

Long Ago and Far Away

By Suzy Hopkins

From the age of 13 I wanted to be an art teacher. My 7th grade art teacher was a handsome, amazing, exciting, creative, inspiring phenomenon. I wanted to mirror him.

So, in 1966 I went to a college that had a large art department. After speaking to some of the seniors who were in the process of doing their practice teaching I slowly, miserably realized that the high school kids need an art class credit to graduate and most had absolutely no talent or interest. Therefore their teachers were spending most of their time disciplining the rowdy students. The grammar school teachers were doing extremely simple projects with the kids. Not very rewarding. Most junior high schools didn't even have art teachers. Many schools no longer paid art teachers. 'Guest artists' were performing those jobs.

I was devastated.

Not knowing what else to do, I quit school and moved into the YWCA. The *only* job I could get was in a bank. Not the First National, not the Second National, but the Third National Bank. I hated math but I had to support myself. Turns out I loved bookkeeping. I worked in the Proof Department in the bank's large basement. You know how you can cash a check from any bank at your bank and somehow it magically gets back to the originator's bank? I ran the massive proof machines with 24 skinny bins, one for each bank. These batches were delivered by courier the next day. The tellers just take the deposits without calculating the total. That was my job. I corrected errors, sent each check to the correct bin, adding the amount to the depositor's account and balanced the 'day's work'. I loved getting the correct answer after huge amounts of daily deposits and looking for errors if it didn't balance.

All that work is done after banking hours. While waiting for the info to be processed by the general ledger person the proof department staff was free to wander the bank. When you're young you can have fun anywhere. No, I won't tell you what we did or what we discovered but it was fun and fascinating.

Since you asked, in 1969 I was finally living in my own furnished apartment loving my job at the Third National Bank of Scranton, Pa.