

Neatness doesn't count among festival ribs eat

By RUTH E. STERNBERG
Repository staff writer

CANTON — How do you keep rib sauce from rolling down your face and onto your business suit?

Some office workers say take small bites and keep your fingers crossed, if you can spare an extra hand. If that fails, "I sit at a table and bend way over. What other way is there?" says Terry Seeberger.

The North Canton resident and attorney with Black McCuskey Souers & Arbaugh said there isn't much you can do, really. If you're going to the Hall of Fame Festival Ribs Burnoff, you have to let go of your sauce-stain worries.

That's what most hungry rib-eaters did Wednesday as they strolled up and down Market Avenue N munching, chatting and trying to balance their sodas, sandwiches and strawberry shortcake in two suddenly very small hands.

Despite an early afternoon rain shower, people still got in line to buy food. They just

ate it in small crowds gathered against buildings to keep dry.

Maria and Dale Ackerman stood near the Renkert Building munching boneless rib sandwiches. The couple live in the Azores now, where Dale is in the Air Force.

The weather was a disappointment to them, but Dale is a Bolivar native. They simply couldn't miss the festivities.

Funny how moving away can awaken feelings you never knew you had, Ackerman said.

"It wasn't until I was away that I even went to the Pro Football Hall of Fame," Ackerman said. Now, he doesn't miss the festival if he can get to Canton.

Nearby, friends Jack Sundheiner of Bolivar and his son, Kyle, 9, watched people while they waited for the rain to stop. Kyle enjoyed strawberry shortcake. But he was getting a little restless to get back out onto the ribs fairway.

Ted and Juanita Shannon never left it. The East Sparta couple had their large umbrella, and just took a rest on a bench

near a bus stop.

"We're gonna walk the whole doggone thing," Shannon said. "Only comes once a year."

The rain did have its advantages. Vendors with tents found customers eager to duck under the canopies to keep dry.

That boded well for the Central Catholic souvenir tent volunteers. They are selling enshrinee T-shirts like mad, said volunteer Jennifer Weil of North Canton.

Hall of Fame pins are popular, and so are the child-sized T-shirts, especially the toddler-sized ones.

The ribs burnoff continues today from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

The U.S. Air Force Concert Band of Flight will play at 9 p.m. at Ninth Street and Market Avenue N.

Fireworks are at 10 p.m.

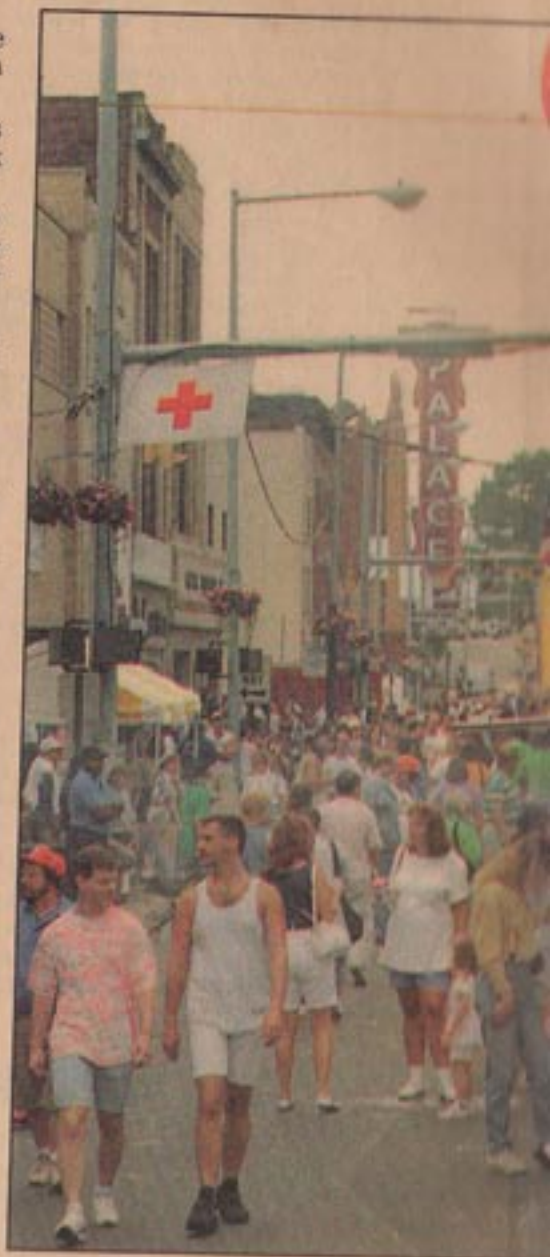
Rock singer Donnie Iris will perform at 8 p.m. on the north stage, just north of Central Plaza.



Repository / Ron Ray



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■ HUNGRY DINERS SEARCH FOR RIBS. The strolls along Market Avenue N in search of ribs Pro Football Hall of Fame Festival Ribs Burnoff. T ues today and the fireworks show will be tonight.

■ **KINGS OF CUISINE.** Making sure the jambalaya has the Cajun taste (above) are Tyrone McDonald (left) and Coade Nettles from Louisiana's Bayou Country, where Cajun cooking reigns supreme. They are dicing onions at the Pro Football Hall of Fame Festival Ribs Burnoff on Market Avenue N. At right, head cook Ed Ideozu of D.D. Stutz's tells prospective patrons how he prepared the pig. He is from Nigeria and was a cook in New Orleans before coming to Canton. His specialty is Creole cooking.