

The Long Commute Home

Driving with Dad

Dad is a character and a half, like no other that I know. As I have already said, Dad constantly reminds us that he was a tank driver under General Patton's command in W.W.II. You can well believe this, if you have ever had the unpleasant experience of driving with the man. My Dad actually believes that he saves gasoline by taking his foot off and on the gas pedal. Picture the rocking sensation this causes any passengers in his car. By the time you get to your destination, your nerves are frazzled and you are in need of a good chiropractor.

Another bad habit of Dad's, is to turn his head to face the person he is talking to, while driving. I can tell you that my Mother is horse from yelling, "Bill, watch the ROAD!"

My husband Jerry left his 10-fingered imprint on the dashboard of my father's car when we went for a visit one year to see Mom and Dad down at Myrtle Beach. Dad was driving, Jerry was the front seat passenger, and Mom and I were in the back seat. Dad was talking away, about God knows what. He went right through an intersection without slowing, never mind stopping at that stop sign back there. Jerry yelled out, "Bill look out". Mom yelled out, "Bill, watch the road." And I just yelled out, "Oh my God!" We just missed being side swiped. To which, of course, Dad replied, "Ahhh, you're all nuts. I've never been in an accident before in my life!" To which we all replied, "Yeah, but you've probably caused a hell of a lot of them!"

Now, besides his unique driving style, my father is infamous at leaving the blinker on. Growing up with such 'maneuvers', we actually, as children, became quite accustomed to his driving. Not that we enjoyed it, mind you. We used to sit in the back seat and mockingly, over-exaggerate the rocking motion of the car, while repeating the words, "Blinker, blinker, blinker", just to bust my father's chops. He in turn would swing his arm to hit whoever was in its path, guilty or not.

If you can believe it, 8 of us actually took a family vacation to Disney World, by car, with Dad at the helm...twice! I can tell you first hand, that it is a hell of a long way from Massachusetts to Florida, in a car built to hold 5 people! It was the best survival training any youngster has ever been put through. Wouldn't you think that surviving my father's driving all those years has at least qualified his "troops" for the purple heart?