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Cool Beans

By SHELBY MERTENS Daily News-Record Sep 19, 2018



The winning beer of the inaugural Beans & Brews Festival's homebrew competition is a black IPA called "Without A Doubt" by Kate Bailey. The Friendly Fermenter brewed the beverage for the Sept. 29 festival.

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HARRISONBURG — The Friendly Fermenter and Pale Fire Brewing are teaming up to host a new dual homebrew and chili cook-off to benefit a local nonprofit that helps homeless families get back on their feet.

The inaugural Beans & Brews Festival will be held at Pale Fire, located at 217 S. Liberty St., on Sept. 29 from 1 to 4 p.m.

About a dozen homebrewers submitted their beers for the competition, which were judged by a panel of local professional brewers in July.

Because of laws enforced by the Virginia Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, the homebrew competition had to be done separately from the festival.

Shawn Gatesman, owner of The Friendly Fermenter, said homebrew and commercial beer cannot be served at the same event.

“The idea would have been to have the homebrew at the event. ... [But] they won’t allow you to do both,” Gatesman said. “You can’t mix the two.”

To get around the law, the Friendly Fermenter brewed the beer based on the winning recipe.

On July 16, the judges chose a black IPA brewed by Kate Bailey, president of the Harrisonburg Homebrewers Club. The name of the beer is called “Without A Doubt.”

“It was very nice to drink,” Gatesman said. “It was the most well-executed with the least amount of flaws. When you get in homebrew competitions, some of the beers can be significantly flawed.”

Bailey’s is the official beer of the 2018 Beans & Brews Festival. The Friendly Fermenter and Pale Fire will sell the beer commercially starting on Sept. 29. Only a limited amount will be available.

Gatesman also came up with the idea for an amateur chili competition.

Gatesman wanted to create a contest for the general public. The annual Rocktown Chili Throwdown that was held in August pitted downtown restaurant chefs against each other.

“I’ve seen plenty of commercial chili cook-offs of restaurant chefs competing,” he said.

To enter the Beans & Brews chili contest, participants must be nonprofessionals who must prepare and serve at least six quarts of their own chili at the festival.

The organizers will accept up to 18 chili entries. Anyone can register to be a judge, which allows individuals to taste all of the chili submissions and vote for their favorite.

“That’s going to be a whole lot of chili,” said Mark Sawin, a Harrisonburg-Rockingham Bridge of Hope board member and coordinator of the Beans & Brews Festival.

The people’s choice award will be announced at the end. The cost to sign up to be a judge is \$10, which will go to the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Bridge of Hope.

Bridge of Hope, a national organization, works with homeless families looking for permanent solutions to homelessness.

The nonprofit partners with area churches for two-year mentoring programs. Bridge of Hope helps cover rent and other expenses. The families receive child care, job training and financial advice.

“It gives them a community they can turn to,” Sawin said. “It’s been really successful here in town. It’s been running for about a decade. It helps get homeless people back into self-sufficiency.”

Sawin said the proceeds from the festival will go toward sponsoring two more families.

“Every \$10,000 we raise, we can help one more family for another year,” he said. “We’re also hoping to get the word out to other churches and organizations that may want to step up and be a part of these mentoring programs.”

Interested individuals can sign up until the day of the festival to be a chili judge. Registration can be completed online at www.beansandbrewsfest.org.

“We’re really excited about this,” Sawin said. “Our plan is that this is the inaugural event and this will run annually.”

Bridge of Hope is also hosting another fundraiser, a locally sourced dinner, called Locavore on Nov. 3 at Muhlenberg Lutheran Church.



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