

Goodbye To Yet Another Childhood Fixture

In a shocking turn of events, it has been announced that Ronald McDonald will be getting a makeover. Apparently, the chain wants to promote a healthier, trendier menu. OK... are we getting rid of Happy Meals, the Big Mac (hold the pickle), and all the rest? I can;t believe that they would be doing away with the character totally with the Ronald McDonald House which he has given his name to for the past several years. While the decades (48 years to be exact) old fixture has not been as visible in ads for the fast food chain, I remember my birthday party the summer after I completed Kindergarten (I think I was 9 at the time... I had a little problem with eating glue... HAHA!). McDs was the place to celebrate when you were a child of the mid-70s... my corner of the woods did not have a Chuck E Cheese or Crazy Pinz.

<https://www.dailyfinance.com/2011/03/03/ronald-mcdonald-put-to-pasture-as-fast-food-chain-gentrifies/>

Hope the video doesn't frighten anyone TOO much.

My Two Moms

Happy Mother's Day to all those who serve as mothers whether it be in the traditional sense or less than traditional. I am lucky to have had two extraordinary women to look up to and admire who have always been there for me no matter where I was or what trouble I have been in. One, my fabulous mother whom I would not trade for all the tea in China. The other one that I was blessed to "adopt" as the second mother I so wish everyone had (God rest her soul)... someone I could talk to and share private things with.

My mom is one of the most giving women on the planet. She has three jobs: beautician, bus driver (morning, pre-school, and afternoon routes), and bookkeeper for volleyball, basketball, and softball. The sports statistician position I think she does more for the escape from the everyday but she still gets paid for it. She also is the best person to have raised her four children, husband (he is still being raised), and niece who had been tossed around from 3 foster families before ending up with us when she was in the second grade. So many memories, I cannot pick a single one.

On the other hand, one instance sticks out clearly in my mind concerning Emily. Following one of the performances of *Joseph* nine years ago, the two ladies and I went to McDonald's. We ordered and went to our table. However, the orders were far from correct. Emily went right back up to the counter and in her special way explained the situation. By the time she was done, we had not only gotten our orders refilled correctly but a refund on top of it. I sometimes wonder if the poor guy

behind the counter had been employed there long. No one wanted to be on Ma2's bad side.

So... thank you to all mothers everywhere. I'm sure that there is not a harder yet more rewarding job anywhere.

Ever Had A Big Mac Attack?

Have you ever had a late night craving that only the "two all beef patties special sauce lettuce cheese pickles onion on a sesame seed bun" could cure? Apparently, that was the motive behind a woman's irate shooting at a McDonald's drive thru window Sunday morning. The woman, driving a white Dodge Intrepid, entered the drive-thru of a Salt Lake City restaurant and wanted to order lunch, dinner, anything else besides what was being offered. Apparently, 24-hour McDonald's change from lunch/dinner to breakfast only around 2AM. I never understood the need for fast-food establishments to have different hours for different meals. Is there something that prohibits them from serving quarter pounders at the same time as egg McMuffins? In any case you can follow [the link](#) to the full details and a possible connection to other shots heard a few hours earlier

Cheap Cheeseburger Rundown

We have the following items from the value menus of the local fast food chains (again Williams Co Ohio)

McDonalds – McDouble (99cents)

Wendys – Jr Bacon Cheeseburger (\$1.00)

DoubleStack Burger (\$1.00)

Burger King – Junior Whopper (99cents)

Bk Stacker (??)

Double Cheeseburger (??)

A&W – No cheap burgers only KFC has 99 cent snackers (chicken/fish)

Dairy Queen – Double Cheese burgers (2 for price on one day of the week)

I've already commented on the McDonalds sandwich. One less slice of cheese than the original Double Cheeseburger at the same old price. It's exactly what you expect from McDonalds. It isn't the same comfort food I grew up with, but for the price and speed of delivery, I always thought it was hard to beat. Until....

On a whim, I stopped at Wendys for a DoubleStack and a Junior Bacon Cheeseburger. All I can say is: I think I'm hooked. Little burgers with a big burger taste. Not at all what I expected. I thought they took a quarter pound single or, in the case of the DoubleStack, a half pound Double and shrunk them. Same taste as a regular size Wendys burger. I have a new mini-price comfort burger. When I want a cheap burger, that is where I am going.

One word on Dairy Queen burgers, I've had them, and they were OK. Not great, not bad, just OK. If I want onion rings or some specialty burger, that only they carry (The flamethrower or mushroom burgers are good), I will go somewhere else. There cheeseburgers and double cheeseburgers are just ok, and more than the dollar menu values of the other chains.

