

Barney's Beanery Memories



Monday, November 30, 2009 - By Charles Forscher, West Hollywood

West Hollywood, California (November 30, 2009) - I used to go to Barney's Beanery often in the early 1960's when the place was becoming a notorious gay hangout, although I had no idea that was happening.



Barney's Beanery in the early 1980s, as protesters demanded that the offending "Fagots (sic) - Stay Out!" sign that hung behind the bar. Photo courtesy "Images of America: West Hollywood" by Ryan Gierach, Arcadia Publishing. WeHo News.

He and his original waitress were still operating what had been the sales office of the company that was selling housing tract lots for the Allah's Garden area, Barney Anthony told me one evening after I had asked him.

The Beanery still looked like a typical 1920's bungalow styled cottage on the outside and I dared to ask what this was all about.

Patrons of the Pacific Electric railway, which ran down the center of Santa Monica Boulevard at the time, stopped there on the way to the beach, Barney also told me, which took me by surprise - the Beanery was a sort of Harvey House.

Not enough of a competition with that chain, though, to produce a film about it with Julie Garland (search "The Harvey Girls" for more on the 1946 film).

|| CLICK FOR MORE || CLICK FOR MORE || CLICK FOR MORE || CLICK FOR MORE || CLICK ||



Stuart Timmons (L) with Ron Andereg presenting the original Barney's Beanery sign, which previously hung on gay activist Morris Kight's living room wall after it was taken down, to the ONE Institute and Archives in 2003 at Mr. Kight's memorial service. Photo by WeHo News.

Not quite nineteen, I looked a lot older and would spend hours sipping beer in the original enclosed patio, drawing portraits of the patrons I did not want to sell to them.

I'd play the songs in the Beanery juke box by a French lady, like the one that started with: "Hello- hello--I like your smile," and another that one that was all in French.

Occasionally, breaking the melody, down the track would lumber a slow Southern Pacific switcher diesel around the bend pulling a string of box cars and a P.E. caboose, its wounded goose air horns blasting as loudly as the old air raid siren at the park that once Civil Defense tested on a regular basis.

I did not have any interest in sitting at the bar itself, but when I passed through the area to use the restroom I saw the two, yellowed "Fagots (sic) - Stay Out!" signs.



|| CLICK FOR MORE || CLICK FOR MORE || CLICK FOR MORE || CLICK FOR MORE || CLICK ||

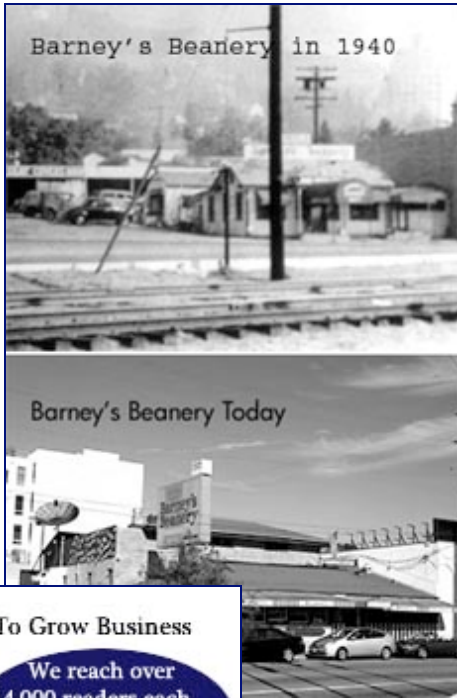
They went up, I'm informed by my copy of *"Images of America: West Hollywood,"* because the Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) had pressured Barney to ban gays or lose his license, not out of any homophobia.

I had no idea, at the time, what the sign even meant.

I did, though, by the time Barney had died and I had done some growing up.

I had a young man flirt with me as we sat at the bar some years later, the yellowed signs were still up, but there was no Barney nor any gorilla-like bar tenders (like animated counterpart in Who Framed Roger Rabbit based on him) left to bounce either of us for creating a scene.

The roadhouse, which gave up its signs almost immediately after the newly-founded city banned such displays of bigotry in 1984, now supports gay and lesbian rights and causes.



Images of America: West Hollywood" Publishing. WeHo News.

Tough Times Means Using The Right Lever To Grow Business

Let Us Show You How

Leverage Our Internet Success For Your Own

WEHONNEWS.COM
serving West Hollywood

We reach over 14,000 readers each and every week, from 'round the world

Reach Them For Less

CLICK TO BEGIN

|| CLICK FOR MORE || CLICK FOR MORE || CLICK FOR MORE || CLICK FOR MORE || CLICK ||

© 2005-2009 WeHoNews.com, All Rights Reserved.