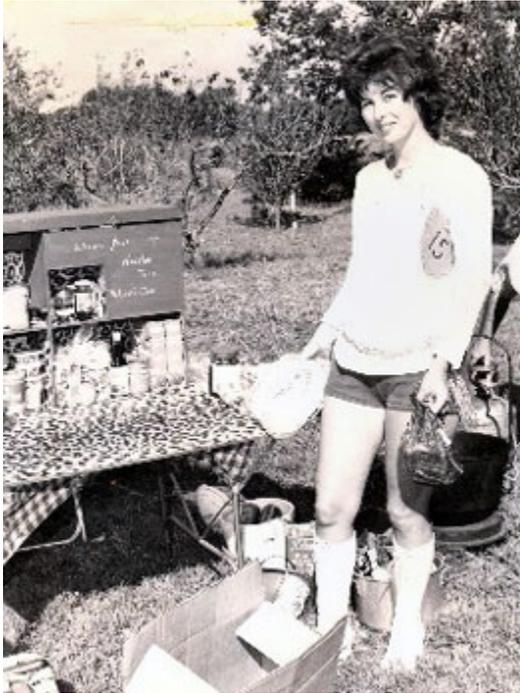


The History of Chili Cook-Offs

Part Four: Upheavals, Female Competitors and a Parting of the Ways



Allegani Jani Scofield
by John Raven, Ph.B.

Last month we covered [the big Terlingua chili cook-off of 1970](#) when Wick Fowler finally got his world championship. Then, at the "big un" of 1971, C.V. Wood became the first two-time winner. We posted his recipe last month.

In 1972 there was a dark horse winner. Howard Winsor out of Colorado claimed all the marbles. We don't know much about Winsor, other than he represented the state of Colorado. His recipe is a bit on the odd side.

Howard Winsor's recipe

- 1 medium sized onion, chopped in blender
- 5 or 6 large cloves garlic, chopped in blender
- 1/2 cup water
- 2 pounds lean beef, cut into 1/4-inch cubes
- 1 pound pork, cut into 1/4-inch cubes

- 7-ounce can Ortega brand green chilies, including liquid
- 5 or 6 jalapeño peppers
- 1 No. 2 can (14-1/4 ounces) whole tomatoes, chopped in blender
- 1 No. 303 can (16 ounces) whole tomatoes, chopped in blender
- 4 large bay leaves
- 1 tablespoon oregano
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cumin powder

Chop onion, garlic and water in blender. Cook until soft. Add meat; cook until it loses red color. Add green chilies and jalapeño peppers to the blender and puree to make a chile pulp. Add 1 cup chile pulp and tomatoes to meat; cook 20 minutes. Add other seasonings. Remove bay leaves about halfway through cooking time. Use covered pot; you might have to remove lid part of cooking time if too thin. Total cooking time, approximately 3 hours. If you want to use beans, put in bottom of bowl before adding chili.

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This recipe is very odd for having won the world championship of the "Bowl of Red". It contains no red chiles. This is more a "chile verde" or green chili which, as we all know, lives in New Mexico and Arizona. More than likely the judges here were newcomers who were over-tequilaed and undereducated. Such a concoction would not even be placed on a judging table today.

Chili gains an "L"

In 1973 Joe De Frates of Illinois was invited to participate in the Terlingua contest. Mr. DeFrates was the power behind the Chilli Man Chilli Company. The DeFrates chili works had roots in Texas. The Chilli Man business marketed canned chilli and a chilli mix.

DeFrates had the shortest and simplest recipe in Terlingua history.

Chilli Man's Winning Chilli

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1-1/4-ounce envelope Chilli Man Chilli Mix*
- 1 8-ounce can Hunts tomato sauce
- 1 dash Tabasco sauce

Brown meat in heavy skillet. Stir in contents of chili mix and tomato sauce. Simmer for 1 hour and add Tabasco.

* The ingredients of the chilli mix are unknown.