Burger King, I'll have to say I've only had the Whopper Jr. Burger King has never been my favorite stop for burgers. I've always been able to taste the "gas" from the flame broiling.

It may just be me, but it wasn't a pleasant taste. On the bigger burgers the taste is less noticeable, but very strong on the smaller burgers. Not sure why that is. Their Angus Burgers, while not cheap, are quite good.

A&W – Even their Cheeseburger is more than a buck. Even at the old A&W stand in nearby Antwerp OH, I never cared for their burgers. Give me a chili Dog, Onion Rings and mug of root Beer. Great Combination, but it isn't a cheap burger.

Next Up Franchise burgers – What they sell now (Big Mac, Quarter Pounder, Whopper, Grillburgers, Single, Double, Triple) and the winner is....

I got cheeseburgers

During the summer, a contest in our local community was held to determine the best burger in town. I was unable to go to that event, and I don't even remember who won. I understand it will be a large undertaking, but I may be taking my own survey on the local burger scene. Since I really like cheeseburgers, I imagine most of the burgers will have cheese on them.

Let's eliminate the fast food burgers first, starting with the smaller dollar menu burgers. I'll have to make a trip to all the fast food joints in the area (Williams County), but I can start with McDonalds.

Recently to save money, McDonalds now have a new burger on the menu. It is called the McDouble. This is a standard double cheeseburger minus one slice of cheese. All this for 30 cents less than the old Double Cheeseburger. 30 cents for 1 slice of precut American processed cheese. Hmm. Still, the Double Cheeseburger was a memory comfort food for me. Kind of like

White Castle sliders only bigger. Not the best burger around, but a taste that remained the same from restaurant to restaurant. Since the introduction of the McDougle, I've been able to tell the difference from the restaurant in Bryan and the one in Montpelier and from the time of day it is purchased. I'm not sure what they do different, but it is no longer the comfort food I was used to. Being the cheap person I am, I'm not about to spend 30 cents for a piece of cheese. So I have to find another \$1.00 burger to replace my old standby.

I'll try to keep you posted...

Also on the list, in time for lent, Fast Food Fish sandwiches... ☐

Walmart Saves The Day

What?!? Believe it or not, the title of my post does not have the slightest hint of sarcasm! Walmart really DID save the day for us yesterday! It almost makes me sorry for my many rants against Walmart and their shady practices designed to put small companies out of business... almost sorry, but not quite there.

It all started when we decided to take the kids over to Fort Wayne, Indiana, which is about an hour away. We pulled into a stall at the Sonic drive-thru for a light lunch and some slushies (Sonic has awesome slushies and drinks), when we realized we had forgotten my husband's wallet, which left us without money or credit cards. Luckily, we had picked up the mail before we left the house and brought it in the car with us. And luckily², we had gotten a commission check in the mail. So we braved the 'big city' Walmart customer service

line on the Saturday after Thanksgiving to see if they would take pity on us and cash the check even without my husband's ID. We were gifted with even more luck when they accepted my driver's license to cash my husband's check, and we were able to eat lunch. Except now it had gotten really late and we were all really hungry, so we decided to skip Sonic and go to the Golden Corral that was in the Walmart outlot instead. If you braved my posts about our vacation diary, then you know how much we like Golden Corral. And I'd say that the one in Fort Wayne is of the best quality out of any of the others we've been to. After lunch, we took the kids to a McDonald's Playland, but it had only one little tunnel and one small slide; prompting our 4-year-old to proclaim, "Dad, this is *boring!*" But our 2-year-old loved it, and soon there were more kids to play with and everybody had lots of fun – including mom and dad since there was also a foosball table. When we left the McDonald's, we noticed there was a Burger King across the street (when isn't there?), and that Burger King had a 3-story play area! Oh, well, we had fun where we went and we can remember the BK for next time. We quenched our thirst with drinks from Sonic, and there was a cool looking car wash next door, so we treated the kids to a car wash also -they love watching the soap, brushes, and water cascading off the car. The second we pulled out of the wash –*ding ding* – our low fuel bell rang – uhoh. My husband and I just looked at each other because it wasn't like we had unlimited money with us. In fact, we had spent the last of the check money at the car wash. Thank goodness gas prices are decent these days because with the change we were able to scrape together from my wallet and the car, we had enough to get us gas to get home... whew! Perhaps it can even be considered a blessing in disguise. When you compare the variety of shopping Fort Wayne offers to our hometown choice of Super Walmart and... well, just the Super Walmart, unleashing us in a larger city with all those shopping varieties could have been disasterous to our bank account!

