

Columbus Day observance today

Today is Columbus Day, a federal holiday.

All federal, state, regional and town government offices, public schools, post offices and libraries are closed. There is no mail delivery or trash pickup.

Retail stores, including liquor stores, may be open.

Banks and most service agencies are closed.

The Recorder business offices are open.

Hungry for the taste of victory

Barbecue teams descend on Beacon Field

By TOM RELIHAN
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GREENFIELD — Slicing the last bit of fat off of a huge beef brisket, Tim Simnett of Attleboro carefully dipped the needle of an injection gun and a brown mix of spices, phosphorous and meat juice, lifting the plunger until the chamber was filled.

Squeezing the trigger, he gave the brisket a shot of the solution every inch or so. The point, he said, was to make sure that the mixture was spread evenly throughout the meat to make sure it doesn't dry out as it cooked when he put it in his smoker oven later Saturday night.

And he'd need every bit of juiciness he could trap in, he said, if

he wanted his dish to impress the judges enough to win the top spot at the fourth annual Riverside Blues and BBQ Festival that took place at Beacon Field during the weekend.

Simnett and his wife, Lyn, are the members of Grannie's Gang Barbecue Team, one of nearly 30 teams that competed in the event. The Simnetts said they've been per-

■ This was the fourth year for the two-day festival in Greenfield.

fecting their craft for a few years now and have traveled around New
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Recorder/Micky Bedell

Jim Simnett of Grannie's Gang Barbecue Team, from Attleboro injects a pork shoulder with a mixture of spices at the fourth annual Riverside Blues & BBQ Festival in Greenfield on Saturday.

Barbecue

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England to compete in similar competitions.

"We started by taking a few classes at the New England Barbecue Society, then practiced in our backyard," said Simnett. "Getting out and doing your first competition is generally a pretty unpleasant experience, you really find out what you're up against."

At the festival, that competition included a smorgasbord of cleverly-named teams, such as Smoke U, led by Tom Fydenkevez of Sunderland, That's Our Que, headed up by pit master Kris Yeager of Monroe, Conn., and Bacon Hogs Barbecue, featuring pit master Ben Barr.

While most of the teams cooked under pop-up canopies, Yeager and his teammates, Guy Walker of Trumble, Conn., and Stuart Monk of Monroe, Conn., prepared their pork offerings from inside a trailer that had been retrofitted into a kitchen, complete with a fridge, sink and cutting board table.

Down at the Bacon Hogs' camp, Barr and his teammates, Matt Barr of Simsbury, Conn., and Adam Zois of Salem, cleaned up some dishes and chatted about their techniques, recipes and philosophy toward barbecue competitions.

"It's a tough choice when you're trying to decide how to prepare your food," said Zois. "Do you cook for what you think someone else would want or do you cook for what you'd want to eat?"

Barr and Zois agreed that their preferred approach is to cook their pork the way they'd want it to be served and hope for the best outcome.

"You gotta cook for what



Recorder/Micky Bedell

People's Choice chicken wing winners Sweet Breathe BBQ pose with their award at the Riverside Blues & BBQ Festival on Saturday in Greenfield. This was the fourth year for the two-day festival.

you believe in, and if it happens to be what someone likes, great," Zois said. "If it happens to be what the judges like, awesome!"

Zois said that while the smoke-offs can be competitive, he also enjoys attending them for the camaraderie that exists between the teams.

"You'll defend your friends to the death, but you'll still be the first to try and beat them," he said. "But, everyone is always really open to sharing tips. If they're doing something, they'll tell you how they're doing it and why. They're all great people."

And true to the event's title, barbecue competitions weren't the only draw to the weekend festival. The BrewFest Beer Samplin' Saloon was packed for most of the day, and local blues musicians performed in between pie eating and beer stein holding contests.

Visitors were also able to chow down on some not-so-competitive barbecuing from Curly's.

Results

Saturday's chicken wing

samples won Firefly's BBQ and head cook Steve Uliss of Marlboro the people's choice award. Joepeanuts BBQ Team, head cook Geordie Fifield of Keene, N.H., walked away with Sunday's people's choice award for pulled pork.

The event is sanctioned as a qualifying event by two barbecue societies, with teams competing in multiple categories under the auspices of the New England Barbecue Society on Saturday and the Kansas City Barbecue Society Sunday. Sweet Breathe BBQ and Eric Gray of South Burlington, Vt., walked away with the NEBS overall trophy Saturday, while Insane Swine BBQ and head cook Jared Huizenga of Worcester took the KCBS grand prize. Greenfield Recreation Director Christy Moore said Insane Swine is a repeat winner, and is eligible to compete in the American Royal barbecue competition in Kansas.