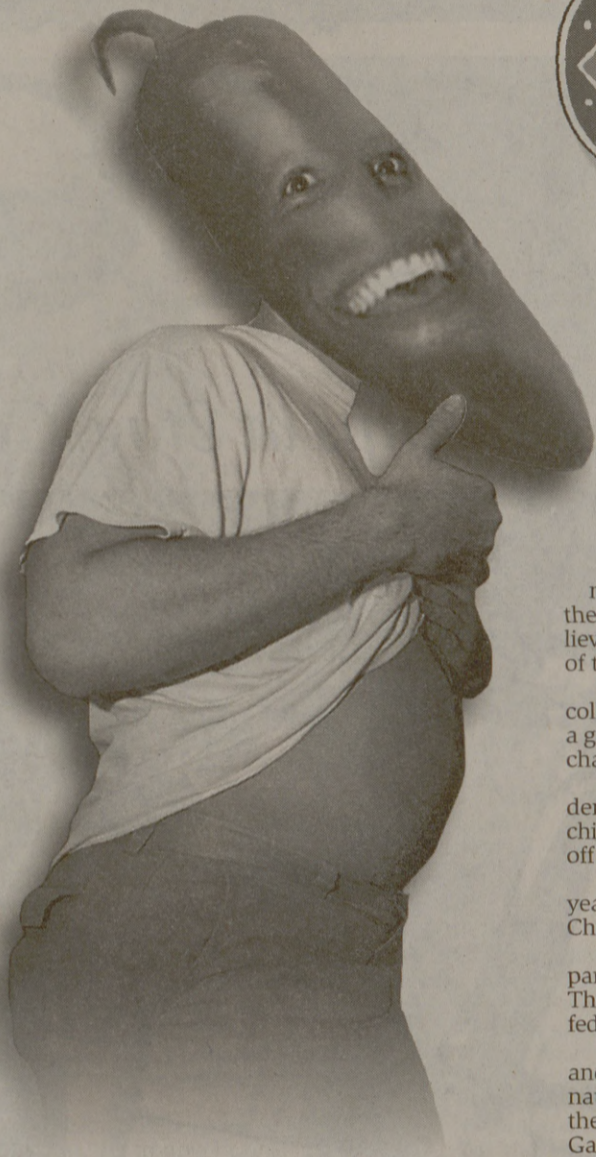


CHILIFEST '99

Story by Rich Paddack • Photo Illustration by Mike Fuentes and Robert Hynceck



Stock up on Rolands and work on tolerating spices, because it is time for Sigma Alpha Epsilon's (SAE) annual Chilifest.

SAE is hosting the ninth annual Chilifest this weekend at the Starlight Ballroom and Rodeo Arena in Snook. The event celebrates the state dish along with a side of Texas performers.

Cody Durham is the organizer and head chef of Chilifest and the chairman of Sigma Alpha Epsilon. The senior industrial distribution major said this is the second Chilifest he has organized and believes the key ingredient to organizing an event of this size is time.

"The most gratifying experience of my whole college career has been putting on a show that's a great time and also raises so much money for charity," Durham said.

Each year, companies, students, local residents and even out-of-towners organize their chili teams to compete in the amateur chili cook-off.

Chilifest had a small beginning, but over the years the number of chili teams competing in Chilifest has steadily increased.

The first event was held at the old Wal-Mart parking lot in Bryan and was a one-day event. There were only ten chili teams and the Confederate Railroad was the only performing band.

This year's Chilifest offers some of the greats and some of the soon-to-be greats. Fort Worth native Tommy Alverson will be performing for the chili teams Friday night. West Texas legend Gary P. Nunn will start things off Saturday, and John Conlee will follow up with ballads such

as "Rose Colored Glasses" and "Common Man." The featured performer, The Charlie Daniels Band, will wrap things up.

This year's event promises to beat last year's chili team attendance of 180 teams and is expecting an overall attendance of 10,000 people. It has also added a day.

Awards are given for the first, second and

tainment.

"With our reputation of success and the entertainment lined up for this year, I don't see how this can't be the biggest and best Chilifest yet," Durham said.

Chilifest has hosted an array of Texas talent with big names such as Jerry Jeff Walker, Jack Ingram and The Bellamy Brothers.

Since its inception, the main objective of Chilifest is to raise money for local charities while having the best time possible.

Last year the SAE Chilifest raised \$28,000 for various charities.

This year's Chilifest will give a percentage of the profits from ticket sales to the Burleson County "Go Texan" Association.

John Sebesta, president of the Burleson County "Go Texan" Association, said the association's mission is to raise enough funds to supplement scholarships. Sebesta said the only way to raise these funds is with the help of events like Chilifest.

"It looks like we will do well this year with the help from Chilifest," Sebesta said.

The rest of the profits go into the SAE Chilifest fund to be used for next year's event.

SAE is also providing free park-and-ride service with the cooperation of the University.

Buses will be running from the Zachry parking lot every hour from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday.

Durham said at the end of the day when the bands have left and the beer is gone the SAE crew can relax and begin a week of cleaning up.

"The best part is locking up at 5 pm, completely sober and reflecting on what a success this year's Chilifest was," he said.

"With our reputation of success and the entertainment lined up for this year, I don't see how this can't be the biggest and best Chilifest yet."

— Cody Durham
Organizer of Chilifest

third place chili. Teams also compete for best corporate and private team showmanship.

The gloves come off in the showmanship category as each team tries to out-do each other with elaborate setups and cookers and smokers the size of cars.

The showmanship award is one of the events more prestigious offerings.

The spiciness does not stop with the chili. The teams names range from the colorful to the just plain off-color. The other essential ingredient in this annual event, other than the all-you-can-eat-and-drink buffet, is legendary enter-

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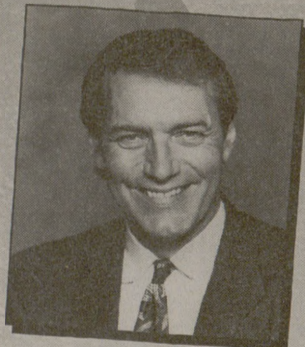
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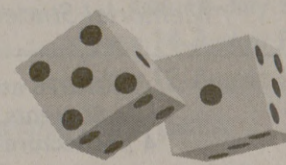
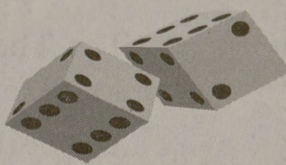
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