

Trick or Treat on School Street

By Nicolle



The ice cream man on School Street in Lafayette Photo Andy Scheck

The ice cream truck industry has changed quite a bit since my day. When we heard the tinny rendition of...what was that song? We ran into the house, begged for a few quarters and the chase was on for blocks. I balanced one sister on the back of my banana seat and another on the handlebars... 'look Ma no helmets! I braved busy streets and honking horns. I fought for my cream. The ice cream man? Well his job was rough too. He would drive fast then slow masterfully playing his funky tunes. He worked 'til dusk- he worked hard for the money.

My son came home Tuesday with an ice cream stick and fuzzies and cigarette gum, you know, the kind you blow into and 'smoke' comes out. "Where did that come from?" I asked. "The ice cream man" he responded nonchalantly. I swallowed down the motherly urge to bring up the sugar -you didn't ask for permission-and what was up with the Lucky Strikes issues, because we are new in town and...an ice cream man? (I sidetrack easily) Is a sugar pusher, a seller of red dye #5 in Lamorinda, in our midst? When my daughter comes home a ½ hour later, she had a pack of Pal Malls and a Push Up. I eyed her questioningly "what Mom? The Ice

Cream Man" she replied to my unspoken question. I stared at the refrigerator with a copy of the healthy school lunches and Red Ribbon Week flier and scowl. Shake it off helicopter lady.

The next day I must find him. I listen for the music, I slowly pace up and down near the school and he never passes by! I gaze at the trail of avid outdoor exercise enthusiasts and 'walk to school day!!!' signs floating in the wind. How did children catch the elusive man? I'm clued in later by a passing fake Camel blower that he parks on the street. He's there daily. No music. No fast and slow driving. He waits, parked on or near School Street with clamoring children waving money in their fists.

It hits me as I walk home, at the rate we're going, will there soon be a mandate on ice cream sales in proximity to schools? I enjoyed cookie sales at school as a child and now we get wrapping paper and magazine fundraisers? Next thing I know we'll be selling food recycling buckets for your waste when someone becomes tuned in to the fact that we're peddling paper. Halloween is not the only opportunity to be a kid around here; it's comforting to see some of these symbols of our childhood are still around.

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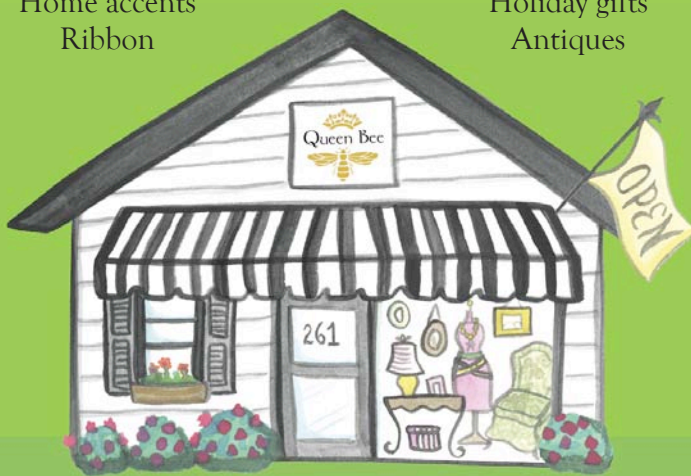
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