And by the way, the Walmart customer service line wasn't too bad, all things considered. Most of the line consisted of a family who had 6 kids and one on the way -wow. And I thought I had a lot of kids!

The Scary Clown Successfully Sold Burgers

On another tangents.org blog, justj has been talking about cheeseburgers, namely White Castles and Burger Buddies (aka Burger Bundles), an '80's Burger King product. I found an old Burger Bundles commercial on youtube and posted the link on his blog in the comments section of the [cheeseburger post](#). While I was looking around on youtube, I found this old vintage McDonald's commercial where Ronald looks like something out of a horror movie. Regardless of what his early incarnation looked like, the clown worked for them in helping to create one of the most successful companies of all time.

Greasy Cheeseburgers

As most of my family knows, I have a thing about cheeseburgers. One of my friends and another blogger here, (Hey [taylhis](#)) talked about White Castle burgers. Well I saw them in the freezer section of our local supermarket. I just had to get some. When I got home this evening I cooked a couple up. It has been a few years since I've visited a White Castle, but the frozen ones were close to what I remembered. Not too bad for a quick snack. Not much more than that, but fun nostalgia.

Strange thing with this, is that my dog got very excited about the smell of the burger. He doesn't normally have a vocal beg, he just likes looking at you with his big brown eyes, but he was very vocal when he smelled these burgers. I'll have to see if it happens again when I cook up some more.

On a side note, anyone remember the Burger King Mini cheese burgers? I think I remember getting 6 bite sized burgers for a buck or two. Fun little burger.

Now that my diet is blown, anyone want a burger?

Moving The Choo-Choo

If you've grown up in Chicagoland as I have, then you'll know what I'm talking about when I describe a few staples of a typical suburban 1980's Chicago childhood. #1 – You've attended a taping of the Bozo show. As I've stated before,

the girl I went to the show with was put on the waiting list for tickets when she was a fetus. We went to the show taping when we were 9 – that's how long it took for her name to come up, thus illustrating how popular the experience was. #2 – If you had perfect attendance in school, you won tickets to a White Sox baseball game. Even I, a true-blue Chicago Cubs fan, ventured over to the south side as a youth to cheer on the men in black as a reward for not missing any days in a school year. Don't tell anyone though; it's not something I'm proud of. #3 – You got your grilled cheese served to you by a miniature train at the Choo-Choo restaurant in Des Plaines.

Now that it's 2008, I doubt they give away major league baseball tickets for perfect attendance in school anymore. I know for a fact that the Bozo show is no longer around, but I also know that the Choo-Choo restaurant is alive and well – for now anyway. The Choo-Choo is a small diner that serves typical american fare – hot dogs, grilled cheese, burgers, and the like. If you sit at the counter, your food is delivered by a miniature train that circles the dining room and disappears into the kitchen. It seems they are thinking of moving the Choo-Choo to build a new police department. Not putting it out of business, thank goodness, but they are considering moving it. I hope this does not happen because I'm not one to favor change, and I can't help but feel that if the restaurant is moved, it will suffer loss of business which will eventually lead to its demise. I don't understand why the proposal involves moving the entire building; from what I remember it is a very small crowded space, and the magic is in the train serving your food, not in the building itself. Since 1951, this little diner has been there, and many generations have enjoyed it. I think it would be a shame to move it as it would lose at least a little bit of its nostalgia for some people if it were in a different location. Leave it there in its tiny building. Let people stand in lines that often run out the door in order to get a counter seat where the train runs as they've done for decades. People

are more likely to return with their children and later on, their grandchildren if it's left exactly the way they remember it.

My husband and I had very different upbringings; his was a life of "privilege", getting every material item he could ever want, although his parents were never home. Mine was the opposite, a loving family always together although we had to stretch the already tight budget just to be able to afford such luxuries as an occasional happy meal from McDonalds. But we are both products of Chicagoland, therefore we share the memories of the Sox tickets perfect attendance prize (not that my husband ever won any; this is no surprise if you know anything about his school years), being at the Bozo show tapings, and our visits to the Choo-Choo restaurant. My kids have been to the restaurant also, and I hope it's still there for them to visit with my grandchildren someday.

Wanna Feel Old?

