

HOWDY-ROO

The History of Howdy Roo and
The Highland Lakes Pod, CASI

By Ruby Ross

“The Highland Lakes Tourist Association had urged all the area chambers to have an event to promote tourism.” That’s when Aqua Boon in Kingsland, Spring Ho in Lampasas and the Burnet Fiddler’s Fest along with Howdy Roo all got started. Clyde Griffin stated the first meeting was held at the Yacht Restaurant in Marble Falls, TX. “We had a roomful of people at this meeting and we decided to have an old fashion country festival and a chili cookoff.” This was Marble Falls event to promote tourism.

The first Howdy-Roo chili cookoff was held on April 8, 1972, on the school grounds (currently the elementary school). Bill Kennon was the First “Head Honchoroo.” He won this honor when he won the name-that-festival contest with the name of “Howdy-Roo.” There was only one entry. The “head Honchoroo” was the chairman of Howdy-Roo each year.

Bill Wilcox (Clements-Wilcox Funeral Homes of Burnet and Marble Falls) lended a hand in organizing the first Howdy-Roo cookoff because he had attended a chili cookoff. From the beginning Bill has sponsored and still sponsors one of the granite trophies. The chili cooks treasure the granite, State of Texas trophies.

There were 20 cooks at this first cookoff. Mary Griffin of Marble Falls and Gary Hahne tied. Gary Hahne was with the group known as Brazos Barristers. Because of the tie, they awarded a woman’s and man’s division.



This photo is of Mary cooking at the first cookoff.

The cookoff was moved to Johnson Park in 1973 because of the litter problem and the park was much more comfortable for overnight camping.

The Howdy-Roo chili cookoff got the ball rolling for chili cooks from Marble Falls to begin traveling to cook elsewhere. Mary's next cookoff was Ladies State in Luckenbach where Mary won 2nd and was invited to the World's Champion chili cooking contest in Terlingua, TX.

Griff's big win came in 1976 when he placed first in Sequin. Two weeks later Daryl Staedtler had a cookoff in Llano. This was the first year to earn points and to qualify for Terlingua. Six points were required. The entries are kept secret until the judge's decisions are made, and the bribery technique was the thing of the past. Still, fun remains the main theme at all cookoffs.

The Highland Lakes Pod was founded in 1977 by Clyde and Mary Griffin of Marble Falls and Darrell Staedtler of Llano. Clyde and Darrell were Co-Great Peppers of the Pod. They received a letter inviting them to the first Great Pepper's meeting. This meeting was held September 6, 1980, at Paul Smith's Sky-Hi Ranch near Weatherford. Darrell could not attend this meeting, so Clyde and Mary attended. Clyde represented the Highland Lakes Pod (HLP) at the Great Pepper's Meeting.

The Highland Lakes Pod was re-established September 8, 1982. The Articles of Incorporation of Highland Lakes Pod, Chili Appreciation Society International, Inc. are dated February, 1983. Registered Agent – Clyde O. Griffin. Board of Directors were: Clyde Griffin, Malcolm Fox, Sharon Roy, and Natha Smith also being the incorporators. At this time the members voted to have The Supreme Great Pepper, Clyde Griffin. No other Great Pepper shall have such destination in the Highland Lakes Pod.

World's biggest pot of chili

Mammoth concoction aids Alamo

SUZANNE KENNEDY
• Highlander Editor

If you were going to cook the largest pot of chili in the world who would you want to help? Well, the First Family of Chili of course, and in Marble Falls that's Clyde and Mary Griffin.

