spring day in Brackettville, Tolbert watched another chapter in the continuing chili saga unfold at the Fourth Annual Tortilla Toss and First Annual Chili Cook-off. Once again, the inmates seemed to have taken over the asylum. Tolbert looked around at the organized confusion. And he giggled.

"Lord, isn't this a scurvy-looking bunch," he said. "Some people come here for the first time, see the collection of characters and watch people throwing tortillas around, and they think they've gone insane."

Pistola Bradford, the gentleman from Rock Springs, weaves back through the crowd. Tolbert whispers an aside. "The old boy's in his 80s, doesn't have a tooth in his head, and he says he's looking for a fight." Bradford sights Tolbert and bellows out a greeting. "Frank, I've been here all day, and I haven't been put in jail once," Bradford says before marching in another direction.

Tolbert then wanders through the chili-preparation area, sampling a bit here, talking to the cooks. "Now this stuff isn't too bad, because we're in Texas," Tolbert said. "But I've been in some places in this country where they don't have the slightest idea what chili is."

Accompanied by his daughter, Kathleen, Tolbert has judged and fixed chili throughout the U.S. and a good part of the world. He's fixed chili in San Francisco and above the Arctic Circle, where he fixed reindeer chili in Lapland. But Texas, he says, remains the epicenter of true chili.

"Elsewhere, folks try to get too exotic," he said. "There's nothing worse than Yankee chili. About the worst we ever ran up against was chili con abalone. Can you imagine? Then there was something called butterbean chili. Sometimes, you risk your life tasting stuff like that."

Maury Maverick Jr., another ex-Marine who loves Texas and chili as much as Tolbert, said, "Frank is probably the greatest living authority on chili con carne. Now, he's not as great as he says he is, but no one in the world could be. He's just better than anyone else."

Maverick, a San Antonio attorney known for his feisty defense of unpopular causes, stressed that Tolbert has a serious side. "He's popularized Texas history in a way that has given people a sense of the dignity of the state," Maverick said. "He could write for in-

chose to deal with... that taxicab drivers and other working people could have pride in the state. And that's the way it ought to be. That's why he's an important writer. Tolbert's all right."

Born in Abilene on Aug. 15, 1912, Tolbert is now tall as an oak, gentle as the armadillo. He points with pride at being a 5th-generation Texan. "My grandfather nearly got hanged during the Civil War," he says. "He was a friend of Sam Houston's, but he didn't want Texas to stay with the Union or join the Confederacy. He wanted to go back to being a Republic." The gleam in Tolbert's eye catches somewhere between twinkle and the mischievous. "Not a bad idea, really."

In 1961, members of the DRT's chapter in Victoria sought to have Tolbert's book, *An Informal History of Texas* banned from Texas libraries because it belittled the military leadership of Col. James W. Fannin, who surrendered a force of 300 Texians to martyrdom to the Mexican army at Goliad in March 1836.

In response, Tolbert said, "In writing that Fannin stupidly let himself be surrounded on a waterless plain, I was drawing from the report of one of his command . . . who escaped the Mexicans later. Didn't have enough space in the book and don't have enough here to list all the well-documented blunders made by Fannin."

The DRT, in all wisdom, quietly and sedately raised the white flag.

In 1977, Tolbert retired from *The News* after 30 years of weaving a rich and weird tapestry of Texas characters in his column, Tolbert's Texas. But retirement is a misnomer. Tolbert still writes his column once a week for *the News*. And he still finds time to wander about the state, tracking down the unusual story with his finely honed sense of the absurd.

And Tolbert is still writing books. His *A Bowl of Red* has just come out in paperback, revised and expanded. And Tolbert is preparing to publish a new book on the Texas borderlands.

To friend and foe — and there are many more of the former — Tolbert stands bigger than life, a feisty, fiercely independent man, quick with the intemperate oath and almost as quick with a kind word. At 71, time hasn't slowed him down any. He still reflects, in equal parts, the grandeur, exaggeration and contradictions of the state that spawned him.

But, for Frank Tolbert, there will always be chili. Any and all cookoffs, from glistening urban centers to dusty border towns are, to him, merely a preface to the Big Time — the international championships at Arriba (Upper) Terlingua each year on the first Saturday in November. From the first one he helped create in 1966, Tolbert has been there, serenely watching the madness unfold, pausing only to laugh the loudest when the best-laid plans go so deliriously wrong.

"I just like to watch it get better and better," Tolbert said. "Last year, we had about 11,000 people there, and there were only three arrests. Terlingua is just a matter of survival."

