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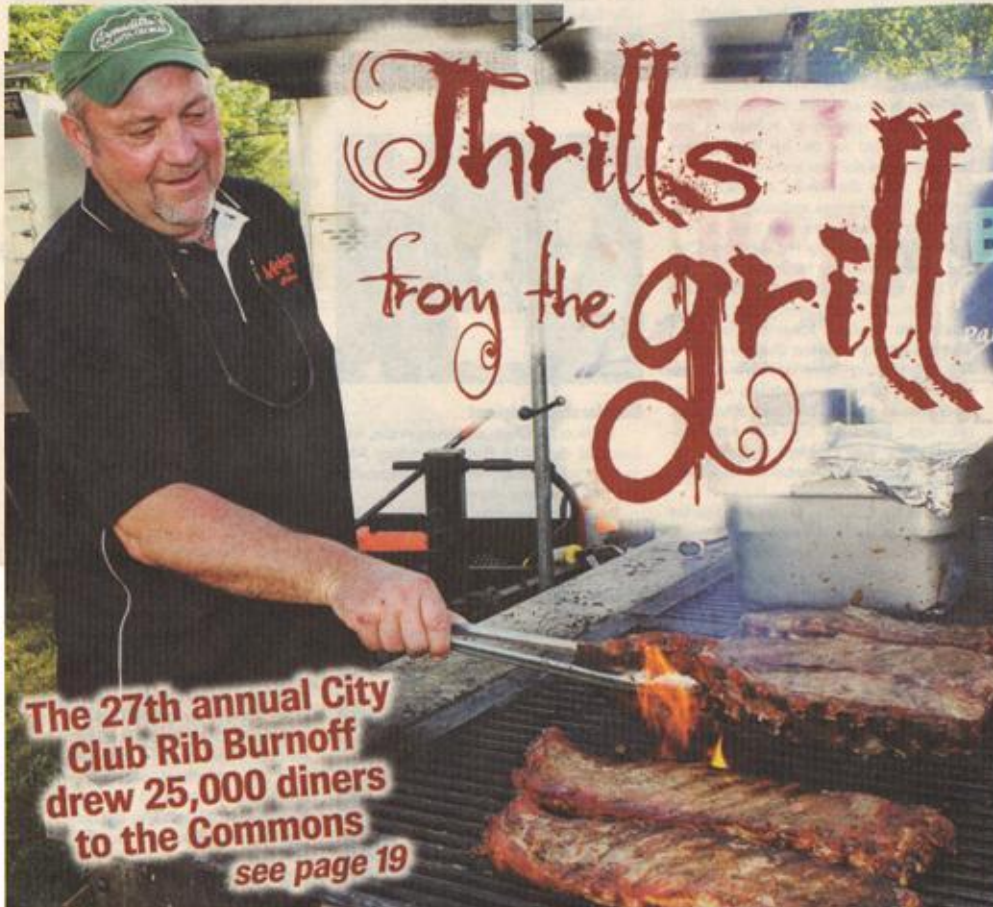


STRONGSVILLE THE POST

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The 27th annual City Club Rib Burnoff drew 25,000 diners to the Commons see page 19

Photo by TERRY BELAS

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Blaze Trail fire ends in total loss

An early afternoon garage fire June 20 results in a total loss of the uninsured structure and its contents **page 22**

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The Longest Day

Strongsville resident Michael Darrah kayaks across Lake Erie from Marblehead to Vermilion for Alzheimer's disease **page 24**

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EARLY DEADLINES

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CLASSIFIED & DISPLAY ADVERTISING:	NEWS SUBMISSIONS:
MON., JULY 1, 5PM	MON., JULY 1, 12 NOON

City Club Rib Burnoff sizzles

Crowds, temperatures and enthusiasm run hot on the Commons

By **TERRY BRLAS**
Strongsville Post editor

STRONGSVILLE — If you liked your ribs and weather hot then the Strongsville Commons was the place for you June 20 through 22. And there was a good chance that you were there, as approximately 25,000 people crowded the city's outdoor center of activity during the three days of the 27th Annual City Club Rib Burnoff.

The thermometer hit 90-plus the final day of the three-day event, but the hottest temperatures of the season did not dampen rib enthusiasts' enthusiasm.

Bruce and Pam Keenen, along with their grandchildren, were enjoying themselves. The Strongsville residents view the Rib Burnoff as a family tradition.

"We've been coming here for years. We started bringing our kids and now we bring our grandkids," Bruce said. "This always gets good crowds and the food's great."

Sonja Jablonsky had a different perspective than most. The Strongsville residents grew up in Moultrie, Ga. She and husband, Chris, were attending the City Club Riboff for the first time.

"I'm from the south so it's a real challenge to get good barbecue in Ohio," she said. "This is really nice. (There is) great weather, great people and good food."

"There's probably more people here today (June 20) than the city she was raised in," Chris said.

Strongsville residents Laurie and Greg Buck, and Mary Ameen have been coming to the Riboff every year for as long as they can remember.

