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## Low temps don't cool off ribbers *Thousands crowd Commons for City Club's annual rib burn-off*

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Staff Writer

TEMPERATURES sank into the 40s last Thursday evening at the city's 17th Annual City Club Rib Burn-off, prompting many patrons to leave the event early.

And while piping hot ribs and fresh corn-on-the-cob sold at a brisk rate, lemonade and ice cream sales sank along with the thermometer.

"It was really cold. I wish we'd had a hot chocolate concession," said event chairman Tom Barnum.

Despite the unseasonable chill, Barnum said rib vendors had a record year and the crowd totals weren't anything to sneer at.

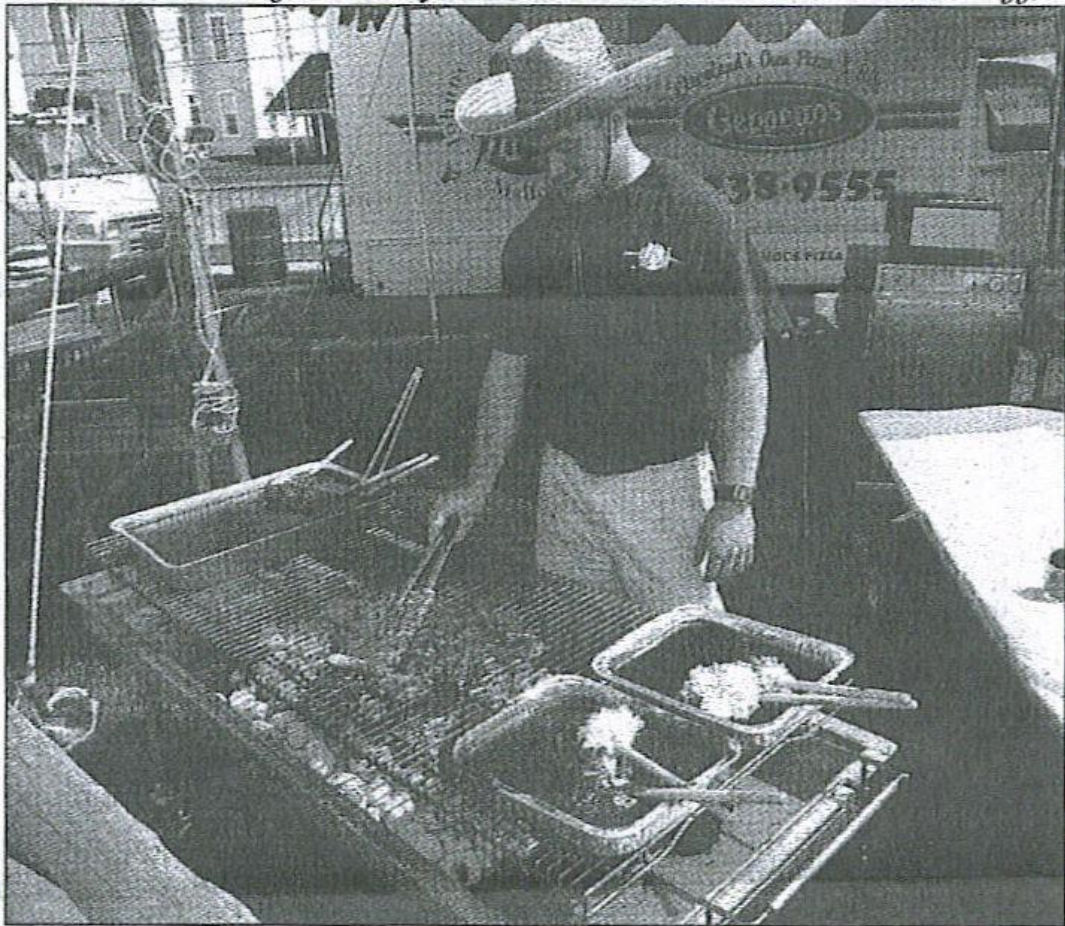
He said 23,000 to 24,000 patrons arrived on the City Commons during the three-day event. "With less than perfect weather, we can count on 18,000," Barnum said.

"One guy (vendor) bragged he sold over 110 cases and there are 18 slabs of ribs in a case, so he sold about 1,900 slabs of ribs. That was incredible," Barnum said, adding that there was no final count on corn sales at *The Sun Star* press deadline.

Tony Roma's Catering, Oakwood Village, took the Culinary Guild's top award for best ribs.

The Guild's judges select winners from among the top six People's Choice picks, arrived at by way of burn-off patrons' ballots.

The People's Choice award for best ribs went to Moose Head of Vermilion and the award for best sauce went to Mad Cactus of Strongsville.



SUN PHOTOS BY JIM VOTAVA

Randy Pace of Geppetto's, Strongsville, cooks up slabs of bones for hungry patrons at the Strongsville City Club's 17th Annual Rib Burn-off.

The vendors list this year also included Barbarinos, Columbia Station; DD Stutz, Massillon; Geppettos, Strongsville; Gold-dust BBQ Co., Stowe; Old Time BBQ, Mansfield; Porky-N-Beans, Fort St. Lucie, Fla.; Sgt.

Oinks Pit BBQ, Tiffin; Texas Pit BBQ, Waco, Texas; Moosehead Grille, Vermilion, and Smokin' Joe's BBQ from Mansfield.

"It was truly a successful event for everyone," Barnum said.

"Everybody had a line going on each evening," he said, adding that Texas Pit "had such a line going that people probably had to wait a half hour. A line draws a line, so people figure it must really be a good product."



Jim Green wraps up some eats at the Strongsville City Club's corn and baked potato booth.



Bill and Helyn Pridemore of Strongsville were among an estimated 24,000 rib lovers who showed up on the City Commons last weekend to sample the various vendors recipes. The Pridemores were caught on camera, digging into Golddust BBQ ribs.