

= Barney Gumble =

Barnard " Barney " Gumble is a fictional character on the American animated sitcom The Simpsons . The character is voiced by Dan Castellaneta and first appeared in the series premiere episode " Simpsons Roasting on an Open Fire " . He is the town drunk of Springfield , a huge fan of Lord Palmerston , and Homer Simpson 's best friend . His desperation for alcohol is a frequent butt of jokes on the show . Barney sobered up in the episode " Days of Wine and D 'oh 'ses " , which was co @-@ written by Castellaneta , and stayed sober for several seasons . Barney was inspired by the cartoon character Barney Rubble from The Flintstones and by several barflies from other television programs . In 2004 , Castellaneta won an Emmy Award for voicing various characters , including Barney .

Barney can be seen in the 2009 @-@ present The Simpsons opening credits , passed out under a pile of leaves (but still holding his beloved bottle of Duff Beer) .

= = Role in The Simpsons = =

Barney 's father , Arnie Gumble , was a World War II veteran who died in 1979 in a parade float accident . Little is known about his mother , except that she lives in Norway and that she served in the United States Navy , including duty on a submarine . She is seen in the season nine episode Simpson Tide . In Treehouse of Horror XVII , Barney stated that he was Polish , after mistakenly saying he was Irish in a drunken stupor . Barney was born on April 20 (which Homer remembers is also Hitler 's birthday in " Viva Ned Flanders " and Barney 's entry into the Springfield Film Festival in " A Star Is Burns " where Barney states that he is 40 years old) . In the episode " \$ pringfield " , he claims that he studied dance for several years , including modern and tap .

Two episodes give different reasons for his alcoholism . " Mr. Plow " suggests that Barney was a dedicated student looking forward to a bright future . He had his mind set on going to Harvard University , until Homer introduced him to beer the day before the SATs . Season 16 's " She Used to Be My Girl " attributes his drinking to his high school girlfriend Chloe Talbot leaving Springfield to pursue a journalism career .

In " Homer 's Barbershop Quartet " , Barney formed a barbershop quartet with Homer , Apu Nahasapeemapetilon , and Seymour Skinner called the Be Sharps . Barney was asked to join when the other members heard him singing in a beautiful tenor voice in the restroom of Moe 's Tavern , replacing the group 's original fourth member , Chief Wiggum , who was kicked out . In 1986 , the Be Sharps won a Grammy Award for Outstanding Soul , Spoken Word , or Barbershop Album of the Year . Soon , creative disputes arose , and Barney left the group in all but name when he began dating a Japanese conceptual artist . The group realized that they were no longer popular and split up .

Barney was rescued from a tar pit by Bart 's pet elephant Stampy in Bart Gets An Elephant and he also started a snowplowing business rivaling Homer 's in " Mr. Plow " . Barney 's commercial defamed Homer , causing Homer to lose his customers . As revenge , Homer fooled Barney into plowing a driveway on Widow 's Peak , a treacherous mountain just outside Springfield . When Homer saw a news report showing that Barney had become trapped in an avalanche , Homer immediately drove to the mountain and rescued Barney . The friends resolved their differences and agreed to work together . However , a heat wave hit Springfield at that exact moment , driving them both out of business . However , in the episodes " O Brother , Where Bart Thou ? " and " Miracle on Evergreen Terrace " it is shown that Barney still drives his Plow King truck .

After being forced to spend a sober night at Moe 's Tavern serving as designated driver , Barney left town in Homer Simpson 's car to , among other things , give a guest lecture at Villanova (although , by his own admission , the guest lecture could just have likely occurred on a street corner) . A gag in " Selma 's Choice " suggests that Barney is the father of many local babies born through (presumably , paid) donation of semen and the resulting artificial insemination .

Barney made a documentary film about his life as an alcoholic , titled Pukahontas . It won the top prize at the Springfield Film Festival . He was ready to quit drinking after winning the Festival , but

unfortunately , the prize he received was a lifetime supply of Duff Beer . In " Deep Space Homer " , Barney trained to become an astronaut for NASA . Under their alcohol @-@ ban , he quickly regained his balance and diction and was quite appropriately selected to fly with Buzz Aldrin . However , he reverted to his old ways when he was presented with a bottle of non @-@ alcoholic champagne . Barney served in the United States Navy Reserve as a submariner on the USS Jebediah , alongside his mother , in " Simpson Tide " .

In " Days of Wine and D 'oh 'ses " , after watching a video of his drunken antics at his birthday party , Barney resolves to get sober . He attends Alcoholics Anonymous meetings , cleans up his appearance , and attends helicopter @-@ flying lessons . It was revealed in the fourteenth season episode " I 'm Spelling as Fast as I Can " that he had relapsed .

