

Competitors ready their recipes for chili cook-off

Public is invited to partake in all-you-can-eat chili for community fundraiser at the American Legion

By Christopher Braunschweig
Newton News

Cassie Pence is so proud of her chili making skills that she happily displays in her home the golden thumbs up participation trophy from last year's chili cook-off at the American Legion Post 111 in Newton. But the chili connoisseur is setting high expectations for herself at this year's contest and wants a top-three finish.

Although she is keeping the recipe top secret, the name she has given her concoction, "Cool Beans," should give some hints. Of course, some chili purists will scoff at the thought of adding beans to their batches, but Pence is not letting those sentiments affect her contest entry one bit.

"They're wrong!" she said with a laugh. "It really doesn't matter what you put in your chili. As long as it's that good, thick, hearty stew. And it has beans."

American Legion Post will host its annual chili cook-off at 5 p.m. Feb. 18 at its headquarters, 1101 W. Fourth St. S., in Newton. Guests can enjoy an all-you-can-eat chili for a \$5 admission; children under age 12 can eat for free. Hot dogs and cinnamon rolls will also be available for separate purchases.

Door and raffle prizes will be distributed to those who purchase an

admission ticket. Attendees must be present to win.

The theme for the cook-off this year is the 1970s. Judging the chili in the cook-off will be the attendees themselves. Contestants who paid a \$10 entry fee will be competing for bragging rights, trophies and a cash prize. First place wins \$100, second place wins \$50, third place wins \$50 and best table display wins \$35.

Pence competed in the cook-off for the first time in 2022 with her Peanut Butter Porter Chili, which was made with craft beer from Lake Time Brewery and tender brisket. It was so exciting to compete last year, she said, and to be surrounded by people who are just as enthusiastic about chili as she is.

"It was so much fun," she said. "I cannot get over the environment. On one side of the table, you've got all the hungry folks. On the other side of the table, you got folks that are satisfied by seeing their people fed and enjoying their food. The dynamic is fun!"

Serving as a fundraiser for the American Legion, the chili cook-off has proven to be a popular winter event for the organization. In addition to the competition side, the cook-off lets people gather to help the community and support veterans in a more relaxed and fun way.



Christopher Braunschweig/Newton News

The first place winner of the American Legion's chili cook-off in 2022 fills a bowl with hot soup post's headquarters, 1101 W. Fourth St. St., in Newton. In addition to serving bowls of hot chili to guests, the cook-off acted as a fundraiser for the American Legion.

"The objective is not to win — it's to support," Pence said.

Which in a roundabout way is still a win for the veterans of Newton and Jasper County. Pence is not a veteran, but she has loved ones who are. She wants to support them in any way she can. If it means cooking up a huge pot of chili for folks to enjoy, well that's right up her wheelhouse.

"That I can do!" she said.

As the competition draws closer, Pence is just excited to help a worthy cause and see what other chili makers have in store. How many will decide to have a creative take on the beloved

dish? How many will stick to what they believe is the "classic" approach? Pence is even thinking about making two batches of chili.

In addition to her bean-filled chili, Pence wants to introduce a smaller serving of a hot and spicy chili made with five different kinds of peppers. It would not be for competition purposes, she said, but perhaps more as a dare for those who want to take the risk.

"I was going to do a 'Jackson Five-Pepper Chili,' and I'm still thinking of doing it. This wouldn't be my entry. But for those who want some spice? Here you go."

Lawsuit

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Despite Galanakis continually telling officers he had not been drinking alcohol and would take a breathalyzer test to prove it, Winters told him his slow response and inability to find his registration, his slurred speech, his bloodshot watery eyes and infractions in his field tests gave police probable cause.

Winters also previously claimed Galanakis smelled of alcohol. When the breathalyzer showed Galanakis had a blood-alcohol level of 0.00, Winters read him his Miranda rights without showing the results of the test and asked him the last time he smoked marijuana.

"Tonight?" Winters asked. "No weed tonight, man. I've had no weed tonight. Why do you think it's tonight? I blew zeros so now you're trying to think I smoke weed? That's what's going on.

You can't do that, man. You really can't do that. Is he allowed to do that?" Galanakis said, turning to Wing. "So I blow zeros and he suspects drugs now?"

As a football player for William Penn University in Oskaloosa, Galanakis claimed he has to participate in and pass regular drug tests in order to stay on the team. Eventually officers asked Galanakis if he would consent to drug tests at the station. At first, he said yes. When he changed his mind, he was handcuffed.

Galanakis re-consented to a drug recognition test and a urine test. The findings by officer Andrew Shinkle determined he was not intoxicated and could go home.

Although Galanakis was not charged with a crime, he described his experience in a lengthy Facebook post and later an edited video compilation of body camera footage and his own videos that has since garnered more than 1.6 million views on YouTube; all of which serve as the basis for

the city's countersuit.

The city's suit makes frequent references to public messages about the officers made by Galanakis on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, GoFundMe and YouTube. While many messages are in response to the traffic stop, others make claims that Winters was convicted of domestic abuse.

Newton News previously reported of a protective order between Winters and his former girlfriend which states he is restrained from committing any further acts of abuse or threats of abuse. So although no criminal charges were filed against Winters, the act of a domestic abuse is implied through the order itself.

However, the order has been modified to allow Winters to conduct official police business, including carrying a firearm.

Newton maintains Winters has never been charged nor convicted of domestic abuse

and that Galanakis' statements were false, defamatory and were written and stated "with actual malice" and "with utter disregard for the truth of such statements." The city also alleges Galanakis knew his statements were untrue.

Filings show Newton believes both officers did not violate any of the city's standard operating procedures during the traffic stop and subsequent arrest. The city also alleges Galanakis took advantage of the publicity generated from the false and defamatory statements by using them to earn income.

As a result of the alleged false and defamatory statements and communications, the City of Newton argued Winters and Wing have suffered and will continue to suffer mental anguish, loss of enjoyment of life, loss of community reputation and loss of employability, among other things.

Newton Mayor Mike Hansen told Newton News in a re-

cent interview that the city is moving the lawsuit to federal court. Galanakis told Newton News he was informed of the city's countersuit by his lawyers, and that his motivation behind pursuing the lawsuit was to remind the city of law and order.

From all the comments he has read on social media, Galanakis estimates an overwhelming majority of them side with him over the police officers. Those who do side with the officers, he says, all make the same argument: If Galanakis did not have an attitude with the officers, he would not have been arrested.

"This is usually what I get from the negative side, like, 'The officers did everything right. Blah, blah, blah. You're not going to win in court. They handled everything perfectly. You're mouthing off. That's why you got arrested.' They all sound the same," Galanakis said, noting he didn't start "mouthing off" until he was accused of being drunk.



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