



The Times

Where's the beef? At 'Burger Mania'!

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SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

WEST WINDSOR -- They served up sliders and Italian sausage and southern fried fish, quarter-pounders and veggie burgers and smoked turkey drumsticks.

It was an afternoon that celebrated all things burger, which was loosely defined as just about anything that could be grilled and decorated with a bun.

A few hundred people turned out yesterday for "Burger Mania" at Mercer County Park, where they tasted all sorts of burger creations and other grilled foods and voted for the best burger from among four chefs.

To locate the festivities, all a visitor had to do was follow her nose and the sound of music.

Chef Don Caldwell and his crew from Killarney's Publick House in Hamilton dished up \$1 classic sliders and hamburgers for hungry burger fans, while the Dublin Square Irish Pub of Bordentown drew a crowd for chef Christopher Moon's beef burgers with an Irish twist that included corned beef, cabbage and thousand island dressing on a large grilled bun.

McCaffrey's Supermarket in West Windsor served up slider platters, five for \$4, as well as giant turkey drumsticks, while Carolina BBQ offered chicken and beef burgers, grilled catfish burgers, Italian sausage and pulled pork sandwiches.

A panel of three judges named the best burgers, while visitors also voted for their favorites. Killarney's won three of four categories, taking best beef burger, best other offering, and the people's choice award. Carolina BBQ of Hamilton won in the ultimate burger category.

The event included music and several other vendors. One of the most popular booths was run by Jim Barbour of FunniBonz Barbecue Sauce in West Windsor. Barbour served up pulled pork sandwiches and sloppy joes with a side of baked beans, chips and a pickle. Barbour was not a contestant, but was already contemplating entering next year as he piled food on plates yesterday.

The sponsor of the event, AC Marketing, originally planned three concerts at the park this summer for Music Fest, but bad weather meant postponing the festival.

"Two concerts got rained out," said April Sette of the marketing firm. "So we decided to do something different this time and throw burgers in the mix."

"Everyone loves burgers," she said. "It's something universal. Even if you don't like beef you can have chicken burgers, salmon burgers or veggie burgers. There's something for everyone."

And with those words, the band began to play Jimmy Buffett's "Cheeseburger in Paradise."

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