I had the good fortune to meet Joe DeFrates in person at Terlingua in 1974, and I traded some communications with him on several occasions. He was quite a nice gentleman. The Chill Mman Company is still in business today.

One for the ladies and several for the road

The year 1974 was a monumental year in the history of the Terlingua chili contest. Not only was a woman allowed to compete, but she won the whole shooting match. Also, the organization running the contest had a parting of the ways.

By virtue of winning third place at the big Luckenbach Ladies Chili Bust, Allegani Jani Schofield was invited to compete at Terlingua.

My first trip to Terlingua was in 1974. I had the good fortune of having the company of Yeller Dog Marsh and Shorty Fry for the trip. Both were chili legends at the time. Then, as today, it is a long way to Terlingua no matter where you start, and it was a Twilight Zone trip all the way. Someday I may talk about it, but several of the persons involved are still around, so I'll just keep it under my hat for a while longer.

The aforementioned Allegani Jani Schofield and her Hot Pants Chili opened the door for female chili cooks. She won the first prize. (For the younger reader, "hot pants" were what short shorts were called for a while back in the 70's.]

[Allegaini Jani's Hot Pants Chili](#)

- 4 pounds stew meat, ground once
- 3 onions, chopped
- 2 tablespoons oil
- salt and pepper to taste
- 2 heaping teaspoons cumin seeds
- 6 cloves garlic, mashed
- 1 can Hunts tomatoes
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1/2 can beer
- 2 packs chili powder
- 3 teaspoons mole paste (available in stores stocking Mexican groceries, or just [make your own mole](#))
- 1 teaspoon Tabasco sauce

- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 quart water
- 4 jalapeño peppers, chopped
- 1/2 cup masa flour (available in stores stocking Mexican groceries)

Brown meat and onions in oil. Season with salt and pepper. Using a molcajete (a Mexican grinding tool), grind cumin seeds and garlic with a little water. Add to meat.

In a blender, combine tomatoes, sugar, beer chili seasoning and chili powder. Add to stew along with mole paste, Tabasco sauce, salt and water and jalapeño peppers.

Cook for 2-1/2 hours, stirring well from time to time. At the end of the cooking time, make a runny paste of masa water, adding it to the stew to thicken it. Stir the stew rapidly while adding the paste to keep it from getting lumpy. Cook 30 minutes more.

A Nation Divided

Behind the scenes of the 1974 chili competition there was dissention in the leadership. Frank X. Tolbert and C.V. Woods were butting heads over how the contest should be conducted and over who was hogging the media to advertise whatever they were advertising. (Terlingua and chili were big news in the early years. For the 1974 contest, NBC news dispatched their ace field reporter Haywood Hale Brune to cover the story. Brune was sort of the Willard Scott of the day, only better. The national TV cameras were on hand. There was a very quick glimpse of me standing in the crowd that was shown all over the nation.)

After a heated exchange, Tolbert told Woods to just take the cook-off to California and that he, Tolbert, wanted no further part of it. Woods took the cook-off to California along with the name "World Championship Chili Cook-Off". The California faction took up the title of International Chili Society.

In this same time frame, the Texas chili cooks began to organize. The First and Only International Chili Convention was held in San Antonio, and out of the convention came a set of rules that would put some uniformity in the competitions. The base of the rules boiled down to using the one-to-ten point scoring system.

The San Marcos Texas Chilympiad Committee was appointed to keep track of the cook-offs and put out a calendar of the events scheduled. (As best I can determine, there were only twelve chili cook-offs in the whole world in 1974.)

Sometime in late 1974 or early 1975, the chili cooks agreed on a system to award points that would lead to qualifying to cook at Terlingua. Yes, Tolbert had decided the Terlingua "Big Un" would continue.

We are running short on space again. Next month we will try to conclude the history of chili cook-offs with a further look at chili politics and another world champion recipe or two in Part Five: [The Chili World Split in Two](#).