



Proclaim It! October 26 is Texas Chicken Fried Steak Day

Waffles, escargot- heck, even candied orange peels- all have their own holidays. So why, in Texas no less, has chicken fried steak gone unappreciated all these years? Former Texas Restaurant Association President Jeffrey Yarbrough asked himself this very question and immediately began spreading the word about the much-needed holiday.

It's not surprising that Texans were so receptive to Yarbrough's cause. Chicken fried steak is so engrained into Texas history that it's widely regarded as the unofficial state dish. German immigrants introduced the dish to Texans when they began substituting beef for harder-to-find veal when making wiener schnitzel and it was love at first bite. Before long chicken fried steak became a favorite of hard-working cowboys across the state, and by the late 19th century nearly every regional cookbook boasted a recipe for the hearty breaded dish.

Yarbrough, himself a seventh generation Texan, had no trouble rallying like-minded individuals to join him in his quest. Fortunately, this group included State Representative and Las Casas Restaurant owner Ralph Sheffield. When he saw what a positive response the first (unofficial) Texas Chicken Fried Steak Day garnered last year he, too, was convinced that the day should be made official.

Sheffield did just that. He took Yarbrough's case to the House and all agreed that "while chicken fried steak can be enjoyed at any time, the dish's popularity justifies the celebration of an observance in its honor." Sheffield, along with Speaker of the House Joe Strauss and Chief Clerk Robert Haney, signed the resolution on May 2.

At a recent Texas Restaurant Association board meeting Yarbrough proudly took the stand to share the news that his beloved chicken fried steak finally had its official day of celebration. As he presented the resolution to his peers, the excitement in the room was palpable. Cheers erupted from the crowd. For a minute it even seemed as though a standing ovation might have been coming.

Tom Perini of Perini Ranch Steak House in Buffalo Gap was equally thrilled to hear the news. Cowboy cooks like Perini have helped make sure the culinary traditions of our ancestors are not forgotten. After appearances on "The Today Show" and The Food Network, Perini journeyed down to Austin where he and Yarbrough spoke about Texas