

**-Grand Prize Winner-**  
Our History with Mr. Henry's  
By  
*Jeffrey J. Stewart and Bettina Schewe*

“I want a big American cheeseburger.” That was her answer to my question about dinner. It was in early March 1994, and hours earlier I’d picked her up from Dulles. We’d been an item since the previous October, when I went to visit her in Germany, and followed-up with a second visit just two months after my first. That evening was her first in America since her departure the previous April, when she returned home because her internship ended and she had to complete her studies.

For clarification, what we in America consider to be a real cheeseburger does not exist in Germany – not in the form we’re used to, and certainly not with the endless variations one finds here in the U.S. So, when the waitress brought our burgers, her eyes lit up with anticipation as she held the *8 ounce cheeseburger* with both hands. She really missed the American-style big burgers, and now she was enjoying a long-desired pleasure. This would happen several times more during her five-week long visit.

We continued our airplane relationship for two more years, during which I’d visit Germany three times more, and she’d visit twice more before permanently moving here. Each of her visits here had their share of trips to Mr. Henry’s, preferably but not exclusively on half-price burger nights.

We married two months after she moved here. The evening of our wedding, we were celebrated by a small group of friends at...Mr. Henry’s. Not only enjoyable, but also most appropriate.

Since then (May 1996), we’ve been faithful Henry’s regulars. Of course, we still visit at least once a month. You may recognize us—your big American cheeseburgers remain among her favorites, our daughter is disposed towards your wings, and I’ve expanded my choices to include your salads.

**-Runner-up-**  
*Jill Strachan*

My first visit to Mr. Henry's was in the fall of 1977. I had moved to Capitol Hill with my partner and we stumbled in for a meal. Of course, there was no internet, no YELP, only the sometimes accurate Gaia's Guide for lesbian folks. Perhaps we used the Guide to find it, but I don't have a memory of that.

Instead, what I remember was my immediate observation of the diversity of the people in the restaurant, made more humorous by the outloud musings of one woman who said to her dinner partner, "I've never met any lesbians." We were sitting two tables away. What we found was a welcoming space with waiters who possessed spectacular wit and humor and who never wrote down our food orders.

Since then, Mr. Henry's has been my home away from home. I've felt as comfortable there as in my own living room. From 1984-2010, many members (almost the whole tenor section) of the Lesbian & Gay Chorus of Washington, D.C., which rehearsed nearby on Tuesdays, stopped by on the way to rehearsal for a slice of quiche and salad and/or dropped by after rehearsal for burgers, patty melts, a specially-made grilled cheese sandwich, or baked-over potatoes. And, of course, a drink! Singing makes you hungry and thirsty.

Mr. Henry's was a comfortable setting for discussion of all kinds— to our amazement one evening a vendor came through selling the early edition of The Washington Post. We all checked our watches to discover it was after 1 AM and it was a work night.

Waiter Terry would ask me on the brink of winter into summer or fall into winter, whether I was ready for my summer drink (Campari and soda) or winter drink (scotch on the rocks). Otherwise, my correct drink would always appear without my having to order. Chuck was a wonderful bartender and gave great hugs across the bar. And, now, Michael is equally fun and friendly and very knowledgeable about the many pics/artifacts on the walls. Yes, there's been change, as is always the case, but Mr. Henry's is still Mr Henry's, particularly since one can still order a patty melt and onion rings and enjoy the convivial atmosphere. Congratulations and here's to many more years!

**-Honorable Mention-**

A Tale From the Corner of 6th & Penn., SE

*by Michael Townsend*

In 1979, I moved to the DC area, after a failed relationship, to make a new start. Within a few months of being here, I met two wonderful gentlemen that would become my mentors, Ralph and Donald, both Washington, DC natives and now deceased. Mr. Henry's was one of the first places that they introduced me to. We would visit the restaurant at least once per week. While having dinner with them, I would listen to their stories about their rendezvous (if the walls could talk) of the Good Ole Days living in DC as a gay black man. One evening, Donald recapped the evening he witnessed Roberta Flack performing the "Ballad of the Sad Young Men" from her 1969 album, First Take, which profiled the atmosphere at Mr. Henry's in the late 1960s. He spun a tale of wonderful and exciting people enjoying a hot new artist in Mr. Henry's cosmopolitan atmosphere.

Now, 38 years later, I am still a patron of your restaurant and bar, enjoying the entertainment, the welcoming atmosphere and rehashing the memories of the Good Ole Days and memories of happier times. In 2016 my friend and I have stopped in several times and listened to several very good performers. Let's just say when I am at Mr. Henry's, it brings me nothing but great memories and joy. I am glad Mr. Henry's still exists and that you have restored the live entertainment. I look forward to developing many memories of these Good Old Days.