



# ABC

COMMISSION  
NORTH CAROLINA

## Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission Newsletter

April 2011 Issue 14

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### State of North Carolina

Our congratulations go out to two retiring ABC Board managers and to the two new craft distilleries in North Carolina.

**Randy Mills**  
Durham County ABC  
14 Years



The Durham County ABC Board announces that General Manager, Randy Mills, will be retiring June 1, 2011. He will remain until the transition to a new general manager is complete. Randy joined Durham County ABC in 1997.

"Randy has been an essential part of enabling Durham County ABC to serve the community well through record-level financial contributions to the City of Durham and Durham County general funds, effective control of the sale of

alcohol, and expanded alcohol prevention and education grants," said Emily Page, Chair of the Durham County ABC Board.

Under Randy's leadership, the ABC board has undergone numerous changes and improvements to become a highly efficient and effective operation. He brought strong operational and financial controls to the organization and helped increase profitability and create a solid financial base for operations. The ABC Board was operating at a loss prior to Randy's joining the organization as General Manager. He returned the ABC Board to profitability in his first year and profits have progressed annually to exceed \$1 million, with a record year in fiscal year 2008 of \$1,659,000. As a result, the ABC board's contributions to the general operating funds of the county and city grew from \$200,000 in the fiscal year prior to his arrival to a level of \$1,122,000 in fiscal years 2008 and 2009.

Randy also led the implementation of strategic plans for expansion into new stores in growing areas of Durham County, the modernization of systems and processes to better serve mixed beverage and retail customers, and the expansion of grant programs.

Prior to joining Durham County ABC as general manager, Randy consulted in financial management with the U.S. Public Health Service and served as Director of Finance for Lincoln Community Health Center. Previous employment includes: Securities Analyst in Wachovia Bank's Trust Investments Department, New Hanover Community Health Center and Winston Mutual Insurance.

A native of Richlands, NC, Randy earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from Winston Salem State and an MBA from Wake Forest University School of Management.

The Durham County ABC Board expresses their gratitude to Randy for his outstanding commitment and service to the organization over the last 14 years. We congratulate Randy, his wife Shirley, and the entire Mills family as they celebrate his exciting milestone.

Durham County ABC annual sales are approximately \$23.3 million.

The City of Durham began as a railroad station and settlement named for Dr. Bartlett Durham.

**Gene Pittman**  
Marion ABC  
McDowell County  
27 Years

After answering an ad in the newspaper, Gene was hired by the Marion ABC Board to assist with setting up a store, and on August 1, 1984, the Marion ABC store became operational. He has been manager since that time and assisted

with the opening of a second ABC store in the town in 2010. The first board members were Doris Hill, Bob Teeter, and Clyde Shaw. Gene credits these members with overseeing the ABC store and making it a profitable business in a short time. Currently, Marion ABC annual sales are approximately \$1.9 million.



A native of Avery County, Gene and his family moved to McDowell County when he was young. After stints working with Drexel Furniture and the U.S. Army, he returned to Marion and, with his father, owned and operated a service station for 16 years. He recalls gasoline being 25 cents per gallon in the late 1960s.

Gene has enjoyed working with the public over the years and the friendships he has made. He is proud of the ABC board's integrity and success during his tenure. He is retiring April 22, 2011 and looks forward to keeping his wife company; she is also retired.

**Cardinal Gin**  
**Southern Artisan Spirits**  
**Kings Mountain, NC**



Southern Artisan Spirits (SAS) is dedicated to revitalizing the lost art of craft distillation. SAS is managed by Charlie and Alex Mauney. Members of Mauney family are pioneers and/or industrialists in Kings Mountain. Charlie and Alex are the great-great-grandsons of Jacob S. Mauney. Jacob and his sons started the first textile mills in Kings Mountain. SAS's distillery is located in a mill owned by the Mauney family.

SAS is only the third commercial distillery to operate in North Carolina and the first since prohibition to manufacture small batch gin. Cardinal Gin is their flagship product. Eleven different organic or wild harvested herbs and botanicals are used in the production of Cardinal Gin. It is manufactured in small batches, ensuring the production of an ultra-premium gin.

Combining technology and tradition, SAS has acquired a 130-gallon Alembic pot still. This still is hand-hammered copper and was imported from Portugal. This distillery's goal places quality over

quantity with its small-batch operation. SAS plans on becoming a leader in micro-distilling.

Cardinal Gin recently won a silver medal in the New York International Spirits Competition. New York's International Spirits Competition welcomed 187 submissions from 28 countries in 47 categories. Judges evaluated spirits within their categories at pricing parity — a gin that retails for \$50 was judged with other gins in that price range. The silver medal was the highest winner in Cardinal Gin's price category. Each spirit was sampled for appearance, aroma, taste, mouth feel, and finish. Cardinal Gin also competed in the San Francisco International Spirits competition in March.

