

Chili Cook-Off Draws Crowd To Southport's Franklin Park



CP&L HEAD COOK CARL GREGORY's chili was a hit with festival-goers Saturday at Southport's first chili cook-off. While the ingredients aren't a secret, the recipe is: Gregory cooked the mixture to taste.

BY SUSAN USHER
Mix some ground beef and hot peppers with a worthwhile cause, enthusiastic volunteers and a pleasant spring day and you've got the recipe for a successful chili cook-off.

Bette Leggett, president of Southport's new Robert Ruark Foundation, smiled a lot Saturday as, by "conservative" estimates, between 1,500 to 2,000 visitors flowed through Franklin Square Park for the foundation's first public event.

Though rain clouds were predicted Saturday, the weather held out longer than the chili, which ran out completely around 2 p.m. "We thought we had enough chili to feed all of Brunswick County," said Mrs. Leggett. "We were pleasantly surprised at the turnout. We were delighted. We made some money and it was fun. It's good for the community to get together and compete."

The cook-off was a fund-raiser for another foundation event, the Robert Ruark Arts Festival planned Nov. 2-4 in Southport.

Twelve civic groups, businesses and individuals entered Saturday's competition, which also featured chili dinners and continuous entertainment.

The Turtle Cafe, scheduled to open in May, took the top prize of \$500 and "a real chili pot," which master of ceremonies Douglas Kerr said was suitable for cooking or display. Head cook Emily Parker's winning entry was a chunky mix of

ground beef, spices, tomatoes—and olives.

While The Turtle Cafe's concoction was the judges' favorite, Carl Gregory's "Powerhouse Chili" was the People's Choice, earning top votes from visitors who paid \$3 each to sample and rate chili from all 12 pots. Seated at the CP&L booth draped with strings of chili lights, Gregory said after the competition, "There is no secret ingredient; we used the ingredients here on the table. We simply cooked it to the taste of the people who were here working in the booth." His chili-by-consensus also garnered third prize in the formal judging.

Coastal Carolina Women's League also garnered two prizes—head cook Kathy Holbrook's chili won \$400 for second place, while the club also received \$100 for having the best decorated booth. The women's club booth featured a Mexican theme.

Fourth place went to the U.S. Open King Mackerel Tournament Committee.

Judges were Mary Russ, county home economics extension agent; Celia Rivenbark, Wilmington *Star News*; and Sam Bush, manager of the K&W Cafeteria in Wilmington. Alnetta Crowe of Southport was the panel's non-voting chairman.

This year's cook-off was non-sanctioned, with no restrictions on ingredients. Sanctioned cook-offs, said Mrs. Leggett, don't allow beans.



A COLORFUL FIGURE from Southport's past, pirate Stede Bonnet, set the theme for the Brunswick Toastmasters Club booth. James Wheeler serves a sample of "Bonnet's Booty" as head cook David Dorsett, Amanda Fairley, Stormy Dunker and Ginna Spivey look on.

Town Plans Strawberry Fest

The 58th Annual N.C. Strawberry Festival will be held April 28 through May 5 in Chadbourne.

Festivities begin Saturday, April 28, with a run-a-thon and race walk. Registration begins at 7:30 a.m. at Chadbourne Primary School. The five-kilometer race starts at 8:30 a.m., followed by an awards cere-

mony. The "Strawberry Encounter," a high point of the festival, will be held the evening of May 4 at the James Allen Cartrette estate 2.5 miles south of Chadbourne on S.R. 1317. Tickets are \$15.

The affair will include a catered buffet dinner, orchestra music and

garden tours. Miss North Carolina Kelly Dawn Fletcher, former Miss North Carolina Laurie Boggs Matson, N.C. Strawberry Queen Joan Leggett and Strawberry Princess Angela McLean will be present.

For more information on either event, contact the Chadbourne Chamber of Commerce at (919) 654-3445.



