

Tommy T.'s Granddaddy Mimm's Distillery is having a birthday party



Tommy Townsend of Waymore's Outlaws.

By Charles Duncan
Towns County Herald
Editor

Granddaddy Mimm is rolling over in his grave – moonshining is legal and you can sell it in Georgia without fretting over revenuers.

There's no disputing the success of Blairsville native Tommy Townsend's Granddaddy Mimm's Moonshine Distillery & Museum.

On Saturday, Oct. 7, Townsend, his family and friends (and new friends), will celebrate the first anniversary of bringing an old "family tradition" back to life in the North Georgia Mountains.

No, Hank Jr. won't be able to make it. However, Townsend has invited Steven Phillips and Midnight Express, the Tom Floyd Band, and yes, Waymore's Outlaws (Waylon Jennings' old band) to town to celebrate the first anniversary of the business he named for his grandfather, Jack "Mimm" McClure, a legendary moonshiner.

"It's been a journey to get where we are today," Townsend said. "I've learned a lot about the liquor business, the laws and so forth.

"The Department of Revenue has made changes where we can sell three bottles per person, per day," Townsend said. "And we can sell it by the drink, like a bar."

The distillery and museum will soon start staying open until 8 p.m. or 9 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, and they're putting in a big screen TV where people can come watch sports.

"And we're going to start having some live music up here on Friday and Saturday nights, but not every weekend," Townsend said. "This is not something that I ever set out to do. I got into a conversation with someone about my grandfather, and that's how it all started."

"We're not allowed to sell beer or wine, just our moonshine, and only to those old enough to purchase it."

The museum opens up into Granddaddy Mimm's Gift Shop, where people will be able to mosey up to the bar and choose one of the flavorful products made right there in Blairsville at the distillery, using local corn and various fruits.

Should guests decide to take a tour, they will be treated to a trip straight into the last century, as they learn how Jack "Mimm" McClure turned corn, water and sugar into such fine-tasting spirits.

Townsend has also restored his grandfather's covered wagon, which people will get a chance to see on the tour, and those who are of legal drinking age will be able to purchase up to three bottles of Granddaddy Mimm's Authentic Moonshine.

Be sure to bring the folding money or the plastic. Limited Edition Run Indian Corn is \$45; Granddaddy Mimm's 140 Proof Corn Whiskey is \$35; 100 proof is \$30; and the flavored stuff (brandy) runs \$20.

Moonshine has turned into a family tradition, thanks to Townsend's interest and subsequent entrance into the business.

During the Great Depression, there wasn't a whole lot of work to be had, especially in the mountains, so Jack "Mimm" McClure began bootlegging out of Crooked Creek in Young Harris in the 1930s to put food on his family's table.

And while he's certainly known for his high-quality corn products, Mimm also carried a reputation for charitable giving and fairness throughout Towns County and the region.

Asked about her son Tommy's moonshine endeavors, Ida Townsend said that at first she was shocked, and then she was proud. Ida is the youngest of Mimm's children, and she remembers well how her father provided for the family, and also how Mimm would split a neighbor's wood if they needed it.

She said that Mimm, who passed away when Tommy was just 2 years old, would be proud of his grandson and what he has accomplished with Granddaddy Mimm's, and of course, his music career.

Event parking will be \$5, with all proceeds going to benefit Shady Grove United Methodist Church, where patrons will park their cars at the

The Oct. 7 event is a one-of-a-kind, can't miss experience for Union County and the surrounding areas, and will feature hours of world-class music entertainment with free concerts, plus guided tours of the distillery, museum, gift shop, and of course, sipping the recipe.

Festivities begin at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Oct. 7, with tours of the distillery at 161 Pappy's Plaza in Blairsville included.

And since Tommy Townsend is celebrating, you can bank on a free concert.

Steven Phillips, a local radio personality out of Hiawassee, will open the event's music lineup at 6 p.m., followed by Blairsville favorite, the Tom Floyd Band.

At 8:30 p.m., Townsend and Waymore's Outlaws will hit the stage playing some good ole Outlaw Music.

"We will have mixed moonshine drinks and bottles of Granddaddy Mimm's to purchase all day, as well as food vendors with lots of food," Townsend said.

Definitely bring some folding money; a cost is associated with the food.

Concertgoers are invited to bring chairs, blankets, and to generally make themselves at home during the Oct. 7 extravaganza.

Of course, folks will want to take full advantage of the event by going on one of the distillery tours, which will be happening throughout the day.

The laws in Georgia have changed regarding moonshine sales, and each person 21 years or older is allowed to purchase up to three bottles a day of Granddaddy Mimm's moonshine at the distillery.

"We're also allowed to pour drinks, just as long as (the alcohol) is made in our distillery, and, of course, if you've got proper ID," Townsend said.



Granddaddy Mimm's owner Tommy Townsend and family. Left to right, all Townsends: daughter Maggie, wife Christy, Tommy himself, sister Debby, father Roy and mother Ida. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

Chief Smith...from Page 1A



Chief Smith swearing in on Aug. 1, 2017. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

Departmental Organization, Employee Selection Process, Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Overview, Promotional Systems, United States Department of Justice Programs; Leadership/Management Role of the Chief, Employee Performance & Employee Discipline, Legislative Process, Social Media for Law Enforcement Leaders, and other timely topics.

"The Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police is pleased to provide executive level

training for the professional development of Georgia's new law enforcement leaders," said GACP President Dennis Nelson of the Clayton County Department of Corrections.

Chief Smith was among 50 law enforcement administrators attending the course.

The GACP provides the executive training for newly appointed heads of law enforcement agencies and command staff personnel twice a year, along with several other training programs throughout

the state.

It is the largest professional association for law enforcement administrators in Georgia, and one of the largest in the country.

The membership of more than 1,700 includes executives representing municipal and county law enforcement agencies, college and university police departments, corporate and private security firms, and numerous state and federal agencies.

Owltown sanctuary. There, a shuttle bus will be available to take them to Pappy's Plaza.

For more details about Granddaddy Mimm's, visit the website at granddaddymimms.com.

Oh, and if you get the

chance, ask Townsend about his new album.

Shooter Jennings produced a solo record of Townsend on BCR Media Los Angeles. The project should be on the street around March

2018 on vinyl, CD and digital.

"I want to say, it's kind of cool to first be produced by Waylon Jennings at the beginning of my music career and now being produced by his son Shooter," Townsend said.