But why chili? "Oh, I just like chili best," Tolbert said. "It's a native of Texas, and that makes it good."

He might be talking about himself

Brackettville's black Indians

Tribe has produced military heroes and chili chefs

TOLBERT'S TEXAS

By Frank X. Tolbert



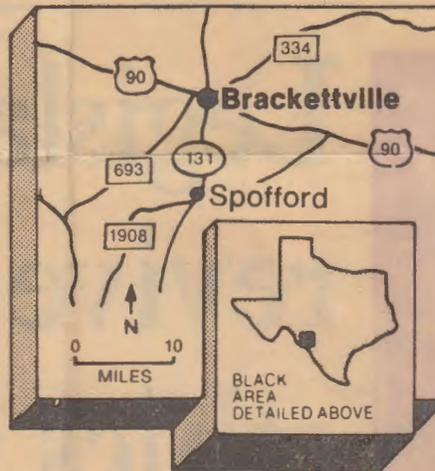
BRACKETTVILLE, Texas — Here there is a colony of black Indian warriors. In the Indians' private cemetery on the Fort Clark military reservation are buried three

winners of the Congressional Medal of Honor and many others who fought in battles from the 1850s frontier wars to the Vietnam War.

They were called, at first, Seminole Indian scouts for the cavalry. And they have served under famous generals ranging from Ranald Mackenzie to George Patton. Now in Brackettville they are organized under the modest, non-military title of the Allies of the Seminoles. They are descendants of Seminoles and runaway black slaves. Their 1983 chief is Louis Dimery, also mayor pro tem of Brackettville, and the subchief and head barbecue and chili cook is Pat Bowlegs.

The original reason Fort Clark was established in Brackettville in 1852 is Las Moras (The Mulberries) Springs. These magnificent fountains rise in a corner of what was the old military reservation and flow an average of 680,000 gallons an hour.

The black Indians revere the icy, pure springs that pour from the ground in a setting of giant oaks. And since the days when they rode with Mackenzie's Raiders, they have had a saying that a ritual bath in Las Moras "will wash your sins away."



The Dallas Morning News: Jean Gowan

This is simply a reference to baptism.

Naturally, though, according to Pat Bowlegs, the white folks have chosen to exaggerate the sin-killing powers of Las Moras.

Fort Clark, which now goes by the name of Fort Clark Springs, is a handsome resort village. The old masonry barracks, officers' quarters and other buildings have been restored for private homes and hotel-type guest rooms, and there is a restaurant worthy of praise. Now at the guarded entrance of Fort Clark Springs, there is a sign that suggests that you have only to cross the bridge over Las Moras and you will no longer be burdened by sins.

Pat Bowlegs competed here in the first annual Border International Open Chili Cookoff. The subchief, Bowlegs, said he didn't cook his best chili for he was also helping chief Dimery and the Allies' female chief, Charley Wilson, barbecue beef, chicken and Freder-

icksburg sausage over mesquite fires. Bowlegs will represent the Seminole Scouts at the 17th annual Original World Championship Chili Cookoff in Arriba Terlingua Nov. 5.

Brackettville is the seat of Kinney County, which has an artistic jewel of a little courthouse, built in 1910 at a cost of only \$4,500. I'd like to know who the architect was because all of the outside rooms have cross ventilation.

Brackettville was named for Army sutler Oscar B. Brackett, who started a supply village for the fort in 1852. Oscar owned the village, and a Yale man, Samuel Maverick, owned Fort Clark. On the way to Brackettville, I stopped in Castroville, hoping to ask my friend, Maury Maverick Jr., how much his ancestors got when they sold the 3,395-acre reservation to the Army. Maury wasn't at home, but later I learned that Maverick's wife, Mary Adams Maverick, was paid \$80,000 in 1884 for the property.

Brackettville's ^{16,779}16,679 inhabitants are a fascinating ethnologic mix: Anglos, Hispanics, black Indians and new settlers in the Fort Clark compounds. They seem to get along amicably. You should have seen them on the dance floor at the civic center after the hands-across-the-border cookoff.

The people who saw that the Border International went off smoothly included the president of the municipality of Acuna, Mexico, Jesus Ramon Jr.; Dick and Marilyn Wright, Paul Smith and Kathleen Tolbert of Dallas; Brig. Gen. Enrique Kortwright, the commander of the military garrison at Acuna; Guillermo Elizonda of Saltillo, Mexico; Sam Lewis of San Angelo, Texas, and Happy Shahan of Brackettville.

