

Local chili cook-off sets taste buds ablaze

BY JEFF WOODALL
STAFF WRITER

If the bundle of peppers in front of Randy Lewis' chili didn't make things clear, his warning would.

"I hope you have a relative or designated driver with you," he said to those willing to try his atomic concoction.

Lewis was one of the many contestants that participated in Hillsborough's first-ever Chili and Salsa Cookoff on Saturday.

For years, the Hillsborough/Orange County Chamber of Commerce has received requests for a chili cookoff, Executive Director Margaret Wood Cannell said.

"Everyone had been discussing how the chamber could create something that would get the community involved and have the potential to grow," she said. "We pretty much did this on a wing and a prayer, but I'm extremely excited about it."

The chamber sponsored the cookoff Saturday.

There were plenty of people who shared Cannell's enthusiasm. Paying a \$2 parking fee and \$5 to taste five entries didn't stop dozens from coming out to support the new event.

From noon to 4 p.m., people lis-

"There's brisket in it, chili powder from Texas and tomatoes from Texas. Pretty much anything from Texas, I used."

BRENDA CAMP, OVERALL WINNER OF CHILI COMPETITION, ON HER CHILI

tened to live music, had a soft drink or a beer and tested their taste buds on both the sweetest and spiciest of entries.

Brenda Camp, the overall winner of the chili competition, called on the Lone Star State for her inspiration.

"There's brisket in it, chili powder from Texas and tomatoes from Texas. Pretty much anything from Texas, I used," she said.

Artie and Tracey Sprinzeles, who placed second with their chili, had a harder time creating their recipe, which included black beans, poblano peppers and ground pork rib.

"We didn't know what we were going to do until Friday," Artie Sprinzeles said.

"We were out last night walking around Harris Teeter looking for things to use."

The variety of both the chili and salsa had people buying their tickets, which made Cannell see the cookoff as an overall success.

The original goal was to at least

break even at \$2,000, she said.

Cannell said that any profits made would be placed in the chamber's general operating fund but that she did not know Saturday how many tickets had been sold.

Proceeds would go toward working with local nonprofit organizations, Cannell said.

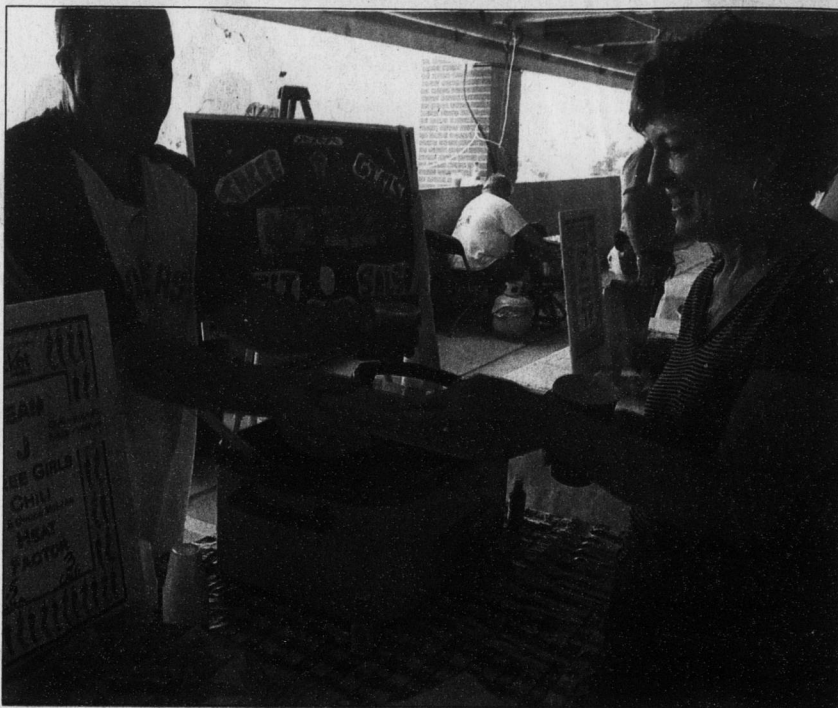
Families, residents and others who walked along the tables enjoyed both conversations and helpings of food inside the event held at the Eno River Parking Deck.

Many tested their own bravery with Lewis' fiery mixture that would make even the devil's forehead perspire.

"It was hard to know at first if we had gotten the message out well enough," he said.

"But it started picking up right away, and there have been plenty of people getting extra helpings."

Contact the City Editor
at citydesk@unc.edu.



Chuck McLean serves a sample of his Three Girls Chili to JoAnne Woodruff at the Orange County Chamber of Commerce Chili and Salsa Cookoff on Saturday. Event visitors were allowed to taste five samples for \$5.

DTH/LISA PEPIN

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Even without a vote, kids care about politics

BY IAN AGER
STAFF WRITER

RALEIGH — Candidates for state and national office met with constituents of a different demographic on Saturday.

Gubernatorial, senatorial, congressional and state legislative hopefuls spoke at a candidates' forum at the N.C. Museum of History, fielding questions from an audience of local elementary, middle and high school students.

The forum was sponsored by Kids Voting USA, a nonprofit group devoted to informing children about elections and voting.

Before taking questions from the audience, candidates zeroed in on the issue most relevant to the young audience — education. Most of them

criticized current educational policy in the state and nationwide.

"You kids have been robbed," said Hugh Webster, Republican candidate for the 13th Congressional District. "Robbed of a good education by the condition of our public schools."

Some of the criticism included discussion of educational reform, especially for No Child Left Behind, a federal education reform act that emphasizes accountability for schools and school districts through standardized testing.

However, questions from the audience touched on other topics, mostly skirting educational issues.

Middle and elementary school students focused predominantly on issues such as the war in Iraq and the environment, while high school students seated in the front asked more targeted questions on topics

ranging from the subprime mortgage crisis to rising fuel costs.

After the forum, the participants took part in election-themed activities, making political buttons and filling out mock ballots.

"It's nice that candidates would take time out of their campaigns to spend time with the people who would be affected by their actions," said Julie Daw, an Apex parent.

"My children want to be informed when they go to the polls for the first time," she said.

Her son Charles, 9, echoed his mother's concerns.

"I don't want to vote for the wrong guy," he said.

Thirteen-year-old Graham Lynn, who came with a church group from Erwin, said he thinks the candidates benefited from learning what matters to kids.

"I think the candidates came to

know how we feel. They want kids' opinions of who'd be the best," he said.

His sister Catherine, 9, said that the candidates' presence at the event showed the importance of youth participation.

"We came to express that we're part of America," she said. "Candidates want to know who kids would vote for, and they care about voter participation."

Rick Armstrong of Knightdale said that attending the event could foster good political discussion within his family of six.

"Many families don't talk politics," he said. "An event like this encourages kids to talk to their parents and get a family discussion going. It provokes thought."

Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

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September 17, 2008

6:00pm-9:00pm

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September 18, 2008

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