"There are great ribs and a nice, clean



Photos by **TERRY BRLAS**

Ribs were in plentiful supply at the City Club Rib Burnoff. The June 20-22 event on the Strongsville Commons had eight ribbers competing for the title and trophies. The City Club Rib Burnoff was all about friends and family getting together for great food and camaraderie. Pictured at left are (left to right) Strongsville residents Mary Ameen, Laurie Buck and Greg Buck.



atmosphere," Greg said.

When asked what their favorite was Greg replied, "We've only tried one, but we're going to taste them all."

The majority of those at the Strongsville Riboff, billed as "Not the biggest... Just the best," preferred the ribs from

see *Ribs* on page 20



Photo submitted by **KEN FEROS**

The sun may have gone down, but the ribs were still going.

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Ribs

continued from page 19
Texas Pit out of Willis, Texas for the People's Choice trophy. Old Carolina Barbeque Company from Medina was deemed second best by a vote of the people. The People's Choice winner for Best Sauce was Desperado's from Hinckley.

The Best Ribs and Best Sauce category winners crowned by a vote of culinary judges from Polaris Career Center were Old Carolina and Texas Pit, respectively. Second place in the Best Ribs category went to Sgt. Oink's from Tiffin, Ohio.

A tasting performed by celebrity judges on June 20 and 21 narrowed the ribs that the Polaris Career Center judges tasted and voted for on June 22.

Chef Training Instructor Chris Olszewski, affectionately known as 'Chef O' from Polaris said there are a number of things he and his students looked at when judging ribs.

"We're looking at how they are handling the meat. It sounds cliché, but when it comes to a good rib, we're looking for that whole picture, the texture, the flavor, consistency and flavor," Olszewski said.



Funkology with its high energy horns performed at the City Club Rib Burnoff June 21. The repeat performer from 2012 is a fan favorite of event attendees. At left: Chef Chris Olszewski of Polaris Career Center samples ribs during judging at the City Club Rib Burnoff. He and his fellow Polaris judges deemed Old Carolina Barbeque as having the best ribs and Texas Pit as having the best sauce.



There are regional differences that come into play with ribs and their associating judging, according to the chef.

"It must be a northern thing, but everyone loves a lot of sauce on their ribs in Ohio. The southern ribbers that come up have to adapt to a northern taste profile," Olszewski said. "We're looking for

a good sauce because we know that sauce is a big thing up here...I'm a person that loves a rib that has a nice crust with a spice rub on it and a little sauce. That's what wins me over.

"We leave constructive comments. It's all high quality stuff. They all do a good job. It's amazing when you taste a St. Louis style rib and it's coming off the same size animal. Once they get it in their hands it's amazing what they can do with it."

The eight ribbers in 2013 were the same octet from 2012. Those wishing to be a part of the City Club Riboff go on a waiting list. The popularity of the event and success of the participants makes this one attractive venue for those in the rib-cooking business.

From the crowds to the weather to the overall atmosphere, City Club President Terry Toth could not have been happier.

"It was fabulous. Even with the hot weather we had a nice breeze," he said. "It's the unofficial start of summer in Strongsville. It's 27 years and rolling."

Proceeds from the event are funneled back into City Club initiatives, including

the organization's major beneficiary, local Special Olympics.

"We think of our special Olympians and it inspires us to keep going. I've seen a number of the athletes here this weekend and their families. That's what it's all about," Toth said.

The Rib Burnoff does not happen without the concerted effort of the City Club members and a myriad of volunteers. The cooperation of a number of entities, including the police and fire departments, as well as the city's service department makes the event tick.

Even if one did not care for ribs, there were plenty of other food offerings, including funnel cakes, pierogies, fried Twinkies, strawberry shortcake, ice cream, sweet corn, cotton candy and onion rings.

A new entertainment sponsor, Architectural Justice, came on board for 2013. This aspect of this year's Riboff had some familiar sounds and some not so familiar in the gazebo at the middle of the Commons.

Back this year were 2012 bands Midnite Groove and Funkology, which played during the evening hours of June 20 and 21, respectively. Solo guitarist Victor Samalot entertained during the afternoon of June 22.

New to the Riboff in 2013 was Dr. Mo featuring Monica Robins. The WKYC-TV reporter was happy to play Strongsville for the very first time.

"I'm not a doctor and do not play one on TV, but we have the prescription for a good time," Robins quipped. "We've never played here before so we're excited to get a taste of some really good ribs and have a good time. It's like a first date. Hopefully they'll want us back."

The Olmsted Performing Arts Dance Company also performed during the afternoon of June 22 next to the gazebo.

In addition to ribs and entertainment, there was Kids Korner where children could burn off energy on the inflatables. Members of the Strongsville High School wrestling team volunteered to monitor this area.



To the victor go the spoils. Old Carolina Barbeque Company took first place in the Best Ribs category by a vote of culinary judges and second place in the Best Ribs category by a vote of attendees. Standing to the far right is City Club President Terry Toth and to the far left is City Club Vice President Gary Mundson.

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Lemonade was a popular thirst quencher at the City Club Rib Burnoff. A young customer is served during the event.