

My First Job

By Suzy Hopkins

Desperate to have my own money to spend I obtained working papers in 1962 at the age of 15.5. Luckily, I got the job I applied for as a waitress at the large Italian restaurant in my home town of Lexington, Massachusetts the location of the first battle of the American Revolution. Summer was the busy tourist season and the restaurant was staffing up for the crowds who usually stopped to eat lunch or dinner at the locally famous restaurant.

It probably wasn't the best first job for me because I wasn't organized as was reflected by the mess in my bedroom. Plus, I had to wash and iron my uniform EVERY NIGHT. That didn't fit into my summer evenings plans.

On one lunch shift I had a table of eight. They all ordered pasta dishes. Trying to keep track of who got what was impossible for me but the diners usually helped me serve everyone their order. I was actually good at balancing, on one hand, the huge metal tray with all my orders on it. But, I can barely speak of it even today, I spilled an entire glass of root beer into one of the pasta dishes. I brought it back to the kitchen, red-faced. Now, all of the customers at that table sat and waited for the ruined pasta order to reappear while their meals were getting colder by the minute.

At the end of my shift that day I was fired. Embarrassing? You bet. Strange, as well, because the night before I had a dream I got fired.

I now have a healthy respect for waiters or waitresses who handle many tables, some with large groups.