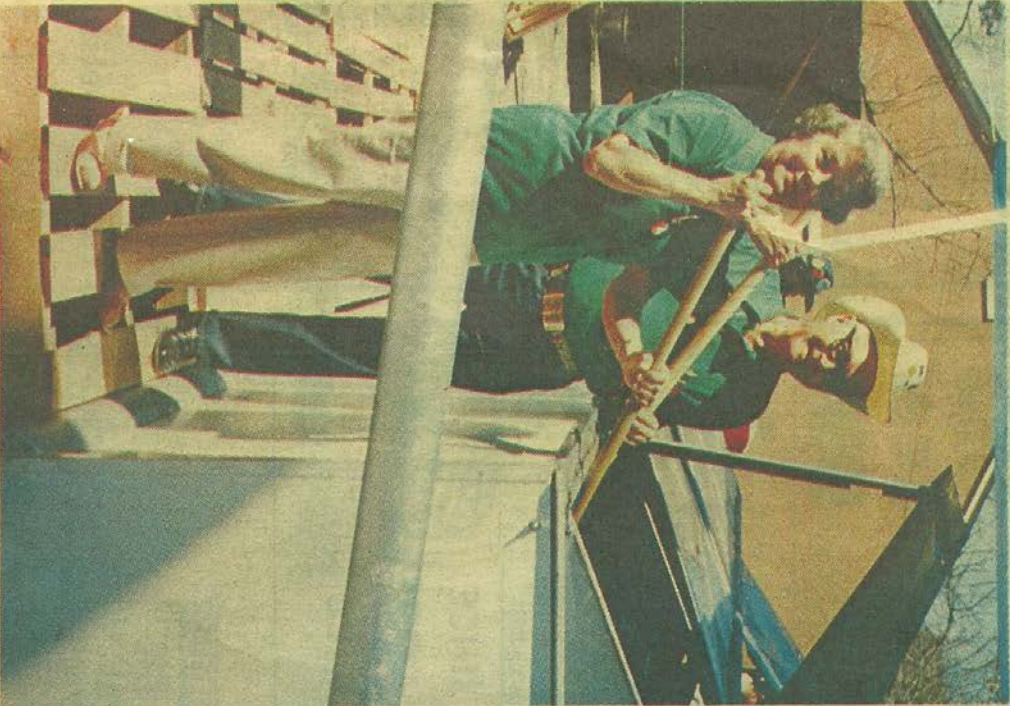
The Griffins, along with Marble Falls Chili Head Ruby Frasier, were called upon to help turn 4,000 pounds of meat into the largest pot of chili in the world. The three were acting as delegates to the Second General Convention of the Funseekers of Texas, which was held in San Antonio as part of the state

wide Sesquicentennial celebrations Saturday.

The chili was sold to raise funds for the William Barret Travis Chapter of the Sons of the Republic of Texas for restoration of the Alamo. What didn't sell (or wasn't eaten by the chili cooks) was given to the Salvation Army, Griffin said.

The pot used was specially made with copper, wood and steel and had an intricate system of steam pipes running under it. A large wooden paddle was attached to a see-saw in order to stir. Chili cooks took

— See Chili, A14



Clyde and Mary Griffin of Marble Falls help stir the world's largest pot of chili which was prepared in San Antonio last weekend. The Griffins were delegates to the Second Annual Funseekers Convention held during



Ruby Frasier, who heads the Marble Falls Howdy Foo chili cook-off committee, met up with two familiar faces at the Funseekers Convention in San Antonio last weekend. Ralph Hay of Houston (left) was head judge for the Howdy Foo Chili Cookoff last year while Lynn Weber of

The "world's biggest pot of chili" was a part of the state wide Sesquicentennial celebrations in San Antonio in 1996. HLP members Clyde and Mary Griffin and Ruby Frasier (along with many other chili heads) were called upon to help turn 4,000 pounds of meat into the largest pot of chili in the world.

Largest pot of chili with Ralph Hay-head judge for Howdy-Roo and Lynn Weber of Killeen 1985 winner of Howdy-Roo along with Ruby Frasier of Marble Falls.



Dave and Lillie Hackworth, Carolyn and Lynn Hejtmancik, HLP Members at GP meeting.

