

Family time... sort of

Today I took a trip back in time, sort of. For just a little while, I was back 20+ years ago having a donut with my little girl. She's no longer the 2 or 3 year old I would carry on my shoulders for 4 blocks to the donut shop, and she definitely eats more than 1/2 a donut now. But just for an instant I saw that very young father, and his daughter in the reflection of the door entering the donut shop.

The shop changed in the past 20 years. There is no longer a bar with stools to sit and watch the frenzy behind the counter. The library and store that was across the street no longer exist in that location. The apartments still looked the same.

They say you can't go back, and of course that is true. I would never want to try to live in that little apartment again. I've grown to comfortable living in the country away from the noise, the lights and the people. I like the silence and the darkness. Most of the time this suits who I am.

I've changed over the past few years, but I haven't changed to the point where I can't enjoy a quick trip to the donut shop with one of my girls. I hope all my girls have some special memory of things they did with their parents. I know I have some for each of them...

A simple cuppa

As a society we are surrounded by coffee. In larger cities there have been Starbucks on every corner. Stretching the point a little, but they did just close a number of "extra"

shops. There are also a number of other coffee places that are national/international brands. Even the likes of McDonalds are starting to sell their own premium coffees. Where does it end?

Now I admit being a bit of a coffee nerd/snob. I have tasted good coffee and desire it above all others. I like the pure 100% coffees from specific regions (Kona and Kenya AA are at the top of my list). I like various blended coffees (Mocha Java and Kona Blends). I like good dark roasts, medium roasts and light roasts. I even go for a good shot of espresso every now and then. When it comes to flavored coffees, there are those I like and those I don't. Adding flavor to coffee is outside the realm of a simple cuppa... So are most of the fancy blends and even the espresso.

I'm talking about a simple no nonsense cup of joe. That fresh jolt of black goodness in the morning. And the thoughts of that cup bring back memories of days long past.

I've told the story many times, of my wife and I finding a coffee shop of all places to spend a little time alone. At that time, I was the only one to even drink coffee. It grew on her. But I felt myself being drawn further back in time. To a small apartment, our first, in Toledo, OH. This little two bedroom unit was about 3 or 4 blocks from a Dunkin' Donuts shop. I remember walking down on some Saturdays to get some donuts and for me a coffee. That coffee was some of the best I've ever tasted. To this day it is still one of my favorites. In those early days, we didn't even have a coffee maker in the house (I would consume the whole pot), so this was a treat. I even had a Dunkin' Donuts thermos so I could get cheaper re-fills.

If I have my count of Toledo area donut shops correct, that one Dunkin' Donuts is the last in the Toledo area. When we lived there, there were at least 4 in the area. Who knows why they left this part of the country for a while. But I've

heard that they are opening up new shops in the Ft. Wayne IN area. I now live halfway between Toledo and Ft. Wayne, so maybe I'll be able to get coffee and a donut from Dunkin' Donuts when I'm on the road. I'd love to see them expand in the area again. But maybe 65 miles isn't too far to go to relive a memory...