

Great chili overcomes some really bad weather

By Mary Lou Callaway
special writer

The rain didn't dampen the fire in the hot and torrid taste buds of judges who picked Jane Federigo's "Parasitic Chili" as first-prize winner from 33 entries in Sunday's sixth annual Michigan Chili Cookoff.

A sellout crowd at The Lark Restaurant in West Bloomfield huddled under a huge tent as they watched the cooks prepare their entries with the aid of flashlights and lanterns — passed around like Olympic torches.

Federigo of Livonia surprised celebrity judges when her recipe called for "whipped cream" — one of 25 ingredients. (Beans were not allowed.)

Federigo now will represent Michigan at the World Cookoff Oct. 21 at the abandoned Tropico Gold Mine in California's Mojave Desert.

Grand prize is \$25,000. Michigan representatives never have won the world competition.

PROCEEDS FROM the Michigan cookoff will give \$1,000 tuition scholarships to six local students to study culinary arts, according to Jim Lark, Michigan Chilihead godfather.

The students are Daniel Harris, Unto Lake Susan Jo Freni, Ann Arbor; Jack DeFrance, Mt. Clemens; Sean Aubrey, South Lyon; Brenda Jones, Dearborn; and Rocco Ciavarella, Belleville.

Harris, 21, who lives in Commerce Township, attended Wall Lake Western High School. He will continue his studies at Schoolcraft Community College, Livonia, while working full time at The Lark where he began as a dishwasher and has moved up to cooking under chef Karl Heinz Mengerser.

"Heinz has been my inspiration. I

plan to be the best when I finish school next year," said Harris.

THE CROWD didn't mind wet feet and the cool temperature as they munched, tasted and tapped toes to a

Marachi band. The loudest hurrahs, aside from the announcement of winners, was for the Tigers win over Toronto.

Inside, judges watched a tiny TV to keep up with the score, with occasional

analysis from former Tiger Jim Northrup.

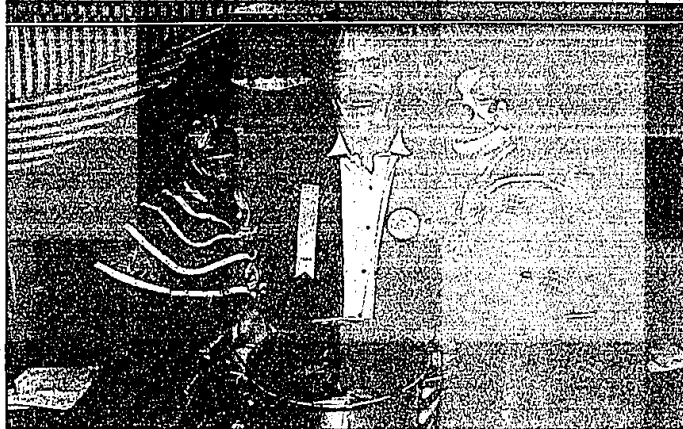
Other trophy winners were Bob Vargo of Milford, 2nd place; Diane Adams, Redford, 3rd place, and tied for 4th place were Ralph Thornburg of

Syracuse, Ind., and Sandy Guillemety of Detroit.

The showmanship award went to Jeffrey Parsons of West Bloomfield, and the best booth award went to Annin Howard of Birmingham.

competing cook is a lot easier than being a judge.

Several judges said it would be six months for a year before they would want to taste chili again. There was a lot of sipping of grapes, chomping crackers and sipping ice water between tastings.



Jeffrey Parsons of West Bloomfield (center) displays an empty chili pot after judges sampled his entry at the state competition last weekend at The Lark Restaurant. Parsons placed first in

the "showmanship" category. He is flanked by Julie Seigel (left) of Farmington Hills and Darlene Swartz of West Bloomfield.

photos by GARY CASKEY/staff photographer

He creates a mixed breed car

Continued from Page 3

"IT'S NOT a show, but a convention, a gathering. It's just a big outdoor car show, meeting, party sort of thing," he said.

There are only two basic rules for street rods — cars on which they are based must have been manufactured before 1949 and they must be street drivable.

It isn't necessary that cars be perfect replicas. Imagination, flair, verve are encouraged.

Basic car styles must precede 1949, Gobart said, because that was the first year the industry went all out with model changes after World War II.

"It is very much a family affair," Gobart said of Street Car Nationals. "Wives and kids will always be there. That's probably one of the best things about it."

Gobart encourages spectators — especially novices — to circulate and ask questions.

"If you see something you like, look for the owner," he said. "I find most owners are glad to talk. Owners are proud of 'em. They like 'em to look good."

Gobart sure is proud of his car. Proud enough to have run up 45,000 miles and attend nearly two dozen Street Rod Nationals since 1978.

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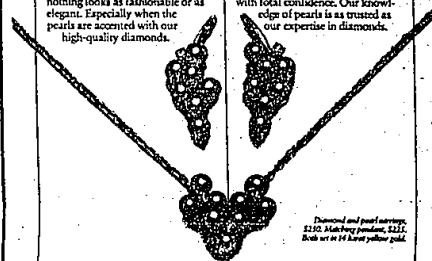
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