

ARTS CENTER TURNS UP THE HEAT FOR "CHILI BOWL"

by Andrew Marshall
Saratoga TODAY

SCHUYLERVILLE – With winter's chill finally settling in, the Saratoga Clay Arts Center is hoping you'll warm up to a little competition at their First Annual Chili Bowl. The event is scheduled for January 28, at the Clay Arts Center, located at 167 Hayes Road in Schuylerville, kicking off at 11 a.m. and running until 3 p.m. A portion of the proceeds generated from the event will go to support the Schuylerville Area Food and Emergency Relief Fund, as well as the Franklin Community Center Food Pantry. Admission to the event is \$1, or free with the donation of a non-perishable food item.

The Arts Center is offering a unique chance to try some hearty chili made by some celebrity chefs, who will be pitted against one another in what the center is calling a "Chili Challenge."

While the chili competition may get people talking, the event is centered on the hundreds of handmade chili bowls that the center is hopeful to sell.

"I reached out to ceramic artists all over the Capital Region from Saratoga, Glens Falls, all the way to Albany," explained Saratoga Clay Arts Center Director Jill Kovachick. "We held a 'throw down' last week where a lot of people came and got a lot of work done."

The center expects to have over 500 donated bowls available for purchase at the event. Each bowl is a one-of-a-kind piece of art, but they're not just for show. The Arts Center is offering the unique promotion of "Fill the bowl, eat the chili, keep the bowl," for only \$15. Each bowl purchased comes with a com-

plementary bowl of chili prepared by one of the celebrity chefs. There will be an auction held for more valuable ceramic pieces created by the late Toshiko Takaezu, a world renowned ceramic artist, as well as the nationally recognized Steven Hill. Additional pieces will be for sale, with prices ranging anywhere from \$15 to \$90.

Kovachick says the idea for the Chili Challenge came from a fundraiser she was involved with during her teaching days at Skidmore College. She credits the rest of her staff at the Clay Arts Center for revisiting the idea with her to help raise money for the local charities.

The Chili Challenge will feature a variety of recipes and styles from the celebrity chefs, who each have their own specialties to fall back on. One should expect a more Cajun-themed approach from Jasper Alexander of Hattie's Restaurant. Rob Chrust from Amigos Cantina will likely draw upon spicier, Latin flavors. The wild cards in this event are Mike McLoughlin of Curtis Lumber in Schuylerville and News Channel 13's chief meteorologist Bob Kovachick. Mr. Kovachick, husband of the center's director Jill, will be participating on behalf of The Meat House Butcher Shop in Saratoga Springs, who will be donating the ingredients for the weatherman's chili. The winner will receive bragging rights over who makes the best chili in Saratoga, as well as a trophy being created by members of the Clay Arts Center.

Kim Klopstock of Fifty South Restaurant in Ballston Spa is planning to make a vegetarian-friendly chili for the event. "I never think inside the box," joked Klopstock.

Klopstock says she has always tried to use more organically grown and fair trade ingredients at her restaurant, and should provide a nice alternative for those who don't eat meat, or for those simply looking to try something new. While she's excited to be participating, Klopstock says it's not about the competition for her, and only hopes to lend her name and cuisine to a worthy cause.

The First Annual Chili Bowl will also feature entertainment by jazz guitarist Chuck Kish of the Hot Club of Saratoga band. For more information, contact the Saratoga Clay Arts Center at their website www.saratogaclayarts.org or call them at (518) 581-CLAY.

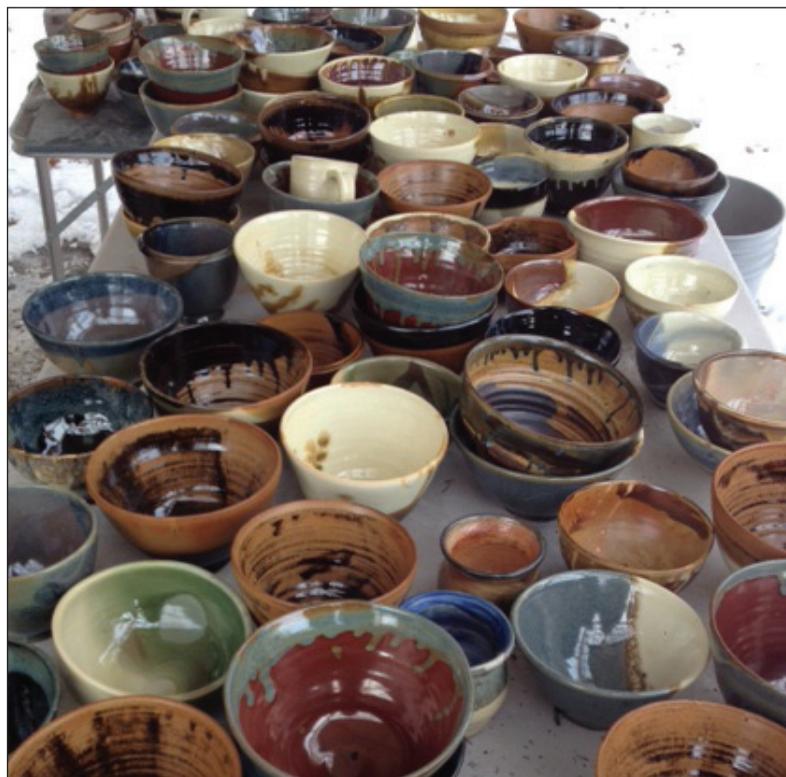


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