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ranches and cooking chili, in his native Southwest Montana, at the age of fourteen. He worked his way through the ranch circuit—with no shortage of stories to tell, ask him about the barn with two \$1000 bills—until he went off to join the service. Afterward, he was discharged in San Francisco and then offered a free flight to Sand Point Navel Air Station, on Lake Washington. From Sand Point he walked to Ballard, because he'd heard about Mike (of Mike's Chili Parlor, 1447 NW Ballard Way). From there he walked to the Madison Park neighborhood, where he decided he'd like to live. Soon after he opened Space Place, rented a place in Madison Park and started dating Dorothy, his future wife. The rest is history, but Joe keeps it spicy. Over the years his proudest recognitions include: Canadian National Championship, Oregon Championship, Montana Championship, sponsored five contestants in Family Style in 2004 (who took first, second, third, fourth and tenth place), he's named by *USA Today* as one of top ten chili parlors in the country, he's the annual Zagat pick—the list goes on. "I am always trying new recipes, especially in competitions. I like to keep it exciting," Joe modestly says, from behind his counter. Always in wearing his thick, denim apron and methodically

scouting around his tiled shop, he is born to talk chili. "I never do the same thing twice in competition."

He keeps it exciting, in more than just competitions. He helped to found the Washington State Chili Appreciation Society, in 1979.

For years Joe anonymously wrote a

Border. He called it the POT POD or PISS ON TEXAS, because that's what members could do from the meeting room by going out the back door," said Bob Lyon, who succeeded Brokaw as editor. "Joe also got many famous chili cooks to come to the Pacific Northwest and hosted them at his own expense. He's mainly responsible for

California. Joe's keen interests in all styles and tastes of chili making, made him eager to see how it was cooked in different locations and he competed in all these other areas. He was particularly interested in Texas because as Texas chili goes, so goes the world of chili. You might also ask him about cooking for the heart transplant patients there with his 'special' recipe that would not cause them any problems. Joe is a legend in the chili world and I have sent many a visitor to his World Class Chili parlor at the Market."

Its not just chili he serves up in his popular parlor, the television generally shows sports and current events, the radio is on if there is something good to listen to hear, The place smells

great. Joe and Elena are friendly and inviting. Chili lovers who know about World Class Chili come back for more. He loves being part of the community.

Steve, originally from Alabama, loves the stuff. He stops by, from the Eastside, on his way to work at the Seattle Public Library, at least once a week.

All-in-all Chili is serious business, no beans about it. The competitions may look like all fun, joking around and laughs, but if you don't know your lingo, styles and rules the other competitors know. For newbies who need to bone up before the big event go down and talk to Joe. World Class Chili is open Monday through Saturday 11 a.m.-3 p.m. (closed on Sunday) or check out worldclasschili.com.

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column, The Old Windbreaker, for the Pacific Northwest Chili & BBQ News and wrote for the Terligua Trails, a monthly paper for the Chili Association International (CASI) and for the Puget Pod chapter of CASI.

Lynne Brokaw, chili aficionado and multiple winner, including Washington State Chili Champion, was his editor for three years. She audibly smiles when she thinks about the now defunct column. She says people were trying to find out for years just who 'The Old Windbreaker' really was. She never told.

"He once wrote about the POD organizations (local chapters as in chili pods) of the Chili Appreciation Society International (CASI) as PODS. His favorite was one on the Oklahoma-Texas

the success of the 49er Days chili cook off, in Winthrop, WA, for 20 years, which he helped, sponsor from the beginning and is now co chair. He is very clever."


Brokaw says she enjoys the Market event particularly because it gives competitors a chance to come to this special place and be part of the behind the scenes. Competitors have a special spot staked out and can still go off and explore the action. Another of her favorite competitions was the "Heartache and Heartburn" Cook Off that Snoqualmie Winery Tasting Room used to have.

"I first met Joe at [the Seattle] Folklife Festival in 1986," said Colleen Wallace, chili cook comrade from Dallas, TX. "After that I saw him cooking in many places, including Texas, Louisiana and




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