SAS has been supplying North Carolina with Cardinal Gin for six months and hopes that ABC stores, bars and restaurants will support craft distillation in North Carolina. Southern Artisan Spirits looks forward to supplying our neighboring communities with exceptional craft spirits.

## Troy & Sons Moonshine Asheville, NC



Troy & Sons - Reviving Heritage  
By Karen Ramshaw

The quality of any product is closely tied to the quality of its ingredients. Troy Ball, of Troy & Sons Distillers, North Carolina's newest distiller, believes one of the secrets to her smooth white whiskey is the corn. For generations, families in Western North Carolina grew two types of corn: yellow corn for the animals and white corn for the family. White corn was ground for bread and, fairly often, made its way to the nearby still to provide moonshine for friends and family and a bit of extra cash from sales to outsiders. While many distillers today use yellow corn in their spirits,

Troy achieves a subtler and smoother flavor from a very special white corn.

As with any new business concept, there is a great deal of research involved before anything tangible can be seen. Troy has spent the past several years traveling, meeting old-timers who were willing to share recipes and family secrets - and the occasional jar or two - and experimenting. She has run many, many tests, some more successful than others, and is grateful that there seems to be a never-ending stream of volunteers willing to taste and compare.

While searching for a new corn to test, Troy met John McEntire, whose great-grandfather, Rufus McEntire, settled along Crooked Creek in the 1800s and established the family homestead. John's family grew an open-pollinated white corn on their property and for generations the family has picked ears off plants they liked and saved the corn kernels for replanting the next year. The family had their own mill and made sure that the bread and grits on their tables were the best they could produce. There may have been a still on the property in those days as well, no one is saying, but we will say there has been a great deal of expertise available as test batches have been run in Troy & Sons' small legal still on the McEntire farm.

McEntire, who today produces grits for upscale Asheville restaurants, told us his corn is thought to have become extinct in eastern Tennessee around 1840. According to Richard Johnson from the Department of Plant Sciences at the University of Tennessee, hybrid corns were developed in the 20s and 30s and became popular in the 40s and 50s. The

hybrids were easier to grow and had better yields, and undoubtedly, some varieties died off, but the McEntire family stayed true to family tradition and continued to grow, harvest and replant the best of each year's crop. As Johnson points out "that's classic plant breeding on a farm level."

Using a traditional heirloom corn to create a spirit rich in tradition seemed like a great idea, but more importantly, it created a better product. Troy tested the Crooked Creek corn against other corns and in batch after batch, she found there to be a qualitative difference in the flavor of the spirit it produced. Troy and John signed an exclusive agreement, giving Troy and Sons Distillers rights to produce spirits using this rare, nearly lost corn. There's a cost to great flavor, however. Traditional hybrids yield 200 bushels an acre, while the proprietary variety of corn she uses yields only 85 bushels an acre. Troy thinks it's worth it and believes the unique flavor will distinguish her white whiskey from others on the market.

Troy has not only become a distiller, she has become a farmer too. When Richard Johnson analyzed the corn, he noted that both genetics and the environment in which the corn is grown contribute to the flavor. Troy and John McEntire have jointly created a planting and management plan for 2011, with the oversight of Robert Kiser, a corn farmer from Illinois with forty years of experience. The growing plan calls for dividing the crop in the event there is bad weather, yet it keeps the corn in the central to western part of the state. "We will grow a significant part of the crop on Crooked Creek. That's home base and

we know what we'll get there," says Troy. These mountain valleys are small and tillable land is hard to come by, but we're determined to make the sacrifices necessary to grow this crop. We'll get lower yields and pay more for growing, but we have a grain like no other, that makes a spirit like no other. And that's worth a lot."

Troy & Sons Moonshine, made from Crooked Creek Corn, will be on the market in June of 2011. At a recent North Carolina ABC Convention tasting, a store manager from eastern North Carolina, who was born in a "juke joint" which doubled as a shot house, told Troy, "Now that's what we call Good Boot."

Troy is committed to making a true spirit, from a true heirloom corn, honoring the true craft-distilling heritage of our ancestors. Troy & Sons is reviving heritage and distilling the truth.



Does anyone recognize this old bottle decanter? If you do, let Guy know at his contact information at the end of this newsletter.

**Cumberland County ABC  
Grand Opening – 7622 Raeford Road**



**Onslow County ABC  
Grand Opening – 419 S. Marine Blvd**



Send retirement or other announcements to Guy Potts [guy.potts@abc.nc.gov](mailto:guy.potts@abc.nc.gov) or 919-218-0748.