

The Long Commute Home

Dad's Trademarks

There are many things that we nine kids would call trademarks of Dad's. The main thing being popcorn. There was not a home movie taken of Dad where he wasn't proudly holding up a box of extra-buttered popcorn. You could well mistake him for the Statue of Liberty holding up her torch.

Another well-known trademark of Dad's was vanilla, ice cream cones. In the summertime, Dad would drive us to the dairy whip, ice cream stand. From the back seat of the car, we would immediately start shouting out our favorite flavors, "Chocolate, strawberry, coffee etc."

Without fail, Dad would walk up to the takeout window, and order 10 small VANILLA cones! As each cone was passed through the takeout window, Dad would bite off the swirl on the top of each one. He only had to order 10 cones instead of 11 because he got his fill of ice cream by taking a bite off of each of ours.

We were a long time in realizing that soft serve, ice cream cones come with a very art-deco looking swirl at the very top. We thought it came naturally with a lip imprint!

You really have to give my father credit. He did his best to stretch every penny he earned as a mailman in order to provide for all eleven of us. To help in this endeavor, he often bought no-name brands, day-old bread and rejects. To us these were the norm. Actually there were quite a few things that we grew up with as 'normal', that were NOT normal at all!

For example, my father used to buy the rejected hot dogs. Now for all of you 'normal' people out there who are wondering what the heck a rejected hot dog is, it is a hot dog whose outer skin has breaks in it. This causes some of the interior meat of the hot dog to protrude like little arms and legs. Now to us kids who had never seen anything different, arms and legs on a hot dog were an every day occurrence.

One day, a neighboring family took their son and two of my older brothers to the ballpark. These neighbors kindly bought their son and my two older brothers hot dogs and cokes for lunch. When the hot dogs arrived, my brothers just looked at them. They weren't sure what the heck they were. They actually asked, "What are these?" To which their friend replied, "Hotdogs." My older brothers looked at each other, then at the "supposed" hotdogs and exclaimed, "Where are the arms and legs?"