

TRUE 'CUE NEWS

From the Campaign for Real Barbecue

May 2015

The True 'Cue Challenge

On April 23, 2014, in the *Raleigh News & Observer*, the Campaign issued a challenge. We offered a prize to the first person who could identify (1) any statute or regulation that forbids any North Carolina barbecue restaurant to cook with wood or charcoal, or (2) any official -- federal, state, county, or municipal -- who has made a North Carolina barbecue restaurant stop cooking with wood or charcoal, or who has forbidden one to start. "If there really are laws or regulations that make life difficult for wood-cooking barbecue restaurants," we wrote, "we will work to change them. If there really are bureaucrats undermining our state's barbecue heritage, the Campaign will reason with them -- and, if reason does not suffice, we will denounce and vilify them. "

A year later, the challenge still stands. The belief that you're not allowed to cook with wood has got to be a myth. Cooking barbecue the old way is harder and costs more, but we are increasingly certain that it's not forbidden. Last year we offered the prize of a handsome No Faux 'Cue apron to the first person who met the challenge.

We're so confident now that we'll raise the stakes and throw in a ball cap.

Certification

True 'Cue NC

As of this writing we have identified 46 North Carolina barbecue restaurants that cook entirely with wood or charcoal, with another 17 possibilities still to be investigated. Just this month we certified **Morristown BBQ Pit** in Allensville (south

of Roxboro), newly opened by the family who run Durham's **Backyard BBQ Pit** (www.sweetribs.com/6.html). The entire list of certified restaurants can be found at www.TrueCue.org.

True 'Cue MidSouth

It is with great sadness that we report that attorney, raconteur, and whole-hog cooker Tom Freeland died of post-operative complications in February. Tom was our Campaign's newly appointed MidSouth representative, and only the month before he had certified our first – and so far only -- wood-cooker outside North Carolina, John Currance's **Lamar Lounge** in Oxford, Mississippi (www.lamarlounge.com).

True 'Cue SC

The Campaign has recently enlisted a representative for South Carolina, Jim Roller of Mount Pleasant. Jim is an authority on South Carolina barbecue who blogs on the subject at www.destination-bbq.com. He will begin his work as soon as he receives his supply of certification decals. Watch for the results at www.TrueCue.org.

Closures

We're sorry to report the recent loss of one of our certified North Carolina wood-cookers, Ed Mitchell's **Que** in Durham. You can read more about it and what the well-known pitmaster and personality plans for the future at <http://www.newsobserver.com/living/food-drink/article10872152.html#storylink=cpy>.

Add that casualty to a list that includes the **A&M Grill** in Mebane, closed after more than 60 years, and **Nelson's Barbecue** in Lumberton, a neo-traditional start-up that closed after only a few months.

We also regret to say that **Deano's** in Mocksville has switched to gas after health issues made the work of wood-cooking difficult for the owner. There's always hope, however, that those who switch might switch back. **Speedy Lohr's Barbecue** on Highway 8 south of Lexington did just that when it acquired a building whose previous owners were gassers but had left the old wood-cooking pits in place. (**Speedy Lohr's BBQ of Arcadia**, run by a relative, has always cooked with wood.)

A New Patron

Finally, we welcome Adrian Miller to the Campaign's list of distinguished Patrons (see www.truecue.org/our-patrons). Adrian Miller describes himself as "a recovering lawyer and politico turned culinary historian." His book *Soul Food: The*

Surprising Story of an American Cuisine, One Plate at a Time won the 2014 James Beard Foundation Book Award for Reference and Scholarship. He's also a Kansas City Barbeque Society-certified barbecue judge.