In 1996, Melba Westerman was Great Pepper. At this time CASI was having more back to back CCO. This is when HLP began having Howdy-Roo on Saturday and Backbone CCO on Sunday. This CCO was named Backbone CCO because we now had Dr Larry Kinnison and Carrie, chiropractor in Marble Falls as active members of HLP who have sponsored the backbone trophies each year. (Also, the creek which runs through Johnson Park is Backbone Creek).

Jimmy Taylor became our Great Pepper in 1994 and 1995. His first year he suggested we have a Youth CCO. 1994 we had 11 entries and 1995 we had 8 entries. This was a good idea, but we couldn't seem to draw enough interest to continue with the youth chili cookoffs.

Jimmy came up with the idea that we add BBQ and Beans to Howdy-Roo. In 1995, we had 14 BBQ teams and 22 Bean cooks. This proved to be very successful and has continued to date.

Larry Kinnison was the GP in 2001. The HLP began having the New Year's American Legion CCO in Kingsland. This began as a 2-day event and then it became New Year's weekend Party and Chili cookoffs. This has grown each year and in 2009, we had our largest attendance. If you want to spend a great New Year's party and cookoff, this is the one to attend. Breakfast is served and plenty of CHILI, CHARITY AND FUN!

In 2006, under the leadership of Carrie Kinnison, the HLP joined the Central Texas Pods in hosting the GP's meeting in Austin. These pod were Classic CASI Pod, SOT Pod, Texas Hill Country Pod, Alamo Pod,

PCP Pod, SAP CASI, ACES Pod, and Pod on the Pedernales. All the hard work produced a great Great Pepper's Meeting.

In 2007, we adopted Lake Country Lane CCO to benefit the young bowlers. This has been a very popular CCO. At this one, we get our cue sticks, bowling shoes and balls and our cooking skills are again tested. We have our 'Cast Off CCO' on Sunday. We all gather together under the pavilion to cook and mingle with our friends.

HLP and SOT Pod was granted our **40th Howdy-Roo CCO**, May 7,2011, as a **CASI Regional CCO** and the Lonestar BBQ as a State Championship BBQ.

Below are the officers who have proudly contributed in making the **Highland Lakes Pod, CASI, the second oldest CASI Chili pod and Howdy-Roo the oldest Pod chili cookoff.**

There is not a charity in Burnet County that HLP has not supported. Howdy-Roo helped purchase the first EMS vehicle for Marble Falls. The HLP is currently very active with a total of over 170 members and continues promoting Howdy-Roo and our beautiful city of Marble Falls to make each year better with **CHILI, CHARITY AND FUN!**



YEAR	GREAT PEPPER
1977	Clyde Griffin and Gary Staedtler
1982-83	Clyde Griffin
1983-84	Clyde Griffin
1984-85	Ruby Frasier
1985-86	Ruby Frasier
1986-87	Jackson Jones
1987-88	R.V. Turney
1988-89	Ruby Ross
1989-90	Carolyn Hejtmancik
1990-91	Lille Hackworth
1991-92	Ruby Ross
1992-93	Fae Paske
1993-94	Jimmy Taylor
1994-95	Jimmy Taylor
1995-96	Melba Westerman
1996-97	Rusty Paske
1997-98	Ruby Ross
1998-99	Larry Kinnison
1999-2000	Pat Pilchick
2000-01	Larry Kinnison
2001-02	Larry Kinnison
2002-03	Ruby Ross
2003-04	Tom Cook
2004-05	Carrie Kinnison
2005-06	Carrie Kinnison
2006-07	Carrie Kinnison
2007-08	Tom Cook
2008-09	Tom Cook
2009-10	Tom Cook
2010-11	Larry Kinnison
2011-12	Larry Kinnison

The Highland Lakes Pod would like to dedicate this history to Clyde and Mary Griffin, and Dick and Mary Rogers (See photo Below). These four HLP members were founders of Howdy-Roo. Without these great friends, many of us would not be CASI cooks today.



Dick and Mary Rogers and Clyde and Mary Griffin

