



TRUE 'CUE NEWS

From the Campaign for Real Barbecue

Labor Day 2017

No. 9

Welcome to an issue of the newsletter marking the end of the lazy hazy crazy days of summer. There's not a great deal to report, but we thought we'd start the school year with a clean slate.

News from the States

The Campaign's certification program, currently identifying and celebrating 100% wood-cooking barbecue establishments in the Carolinas and Kentucky, has continued in a desultory kind of way. You can see the lists of certified practitioners on our [website](#).

True 'Cue Georgia

Plans to expand our certifying operation to Georgia have been put on hold because Patron Jim Auchmutey, our Peach State satrap, has been tapped by the Atlanta History Center to organize a massive exhibit on barbecue. Scheduled to open on May 5, 2018, it will stay up through June 2019, and promises to be something worth a trip to Atlanta to see. There will be many special programs, and the Campaign for Real Barbecue will be participating. Stay tuned for details.

Another One Bites the Dust

We are sad to report that another North Carolina town has become a True 'Cue desert. On July 31, Carolina Bar-B-Q of Statesville closed its doors, after 32 years in business. Owners Gene and Linda Medlin were staunch exponents of cooking shoulders, Piedmont-style. When TV journalist Charles Kuralt, a fan of Eastern-style whole hog, criticized their barbecue, tongue-in-cheek, as "too-refined, without the necessary grease and gristle," they posted a notice next to the cash register that said "EXTRA FAT AND GRISTLE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST."

You can read about the restaurant and its history and see some fine photographs [here](#).

And Another One May Bite the Dust

In its more than three years of existence, the Campaign for Real Barbecue has certified only two barbecue places not in the Carolinas or Kentucky. Alas, as we reported in *True 'Cue News* #7, one (the Lamar Lounge in Oxford, Mississippi) closed last year.

And now the other, Memphis Minnie's in San Francisco, is in danger. Founder Bob Kantor's widow Gail writes to say that the talented and dedicated couple who have been managing Minnie's can't afford to live in the Bay Area any more, and will be leaving as soon as she can sell the place. Obviously new owners will be free to turn it into another kind of restaurant altogether, even to start cooking "barbecue" with gas. But Gail says a new smoker from Texas was installed just at the end of last year, and she'd be happy to sell the recipes, logos, and so forth, so it's possible that Minnie's will survive to fly the True 'Cue flag on Haight Street.

This could be a turn-key operation if anyone's interested. Spread the word.

Alton Spells It Out

[Here.](#)

"Slow cooking over a smoldering fire pretty much defines the 'barbecue' process."



Make Your Own BBQ Sign

Check [this](#) out. (The original sign is from Asheville, North Carolina.)



Mysterious Crime Spree Continues

In *True 'Cue News #4* we reported that both Raleigh chef Ashley Christensen's custom pig cooker and one of Austin pitmaster John Mueller's barbecue pits had been stolen. This summer, someone stole a 1700-pound [cooker](#) belonging to Pepper's Ole Fashion BBQ of Albuquerque -- *while it was cooking brisket* -- and a [food truck](#) belonging to Smokehouse BBQ of Edmonton, Alberta. The cooker at Southern Smoke BBQ in Garland, North Carolina, was also stolen, although a [Facebook post](#) led to its recovery.

This is getting out of hand.

Redneck Rotisserie



On the Word “Craft”

Eric Trousdale, of the hot Chicago cocktail bar Arbella:



I'd love to see the term “craft” disappear. It seems over-used and unnecessary—most blatantly so with American whiskey. Hip new distilleries using craft as an attempt to differentiate themselves from classic staples feels disrespectful to those that created their industry. To me, it insinuates that guys like Elmer T. Lee, Lincoln Henderson and Jimmy Russell were just trying to get drunk and cared little for their “craft,” when the reality is, the popularity of their whiskeys has continued because they’ve made consistently awesome products that are made to be enjoyed at a reasonable price instead of labeled craft in an effort to charge twice as much.

“7 Foolproof Ways to Spot a Fake BBQ Joint”

In an article with this title for Thrillist.com, Colleen Rush goes after “alien cooking practices, among these gas, electricity, and the use of compressed wood pellets.” The second of her seven tip-offs is “There’s no wood stack in sight”:

By definition, barbecue is made by the intermingling of meat, wood smoke, and fire. If there's no sign of cooking wood in plain sight or no distinct smell of smoke in the air, then there's no barbecue in the house. And I don't mean sacks of sawdust that the restaurant sprinkles over a fire to create the illusion of wood smoke. You want to see a cord of oak, pecan, hickory, mesquite, or any other type of smoking wood stacked or piled somewhere in the proximity of a hulking, smoke- and grease-blackened pit.

The Secret Life of Hank Hill #1



Wood-Cookers Honored

A recent [list](#) from Zagat of “10 Pitmasters You Need to Know Around the U.S.” is less silly than most such lists. In fact, it’s pretty good. We’re pleased to observe that they all cook with wood, and nearly all use nothing else.

Hot Links

A few things that struck our fancy recently:

- (1) A belated nod from us to last year’s [NC BBQ Revival](#).
- (2) A profile of a great old-school Eastern North Carolina place, [B’s of Greeneville](#).
- (3) A story on [Charleston](#)’s recent emergence as a barbecue Mecca.
- (4) Patron Daniel Vaughn’s [thoughts](#) on the homogenization of American barbecue.



The True ‘Cue Challenge

Still [stands](#).



Please forward this newsletter to anyone you know who might be interested.

Earlier issues of *True ‘Cue News* can be found on-line [here](#).

You can also follow us on [Facebook](#).

If you have anything of interest to supporters of Real Barbecue—old places closing or turning to gas, new places opening, obituaries of barbecue legends, whatever—please send it along to TrueCue@gmail.com.

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