Lifestyle

9/2/81

SAM LIKES IT HOT

By BILLIE BLEDSOE
NEWS FOOD EDITOR

What President Reagan has done for jelly beans, Sam Lewis is doing for jalapenos.

Although the latter hasn't quite achieved the household-word status of the former, it's only a matter of giving Lewis a little more time. In any case, he already offers more variety and if his ideas and supplies hold out, there should soon be a jalapeno-flavored treat for everyone.

Lewis is the man who has given us jalapeno jelly, jalapeno wine, jalapeno lollipops (he does other flavors as well), jalapeno ice cream, and even jalapeno jelly beans.

And for those who are already bored with the above, there's a new treat in store. For the uninitiated, your taste buds may never have seen anything like it.

Would you believe the jalapeno stuffed olive has now arrived — thanks to Lewis' inventiveness.

All his recipes are special to him, but as we talk, it's the olives he's hyping, pointing out from behind his ear-to-ear grin, the versatility of the treat.

Martini

"When you drop that in a martini, you *really* have a martini," Lewis states, fingering an olive from its jar, holding it aloft for the comment, then popping it in his mouth.

"Or you can put my olives on cheese nachos or serve them with cream cheese on crackers," says Lewis.

Although he has other hob-

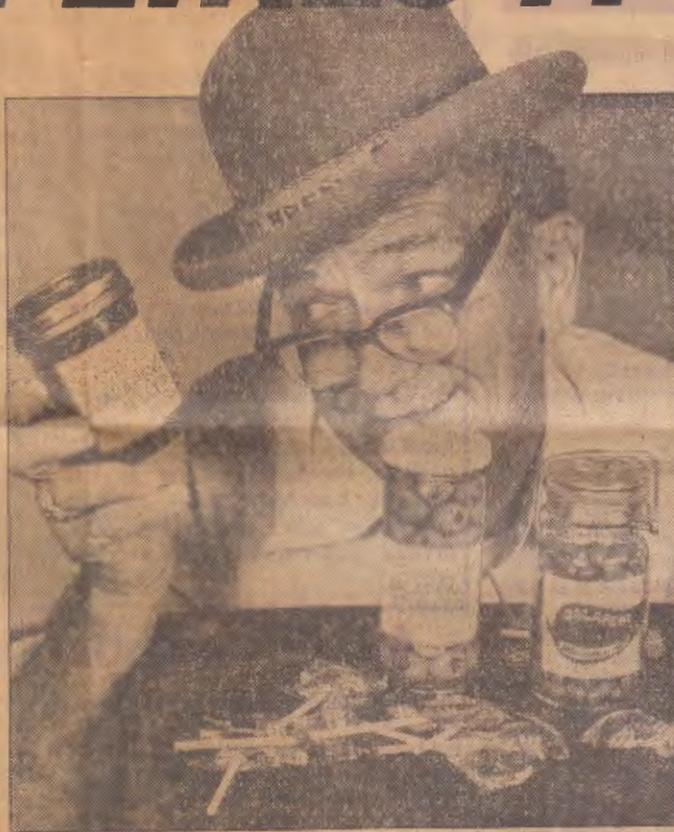


PHOTO BY CHARLES BARKSDALE

SAM LEWIS HAS JALAPENOS IN HIS BLOOD ... his newest treat is jalapeno stuffed olives

bies — Lewis is the current president of the World Armadillo Breeding and Racing Association — jalapenos are a full-time occupation.

In addition to his edibles, he is also originator and director of the annual San Marcos Lollipop Lickoff, set for Oct. 4. And he's proud to point out that his peppers are Texas produce, nurtured under the healthiest possible conditions.

"My jalapenos are fresh grown, raised in a worm-free area — Cherokee, Texas — by

Sammy Grey, who grows them especially for me. And she doesn't use fertilizer or bug spray — just manure, fresh water and tender loving care."

Lewis explains he came by his fascination with the hot green vegetable via a friend known as "Tom Cat." Lewis helped Tom Cat get the first jalapeno products on the market and was later given the formula when the friend decided to develop other interests.

"Of course, going on and doing the things I've done is only

natural with the background I had — baker, confectioner, candy man — and I've been a public relations specialist for years. It just all fit together," says the man whose proudest fete is that his treats have, "a flavor all their own."

Peddling

The development, marketing and sales involved in peddling jalapeno products all over the country keep Lewis busy, but he swears to loving every minute and says the ideas for new edibles come faster than he can handle them.

