



Leslee Stout of Scotts Valley brought her children, Bill and Ashley, to the

Burrito Bash, where they feasted on strawberry shortcake.

Fifth Burrito Bash draws thousands to fairgrounds

By JESSE CHAVARRIA
STAFF WRITER

Sunny weather, music, Mexican specialties, and food-eating contests drew thousands to the Fifth Annual Burrito Bash at the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds Sunday.

About 6,500 people turned out for the event, which organizers said was the largest crowd ever for a bash.

"Last year we had about 5,000 people, but this year we broke that record easily," said Brenda Armstrong, event coordinator at the Watsonville City Recreation Department.

The event features burrito-making contests and this year Tampico Restaurant repeated as the first place winner in the World's Best Meat Burrito competition for its tortilla-wrapped delicacy. El Frijolito restaurant came in second and Rico Pollo restaurant was third.

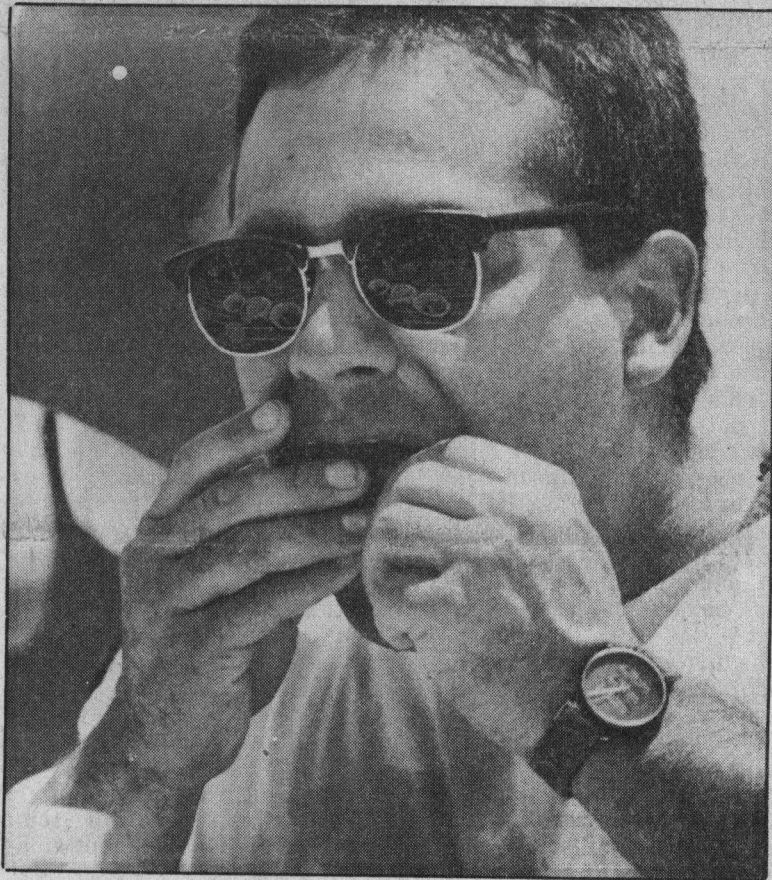
In the World's Best Specialty Burrito contest, El Puentito took first, Rico Pollo second and Rancho Grande third.

"This is the fourth or fifth year El Puentito has taken first place in the specialty contest," said Armstrong. "The owner has plaques all over his wall."

Specialty burritos can contain any combination of ingredients — meats, beans, salsa, seafood. Meat burritos must contain only beef or pork and sauce.

Other restaurants that participated were D'La Colmena, Rancho Grande, Margaritaville, the Hollister Drive-In Market and Lamat's.

In the amateur division, Martha Pineda was awarded first place in the Best Meat Burrito Contest. The Oak Pit Crew, under the direction of John Lizalde, took second, and Lupe Heredia and Lupe Cano took third.



Diane Varni

Nick Castro, of Hawaii, packed in 60 jalapeños to win the chili-eating contest.

The Oak Pit Crew took first place in the Best Specialty Burrito Amateur Contest. Martha Pineda was second and John Silva placed third.

In the People's Choice category, in which those who attended the bash cast ballots for best burrito, D'La Colmena took first place for its meat-packed specialty. Rancho Grande placed second and Vicky Vargas took third.

In other contests at the bash, Alexandra Bird won the Diaper Derby, which featured crawling infants racing against one another. It was no contest when Bird left the other babies at the starting line. Timothy Fannin was second and David Brinsberg was third.

Misty Jennings won the toddler Hobble-off, a race featuring infants up to 18 months old. Ryan Castillo was second and Esteli Gomez was third.

A big crowd-pleaser was the jalapeño-eating contest.

Three contestants forced a run-off by each consuming 36 of the little yellow-green chilies in a two-minute span.

Nick Castro gobbled up 24 more in the one-minute eat-off, taking the first place honor.

Reynaldo Gonzales placed second.

The winner far surpassed last year's record of 16 jalapeños consumed.

Joe Rudolf, of KNES radio, won the burrito-eating contest held among radio station employees.