

# C.A.S.I. / CASI HISTORY AS AN ORGANIZED & INCORPORATED ORGANIZATION

by H. Ray King

## CHAPTER ONE 1977

It has become increasingly clear in the last several months that the true history of C.A.S.I. is either unknown, forgotten or remembered with selected memory. I must write this history, since I am the only remaining person alive that has the full knowledge of CASI history and was the person responsible for creating, organizing and developing CASI as we know it today.

I had a lot of help from persons that are never mentioned and never given credit for their valuable contributions to this wonderful organization we know as C.A.S.I./CASI. People who were very instrumental in the growth of C.A.S.I such as: Vann York, Richard Knight, Judie King, Pat Irvine, Paul Smith, Larry Burruss, Ron Charlton and many more I will introduce to you as we progress through our past to present.

I have written in the past about some of the things that happened in chili from 1939 through 1978. Most was dependent on research and interviews with the people involved. I'm leaving that part of chili history out of this series of articles. We will ask for help from Tom Tierney, Bill Neale, Carroll Shelby and some of the other people who were there and involved to fill in that era of chili history.

From 1977 until present I have lived with CASI everyday and can give a complete and factual history. With documentation, which will become a part of the Terlingua Chili History Archives & Museum Trust. I

promised the TCHA&MT board at their last meeting I would write this history. We hope it will encourage others to start participating in the TCHA&MT program.

I first went to Terlingua in 1968 when Judie and I got married. We went to several chili cookoffs as spectators to look at the weird people and drink a cold beer. But, we never really cared to participate as cooks until early 1977. In that period of time Judie and I spent a lot of weekends with Dick and Marilyn Wright. Marilyn worked at H-P with Judie. Our weekends were spent going to the lake, going to the race track in Louisiana, fishing, golf and weekend activities that most people we knew participated in. We first met Vann & Joy York in early 1977 at a BBQ at Dick and Marilyn's. Vann had started to cook chili and was going to enter Grand Prairie - Prairie Dog Second Annual Chili Cookoff. Dick Wright invited us to come out and be on Vann's team. We agreed to go for the Saturday events. Vann never did ask us and I don't think he even remembered who we were when we got to the cookoff.

We met a lot of new friends at that cookoff. Clyde and Mary Griffin, Dick and Mary Rogers were the ones we spent more time with that Saturday and Saturday night. Prairie Dog had some kind of events in the rodeo arena at night on Saturday, but I don't remember what they were. We were definitely over served by that night and were more interested in visiting.

Clyde ran Howdy Roo in Marble Falls and they talked us into coming down and cooking chili for our first time. Howdy Roo was limited to the first fifty cooks to enter,

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postmarks counted. Numerous entries were returned each year, we were told. I tried to pay that night, but Clyde would not take the money. He insisted that it had to be mailed. But I did get him to assure me that my postmark would arrive on time. Yet, Clyde was seriously pissed off at Frank Tolbert for the way he had picked the chili champion at Terlingua in 1976. Clyde was involved with the judging in Terlingua that year and the chili they judged as the champion was not the winner. Frank already had his winner picked before the cookoff was ever held. Clyde swore he would never go back to Terlingua as long as Frank was there. After I started running Terlingua, it was several years before I convinced Clyde to come back.

Unfortunately, that was the way chili cookoffs were run in those days. You could almost always figure out the winner on Friday night before the cookoff on Saturday. There were some that tried to run a good clean cookoff, but the shaky ones outnumbered the good ones in my personal opinion. It seemed that forty to fifty percent of the chili cooks wanted to take their cooking serious. The rest appeared only interested in having an excuse to get away from home to get drunk, smoke dope and fornicate.