"Remember, I do all my own testing, too," he says, recalling the time when "I was working on the jalapeno wine and wanted to get the bouquet just right. I got drunk on half an ounce. So I took it to the lab at the hospital and had it checked out. It was 43 proof. I fixed that, of course."

Right now he's working on jalapeno bubble gum and "a secret product I can't tell you about yet. But it's guaranteed to wake you up."

It's apparent from talking with Lewis that he finds his work fun, but are there any difficulties at all — any "hot spots," so to speak?

"Only meeting the demand for my products," Lewis states, explaining that he sells, for instance, jalapeno lollipops, 1,000 at a time, complete with a message on each stick.

"That's one of my big sellers. But all my stuff goes good. There's a big demand for jalapeno products around here. I can sell as much as I can produce." Still, he aims to sell more.

"Try them," he says of his jalapeno inventions, "you'll like them!"

Battle of chili cookoffs moves to court front

DALLAS (AP) — A group of Californians, contending they hold the world championship rights to the fiery state dish of Texas, have filed a federal lawsuit against a founders and organizer of the annual Terlingua Chili Cookoff.

The California-based International Chili Cookoff Society contended in its suit filed Wednesday against Frank X. Tolbert that it owns service mark, or trademark, for the phrase "World's Championship Chili Cookoff."

The phrase is similar to the name of Tolbert's non-profit Texas Corporation and, until this year, the name of the annual cookoff of "Texas Red" in Terlingua, a ghost town located near the Big Bend National Park in far Southwest Texas.

"I figured they'd do this," said Tolbert. "They are suing me for

what I originated. They steal your idea, then they sue you."

"We'd been using that name for years. We originated it and we've used it for years. They didn't say anything about it until this year. Immediately after we got the letter, we changed the stationary and everything," said Tolbert.

The Terlingua cookoff will be known this year as the 17th Annual Original Terlingua Chili Appreciation Society International Championship Chili Cookoff & Wick Fowler Memorial, said Tolbert.

He said he changed the name of the World Championship Chili Cookoff at Terlingua last Spring after receiving a letter from the California group, claiming rights to the trademark registered in 1978.

The lawsuit seeks a permanent injunction against the

Texan's use of the phrase, an accounting of all profits gained from the use of the name and damages equal to three times the profit.

Dallas Attorney Jerry W. Mills, who represents the California chili society, said that he believes the group is "quite serious" about the claims in the suit.

Tolbert said he and public relations counselor Tom Tierney initiated the Terlingua cookoff in 1967 as a "joking promotion" for Tolbert's book, "A Bowl of Red."

Some members of the original Texas promoters moved to California in 1975, said Tolbert, and attempted to take the chili cookoff with them.

"They're just copycats. We've called 'em that for years — The Copycat Cookoff," said Tolbert. "It (the suit) is just a vindictive thing."

There's war in the world of gourmet chili. Or at least a schism. Since 1967, a group of Texas businessmen, raconteurs and assorted eccentrics has been staging an annual *World Championship Chili Cook-off* at Terlingua, a remote and abandoned mining camp at the edge of the Big Bend National Park on the Texas-Mexico border. Although it takes place some 200 miles from the nearest commercial airport and about that far from anything else, the Terlingua chili contest, started as a stunt, has become a Southwestern tradition—an annual drunkathon and boozarama that now draws thousands to what its sponsors call "the beautiful and varmint-infested Chisos Mountains" before the first norther blows in each fall. *Dallas Morning News* columnist Frank X. Tolbert first cooked up the idea and grafted it onto another institution, the Chili Appreciation Society International (CASI), organized some 25 years ago by other Texas crazies. Two friends, David Witts and Carroll Shelby (of Cobra race-car fame), had a desolate, isolated ranch that included the town of Terlingua; another, Tom Tierney, had a Dallas PR agency; others had favorite chili recipes and a sense of humor, and one thing led to another.

Anyway, no one ever disputed the Terlinguists' claim that their annual cook-off was the Olympics of chili competition. Until 1975. That was when C. V. Wood, Jr., a wealthy land developer, managed to antagonize other chili honchos with his self-promotion and weird chili recipes (which included such things as celery, chicken and pork) and was made to feel unwelcome as a Terlingua chili judge. He left in a snit and set up a rival world-championship chili cook-off in California, scheduled for the same weekend. Wood is the flamboyant fellow who bought and moved the London Bridge for a property development. The Texans accuse him of trying to do the same thing with their chili contest.

