

NEWS

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Winners Take Home \$8,000 in Prize Money at Chili and Salsa Cook-off

Toms River, NJ ...Competition was stiff this year at the 20th Annual New Jersey State Chili and Salsa Cook-off as nearly 60 cooks competed for the \$5,000 top prize. The Cook-off was held on Saturday, May 30th from 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. on Washington Street in Downtown Toms River. Judges and the voting public sampled all the spicy, taste-tingling entries to declare the winning chili and salsa cooks, who shared a total of \$8,000 in prize money. The hugely popular event, which is hosted by Downtown Toms River, attracts cooks from across New Jersey and as far away as Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, Virginia and Kentucky.

The Cook-off features two divisions - the International Chili Society (ICS) sponsored categories and the People's Choice ones. The ICS division offers three categories - red chili, chili verde and salsa. People's Choices offers red chili and salsa. Prize money aside, for contestants entered into the ICS categories the singular goal is to win first place, which guarantees eligibility for the World Championships later this year. New this year was a Guacamole competition, which was decided by a special panel of judges.

The winners of the 2009 ICS competition are: Red Chili: 1st place and \$5,000 was awarded to Jonathan Everin of Mt Kisco, NY with Giants Tailgate; 2nd place and \$500 went to Carrie Lentz Parker of Leesburg, VA with Belle Breezy Bordello by Carrie; 3rd place and \$200 went to Rhone Carr of Mantua, NJ with Rhone's Ranger and 4th and 5th place, respectively, went to Eric Eckley of Frederick, MD with Nickel Chili Company and Mike Kropp of Londonderry, NH with Chili Cats, each receiving a trophy. The ICS Chili Verde winners are: 1st place and \$300 went to Tom Yanisko of Toms River, NJ ; 2nd and 3rd place, respectively went to Jim Parker of Alexandria, VA and Kurt Leitner of Avenel, NJ. each receiving a trophy. ICS Salsa winners include: 1st place and \$500 to Carrie Lentz Parker of Leesburg, VA.; 2nd and 3rd place, respectively, Bruce Harms of Marlboro, NY and Christian Parker of Leesburg, VA.

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both receiving trophies. Best Booth and Showmanship trophy went to Pop Hots, represented by Mary Miranda of Colonia, NJ for outstanding efforts. All of the ICS 1st place winners are invited to compete in the 2009 World Championship later this year as representatives for New Jersey.

This year's People's Choice winners are as follows: 1st place Red Chili and \$1000 went to X of (name of town) and 2nd and 3rd place, respectively, went to X, of (name of town) and X, of (name of town), both receiving trophies. People's Choice Salsa winners are: 1st place and \$500 went to X, of (name of town) and 2nd and 3rd place, respectively, went to X, of (name of town) and X, of (name of town), both receiving trophies. The winner of the guacamole competition was X of (name of town), for (his or her) (type of guacamole). (He/She) received a trophy and basket of margarita-themed items.

Also announced were the winners of the children's coloring contest, which was held prior to the Cook-off for children 3 – 12 years of age. Participants were encouraged to be as creative as possible when decorating their coloring page. Winners are Will Newman, Toms River in the 3 – 5 year old category; Kayla Chandler, Toms River in the 6 – 8 year old category; and Cameron Previte, Toms River in the 9 – 12 year old category. Winners were presented with an art kit and a gift certificate for Erickson's Framing and Art Supplies. Toms River South High School art teacher Rebekkah Hunkele judged the contest.

The 20th Annual New Jersey State Chili & Salsa Cook Off was sponsored by Comcast, Capone's Gourmet Pizza & Restaurant, HEALTHSOUTH Rehabilitation Hospital of Toms River, Extra Space Storage, Mr. Alan's The Original Florist, New Jersey Natural Gas, Shore Photographers, United Water Toms River and radio stations WJRZ and The WRAT. Upcoming Downtown events include: Cruisin' Downtown, the second Wednesday of each month through September; the 7th Annual New Jersey State Ice Cream Festival, July 18; the 4th Annual Pizza, Pasta, Pastry, September 26; and the weekly Farmers' Market on Wednesdays from June 10 through October 28.

For additional information on this event or other Downtown events in Toms River, call 732-341-8738 or Allen Consulting at 732-946-2711 or visit www.downtownomsriver.com.