

The Long Commute Home

Mom's Trademarks

Mom has always been an early riser. She was our human alarm clock for school. When the youngest 6 of us kids were in grade school, Mom would wake us all up at the same time, so she could prepare one big breakfast for all of us. After waking us she would proceed downstairs to begin making the breakfast. From bed, we would all yell out our requests for breakfast. "Pancakes." "Waffles." "Eggs on toast." But our "chef" had two easy-to-prepare breakfasts that she would make most often. One of these was Cream of Wheat.

Mom used to answer our yelled-out requests by actually SINGING, "Cream of Wheat is so good to eat, yes we have it every day..." To which we would yell back, "MOM! Not again!"

Mom's other easy-to-prepare breakfast was oatmeal, which Mom referred to as Sargent Preston. It wasn't until many years later when I met and married my husband Jerry that I actually found out the truth about Sargent Preston.

Jerry and I sat down to eat breakfast together for the first time. He asked me to pass him the Quaker Oats. To which I replied, "Huh? Oh, you mean the Sargent Preston?" Jerry looked at me to see if I was kidding him. But I was totally serious. Jerry just started laughing. He said, "You goof, that isn't Sargent Preston. That's Quaker Oats. 'Sargent Preston of the Yukon' was a TV show that was on when I was a kid. The main character, Sargent Preston, was the spokesperson in commercials at the time for Quaker Oats."

To hear this from Jerry was beyond mind-boggling to me. I cannot even begin to explain how truly dumb-founded I felt. Here I had honestly believed, well into my adult life, that the name of that particular brand of oatmeal was actually called Sargent Preston!

My Mom was also famous for coaxing, cajoling and guilt-tripping us kids into projects around the house. Her most famous phrase was, "It'll just take 5 minutes." To us, that was the kiss of death. Your entire morning or afternoon was blown if you heard that phrase uttered from my mother! What it actually translated into was, you're stuck on this project for the next 2 to 4 hours. Even so, after working like crazy for 2 hours on any given project, you could still hear Mom say, "Just another 5 minutes and we'll be done."