What first irked the Texans was the flurry of professional press releases and glossy photos announcing that something called the International Chili Society was about to hold its annual world-championship chili cook-off and that "the site of the colorful event for the first time has been switched" to California. There would be movie stars as judges, a custom-made kitchen (courtesy of some California custom-kitchen maker) and "marching bands, barbershop quartets, wandering minstrels and all kinds of impromptu fun." To Terlingua's purists, such an extravaganza was about as close to the real thing as plastic beans and ersatz meat cooked on an electric stove in a chrome-plated pot.



"The Terlingua chili contest, started as a stunt, has become a Southwestern tradition—an annual drunkathon and boozarama."

Despite wire-service reports that the annual world chili cook-off had been moved to California, somewhere between 12,000 and 15,000 of the faithful journeyed to Terlingua on schedule.

By Friday, C day minus one, Terlingua's 680 acres looked like the infield at Indy: Vehicles, tents, lean-tos and sleeping bags were scattered over the hillsides and ravines. By Saturday morning, the place looked like the beaches of Dunkirk, with the walking wounded drinking beer for breakfast and squinting with surprise as the sun peeked over the mountains. Belched one bleary-eyed observer: "Used to be we just dumped the bodies down the cistern over yonder, but it made the water taste funny." Another, also bent on impressing the out-of-state press, allowed as how "this here's the biggest and scuzziest crowd ever. With so much booze and broads and ordnance and country music here, we got to have a shooting or two just to keep up appearances." That remark was quickly challenged by a nearby noncompeting chili cook who, incidentally, claimed his secret ingredient was Mexican marijuana: "Shee-it, no! Only in Texas can you mix all these freaks, shit-kickers and grannies and have 'em all so polite they only apologize when they stagger into each other and fall down."

The fact is there *was* a fight during the dancing and revelry on Friday night;

and somebody reportedly broke a leg by toppling into Dirty Woman Creek (a 20-foot fall that probably would have killed a sober person in daylight). A few vehicles also sustained damage when their operators tried to park them nose down in ravines or on top of boulders in the dark; and cactus spines took their toll. Nevertheless, and despite a long knife on every belt, this redneck Woodstock came off harmoniously without a single cop or armed guard to be seen for 100 miles.

The actual chili judging, which took place in the early afternoon, was preceded by the Official Unusual Martini Judging Contest, staged mainly to keep the mob amused while the chilitasters sweated over numbered dishes in the back room of what's left of Terlingua's adobe saloon and opera house. The martini judges could not decide on the best martini, the worst martini or even the most original martini but eventually conceded first place to Al McGehee of Odessa, Texas, for his TNTini, a revolting combination of tequila, vermouth and other adulterants.

Eventually came the announcement that the chili judges had selected a new world-champion chili cook and a relative hush fell over thousands of rowdy drunks. Everyone knew that the reigning world's champ was a female—Alegani Jani Schofield, crowned the year before as history's first woman to win the title. Everyone, at least in Terlingua, also knew that women are supposed to do all good cooking *except* for chili. So it was with amazing grace that the *macho* honchos of Terlingua chili courageously awarded the new world's championship to Suzie Watson of Houston (and later auctioned off Alegani Jani's bright-red hotpants for \$30 to raise funds for some vague, and possibly charitable, cause).

The losing male contestants took their defeat with commendable equanimity, along with plenty of Pearl and Lone Star beer. Even Ed "Chill Lee" Paetzl, who had won the title in 1973 and had spent most of the morning quarreling with officials over procedural details, agreed that the contest had been conducted honestly: "I hear Suzie didn't sleep with none of the judges. I know I didn't sleep with none of the judges. I figure she won it fair and square."

This year, the chili cooks off on October 16. The traditional date is the first Saturday in November, but the Californians set their contest two weeks earlier to upstage the Texans—who merely issued a long-range bad-weather forecast and moved theirs up three weeks to beat their opponents to the draw.

—WILLIAM J. HELMER

Friday, June 20, 1975

DICK
HITTWretched
excesses

DALLAS insurance agent Tom Nall was stirring his cauldron a few weeks ago at the Houston Chili Cook-Off when another contestant walked over and peered at his name tag. "Are you THE Tom Nall?" he asked. "Well, maybe," Nall said, puzzled; "what do you mean?" "Tortillas, man. Tortillas! You the one who ate all the tortillas?" Nall said he was. "Well, man," said his admirer, "you're in the Guinness Book of World Records!"

