

# Features

## Waitressing: skills for the jobs of tomorrow



**Rebecca Sulock**  
columnist

surrogate moms, or the cheating wives, or the ugly stepsisters. We're there unfailingly, always coming back with that extra butter or some ketchup. This is the substance, indeed, the very soul of waitressing.

Occasionally, you run into difficulties. In the lingo we call them "problem customers" or, on occasion, "damn assholes." Both of these terms are acceptable.

The Rich People tend to treat you like their personal maid (or butler). They command you "Woman, bring me that A-1 sauce godspeed," and you can tolerate it.

But it's hard to explain to them why you don't have time to shine their shoes, or give them a thorough lintbrushing. You often meet with cries of outrage: "What exactly do I pay you for, insolent wretch?!"

The Cheap People don't seem to realize that the price of a meal has risen since they last dined out in 1975. They scoff at the \$7 entree, and usually end up ordering the most inexpensive item on the menu (a heaping bowl of bacon bits) and eating lots of our unlimited free bread.

The Mean Parents are the hardest to deal with. An example: I was taking the drink order for a table, and one of the children asked me what he could have. I started to tell him, and he interrupted to ask if we had orange soda (which we do).

His mother, however, screamed "NO OF COURSE they DON'T!" and smacked the child upside the head. She had three other children, whom

she treated with equal tenderness all night. The father was chugging Long Island iced teas so fast I could see the liver spots appearing on his head. This kind of family makes you want to scoop the kids right up and haul ass to the Department of Social Services.

The Heavy Drinkers demand to know why you haven't brought that sixth double shot of tequila they ordered. You try to tell them, for the second time, that North Carolina law prohibits more than five drinks in a two hour period and it's only been twenty minutes since they sat down.

They often don't see the logic in such legislation. Either you're lucky, and they leave, sober up, and write letters to their congressmen about the injustice of it all, or else they get very

angry and yell and scream a lot. Stuff like "Well, I never heard of that! Who in the hell wrote that law?! My grampaw didn't lose his arm gettin' shot at by federal agents when he was

runnin' moonshine durin' Prohibition fer nothin'!! Great men like him fought MY right to drink!" only slightly less lucid. These people have the remarkable ability to enjoy an entire dining experience without ever looking at the menu! They also have an extraordinary sixth sense that allows them to come to the restaurant only when it is incredibly busy, so full of people that the guy who wants the corner table has actually sat down to dine with the elderly couple.

Waitress: "Hello blah-blah.. And what can I bring for you to drink?" Man dining with Space Cadet: "I'll have iced tea."

Space Cadet: (after about two minutes, hands resting on her unopened menu) "Oh, I don't know...What do you have?"

Waitress: "Well, we have Coke, Diet Coke, Mr.Pibb..." (then she lists off all 213 possible beverage choices the restaurant offers, including every bottle of beer in the bar)

Waitress: (gasping for breath after reciting list)

Space Cadet: "What was the first thing you said? Coke? I'll have that."

Waitress: (running screaming away from table)

Later on you'll end up listing every appetizer, salad dressing, pasta dish, side item, and dessert in the entire restaurant, sometimes two or three times. All of this could be remedied by a quick glance at the menu.

But, besides the occasional difficulty, waitressing is mighty fulfilling. I look forward to many full years as a service professional, my college degree taped wistfully to the inside of my check binder...

Waitress: (with a hopeful look in her eye) "And while you're deciding on an appetizer, would you like to know about the ancient civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia?"

Customer: (beating children with the table tent) "Shut up and bring me some bacon bits!" (leers menacingly) "By the way, y'all got Mich Lite on draft?"



Ah, waitressing. The venerable occupation so many of us are thrust into during our college years. We wait tables to help pay for our college education, realizing in the process exactly why we want the college education, and then why we need the college education.

Then, when we have the college education, we realize how valuable the waitressing experience was, because it will get us a job a lot quicker than, say, a Ph.D. in English.

Before I say anything else, however, I should begin by decoding some of the secret lingo that goes with the job. "We're on a wait" means that there are angry people waiting at the door, demanding to know why they haven't been seated yet at that one booth ("See that one?! That one in the corner right over there!") where an elderly couple is still sitting, not quite finished with their key lime pie ("They're almost done! We're goin' in!").

When we say we're "in the weeds" or "weeded," it means that

we're panicked because of stressful circumstances, such as: the little crack in the roof above our section of the restaurant just broke open and no one requested "open-air dining" tonight, or the hostesses just got in another fistfight with the guy who wants the table in the corner, or we just ran out of Michelob Light on draft.

But I think I speak for all of my brothers and sisters in the serving profession when I say: I love my job. It's gratifying. At the end of each shift, you really feel like you've made a difference in the world.

There is truly nothing more satisfying than pouring some sweetened tea in an empty glass of ice, and then seeing the smile of gratitude spread across the customer's face.

People really appreciate what we do. When someone needs extra napkins, we're there for them. We're there in way no one else can be, and we're there when no one else is, not the deadbeat dads, or the

# FYI

For Your Information

february 12 thru february 19

## UNCA

FYI is a service of the Student Activities and Student Affairs offices.

FYI is published each Thursday. Deadline to submit information is Friday at noon, for the following week's publication. Next deadline: February 13. Send a copy with basic information to The Banner, c/o Ad Manager, CH 208A or S. McDonald, HC 27.