We decided to come back for the cookoff the next day and bring our motor home. I had my RV up for sale at the time, I used it in my work. We were one of the very few that had any kind of RV, trailer, camper, etc. Judie and I stood out like we were holding a red flag. I got a lot of ugly remarks about using an RV. "You think ya'll are too good to sleep on the ground". My answer was, "Damn right if I don't have to. I'll find something else to do on the weekends before I will do that". So, I guess from my very first day in chili I

sometimes irritated a few people. Ninety nine percent of the time it was because they were envious and jealous of me. So if you ever hear anyone say a negative thing about me, just remember they are not angry, they are only envious. They wish they could be me, but they can't. Remind them that I have empathy for their pain and it will go away

How we got back to our house that Saturday night is still one of those foggy mystery's. We never did figure out who drove.

That cookoff was run honestly as it could be, I think. Doug and Allen worked hard to make it a good event every year. Of course like most new chili cooks I wasn't to sure when my team failed to place. But remember, they only called the top three winners in those days.

I went out and bought all the cooking gear we needed. Dick Wright did also. We went to a restaurant supply place in Urbandale (a suburb of Dallas, Texas) to buy our pots. We met Harry Hubble there. He was a salesman for this supply company. This was before he started to design and build telescopes.

We went to Marble Falls and cooked at Howdy Roo for the first time. We did nothing. Looking back at what we were doing then, we did not deserve anything. Needless to say we were hooked. We went every weekend that we could locate a cookoff. There were not that many at that time; so we had to drive a lot of miles to cook. I wish I had only half of that energy today. I took my RV off the market and went and traded it in for a bigger one. I had discovered a better use for a motor home than using it to work out of. I found

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a way to use it to spend money, Does that sound familiar?

We went to San Angelo, TX to cook at the Honky Tonk Hilton. This place was located in the middle of nowhere in a mesquite thicket. This was and still is to this day, the hottest place I ever cooked chili. It was so hot you did not sweat. I could not taste the comino in my chili. Still think it was the weather and not the few beers I had, but I used a pint jar of cumin in my chili that day. Sorry judges didn't give me a good score either. I assume they would have preferred more cumin, but I ran out. I did not care. All I wanted to do was leave and go back to town and jump in that river I had crossed coming through the city.

This was the first time we met Richard and Carol Knight. I went wiggling through those mesquites trying to find a place to park and scratching the hell out of my brand new motor home and parked close to these people from Irving, Texas. They were glad to see someone from the DFW area. We were among a bunch of drunk redneck goat ropers we did not know. They turned out to be our kind of people. Some went on the chili trail and cooked for years. Strange how good a chili cook can clean up. Has something to do with our other life, where we have to work everyday.

We thought this is a nice couple. Here with their three kids enjoying a weekend together. They seemed like a meek little family like the Cleaver's or one of the other funky sitcoms on TV then. We made an incorrect guess on that one. We should have thought, Adams Family.

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I know that I am rambling without any chronological sequence and writing in a

first person format. Although, I know it is incorrect; it is easier for me to write this way. History was one of my majors about a hundred years ago when I was in school. Writing on a computer sure is easier than those slate tablets and papyrus. I am writing in this first chapter about the year 1977-- a very large and important year for C.A.S.I. A chronological chart is in the front of this book..

In 1977 Cowtown held their first chili cookoff at the stockyards in Ft. Worth. This is the first place I got to know Tom and Karen Wayne. Tom was very instrumental in helping to write the first cooking rules. The cookoff was won by an air force guy by the name of Koch. He was a prodigy of Casey Kirby. Casey was instrumental in our needing a good solid set of rules. I won my first chili trophy there. Not in chili, but for beer drinking. I met and got to know Jim Lund, Jimmy and Beth Moon, Doug Beich and many more people that helped and encouraged me to move forward with trying to correct the fallacies and unscrupulous ways cookoffs were run.