Such are the glories of new fame and wretched excess, as Nall himself discovered when he sought out a 1975 edition of the Guinness Book and found himself in the latest pantheon of gluttony. It says right there on page 478 of the paperback version:

Tortillas. 74 by Tom Nall in the 2nd World Championship at Mariano's Mexican Restaurant, Dallas, October 16, 1973.

I was there that evening and am still dazzled by Nall's feat. These were full size, about 5 inches in diameter, corn tortillas and 74 is a lot. Nall paid a \$250 entry free for the privilege, with proceeds going to the Caruth School of Business Administration at SMU. It was tax deductible, as I hope his Pepto Bismol was.

THERE IS something about competitive gluttony that seems to appeal to all of us, and the new edition of the Guinness Book pulls no bones, nor leaves any, about the gastronomic champs of the world. Some of the more chilling accomplishments:

"Eating Out. The world champion for eating out is Fred E. Magel of Chicago, who between 1928 and Nov., 1971, dined in 36,000 restaurants in 60 nations as a restaurant grader. Mr. Magel's favorite dishes are South African rock lobster and mousse of fresh English strawberries.

"Baked Beans. 1,823 cold beans, one by one, with a cocktail stick in 30 minutes by Nigel Moore at Manchester England.

"Eggs. (Hard-boiled) 44 in 30 minutes by Georges Grognet of Belgium; (Soft-boiled) 25 in 3 minutes 1.8 seconds by Bill (Dink) Hewitt, Bethlehem, Pa.; (Raw) 13 in 3.8 seconds by James Lindop in Manchester, England.

Meat. One whole roast ox in 42 days by Johann Ketzler of Munich, Germany, in 1880.

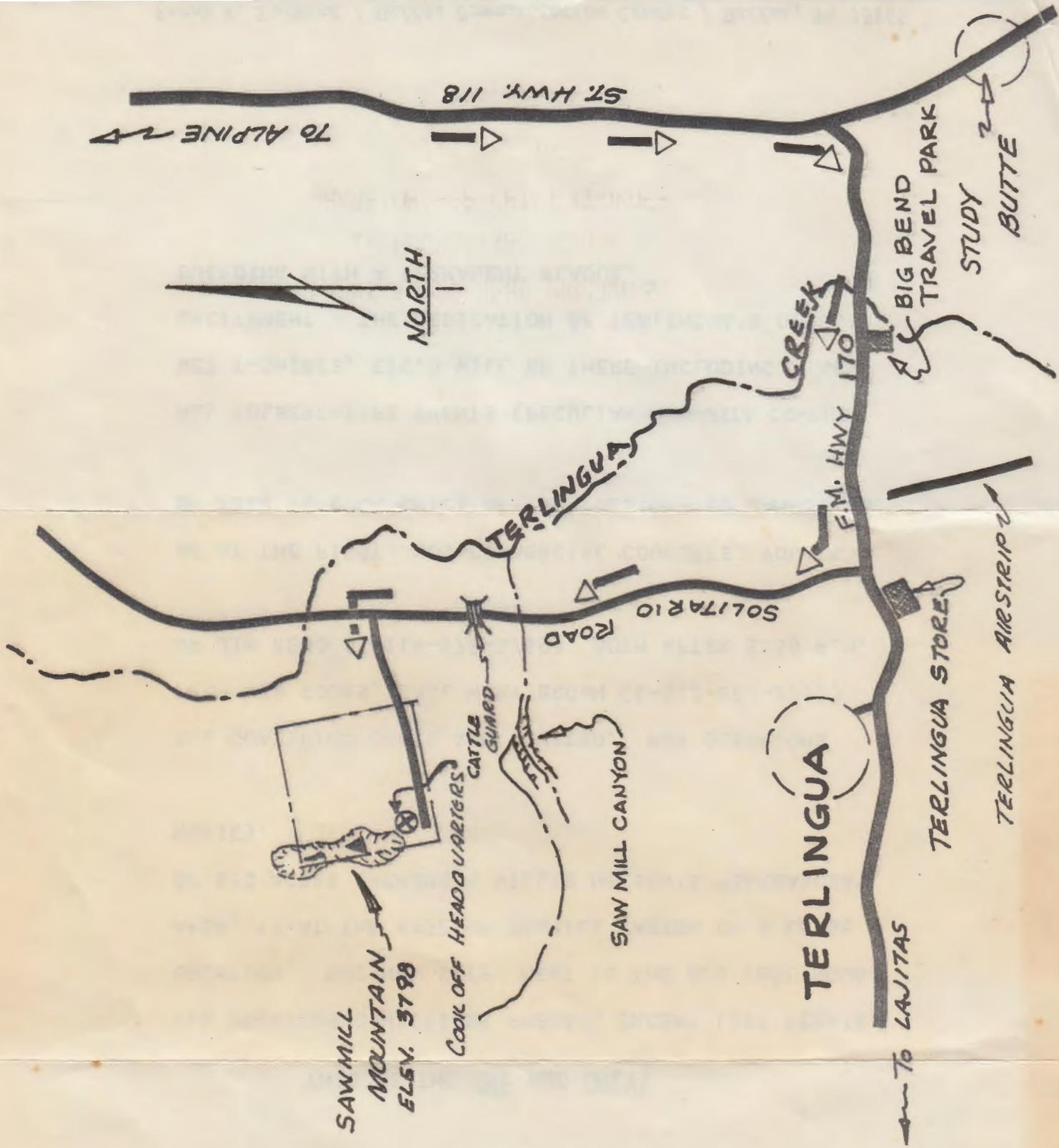
Pickled onions. 66 in 2 minutes by James Wilson at Ilmington, Warwickshire, England.

