



ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEASTERN RESEARCH LIBRARIES

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NEWS

ASERL Launches “Guide to Southern Barbecue”

A Unique Blending of Southern Traditions, Librarian Savvy, and Good Humor

www.aserl.org/bbq

May 1, 2013 – DURHAM, NC. With tongue firmly planted in cheek, today the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL), representing libraries at 40 research institutions across 11 states, officially launched its own “Guide to Southern Barbecue,” a listing of recommended barbecue joints near ASERL campuses across the Southeast. The ASERL Guide to Southern Barbecue is published as a freely-available, open-access guide to good eating in the region.

“ASERL librarians met last week in Memphis, well-known for its barbecue,” noted ASERL President Lynn Sutton. “And after years of good-natured in-fighting about where to get the best barbecue in the South, we took the occasion to publish our own guide. As librarians, we have to use good judgment to select high quality resources all the time – we used these same skills to select good barbecue.”

ASERL convened a crack team of research library professionals – each a self-appointed arbiter of good taste in barbecue – to define criteria and design the user interface. Quoting chapter and verse from “Holy Smoke” and other bibles of the craft, at one point the planning team identified more than three dozen possible criteria to be used in selecting winners. In the end, ASERL libraries used a variety of methods to identify what they believe are the three best barbecue establishments within a 30-minute drive of their campuses. On the launch date, about a third of ASERL libraries have contributed data; the remaining libraries continue to carefully consider these difficult decisions.

The online guide – available at www.aserl.org/bbq -- contains basic and detailed listings for each selection, and maps to help guide users. Mobile users can get driving directions to their selected restaurant. And of course, the website includes links to other trusted resources, and a bibliography.

“We’ve been talking about this idea for a while. I’m thrilled to see it come to life,” commented John Burger, ASERL’s Executive Director, who has been known to darken the door of such establishments with some frequency. “I doubt it will solve any arguments – that’s not the point – but it will let people know where to start their search for the best of the best.” Burger also joked that NIH-compliant data management plans are under development.

About ASERL

Founded in 1956, the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries is the largest regional research library cooperative in the country. ASERL operates numerous projects designed to foster a high standard of library excellence through inter-institutional resource sharing and other collaborative efforts. By working together, ASERL members provide and maintain top quality resources and services for the students, faculty, and citizens of their respective communities. More information about ASERL can be found at www.aserl.org.

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