The Hottest Tickets in Town

By Gail Busiek, Mattapan, Massachusetts

LIVING in the Shorelands neighborhood, in 1949 and ’50, we could walk to the center of Old Greenwich, Connecticut to spend our allowance on candy.

Every Saturday, my mother would hold out her hands with a nickel and a dime in her palms and ask us which one we wanted; it was her little joke. My sister Sue and I each picked the nickel, since the nickel was bigger and obviously worth more.

We would crow over our nickels, thinking we’d outsmarted our mother. Our sister Jacquie, being brilliant, picked the dime, as Sue and I smiled knowingly at each other behind her back.

My dear friend Robin Carlson completed the “Candy Club,” and we’d all head for Mead’s Drugstore, in the center of town. There, we’d ponder the biggest-looking candy bars.

Hershey’s looked big, as did 3 Musketeers. The unchewable and indigestible Turkish Taffy bar could keep us pleasantly nauseated for hours.

The Candy Club boycotted a certain bite-sized candy bar. We were told that it was worth all of a nickel because it had raisins and nuts in it. We knew a bad element had entered the candy market. How many raisins were we supposed to think was in that thing, anyway?

Jacquie, of course, had enough money for two candy bars and picked a smaller bar that tasted better—the renowned Welch’s Fudge. While Sue, Robin and I gobbled our candy bars as fast as we could, Jacquie, being a tower of maturity and self-discipline, nibbled hers to make them last.

In time, the Candy Club became the Mallo Club cult. Mallo Cups were the greatest! In the bottom of each cup's package was a printed cardboard square, and 500 points' worth of "coins" would entitle us to 10 free Mallo Cups. It became a point of honor to buy only Mallo Cups to get our 500 points.

Robin had the biggest allowance, giving her a certain cachet among us in buying more Mallo Cups.

Then, I made a desperate move. When I'd get to my Brownies den meeting, with 10¢ in my pocket for dues, I'd say I didn't have the money. I endured endless humiliation and shame and the fury of the den mothers so I could contribute three cardboard pieces a week to the Mallo Club cult.

We collected 30 pieces, and our excitement mounted. By Jacquie's arithmetic, we might have 500 in just a few years. The pieces were kept under Sue's bed with her matchbook collection, bottle-cap collection, cereal-box-top offers, forbidden comic books and some chicken bones from her midnight snacking.

One day, Sue was tending a leaf fire outside when a spark singed the frayed threads of her blue jeans. She was afraid Mom would get mad if she found out, so she threw the jeans under her bed and sauntered out, freshly clothed and whistling casually.

Mom soon smelled smoke, ran into Sue's room and threw a pot of water on our stockpile under the bed. With a few choice words of description, Mom cast it all, smoking and soaking, into the garbage can.

It was the deathblow to the Mallo Club cult, and although the Candy Club was never revived, there were many more clubs to be launched.

SWEET! Mallo Cups Have Filled Many to Brim

IN 1932, brothers Bill and Bob Boyer began helping their mother

make candies in their kitchen in Altoona, Pennsylvania to bring in extra income.

Bill would make the sweets; his mother, Emily, would wrap and pack; Bob would then sell them door-to-door.

The first candies were homemade fudge and nut-raisin patties, and their popularity soon had Bob selling store to store.

High demand led to the first factory, where they added molded chocolate animals and other specialty items to their products.

It was at this point that the Mallo Cup was created.

The Boyers worked on a chocolate-covered marshmallow bar, but couldn't get the marshmallow center to stiffen. Mrs. Boyer suggested using cupcake papers, which led to the development of their chocolate-cup candy line.

Other additions to the line include the Smoothie Cup, with a peanut-butter center and butterscotch coating, and the Peanut Butter Cup, with creamy peanut-butter filling covered by milk chocolate.

Another thing that set the Boyers' candy apart was the coin premiums—printed cardboard within each candy wrapper that had a denomination between 1¢ and $1—redeemable for candy, coupons for candy or, currently, a rebate, when they totaled 500 points' worth.

The family business was incorporated in 1936, with Bill and Bob as the company's principal officers.

Decades later, Mallo Cups, the whipped-marshmallow-creme-center candies surrounded by milk chocolate and coconut, continue to roll off the Altoona plant's assembly line.

As many as 550,000 chocolate-cup candies still are made in each 8-hour shift, eagerly awaited by those who remember the thrill of finding a 50-cent, or even a $1, coin premium with their candy treat all those years ago.