### academic notices

- Undergraduate Research - Summer Research Grant Proposals deadline, KH 126 (x6122) • 2/27

### athletics

- Women's Basketball vs. UMBC, 2pm, JG • 2/14
- Men's Basketball vs. UMBC, 4pm, JG • 2/14
- Men's Tennis vs. Citadel, Noon, JC Courts • 2/15
- Baseball vs. WCU, 2:30 pm, GF • 2/17
- Men's Basketball vs. Elon, 7:30, JG • 2/18

### career opportunities/jobs

- Inner Harbour Adventure Camp - Summer jobs - visit Patrick Kelly, 10am-1pm, HC (website link from Career Center homepage - www.unca.edu/career) • 2/17
- Resume Review - appointments available, 1-4pm, Mon., Tues., Thurs., WHC 101 or email nwhite@bulldog
- WNC Consortium Job Fair, Grove Park Inn (4/14) - see Career Center homepage for registered employers - update weekly

### concerts/live entertainment

- Harlem Rockets Comedy Basketball Team vs. UNCA Faculty/Staff/Students/Alumni, 7:30pm, JG, Free to UNCA students • 2/12
- "People Who Must" - great college band, 9:30pm, HC Lounge, Free • 2/13
- Tim Haden Trio, jazz, Noon to 1:30pm, Dining Hall • 2/14
- "The Kingfisher's Wing", theatre, 8pm, HLH, \$3 students (spon. by Bahai Assoc.) (281-2379) • 2/16
- Theatre UNCA: "I am a Camera", CBT (Box Office 232-2291) (Special Student Preview - \$5 • 2/18) • 2/18-2/22

### etc.

- Food Service Committee Open Meeting, 5pm, PDR • 2/16
- Dining Hall new hours - dinner Monday thru Thurs., 4:45-7pm (x6183)
- Spanish Table, guest speaker - Dr. Marcel Andrade "Misconceptions re: C. Columbus", Noon-1pm, PDR • 2/18
- Poetry Reading/ Talk by Janet Sylvester, 7pm, Laurel Forum (x6411) • 2/19

### exhibits

- Marilyn Murphy Exhibition, visiting artist, Univ. Gallery, OH • thru 2/24
- Scott Woodard Exhibition, 2nd floor Gallery, OH • thru 2/25
- Alumni Art Exhibit, Ramsey Library (x6336) • thru 2/28
- UNCA Art Majors Exhibition, Asheville Gallery of Art, 16 College St. (x6875) • thru 2/28

### films

- "Air Force One", 11:30pm - 1:30am, HC Lounge (x6675) • 2/13

### homecoming '98 - "cruisin thru the decades"

- Homecoming King & Queen Voting, 10am-5pm, RL • 2/12; 10am-3pm, RL & 4-6pm, PH • 2/13; 2-6pm, JG • 2/14
- Spirit Banner/Poster Making, Noon-4pm, HC • 2/13
- Parade - over 20 entries & floats, Grand Marshall WLOS' Gary Stephenson, 4:45pm, Univ. Heights - Dining Hall to JC • 2/13
- Pep Rally, 8:30-9:30pm, JC • 2/13
- Moviethon - "Air Force One", 11:30pm, H/c Lounge • 2/13
- Party at Biltmore Estate- Deerpark Restaurant, 9:30pm-1:30am, free shuttles from UNCA Dining Hall, \$5 students with UNCA I.D., \$10 guests • 2/14

### leadership opportunities

- "The Leadership Myth" - understanding team concept, by Melinda Costello, 5-6pm, PDR (sign up in HC 48) (x6588) • 2/18
- Greek Intern Position Available, apply in HC 27 • by 2/19
- Resource Center/Leadership Library - outside HC 37

### lectures/workshops/seminars

- Last Lecture by Prof. Chris Bell, 7pm, HC Lounge (spon. by UP) (x6244) • 2/16
- "Home Again: On Returning to Israel on the Eve of Israel's 50th Anniv.", by Dr. Rick Chess, 7pm, OCC (x6576) • 2/17
- "In Search of Everest", by Adrian Burgess, British Mountaineer, 8pm, HC Lounge (x6001) • 2/19

### organizations/special programs

- Spirit Chain: Buy a link for 25 cents - proceeds to help prevent drug abuse (spon. by Alpha Phi Omega) • thru 2/14
- "The Healing Force" - stimulate cultural awareness, community service, perf. arts, 7pm, HC Lounge (spon. by BSU, PCF, UMCM) (258-3817) • 3/5

### outdoor activities (sign up in HC)

- Oyster Banks - Spring Break Trip, \$175 includes most meals, equip., guides, travel & camp fee - sign up now • 3/14-3/21

### tickets-discounts-hc27-10am to 4pm

- Nat'l Theatre of the Deaf - "Peer Gynt," \$5 students • 2/24-2/25
- Charlotte Hornets, \$10, February games on sale: 2/28 (x6584)
- Movie tickets to local United Artists theatres - \$4 for students
- Wolf Laurel Tickets-\$10 (regular \$15) good any day/time; Student ID

### volunteer opportunities

- Be a "Busytown Busybody" - help children ages 2-10 & their families enjoy the town created by author Richard Scarry at the Health Adventure, Pack Place • to volunteer, call 251-6588
- Lewis Rathbun Wellness Center - 251-0595
- Isaac Dickson Elementary - 281-3700/232-4120