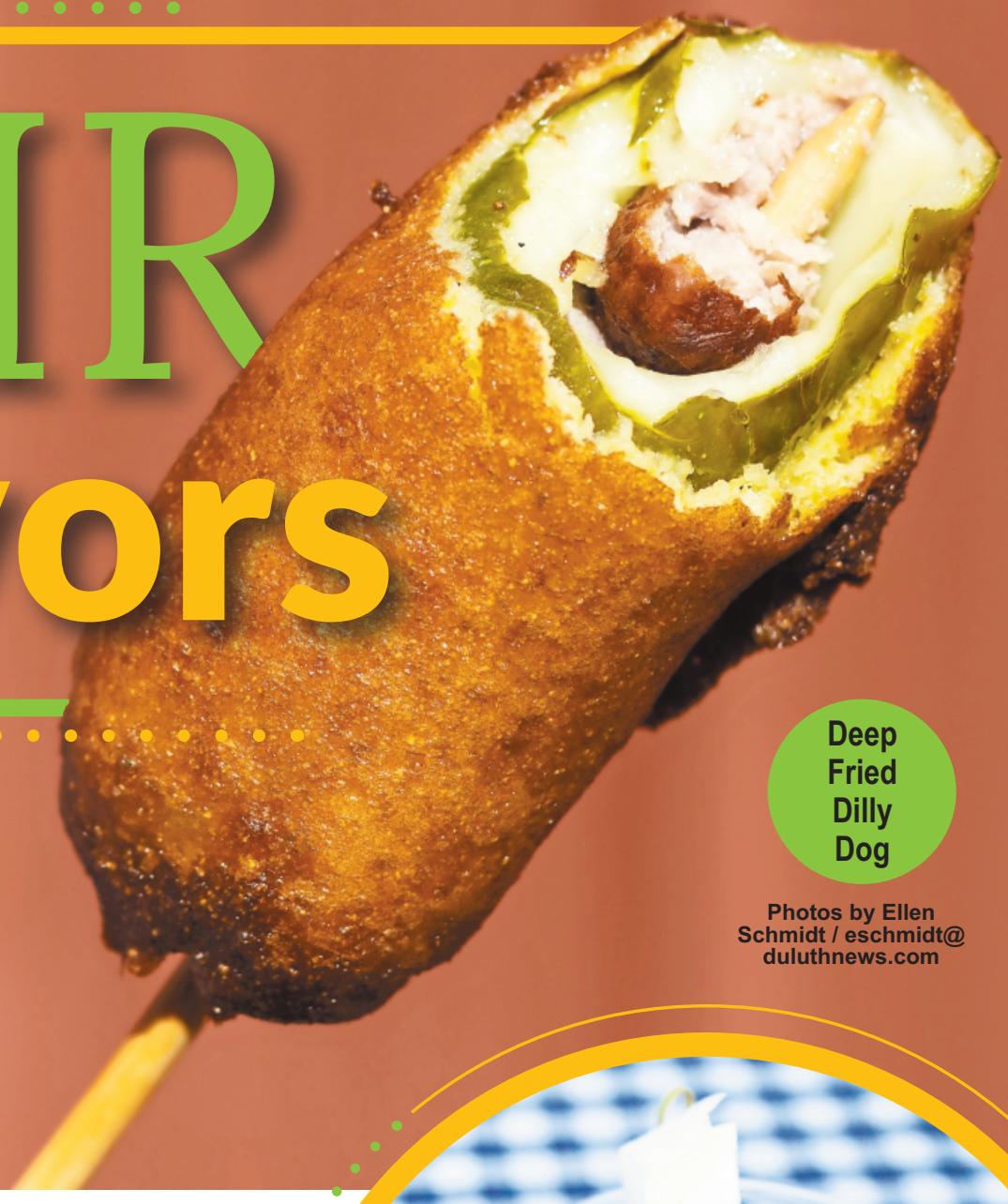


FAIR flavors

Eating our way from
end-to-end of the
Minnesota State Fair



Deep
Fried
Dilly
Dog

Photos by Ellen
Schmidt / eschmidt@
duluthnews.com

DEEP FRIED DILLY DOG
Swine & Spuds, \$8
Warner Coliseum, east side
The line for this one, oof. We started outside of the Warner Coliseum building and wound our way in while mounds of on-a-stick paraded past. Then, after ordering, we were herded into a holding pen to wait and wait and think of names superior to Swine & Spuds. This food checks the Minnesota State Fair boxes with its Pronto Pup aesthetic. It's a thick pickle stuffed with bratwurst, deep fried. It tastes great, of course, because it's deep fried and it's a pickle and there is meat and mustard-ketchup. It takes a bit to get to brat and it's a messy full facial commitment. So much drippage.

By **Christa Lawler**
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FALCON HEIGHTS, Minn. — We pored over the Minnesota State Fair's new food listings. We picked things that looked pretty, outrageous, or served on a stick. Then we ate our way from end-to-end. This year, long after the News Tribune's photographer had left, we were off the clock, and Belinda Carlisle had performed a free concert on the Leinenkugel's Stage, we realized we were hungry-hungry — not for fried pickles or funnel cake, but for just, like, food.

Reader(s), we bought the menu at the Blue Barn. This place is consistently among the state fair's best options for food, but a place we had skipped this year in favor of, what, a deep fried pickle stuffed with sausage, etc. We ate pierogies with horseradish dip and tater tots stuffed with bacon. Chicken in the Waffle is great gravy with chicken chunks served in a waffle cone. And as an added bizarre touch, the Whopper at the bottom. Nashville Hot Chicken-On-A-Stick is a solid amount of sweet-spicy-crunchy in juicy chicken.



Cuban
Fusion
Fajita

CUBAN FUSION FAJITA
Juanita's Fajitas, \$7
West of Nelson Street, south of the Grandstand

It can feel impossible to get a proper Cuban sandwich. The essence can be there, for instance, but the bread is wrong. Juanita's Fajitas eliminates the expectation by taking the pork-ham-mustard-pickle mixture and bundling it tightly into a flour tortilla. There is no wow here, no you-did-what-to-what moment. Instead, it's just a solid, well-balanced fistful of a sandwich and definitely worth dusting off the George Foreman to make in your own kitchen. No muss, no fuss, good eating.



Joey
Mary

JOEY MARY
Brim, \$8
North End, northwest section

Brim feels like the very last spot on the fairgrounds, but it's worth the walk past, like, everything else. At the time of drinking, this iced coffee with accoutrements, was exactly what this bod needed. Like its Bloody Mary influence, this booze-free take had add-ons on a skewer: an especially moist almond cookie, a blue truffle with a white chocolate shell, chocolate covered toffee. The coffee was deep and rich with a hint of chocolate. It's billed as a slushie, but the slushie part was lost.



Shrimp
and
Grits
Fritters

SHRIMP & GRITS FRITTERS
Funky Grits
Food Building, east wall, 3 for \$5

Among the great food combos in all the land: cheesy grits and (fill in the blank). In this case, shrimp. These three deep fried balls are served with spicy, spicy aioli that definitely calls for post-grits pinky dips. Loved the taste, texture. Seemingly a crime: Funky Grits is located right next to an especially hot vendor and that joint's line made it hard to find this no-wait hidden spot.

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