

Communication from Public

Name: Chuck Stewart

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Comments for Public Posting: I write this letter in support of declaring Oil Can Harry's a Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) at 11502 Ventura Blvd., Studio City. I have regularly attended OCH since about 1975. It has been my primary social outlet all these years, and most of my long-time friends are patrons of OCH. These friends are indeed my family. OCH provided a sense of family when many of us have experienced being rejected by our biological families for being gay. Besides dancing at OCH, I taught dance classes there for years and have probably taught most of the people there. OCH provided a safe place to learn to dance in same-sex couples. That is important because, until recently, we couldn't dance in each other's arms in straight places without censor or worse. I am an academic who has written eighteen books and references, ten of those on LGBTQ subjects. I work as an editor/writer for ABC-CLIO, Praeger, Greenwood, and SAGE publishing houses. I bring this up because this property has so much history important not only to the LGBTQ community but also to the African American community. OCH took over the lease of this building in 1968. Before that, it was the Zomba Café in the 1940s, '50s, and '60s bringing "A Bit of Africa" entertainment. Many actors and movie stars from the nearby studios were known to frequent the Zomba Room. I know many of the people who were active in running OCH. I also have contact with the last owners of the Zomba Cafe. Unfortunately, many of us are elderly and dying off. The history is fast becoming lost—what a shame. I propose that besides the property obtaining HCM status, we reach out to those interested in preserving the history. For example, USC hosts the world's most extensive LGBTQ library and archive at the ONE Institute IGLA on West Adams Blvd. It is one of the affiliated libraries of the university's library system. The colleges and universities in the area—UCLA, CSUN, CSULA, Valley College— all have departments of anthropology, LGBTQ studies, and African American studies, besides student groups interested in reclaiming their histories. It would be great to put together a team of professors and students to conduct a thorough review of historical documents and artifacts before it is all lost. I've spoken with some of these groups, and they are excited to find out more. Of course, this requires funding. Perhaps the city can be of help. I appreciate the opportunity to express my hope to preserve the

histories of Oil Can Harry's and the Zomba Room. Chuck
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www.StewartEducationServices.com (to review all the books I
have written) Attached are photos of the Zomba Room

The Zomba Cafe



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DINE-DANCE



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