= = Character = =

= = = Creation = = =

Barney was inspired by Barney Rubble , Fred Flintstone 's best friend and next @-@ door neighbor from the animated series The Flintstones . The writers originally wanted the character to be Homer Simpson 's sidekick and next @-@ door neighbor , but instead , while still portraying him as Homer 's best friend , they decided to make him an alcoholic . Ned Flanders would become the next @-@ door neighbor instead . " Barney was taking the standard sitcom sidekick and just making him as pathetic as possible , " said Matt Groening , the creator of The Simpsons . The writers drew further inspiration from Crazy Guggenheim , a character played by comedian Frank Fontaine on The Jackie Gleason Show . Part of the reason the writers went in that direction , according to Groening , was because of " a sort of unspoken rule about not having drinking on television as a source of comedy . So , of course , we went right for it . " The writers also patterned the character after Norm Peterson (George Wendt) , a character from the sitcom Cheers .

In some early first season episodes , Barney had yellow hair . Later in the production of that season , the producers had it changed to brown , because they thought that his hair looked like his skin ; as well , during an artistic convention of the show , Groening stated that he wanted only the Simpsons to have yellow hair . Animation director Rich Moore modeled Barney 's apartment on one he and several other animators who worked on the show shared , particularly the Farrah Fawcett poster and the cable spool table . The writers originally intended for the character to be the owner of Barney 's Bowl @-@ A @-@ Rama . However , after making him " pathetic " , they could not regard him as a business owner any longer , and it was explained seasons later in " And Maggie Makes Three " that his Uncle Al owns the alley and named it after him .

= = = Voice = = =

Barney Gumble is voiced by Dan Castellaneta . Early on the show , Castellaneta discovered that it was not easy for him to do Barney 's trademark belch every time a script called for it , so he identified his best belch and told the producers to make that the standard . Castellaneta has voiced Barney every time he has appeared in the series , with the exception of the episode " Homer 's Barbershop Quartet " , in which some of Barney 's singing is provided by a member of The Dapper Dans , who recorded lines for all four members of the Be Sharps . Their recordings were intermixed with the cast 's , often with a cast member singing the melody and the Dapper Dans providing backup .

= = = Sobriety = = =

Castellaneta thought of the idea of Barney sobering up early in the series . He wrote a script together with his wife Deb Lacusta . They offered their script to showrunner Al Jean . Jean liked the story , but felt that it was too similar to a script the writers were already working on , " Duffless " , so

he turned it down . Castellaneta and Lacusta waited several years and offered their script , which they updated , to then @-@ show runner Mike Scully , who liked it and had them make a few changes . Their script became the eleventh season episode " Days of Wine and D 'oh 'ses " , which first aired April 9 , 2000 . The episode was directed by Neil Affleck , who said that he had " a vested interest in getting Barney sober . " However , some of the writing staff was opposed to the episode as they felt Barney sober would not be funny . Castellaneta commented , " He 's still a goofy man @-@ child ... he 's still got 15 years of booze left in his veins . "

After a long discussion about how the episode should end , the writers decided that they did not want Barney to return to being drunk at the end of the episode . Barney stayed sober for several seasons . The animators modified the appearance of the character , straightening his hair , among other things , to indicate his sobriety . Castellaneta altered his voice for the character by no longer slurring . Barney was still seen at Moe 's Tavern , but only drinking lattes . The character 's new addiction to coffee was suggested by writer @-@ producer David Mirkin , who has friends who stopped drinking alcohol and became addicted to coffee .

= = Reception = =

Filmcritic.com ranked Barney 18th on their 2008 list of " The 21 Best Movie Alcoholics of All Time " . Recognizing the character for his appearance in The Simpsons Movie , Filmcritic called him " the most awesomely funny town drunk in pop culture " . IGN ranked Barney fifth on their list of the " Top 25 Simpsons Peripheral Characters " in 2006 , stating that , " he 's been a dependable source of humor through his many drunken asides , burps included ... Occasionally he 's sobered up ... But let 's face it , for comedy 's sake , The Simpsons is better off with a drunken Barney mouthing off at Moe 's . " Author Chris Turner (Planet Simpson) said , " Making [Barney] sober falls into the trap of all the stuff The Simpsons satirizes , all those simple sitcom narratives where everything is wrapped up in half an hour and everyone learns a lesson in the end . "

Britain 's The Guardian said that Barney " should be hailed for making compulsive drinking a source of comedy on US TV , a hitherto impossible dream . " Entertainment Weekly placed " Mr. Plow " sixth on their list of the best 25 Simpsons episodes in 2003 . In 2004 , Dan Castellaneta won a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Voice @-@ Over Performance for voicing several characters , including Barney , in the episode " Today I Am a Clown " . " Days of Wine and D 'oh 'ses " was nominated for a PRISM Award in 2001 .

= = = Merchandising = = =

Playmates Toys created three Barney Gumble action figures as part of the World of Springfield toy line . The first one , released in August 2000 , depicts Barney in his usual appearance . The second , Barney in his Plow King jacket from " Mr. Plow " , was released in January 2003 . The third , a Toys " R " Us retail exclusive , was released in July 2003 as part of a Be Sharps play set . The song " A Boozehound named Barney " from the episode " Simpsoncalifragilisticexpiala (Annoyed Grunt) cious " was included on the Go Simpsonic with The Simpsons album . Barney plays a role in The Simpsons Ride , launched in 2008 at Universal Studios Florida and Hollywood .