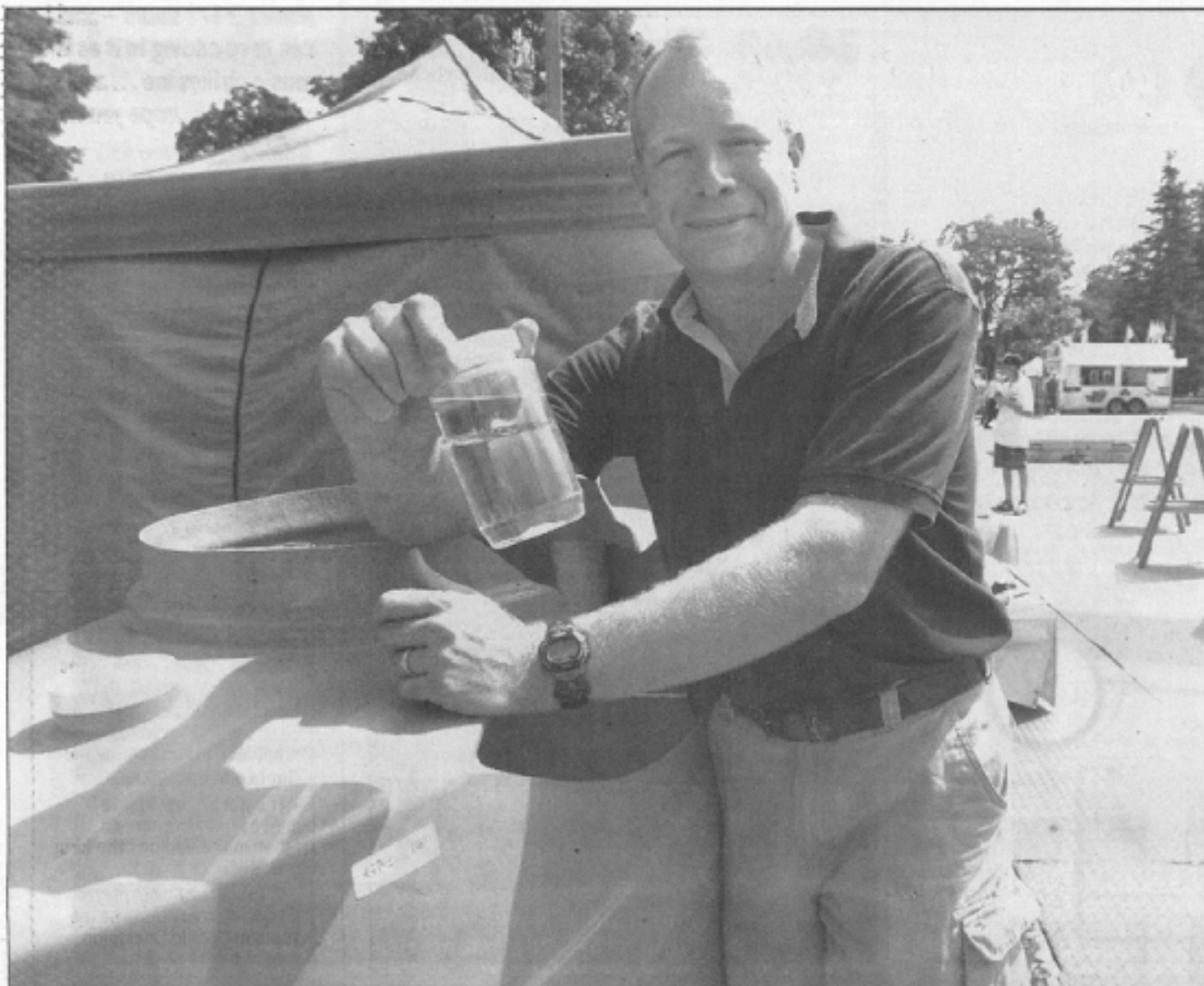


■ **RIBFEST:** They talk green about the environment folks, not the meat



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Barry Orr, who works for the city, shows a jar with oil and water separating, the basis of a Green Festivals pilot project. Two tanks similar to the one he is leaning against have been placed in Victoria Park where vendors are asked to dump their used water.

Vendors embrace green initiative

NORMAN DE BONO
The London Free Press

The smell of smoke floated across the flaming grill and charred red barbecue sauce seemed everywhere, but Dorothy Pawlowski was talking green.

Busy working at Pistol Pete's Smokehouse yesterday at the London Ribfest, she applauded the city for a new, environmental initiative at the festival.

"It is great. It is helping the environment and the future. We have to do this," said Pawlowski, from Lobo.

In the past, some vendors at Victoria Park festivals would dump their used water into storm sewers—which wash into the Thames River—carrying food, oil and grease with it.

Now, for the first time, vendors are being asked to keep their dirty water and dump it into one of two large sinks the city has set up in the park.

The city has installed large tanks under the sinks in which the water will be separated from the grease and oil and be dumped into sanitary sewers for treatment. The grease will be removed by a private contractor.

"We like to canoe and kayak on the Thames and we would never think of dumping into the river," said Pawlowski. "The grease clogs things up. It contaminates and does not break down quickly."

The new system is "an extra step, but it is easy. It is like recycling and composting," she added.

Barry Orr is staffing a booth

at the festival, complete with a model of how the new system works, to show people that even in the midst of ribs and rides, they have to think green.

"The vendors realize there has been an issue and they understand. They are very good. They see there is a real need," said Orr, who works in the city's wastewater operations and environmental and engineering services department.

"This helps reduce the amount of bypass treatment that goes into the Thames River," he said.

At the booth he has a photo album of grease that has filled wastewater and sewage facilities in the city as well as created grease blobs in the Thames.

"It was a big problem. We needed to address it," he said.

John Fitzgerald, division manager for pollution control operations in the city, isn't surprised vendors are embracing the new sinks.

"If offered a choice, most people will do the right thing. This is the right thing," he said.

The system mimics grease traps found in restaurants, which trap grease washed down the drain when eateries are cleaned, and then removed, he added.

The grease is eventually used by many different businesses, from makers of pet food to soaps and even for energy use.

"The waste business is developing a lot of niche markets," Fitzgerald said.

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