

Breakfast on the Covered Bridge another success

Volunteers cook, dish up large quantities at annual City Club event

By TERRY BRLAS
Strongsville Post editor

STRONGSVILLE — Great food, good friends, spectacular views and perfect weather is a winning combination anyway you slice it. Sound like a recipe for a good time? It was the perfect mix for the Strongsville City Club's annual Breakfast on the Covered Bridge.

The three-decade old event took place on the Walter Ehmfelt Covered Bridge in the Metroparks Sept. 15. Early morning diners basked in golden rays of sunshine and sat down to golden, fluffy scrambled eggs along with other breakfast items.

All in all it was a tremendous event as more than 1,500 people filed through and filled the available picnic table seats on the bridge that has become, not only synonymous with Strongsville, but also symbolic of the third Sunday in September in the city.

"It's great weather, sunshine and no wind. It's all good," City Club President Terry Toth said. "You hear frying when you start in the line and water running when you get to the end of the line (from the Rocky River)."

When asked what makes the event so special Toth responded, "The community, the setting, the great breakfast, all of that. It beats hash browns and Egg McMuffins, which are great the rest of the year, but not on this date."

Breakfast on the Covered Bridge could not happen without the myriad of volunteers that prepare, cook and serve the food.

"The cookers do the



Photos by TERRY BRLAS

Seats were hard to come by at times during the Strongsville City Club Breakfast on the Covered Bridge. The Sept. 15 event at the Ehmfelt Covered Bridge in the Metroparks had more than 1,500 people dining on the first meal of the day.

hard work. That's the tough job," Toth said.

And cook they did! There was 800 pounds of meat (bacon, ham and sausage), 350 dozen (4,200) eggs, 1,400 hash browns, 45 gallons of orange juice, 230 pounds of Danish and a "truckload" of coffee, according to City Club member Joe Putrino.

Manning his usual spot scrambling eggs was Strongsville Mayor Thomas Perciak. He may have been making the breakfast staple, but knew which side of the bread this event was buttered.

"Every year we're fortunate that the Strongsville City Club sees fit to put this on. A special thank you goes out to all the City Club members' wives who are here today helping serve the meal. Without them it would be quite difficult," the mayor said. "This event is not only part of the fabric of the community, it's what Strongsville is all about. It defines what Strongsville is and separates us from other communities."

Charles Goss is not only the city of Strongsville's safety director, but he is also a member of the City Club. He served up lots of coffee and orange juice at the civic organization's annual Breakfast on the Covered Bridge event Sept. 15.



How many eggs were served at Breakfast on the Covered Bridge? There were 350 dozen that made their way onto the plates of the more than 1,500 diners at the Sept. 15 event. Steven Neal pours the liquid yoke, while Strongsville Mayor Thomas Perciak cooks them into a scrambled final form.

outside the confines of the bridge. Sam Hepp, a sixth-grade student at Drake, was showing off her immense talents as Dot Hepp, her mother, and Laura Wolford maneuvered the rope.

One group that has been at Breakfast on the Covered bridge for as long as anyone can remember is the West Cleveland Harley Owners Group, a motorcycle enthusiast organization. President Linda Smith says the event is something to which the members look forward.

"The food's great, the price is right and it's a beautiful ride," she said. "They save the parking up front for us, which is nice. These covered bridges are few and far between in Ohio so it's nice to keep them open and in use on a regular basis."

Ken Stahurski is the oldest member of the group at 64. He has been coming to Breakfast on the Covered Bridge for 25 years and initiated the West Cleveland Harley Owners Group ride to the event.

"My wife and I first did it ourselves before we involved the rest of the group. Once we discovered how good the food was it was a no brainer," he said.

The West Side Harley Owners Group may have had the most unique mode of transportation to the event, but the prize for traveling the farthest probably went to Jerry, brother of City Club Member Bob Jirik, and Martha Jirik, of Forth Worth.

see Breakfast on page 32



Breakfast on the Covered Bridge was all about friends and family getting together. The Ballow family was one such group of individuals that gathered the morning of Sept. 15 to enjoy breakfast and each other's company.

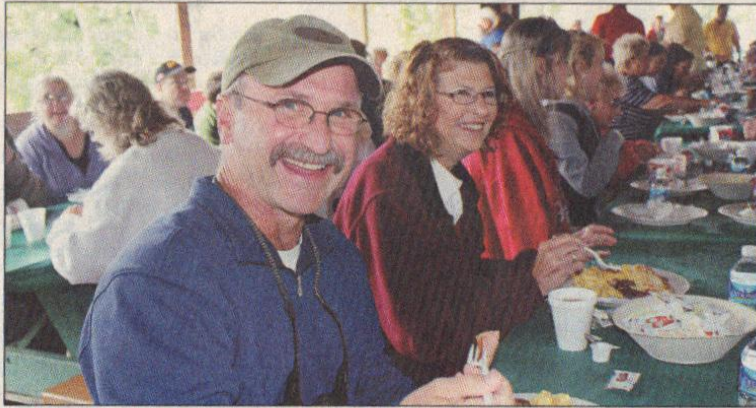


Photo by TERRY BRLAS

Strongsville Fire Chief Jeff Branic sat down for a meal of scrambled eggs, bacon, Danish pastry, sausage and coffee at the City Club's Breakfast on the Covered Bridge Sept. 15.

Breakfast

continued from page 30

Texas.

"We spend the summer in Brecksville and Forth Worth for seven months," Jerry said.

"When the trees lose their beautiful leaves so do we leave," Martha joked.

Breakfast on the Covered Bridge was not only a great culinary start to the day, but also a chance for residents to catch up with friends and acquaintances they had not seen in some time.

"It's a tradition we enjoy being in the outdoors, seeing a lot of friends we don't see every day," John McDermott said.

"It's all the people. It's a fun event," Carl Naso said.

"It's a nice gathering place for people who haven't seen each other in awhile. It's a great outdoor activity," Tom Laub said.

"It's a great opportunity to support the City Club and see people you haven't seen all year long," George Grozan said.

For Dave Yettke, "Food tastes better outside."

Strongsville Councilman-at-large Joe DeMio remembers coming to the event before living in the city.

"Wally Ehrnfelt (former mayor) gave me tickets when we were looking for a house in Strongsville. He was very welcoming," DeMio said.

Mike Kalinich Sr. has been involved with Breakfast on the Covered Bridge since its inception. It's all about volunteerism for him and the event. Well, that and the weather.

"We've been fortunate that we've only had one bad Sunday," he said. "The line is long, but the people don't mind. When you stand over the river and it flows so quietly you think about the poor people in Colorado. We are blessed."