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Up's Oscar Noms Will Mean More Business for the Movie's Real-Life Ice-Cream Stop

2/3/10 at 11:30 AM | Comment



Photo: Walt Disney Studios

After *Up* received its Oscar nomination for Best Picture (the first animated film since 1991's *Beauty and the Beast* to get one), the Pixar crew likely treated themselves to a sundae at their local Oakland soda fountain, **Fentons**. Not only because *Hey, who doesn't love ice cream?*, but also because Fentons has an important cameo in the film: An animated version of it serves as the final scene's location, as Carl, Russell the Boy Scout, and Dug the dog happily sit outside on the curb with their cones. And the Fentons scoopers will be happy the Pixarians have a reason to celebrate, because every time *Up* gets attention, more fans show up to eat.

"When the movie first came out, it created an excitement locally and we got an increase in business," said owner Scott Whidden. "People would come in wanting to know if it was really us in the movie. We noticed the *Up* effect again when the DVD came out. It feels like the awards attention is just another way that people might be prodded to come down. People have been calling and e-mailing to say congratulations. It's almost like we are winning a little something as well."

The mom-and-pop shop, located right near Pixar's Bay Area HQ, got its honorary role because it's a common space for Pixar family birthdays; both *Up* director Pete Docter and producer Jonas Rivera have celebrated there. "I love that place," Rivera told us the night he picked up his Producer's Guild Award. "It felt really good to include a local landmark in the film. We could have just thrown in a generic ice-cream parlor, but it felt cooler to include a real local institution that fans could visit after seeing the film."

While business hasn't exploded at Fentons on an *E.T.*-Reese's Pieces scale, it has definitely brought new customers and coolness cachet to the family business. Whidden has countless stories of kids dragging their parents in and people crossing state lines after seeing the film to feast on Fentons. After a matinee, one Washington couple were reminded of their first date at the shop twenty years prior, and came all the way back to re-create it. And the curb outside has become a common photo-op spot. Whidden says he sees people posing à la Carl and Russell at least every couple of weeks: "It's better placement and branding than we could buy." Though in yet another example of movies being better than reality, the aforementioned curb is a bus stop. "We get a little nervous with all these folks trying to re-create the scene. We want to make sure they leave with all their legs intact."

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