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**COONDOG O'KARMA NAMED HONORARY CHAIR OF HAMBURGER FEST  
AKRON-BASED PRO COMPETITIVE FOOD EATER TO AWARD KETCHUP BELT**

**AKRON, Ohio (July 29, 2015)** – Coondog O’Karma. If the name alone doesn’t spark some interest, well, we’re not sure what does.

Turns out that Dave “Coondog” O’Karma is the stuff of legends.

This Akron native is best known as being one of the world’s best professional competitive food eaters – so much so that he even earned his own question in a the board game *Trivial Pursuit*.

“In my teen years, I was the pizza-eating champion of the local Big Chuck and Houlihan television show. I also broke the then *Guinness Book of World Records* record for eating eggs and doughnuts,” Coondog shares. “I retired to be an ‘adult’ for some 30 years, then came back strong in 2001 when competitive eating became popular again.”

Besides being a competitive eating celebrity, Coondog also is one of the co-founders of the National Hamburger Festival, which will be held in Akron at Lock 3 Park Aug. 8-9.

“I was driving home from Buffalo after competing in the National Buffalo Wing Festival and was thinking, ‘Wouldn’t it be great if Akron had its own food to celebrate in such a profound way?’” he said. “And, then I remembered that the Menches brothers of Akron had invented the hamburger. Why not start our own festival celebrating the world’s greatest sandwich?” Coondog said.

Coondog joined forces with Drew Cerza, the founder and official “Wing King” of the National Buffalo Wing Festival in Buffalo, NY. The two put their heads together and created an event celebrating all things burger.

(more)

In 2015, the National Hamburger Festival will celebrate its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. To mark this momentous occasion, Coondog has been named honorary chairman of the 10<sup>th</sup> annual festival.

"It's with great pride that I serve as the honorary chairmen of this event that has created so much civic pride for Akron over the last 10 years," he said. "I am also excited that I am finally being nationally recognized for what I really am – The 'True' Burger King."

In addition to being the festival's honorary chairman, the now semi-retired pro food eater also is hosting the Tournament of Champions at this year's fest. What's in store? And, will Coondog compete?

"Eating contests are truly competitive forms of eccentricity. The skinny eaters don't like the big eaters, and vice-versa. A lot of the eaters hate me because not only am I a great eater, I am handsome and smart; the full smorgasbord. The other competitors can't stand that. So, there could be some jealousy fireworks if I decide to compete," he said.

The hamburger eating competition, held on Aug. 8 at 6:30pm, will involve eating as many one-pound hamburgers as possible within a 10-minute period of time. The winner of the championship will win the "Ketchup Belt."

To register for the hamburger eating contest, visit  
<http://hamburgerfestival.com/contest-info/amateur-hamburger-eating/>.

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#### ***ABOUT THE 2015 NATIONAL HAMBURGER FESTIVAL***

*More than 20 eateries serve up to 50 different styles of burgers along with other favorite summertime foods at the 10th Annual National Hamburger Festival presented by the City of Akron at Lock 3 Park on Aug. 8-9, 2015. Activities include live music, children's activities, best hamburger competition, bobbing for burgers, Hamburger Festival Queen Pageant and amateur hamburger eating contests. To learn more, visit [www.hamburgerfestival.com](http://www.hamburgerfestival.com). Or, follow along at [@HamburgerFest](#) and [www.facebook.com/NationalHamburgerFestival](http://www.facebook.com/NationalHamburgerFestival).*