

Students find the latest buzz at Louie's barber shop

By Liz Perros
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Louie's barber shop on Commonwealth Avenue is a place where haircuts are \$10 and the gossip is free.

"Our strategy is to know everybody and their roommates and to talk about everything you could possibly think of," says shop owner Lou Fenerlis. "We talk about things all the way from what they're majoring in to who they slept with last night. It makes it fun."

Louie's has been centrally located on the Boston University campus for four years. Fenerlis, who does no advertising for his business, attributes the location to the shop's success.

"Two thousand people walk by here every day," the former Harvard Square barber says. "You know it's not my good looks."

Emmanuel Serrano, a College of Arts and Sciences junior, has gone to Louie's for the past three years.

"They make it more personal," he says, reading a magazine while waiting for a trim. "They talk to you about school. Besides that, Louie's has a great price and a great location for BU students."

At Louie's, a traditional barber pole rotates red, white and blue outside the door, lending a circa 1950s charm. But according to Philip Polizzi, a barber at Louie's, the shop is cutting-edge.

"Traditional barbers are a dying breed," says Polizzi, who used to own a shop in the Ritz Carlton. "When you walk in here, man or woman, you feel comfortable. We all have learned from Louie's technique and it works."

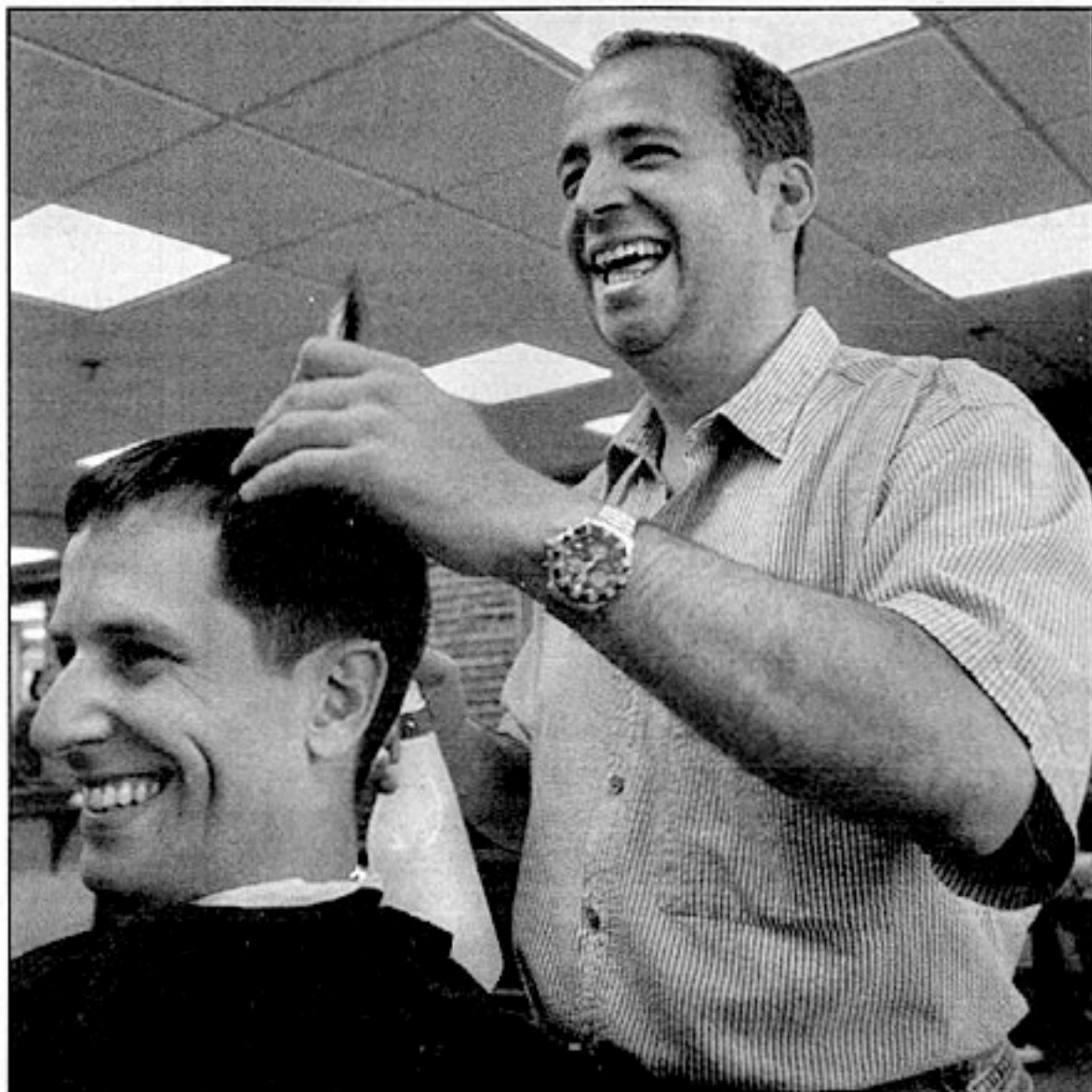
"I really love this job," he adds, swiveling around in his barber chair.

For the most part, men occupy the waiting room at Louie's, though the shop specializes in men's and women's haircuts. According to Fenerlis, the shop has more male than female clients, but women should not be wary of walking through Louie's doors.

"It's a pretty male place," says Boston social worker Tim Hintz, pointing at a rack that holds more razors than curling irons. "But my wife was the one who got me to come here when she was a student at BU."

Hintz slides into the chair of his favorite barber, Alma Mentez, and speaks with her in Spanish.

"Alma sets Louie's apart
See LOUIE'S, Page 8



DPP Staff/Gloria Calderon

Lou Fenerlis cuts a client's hair in his Commonwealth Avenue barber shop yesterday afternoon. Louie's barber shop is a hot spot for BU students in need of a quick trim.

Louie's woos BU clientele

■ LOUIE'S

Continued from Page 1
from any other place for me," he says.

When Mentez is through with Hintz, David Newlin is next to slide into her chair. "I'd like it real short on the bottom and longer on top so I can part it," the University Professors freshman requests.

As she cuts, Mentez asks Newlin where he's from and what his major is. Clips of his light brown hair sail to the floor and land by his feet.

"Louie's has an informal setting, but at the same time, you know you're getting a haircut by someone who cares whether or not they do a good job," Newlin says.

After Newlin has the loose hair brushed from the back of his neck, he gets up and receives a smile from Mentez. "This is a place where you come back," he says.

Across the room, Fenerlis continues to clip a client's hair while looking around his shop to see how many people are waiting. The chairs are full of new faces.

"People come back and they say they're waiting for you to cut their hair. You know them and you know their parents, whom you've never met," he says. "And then it's not the haircut anymore. It's the friendship."