Oysters. 500 in 60 minutes (alotted) by Councilor Peter Jaconelli, mayor of Scarborough, Yorkshire, England on April 17, 1972.

Ravioli. 324 (first 250 in 70 minutes) by "Bozo" Miller at Rendezvous Room, Oakland, Calif., in 1963.

There are two other Texans listed among the recordholders. Mrs. Nicky Bove consumed 124 Moroccan snails in 15 minutes in Houston in 1974, and Mrs. Jo-Ann Hoss had 5 lbs, 10 oz. of boiled shrimp at Freeport on July 4, 1971.

Any gastronomic gunfighters who want a showdown with the local tortilla champ Nall will have trouble enticing Nall into a tortilla-off. "I'm the champ," he says; "they'll have to out-eat me first before I'm even touching another tortilla."



NORTH

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TO ALPINE

CREEK

FIM. HWY 170

BIG BEND TRAVEL PARK
STUDY BUTTE

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FRANK X. TOLBERT PRESENTS
17TH ORIGINAL WORLD
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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5TH, 1983

THIS IS THE ONE AND ONLY!

ALL PREVIOUS CONDITIONS PREVAIL EXCEPT LAST YEAR'S LOCATION. THE NEW SITE, NEXT TO THE OLD TERLINGUA AREA, IS AT THE BASE OF SAWMILL CANYON ON A LEASE OF 650 ACRES (REMEMBER WILLIE NELSON'S "BARBAROSA" MOVIE).

ALL QUALIFIED COOKS ARE INVITED. FOR QUESTIONS FROM NEW COOKS, CALL MARY BROWN (1-817-267-2782) OR JIM REDD (1-214-576-3769), BOTH AFTER 5:30 P.M.

AS AT THE FIRST, NON-COMMERCIAL COOKOFFS, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO COOK CHILI AT YOUR DESIGNATED CAMPSITES.

ALL TOLBERT-TYPE EVENTS (PECULIAR MARGARITA CONTEST WET T-SHIRTS, ETC.) WILL BE THERE INCLUDING A NEW EXCITEMENT - THE DEDICATION OF TERLINGUA'S OLDEST BUILDING WITH A PERMANENT PLAQUE.



Tolbert's Texas

About Charlie Perkins, barbecued rib virtuoso

By FRANK X. TOLBERT

CHARLIE PERKINS has a barbecue cafe on the outskirts of Cleburne, on Highway 171 going to Godley. Mr. Perkins has talent. He can barbecue ribs in a manner which made me hearken back to the old days when I was a regular customer at Jack's barbecue joint on the North Side of Fort Worth.

I thought I'd never again experience barbecued ribs as delicious as those at Jack's. Yet I did at Charlie Perkins' place the other day — although the Perkins sauce doesn't quite measure up to Jack's.

Mr. Perkins is the sort of dedicated barbecue artist who may be found over his smokey pits at the back of his cafe at 2 a.m.

For years Paul Smith of Dallas has been telling me of the delights at the Perkins barbecue institution, but Paul never mentioned the ribs, only the tender and tasty barbecued beef.

GLEN ROSE is another center for good barbecue joints. I've made mention of Hammond's on Coyote Strip west of Glen Rose.

But when I was there last week I was told about a small and smokey cafe called Gabe's, next to a Gulf service station and on the edge of Glen Rose on the road to Walnut Springs. Gabe is a brother of Jack West, the owner of the Shaky Springs ranch near Glen Rose.

