

Starspeak

by Kevin John Phillips

“If you've never been in Starbucks...” may be a phrase as close to silly as one could snuggle, don't you think? We've all either ordered, been with someone who ordered, or tried to order a cuppa joe at Starbucks — I'd put a fiver on it.

A man's lifetime includes a handful of happenings that define his culture, and this Monster Coffee Company from the farmer's market section of Seattle may rank one or two on the list for me, trailing only that last Cowboy playoff game. (Excuse me while I projectile vomit. Okay, I'm back.) I'm not a Starbucks junkie and really only go there when the missus says she needs a Hazelnut something before she goes postal, but the place defines the culture you and I live in, no doubt.

So if we all have an idea what goes down when the young person at the cash register (the registerista?) asks, “Can I help you?” then we all know there's a different way to habla at Seattle's gift to the world.

For instance, there's a Triple Grande Mocha. Know what that is? It's a medium-sized espresso and chocolate drink with an extra shot of espresso. Maybe. I asked the missus, “Say, good-lookin', what's a Triple Grande Mocha?”

Twenty minutes later, “...so Kevin, it kinda depends on how the barista sets the Hecktor Vector Schmector on the espresso machine; that is to say, if he or she runs it at 35.045 PSI — corrected to sea level of course — it produces either 1.2 grams of white foamy goodness or 1.2 grams of just hot milk.”

I blinked and made a squeaking sound.

"It's simple, husband. A tall is the smallest size, and though I prefer the venti or large size when I order a Caramel Ray Liotta, you can still ask them to..."

It's a whole different vocabulary and you have to wonder about the future. What if, thirty years from now, cities are trying to pass Starspeak Only laws? Might we have to understand things like...

"Well, Mr. and Mrs. Phillips, when it comes to math and science, your son is Quad, Extra Hot and Double Blended; when it comes to reading and English...well, to be honest...he's a datgum Two Pump Hazelnut."

Will the announcer's whisper hurry out of her mouth like a hiss of steam, "Will this be the highlight of the event? Our last diver needs to score a 9.6 on this dive, a very difficult Quarter Soy, half pack Sweet and Low, light extra foam maneuver. Here she goes..."

Will Starspeak slip into home decor? "I would have painted it a more vibrant color, you know? Looks kinda One Pump Sugar free Vanilla now that I see the whole room."

"Gosh when I was 23, I could drink beer all night and still I looked like a Skinny Soy Latte. Now if I even pick up a bag of chips, I plump up to a Venti, Thick, Heavy Whipping Cream Breve."

If you tell someone you want Iced Quad Grande, you'll be saying, "I'll come at you like a spider monkey, Chip."

I better get up to speed...it'll be soon enough the doctor will say, "Okay, Kevin, let's have a look at the old frappuccino." I'd better know what to show.

