

The Virgin Islands Consortium

35th Annual Texas Society of the Virgin Islands Chili Cook-Off Drew Throngs of Chili Lovers to Brewers Bay

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ST. THOMAS -- So, at the 35th Annual Texas Society of the Virgin Islands Chili Cook-Off at Brewers Bay on Sunday, the vegan chef chilling at the water's edge didn't want to be interviewed because, well, he's a vegan chef at the chili cook-off. Understandable.

And don't spread it around, but Erick Ackerson, the president of the Texas Society of the Virgin Islands -- he's from Kansas. Didn't see that one coming.

Around this time every August, though, you can count on a few hundred chill and chili-hungry Virgin Islanders venturing down to Brewers Bay Sunday to sample the tastiest chili St. Thomas has to offer, and to show some love for the annual charity event.

"Only in the Virgin Islands do have the best of all worlds. You have the beautiful sunshine, you've got the chili, the water," Gov. Albert Bryan remarked, opening the day-long tribute to chili. "Most of all, the fantastic, tremendous, terrific V.I. people"

The 35th annual cook-off featured, of course, the individual Beef and Veggie chili-master and the Large and Small Show competitors. But this year's contest also handed out first-time ever honors for Best Salsa.

With chili fans coming and going through the day, it's hard to get a firm head count. But Mr. Ackerson, who has headed up the Texas Society of the Virgin Islands for over 20 years now, was pleased with the turnout -- a little smaller than some year, better than others. "Beautiful weather, a couple of showers to cool everything off. ... We love it. We love the community. We love our volunteers. Thank you all for coming out."

The chili cook-off started in 1984. The HOVENSA refinery brought a lot Texans to the territory. Texans love chili. "And Texans tend to brag," Mr. Ackerson said. So it did not take long before a contest for who had best chili recipe on St. Thomas was born.

Today the event raises thousands of dollars for charities across St. Thomas. Two University of Virgin Islands scholarships. The Texas Society supports the Family Resources Center, Queen Louise Housing for the Aged and a host of other organizations.

The grand prize winner gets an expenses-paid trip to the International Chili cook-off, Mr. Ackerson said.

Texas Society of the Virgin Islands Chili Cook Off winners, Brewers Beach, St. Thomas:

Beef chili

1. Leslie Thompson
2. Claire Chapman
3. Nora Chapman
4. Jasper Templeton
5. Doug Campbell - Ship VI chili
6. James Jamison
7. Heidi Taylor
8. Carolyn Smith
9. Laura Jamison
10. Kathy McAllister

Veggie chili

1. Erin Flynn
2. Donald Pomeranz Pomerosa Chili
3. Heidi Erwig

Salsa

1. Laura Jamison

2. Thorsten Fahnert
3. Ronald Gause

Large Show

1. Heidi's Honeymoon Grill
2. Pro Solar Spicy Solar Chili
3. Metro Motors

Small Show

Pomerosa Chili
Taco Chelles
Denise Fraguera Real Estate

Correction: August 20, 2019

A previous version of this article stated that the HOVENA refinery opened in 1984. That's incorrect. The refinery opened in 1966 as Hess Oil Virgin Islands Corporation. The story has been updated to reflect the correct information.