The first Texas Open was held that year at "Big John" Brigham's Ranch in Plano, Texas. Frank Tolbert did start this cookoff. He and Paul Smith were trying to run it and doing a lousy job. They were more interested in visiting and talking than working. Chili cooks jumped in and helped. We knew that it would be an out-of-state winner if Frank could possibly manage the outcome. The winner was Pat Fagan from Little Rock, Arkansas. It was a mistake on Frank's part. He should have picked one of the passive people from Arkansas that were cooking that day. I will explain later when we get to the Terlingua Cookoff.

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"Big John" was a character everyone should have had the pleasure of knowing. John did a lot of promotions for local radio stations and events. He had two stagecoaches pulled by teams of Belgium Horses. John stood about 6'-5" and weighed in at around 260 lbs. He always dressed western and looked like he had just stepped out of an old west movie. John had a million stories. One of my favorites was about several tenants he had living in some houses he had on his ranch. They would not pay their rent, and they would not move out. When they got two months behind, John went down and told them he owned those house and had decided to tear them down. He told them he would be back the following Saturday and burn down the houses. The following Saturday he loaded his pickup with cans of gasoline and went down to his rent houses and everyone was gone -- even those that were not behind on their rent.

We left Plano and drove to Junction, Texas for a cookoff. This was about a 375 mile drive. There were not that many cookoffs in those days and if you wanted to try for points, you had to do a lot of driving. It was Labor day weekend and hot as the bowels of hell in South Texas. I had now been cooking a long time and had never gotten a point. Remember that the point system then only gave points to the top three places. Well I had been paying attention and knew how the good old boy - bubba system worked. I hated it with a passion, but if you wanted to score you had to play by the system that existed. I approached the cookoff promoter the morning of the cookoff and volunteered my motor home for judging and tallying where they would have air conditioning. I got second place and my first two chili points. A local won first place. I first met Tom Pike and his wild chili team at this

cookoff. Tom needed only one point for Terlingua and did not get it. Time was running out, because Terlingua was held the first weekend in October in 1977. I felt guilty for taking points from a new friend who needed one desperately. I felt even worse about a team member of Tom's who showed up at the cookoff on a new Golden Eagle Honda motorcycle. He drank too much beer that day and as hard as they tried to keep him there that night, he got away from them and headed back to San Antonio that night. He missed a curve and went off the side of a hill and killed himself.

We went to Pleasanton, Texas to cook in the "Cowboy Homecoming Chili Cookoff" in 1977. It turned out to be a 700 mile round trip mistake to cook in 100+ degree weather. There were eight or ten people from Dallas that made the trip, and everyone cooked good chili. We thought one of our group would come in. Remember, there were only three places awarded in those days. You had to make the top three or you got nothing.

Third place was announced and it was a local cook we did not know. Second place was announced and it was Chon Davila, a friend we liked from the local area. Chon had run the cookoff for them that day, and we were happy for him. Then they announced the first place winner -- it was the First State Bank who had sponsored the cookoff.

Now you had a bunch of chili cooks that were hotter than the weather. Everyone loaded their cooking stuff to leave as fast as possible. Those that had motor homes and trailers took the caps off of their holding tanks and pulled the plug and drove out all together, straight through the



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middle of the cookoff area. We felt like we needed to make a statement, and did - Needless to say, it was years before anyone went back to cook in Pleasanton, Texas.

Luckenbach Ladies State that year was judged as fairly as cookoffs could be at that time. Ben Self won in 1977. When she entered, Kathy Morgan sent her entry back and told her that men could not enter.

El Chico Restaurants in Dallas put on a chili cookoff at the State Fair of Texas in 1977. They did not allow any gas or propane stoves. The chili had to be cooked on charcoal. That was an experience I don't wish on any cook. They gave each contestant a bag of charcoal and a small grill to cook on.