Of course you do, who doesn't? Besides, it's Friday night, and you're at home reading my blog! ☐ I guess you could be reading this at a later time... But anyway, if you're around my age or older, then you remember [Molly Ringwald](#), a popular actress in the 1980's from many teen-themed movies such as [Pretty in Pink](#), [Sixteen Candles](#), and the iconic [The Breakfast Club](#). If you were a fan of these movies as a teen or young adult yourself, you will probably feel old when I tell you that Molly Ringwald is playing a *grandmother* in her next role. That's right – grandma. A woman whose kid has a kid. Sigh. While we're on the subject of feeling old, I read an article the other day that had some interesting facts about the lives of students entering college this fall. Each August

for the past 11 years, Beloit College in Beloit, Wis., has released the Beloit College Mindset List. It provides a look at the cultural touchstones that shape the lives of students entering college. For these students, Sammy Davis Jr., Jim Henson, Ryan White, Stevie Ray Vaughan and Freddy Krueger have always been dead. Here is some food for thought with the rest of the list:

1. Harry Potter could be a classmate, playing on their Quidditch team.
2. Since they were in diapers, karaoke machines have been annoying people at parties.
3. They have always been looking for Carmen Sandiego.
4. GPS satellite navigation systems have always been available.
5. Coke and Pepsi have always used recycled plastic bottles.
6. Shampoo and conditioner have always been available in the same bottle.
7. Gas stations have never fixed flats, but most serve cappuccino.
8. Their parents may have dropped them in shock when they heard George Bush announce "tax revenue increases."
9. Electronic filing of tax returns has always been an option.
10. Girls in head scarves have always been part of the school fashion scene.
11. All have had a relative—or known about a friend's relative—who died comfortably at home with Hospice.
12. As a precursor to "whatever," they have recognized that some people "just don't get it."
13. Universal Studios has always offered an alternative to Mickey in Orlando.
14. Grandma has always had wheels on her walker.
15. *Martha Stewart Living* has always been setting the style.
16. Haagen-Dazs ice cream has always come in quarts.
17. Club Med resorts have always been places to take the

whole family.

18. WWW has never stood for World Wide Wrestling.
19. Films have never been X rated, only NC-17.
20. The Warsaw Pact is as hazy for them as the League of Nations was for their parents.
21. Students have always been "Rocking the Vote."
22. Clarence Thomas has always sat on the Supreme Court.
23. Schools have always been concerned about multiculturalism.
24. We have always known that *"All I Ever Really Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten."*
25. There have always been gay rabbis.
26. Wayne Newton has never had a mustache.
27. College grads have always been able to Teach for America.
28. IBM has never made typewriters.
29. Roseanne Barr has never been invited to sing the National Anthem again.
30. McDonald's and Burger King have always used vegetable oil for cooking french fries.
31. They have never been able to color a tree using a raw umber Crayola.
32. There has always been Pearl Jam.
33. The Tonight Show has always been hosted by Jay Leno and started at 11:35 EST.
34. Pee-Wee has never been in his playhouse during the day.
35. They never tasted Benefit Cereal with psyllium.
36. They may have been given a Nintendo Game Boy to play with in the crib.
37. Authorities have always been building a wall across the Mexican border.
38. Lenin's name has never been on a major city in Russia.
39. Employers have always been able to do credit checks on employees.
40. Balsamic vinegar has always been available in the U.S.
41. Macaulay Culkin has always been *Home Alone*.
42. Their parents may have watched *The American Gladiators*

on TV the day they were born.

43. Personal privacy has always been threatened.
44. Caller ID has always been available on phones.
45. Living wills have always been asked for at hospital check-ins.
46. The Green Bay Packers (almost) always had the same starting quarterback.
47. They never heard an attendant ask "Want me to check under the hood?"
48. Iced tea has always come in cans and bottles.
49. Soft drink refills have always been free.
50. They have never known life without Seinfeld references from a show about "nothing."
51. Windows 3.0 operating system made IBM PCs user-friendly the year they were born.
52. Muscovites have always been able to buy Big Macs.
53. The Royal New Zealand Navy has never been permitted a daily ration of rum.
54. The Hubble Space Telescope has always been eavesdropping on the heavens.
55. 98.6 F or otherwise has always been confirmed in the ear.
56. Michael Milken has always been a philanthropist promoting prostate cancer research.
57. Off-shore oil drilling in the United States has always been prohibited.
58. Radio stations have never been required to present both sides of public issues.
59. There have always been charter schools.
60. Students always had *Goosebumps*.

I hope I didn't depress you, but remember, it's not my list, so blame Beloit College and Molly Ringwald if you feel like an old geezer. Why don't we just forget about the list and toast our recycled bottles of Coke to life experience.