



**Left: Russ Clark and Kevin Britton turn the chicken at the Pleasant Plains Volunteer Fire Company's Family Chicken Barbecue. Right: Matthew Shernikoff, 7, of Freehold Township, eats some watermelon at the barbecue.** (STAFF PHOTOS: PETER ACKERMAN/ CHIEF PHOTOGRAPHER)



# Barbecue raises money for firefighters

By **NAOMI MUELLER**  
TOMS RIVER BUREAU

## DOVER TOWNSHIP —

Twenty-five years ago, when members of the Pleasant Plains Volunteer Fire Department decided to host a chicken barbecue with the hope of raising money for its fire company, the event's organizers used makeshift fire pits because they didn't have the money to buy real ones.

Now, township police direct traffic at the annual event and hundreds of chickens are cooked at a time.

"As the years have gone by, we have been able to make things better and bigger," said Nancy Dunham, who organized the first annual Family Chicken Barbecue and continues to do so today. Saturday marked the 25th anniversary of the event.

Since the first barbecue, when Dunham said organizers ordered 250 chicken halves; the event has grown. This year, Dunham said 2,000 chicken halves were ordered and another 500 were on standby. By mid-afternoon, it seemed almost certain that most, if not all of the chickens would be sold.

But chicken was not the only thing on Saturday's menu. Diners also came with corn on the cob, a large chunk of watermelon and a choice of three beverages. Cotton candy, baked goods and ice cream sandwiches also were sold.

"I like the people, the music and the food," said Fred Rothbeck, an 87-year-old Dover Township man who said he has been attending the barbecue "for years."

For Shirley Winter, the barbecue provided more than just an

## CHICKEN BBQ

### BEHIND THE NEWS

■ At the first Family Chicken Barbecue held by the Pleasant Plains Volunteer Fire Department, 250 chicken halves were ordered, said Nancy Dunham, who organized that event 25 years ago.

■ For Saturday's barbecue, 2,000 chicken halves were ordered and another 500 were on stand-by, she said.

opportunity to enjoy a day of good food, lively music and friendly crowds; it was also a chance for Winter to return to her roots. A North Carolina native, Winter said she moved to New Jersey 43 years ago. Yet, the 71-year-old Dover Township woman said it took until Saturday for her to find an event that made her feel at home.

"I finally found my people

after all these years," Winter said, as she clapped along with the country music provided by Reel to Real Country.

Although Dunham declined to say how much the annual fundraiser generates for the fire department — saying she doesn't like to talk about the money aspect of the event in the newspaper — she said the department's 60 or so members plan to use the funds to update the firehouses' bathrooms and to remodel the firetrucks' bay. She also said the firehouses' second floor needs some work and that the department's members would like to buy another shed.

"It never stops," she said of the fire company's needs. "But I'm just happy we can keep doing it every year."