I can't remember the guy's name now, but he worked at the liquor store I frequented down by White Rock Lake. He had won the cookoff in 1976 and the El Chico bunch sent him to California to cook in a world championship. I had never heard of ICS at that time and didn't have clue why they were sending the winner to California. It sounded like a good deal to Judie and me when we entered. We entered as a team and only cooked one pot. On a charcoal grill one pot is all you have time to handle, continually moving the pot from spot to spot to regulate the heat. Our friend from the liquor store cooked his in an iron wash pot, with about 30/40 pounds of meat and about a 3 inch layer of red grease on top. It made your cholesterol go up just smelling the chili.

Our friend from the liquor store, it turns out, had worked for El Chico Restaurants at one time. He introduced us to all the El Chico people during the cookoff. I don't

know if that had any thing to do with us winning first place or if it was good chili. I thought it was good chili. We were so happy. We got a three hundred dollar check and a nice trophy. We thought we were going to California to cook in the world championship. But, then they made another announcement. There was a Grand Champion chili chosen. You saw something new and surprising at almost every cookoff in those days. You guessed it. It was our buddy from the liquor store. He had won it again.

I thought I had won three points for Terlingua and was qualified to cook-- another wrong assumption. Hal John Wimberly decided not to give me the points because they gave money as a prize and he and Frank didn't think you should also get points. Remember, there were no written rules-- people made them up as they went along. I offered to give them the prize money if they would give me the points. They thought about it a long time, but decided not to take my money.

That was one of the worse mistakes they ever made in their life., probably their biggest in the world of chili. They spit on Superman's cape, pissed in the wind and created their worst nightmare. Ray and Judie King and C.A.S.I became synonymous at that time.

Judie and I went to Terlingua in 1977 needing one point each to be able to cook. Dick Wright had won third at the Texas Open and Frank Tolbert invited him to come and cook. Vann York won a cookoff in Guadalajara, Mexico and wrote Frank a letter, so Frank invited him to come and cook.

# C.A.S.I. CHRONOLOGICAL EVENTS

DATES	EFFECTS, CIRCUMSTANCES, PHENOMENA AND INFLUENCES
1939	NAME ~ CHILI APPRECIATION SOCIETY FIRST USED
1975	THE FIRST TERLINGUA SPLIT
1975	ICS FORMED IN CALIFORNIA
1976	THE TERLINGUA COOKOFF THAT WAS NOT SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN. CREATED PROBLEMS WE STILL LIVE WITH TODAY.
1977	C.A.S.I.'s MOST FORMATIVE YEAR. TERLINGUA COOKOFF MOVED TO VILLA DE LA MINA.
1978	RAY KING WRITES FIRST RULES
1978	RAY KING ORGANIZES C.A.S.I. INTO A FORMAL ORGANIZATION WITH PAUL SMITH AND FRANK TOLBERT
1979	RAY KING COPY WRITES C.A.S.I. RULES FOR C.A.S.I., INC.
1979	CHILI COOKOFFS START USING A UNIFORM SET OF RULES - RAY KING BECOMES THE C.A.S.I. TALLY MASTER
OCT. 6, 1979	C.A.S.I., INC CHARTERED BY THE STATE OF TEXAS
1979	C.A.S.I., INC ~ TRADEMARKS LOGOS AND NAMES
AUGUST 1983	LETTER OF AGREEMENT REACHED BETWEEN C.A.S.I., INC. AND C.A.S.I.- CHILI APPRECIATION SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL
OCT.6, 1983	C.A.S.I. - CHILI APPRECIATION SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL, INC. CHARTERED BY THE STATE OF TEXAS
OCT. 26 1986	RAY KING RESIGNS FROM BOARD TO PROTECT C.A.S.I. BECAUSE OF ICS LAWSUIT
MAY 27, 1987	C.A.S.I. SETTLES LAWSUIT WITH ICS
DEC. 28, 1989	C.A.S.I. BUYS LAND IN TERLINGUA
JAN. 24, 1990	DATE OF TITLE INSURANCE ON THE C.A.S.I. LAND
FEB. 17, 1990	C.A.S.I. GROUNDBREAKING IN TERLINGUA