I'm going to give Gabe's the Tolbertian test the next time I'm in Glen Rose.

IF YOU like to talk with celebrities you would enjoy the job of answering the telephone at the Caliente Chili Inc. in Austin.

This is the outfit which markets the world famous ingredients for chili con carne called Wick Fowler's 2-alarm chili.

Some of the regular customers who order packages of 2-alarm over the phone include Ann-Margaret, Elizabeth Taylor, Hughes Rudd, John Ringling North, Raymond Burr, Ralph Bellamy, James Coburn, Jack Lord, Elliott Roosevelt, Lena Horn, Dan RATHER, Walter Cronkite, Suzanne Pleshett, Bette Davis, Harry Reasoner, Ben Hogan and the people in the musical

committee called the Rolling Stones.

MRS. EVELYN G. Pair of Tyler was one of those who thanked me for printing the recipe for the delicious peanut bisque, as served at an eating place in Waxahachie, the Durham House.

Mrs. Pair wrote: "Peanut soup was always one of my family's favorites. Yet when I mentioned it to other people many times in the past I just got incredulous stares. Now, thank goodness, you have bestowed legitimacy on it."

The peanut bisque, as prepared by Chef Jerry Weber at the Durham House, is pretty complex.

Mrs. Pair sent along rather simple instructions for what she calls peanut soup.

"I MAKE peanut soup by, first, simmering a hand full of chopped onions in creamery butter until limp. Then I add a chunk of peanut butter of a size to please me. I mash it all together add hot milk, salt and pepper.

"The proportions never seem important. You just make it according to your taste."

MESSAGE TO Helen Evan of Clayton, N.J.: I'll mail you Bob Murphey's recipe for real, old-fashion peanut patties. Helen Evan wrote:

"I take the *Dallas News* just for your column. I agree with Bob Murphey of Looneyville, Texas, that Jimmy Carter's presidential campaign is in trouble unless he does something about the soaring price of peanuts."

The peanut pattie is already a political issue in Texas, and now Helen Evan is going to put New Jersey type pattie pressure on Mr. Carter.

VICTOR WIDOWIAK, the wine connoisseur, was in charge of the Peculiar Martini Contest at the World Championship Chili Cookoff last year, with assistance of a veteran martini tester, Tom Tierney.

Now Mr. Widowiak can't make up his mind whether to run the Peculiar Martini Contest at Terlingua on Oct. 16 or to be a contestant. Victor says he makes an East Texas moonshine martini which would be a sure winner at Terlingua.

Friday October 18 1975

Texas won't give up in chili squabble

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hey, C.V. Wood out there in California, there is going to be a world champion chili cookoff in Texas.

Frank X. Tolbert, veteran Dallas newsman, longtime chili taster and cooker, and defender of the Texas contest, said Friday the dusty ghost town of Terlingua will host the ninth annual contest, just as it has done for the previous eight years.

Wood insists the most of the bigtime chili cookers will be stirring the tongue-burning brew out in a tree-lined valley at Rosemond,

Calif., not far from the smog of Los Angeles.

Phooley, Tolbert said, "The defending world champion, Alleghany Janie of Stonewall, Tex., will be at Terlingua and how can you have a world championship without the defending world defending world champion?"

Tolbert added, "Let C.V. go along and put on his sideshow, but the main attraction is at Terlingua."

Tolbert said all of the talk coming from Wood had caused "a lot of trouble for a lot of people who had planned on going to Terlingua and are confused about the whole thing. Actually, we shouldn't pay any attention to Wood, but we don't want people to think there won't be the real world series for chili cooks at Terlingua this year."

Wood, a Los Angeles oil company executive and chili connoisseur, earlier told The

AP, "I challenge Tolbert to a man-to-man, one-on-one, cookoff. I agree to cook against Tolbert blind-folded and with my stirring hand tied behind me."

Tolbert replied, "I won't ever answer him. He hasn't won anything in six years."

So, looks like there'll be two chili cookoffs. One among the sagebrush of West Texas and the other on the outskirts of busy and bustling Los Angeles.



Frank X. Tolbert, Dallas, the head Chili Pod of the World Chili Association and co-founder of the original World Championship Chili Cookoff at Terlingua confers with Happy Shahan, Chairman of the 1st "Border International Open" chili cookoff and 4th World Championship Tortilla Tossing Tournaments slated for Brackettville on March 18th and 19th. Top 3 winners and 1st in showmanship for this State Open Chili Cookoff in Terlingua.

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