

# THE FOREST REPUBLICAN

February 24, 2010

## HILES NEWS

There are getting to be more and more bare patches of black top showing in parking lots, on streets and driveways! Maybe soon there will be bare patches of ground? Well, we can hope. After all, back there a few weeks ago, Jimmy the groundhog of Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, predicted an early spring.

A friend who always has an excellent vegetable garden plans to plant his tomatoes the first week of March. I think that qualifies as an early sign of spring!

As I predicted last week, the Hiles Ladies Pool League and their guests enjoyed a fine supper for Valentine's Day complete with a King Cake for Mardi Gras. Does it seem like these holidays and celebrations are doubling up on us? Maybe this feeling is just a sign that I'm aging. Nah, that can't be it. The Pool Ladies' dinner for St. Patrick's Day is just around the corner. Pretty soon the pool season will be coming to an end. Whose team will come out on top? At this point it could be anybody's guess!

This week the Red Hatters will be meeting at 11:30 am on Wednesday, the 24<sup>th</sup> at Pine Lake Pub. The intention of this meeting will be lunch and an afternoon of games. Remember to bring a white elephant gift, wrapped, for a game prize.

### Calendar and Almanac

February is International Expect Success Month, Youth Leadership Month and Spiritual Teachers Month. This may be a good time to thank the pastors, teachers, and all those helping to get our children and others ready for confirmations and first Communions.

This week is American Crossword Puzzle Week. They might seem like just fun and games, but it has been shown that doing the crossword and other word puzzles and games will help keep our minds sharp as we age.

February 24—Red hats meet at Pine Lake Pub, 11:30 am for lunch and games

February 28—full moon known as Snow Moon because at this time of year there are heavy

snowfalls. Well, there go our dreams of spring! It's also called the Hunger Moon because of meager hunting this time of year. With our poor economy, that may be an apt name. If you can, make a donation to our local food pantry.

February 25—National Chili Day

March 4—Hiles Service Club, 1:00 pm at the Hiles Museum in the town hall

March 4—Red Hatters meet at 6:30 pm at the Pine Lake Pub

## **Chili for a Chilly Day**

There are as many ways to make chili as there are cooks that make it. It was 'invented' around San Antonio Texas, and Texans take their chili very seriously, with cook-off competitions, resulting in many variations of chili. **Basic Texas Chili**

2 pounds beef, round or chuck, cut into ½" cubes, all fat removed

1 small onion, chopped fine

1-2 cloves garlic, minced

Salt and black pepper to taste

Water

2-3 tablespoons blended chili powder

1 tablespoon ground cumin

1, 8-oz., can tomato sauce

2 tablespoons flour

½ cup water

In a heavy skillet, sauté the meat in a small amount of oil until it is no longer red. Drain away the watery juices and transfer the meat to a stew pot.

While the meat is still hot, mix in the onion, salt and black pepper to taste. Cover and let sit for 30 minutes.

Add enough water to cover the meat. Put in the spices and bring to a simmer. Cook until the meat is tender. You may have to add more water if the mix becomes too dry. Add the tomato sauce and simmer another 20 minutes.

If the chili is not spicy enough for your taste, add a small amount of cayenne.

Mix 2 tablespoons flour with one half cup of water. Raise the heat under the chili until you get a good boil. Stir in the flour/water mixture and continue stirring until mixture thickens. Reduce

heat and simmer about 15 more minutes. Serve with saltines or tortillas.

This recipe will get you started. Experiment with the recipe. Try different brands of chili powder.

Garlic needs to go in the pot in the last half of the cooking process as it will lose its flavor and important nutrients if cooked too long. Oregano or marjoram will become bitter if cooked too much, so if you are using that, it needs to go in toward the end of the cooking time.

### **Here are a few chili "secrets":**

Chili that is bitter can be sweetened with a little dark brown sugar. Just enough to kill the bitterness. This also cuts the acidic taste of tomato products. Chili that is too salty can be rescued by boiling a peeled potato in the pot. The potato will absorb a lot of the salt. Also, if your chili is too thin, add some instant mashed potatoes. This will also absorb salt and is an easy way to stretch a pot of chili when an unexpected guest shows up.

Most of all, experiment. Read all the recipes you can find. Like I said there are as many ways to make chili as there are chili chefs. Some folks don't consider it chili without beans. Some add other vegetables like celery or green peppers. With macaroni, it is called chili-mac. With cheese on top, usually shredded cheddar, it is called chili con cesa. Try other cheeses, too, like a Mexican blend, Swiss, or mozzarella, or sour cream. With meat, which is how most of us like it, it is known as chile con carne. Many cooks use ground beef. Some use pork or venison. Some people add cocoa powder or melted chocolate, which gives the chili a deeper color. Chili can be a thick sauce to wrap up in a tortilla, or spoon on a hot dog. It can be a thick stew, or a thinner soup consistency. Just do your own thing with it.

### **Doing Community Service**

One day a florist went to a barber for a haircut. After the cut, he asked about his bill, and the barber replied, 'I cannot accept money from you; I'm doing community service this week.' The florist was pleased and left the shop.

When the barber went to open his shop the next morning, there was a 'thank you' card and a dozen roses waiting for him at his door.

Later, a cop comes in for a haircut, and when he tries to pay his bill, the barber again replied, 'I cannot accept money from you; I'm doing community service this week.' The cop was happy and left the shop.

The next morning when the barber went to open up, there was a 'thank you' card and a dozen donuts waiting for him at his door.

Then a Congressman came in for a haircut, and when he went to pay his bill, the barber again replied, 'I can not accept money from you. I'm doing community service this week.' The

Congressman was very happy and left the shop.

The next morning, when the barber went to open up, there were two dozen Congressmen lined up waiting for a free haircut.

And that, my friends, illustrates the fundamental difference between the citizens of our country and the politicians who are running it.

*By Pat Pfeiffer*

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