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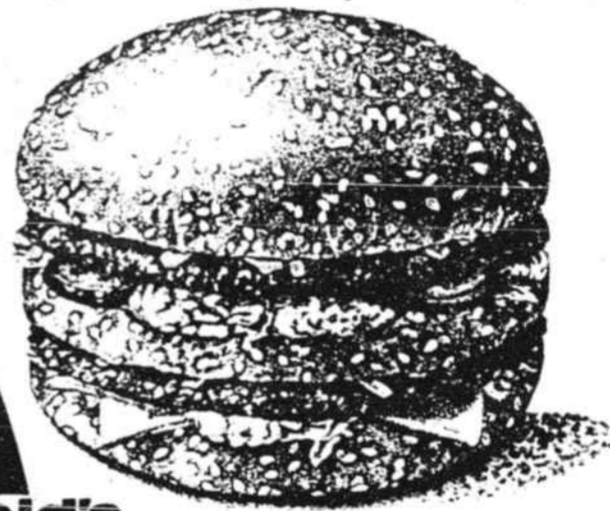
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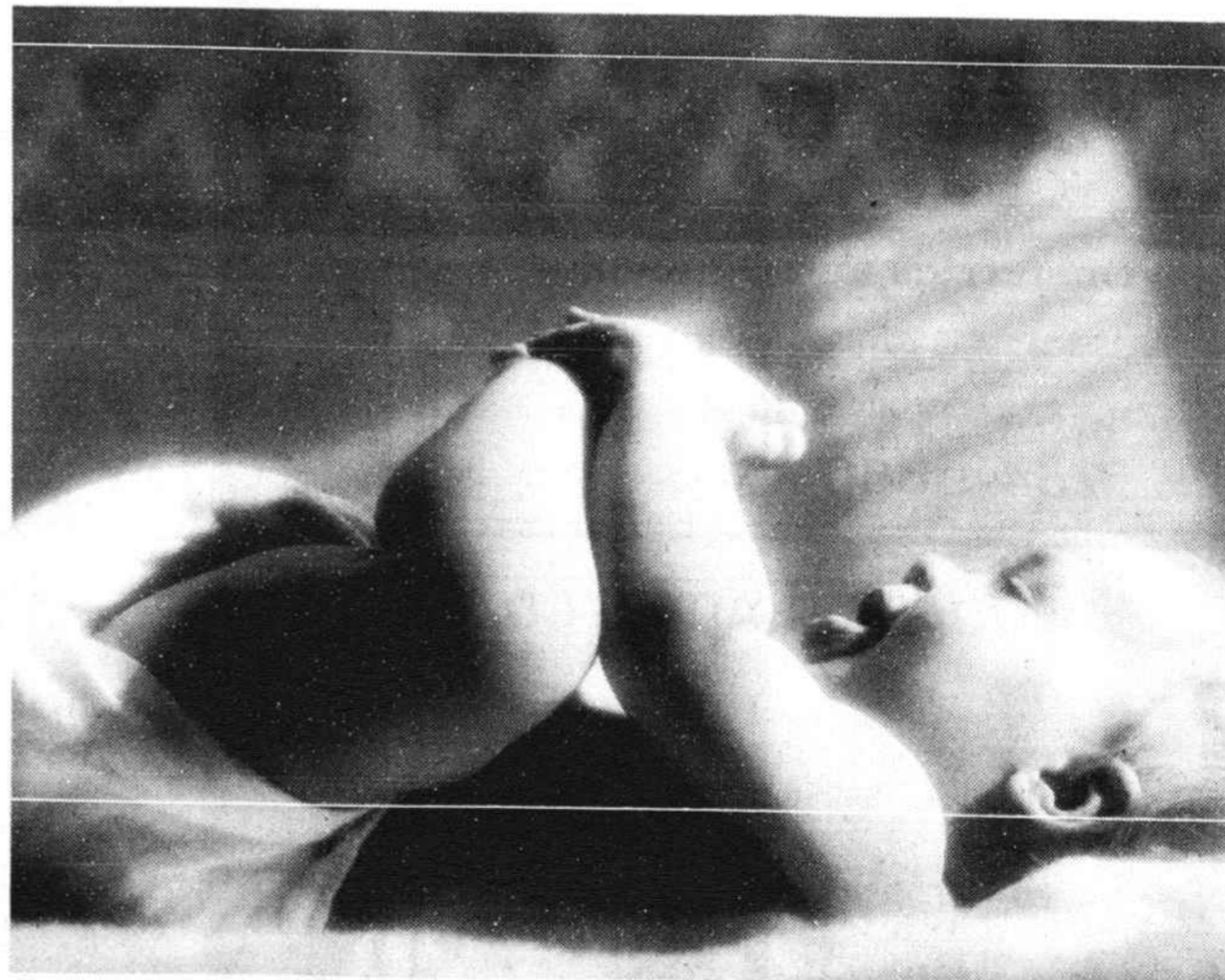
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