



The firefighters may work hard to put out flames on any given day, but chicken BBQ day is special — the more smoke the better!



a chairman, and the two co-chairs are trained up to be chairman during a three-year cycle.

“It’s a prideful thing to be part of,” says Figurniak. “Hopefully when it’s your turn, you’ll have enough understanding of what goes on or how to run the event. But fortunately, we have a lot of experienced members who will be able to get us through the day. The best part is the day-of. Everyone has the job they’ve been doing for years.”

### PIT MASTERS

Everett “Evie” Glover, who was the chairman in 1974, echoes the sentiment.

“Like [Figurniak] said, everything’s great. You don’t see arguments, nothing. Everyone’s having a good time, and that’s what you want to see. We have a job, and we have a good time doing it.”

Today, a ticket comes with a half-chicken, all-you-can-eat corn, potato salad, tomato and cucumber salad and ice cream with fresh local peaches for dessert, as well as refreshments. It’s essentially the same menu from 1957, but on a much larger scale.

Still, Glover, who has been involved for 60 of the barbecue’s 67 years, has seen the tradition evolve. During the early years, an outside group would come in and cook the chicken, but as the event grew, the department started cooking the chicken by itself due to the large volume needed.

The department now gets the chicken from a food distributor, while the corn and other ingredients come directly from Fox Hollow Farms in Calverton. Around 6,000 to 7,000 ears of corn are picked

up the day of the barbecue.

Like the fire department’s structure, which includes junior firefighters and a hierarchy that prioritizes hard work and learning, younger members of the department start out doing the nitty-gritty work for the event.

“What you do during your first one is, you do dishes,” Glover says with a laugh.

“Like many other places, you know, the dirty jobs get done by the newer people,” adds Brewer. “But it doesn’t happen without the help of all 100 of our members.”

Glover’s favorite part of the day: cooking the chicken. The chickens are put on a rack over a charcoal fire for an hour and 20 minutes, where they’re turned over and sauced. They are then put in (clean!) garbage cans lined with tin foil, where more sauce is added.

### SECRET SAUCE...AND MARTHA STEWART?

The sauce is, famously, a secret.

The recipe has allegedly never changed, and only a few members of the fire department know its magic ingredients. In an episode of “Martha Stewart Living” from 1998, the culinary legend attended the barbecue in an attempt to get the recipe.

But Stewart clearly didn’t mind not getting it — she enjoyed the barbecue so much that she invited them to cater her company’s clambake. Her sister, the late Laura Plimpton, even had the department cater her wedding.