

Goodbye to the Greasy Spoon

Lester's Diner has been a staple in Bryan Ohio since its inception in 1955. On Memorial Day 2011, it closed its doors for the last time. Like many small towns, the restaurant was a gathering place for seniors who sat around the "round table" (whether or not it had an actual round table... I think Lester's feature was its lunch bar). Not only was it a hang out for the young-at-heart, I have heard a story or two about a group of young whippersnappers who frequented the joint after high school football games.

OK... maybe they were not so young. My parents along with the former high school band director, his fiancée, and other friends would travel there occasionally after the game while high schoolers would head to Pizza Slut (err... Hut). The next day, we would be regaled with tales of "Sweaty Betty" who would make perfect hamburger patties by placing a ball of meat under her armpit. Dad said that he once found a hair in his burger. All right, I doubt if that was true but it sure made for a good laugh for a 7th or 8th grader (I was in junior high at the time)! I'm sure regulars could sit and tell tales a mile long about the "spoon."

The atmosphere and scenery of the eatery took the diner back to the fifties complete with swiveling stools at the bar, four person booths with classic mini jukeboxes, and milkshakes served with the tall silver shake cup. The giant sign outside the establishment featuring the giant "16 ounce cup" (I stand corrected, it was a "14 ounce cup") of coffee was the inspiration for the sign outside Mel's Diner on the 1970-'80s tv series *Alice*.

Yet another piece of Americana dissolving only to be a memory to those who knew it.



