

The Great Chili Shootout 2011

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Granite City Gunslingers, St. Cloud, MN
Shooting at Kimball Rod & Gun Club
<http://www.granitecitygunslingers.com>



Here in central Minnesota, where the Granite City Gunslingers hang out, cold weather comes early and hard. This year winter has been an especially tough hombre; snow and temperatures both started falling in December and never let up, bringing on bunkhouse fever all around.

Morning light, January 29, 2011, saw 20 degrees outside with twelve inches of snow on the ground. The overcast sky foretold of a storm front moving in; the temperature would soon head lower.

As the story goes, that fateful day found twenty-seven cowboys, cowgirls, and cavalry officers hunkered down in the bunkhouse at Kimball Rod and Gun Club, figuring how to pass the time. Someone claimed to make the best chili this side of Northfield and, being a competitive bunch, challenges ensued. The only way to settle this would be to throw a chili cook-off. Thirteen chuck wagon cooks took to their pots and soon the aroma of chili was in the air.

Then someone spotted a band of marauders in the distance, coming to rustle our fine vittles to be sure. We quickly formed two posses and went out into the cold to confront the scalawags. Now, some cowpokes said they could have been better prepared for the weather, but defending the chili was more important.



Two Granite City Gunslinger posses protecting our chili from marauders over yonder.

The Great Chili Shootout of 2011 had commenced. To beat winter's chill and keep their strength, the posses spent time between stages warming up in the bunkhouse and chowing down chili. It took six stages of expert shooting before we sent the bad hombres packing – our chili and our pride were saved.

But the Great Chili Shootout wasn't over. Those bad guys had vamoosed but there was still chili to be tasted – and a verdict to be rendered. Cowpokes sampled chili after chili, thirteen in all, trying to detect the nuances of each recipe. A question heard from someone in the bunkhouse was, “Is there a difference between fumes and aroma?” That question left many wondering what was in some of those pots. So much for the nuances . . .



L-R: J.R. Leadslinger, DM Yankee, Riverboat Red, Bio Bob, Amen Straight. It looks like DM Yankee is trying to influence the outcome!

The jury deliberated for some time and finally the foreman of the jury, Amen Straight, was ready to announce the verdict. The top chili award went to DM Yankee for his “DM Chili,” the DM standing for “Darn Meaty” as he tells it. His sentence – umm, trophy – was a large, wooden spoon with “GCG Chili Champ” burned in with a branding iron.

Now, it's the cowboy way to respect the heroes amongst us, and protecting our chili from those cantankerous varmints required some mighty fine shooting that deserves recognition.

The biggest hero of the day, as top gun, was Double Down shooting as a Wrangler. Right behind him, second and third, protecting his flank, were Timber Jack Thompson as top Cowboy and Amen Straight as top Forty-Niner.

A standout with some fine shooting and cooking was DM Yankee who took fourth overall, top Frontier Cartridge, and the coveted trophy spoon for top chili honors. It's a good thing his guns were smokin' and not his chili!



DM Yankee smoking his way to a win in Frontier Cartridge in addition to top honors in the chili cook-off.



The "Chili Champ" trophy

There were more heroic shooters in our shootout. Cherry Lake Jake took top honors as a Senior Duelist, Lawless Guy Thompson led in Senior, JR Leadslinger was top Gunslinger, and Riverboat Red led the way in Duelist. Knarley Bob and Wronggun both laid down some serious smoke as the leaders in Frontier Cartridge Duelist and Ladies Frontier Cartridge respectively, and Don Juan took Silver Senior.



Knarley Bob came out on top in Frontier Cartridge Duelist.



Wronggun shooting her way to the top in Ladies Frontier Cartridge.

The Great Chili Shootout 2011 was a grand event. With all the great people, camaraderie, laughter, good food, and lots of shooting, it couldn't have been better.

The Granite City Gunslingers are a hardy bunch of hombres and they're already planning to do this again next year.

Rumor has it that those marauding outlaws didn't like the beating we gave 'em so they'll be back next year too, and they're bringing reinforcements. The Granite City Gunslingers will need more help to fend off those chili rustlers so come join the posses next January at The Great Chili Shootout 2012. Bring your finest shootin' irons, your best chili, and a sturdy spoon.



The brave Granite City Gunslingers saved our chili from rustlers.