

With Motivation, Job In Fast Foods Doesn't Have To Be A Dead End

By Audrey C. Lodato
Post Staff Writer

Fast food jobs are often disparaged as dead-ends or at least slow starts into the world of "meaningful employment." But that's not necessarily so.

Like many high schoolers, Anton Huntley worked for a couple of fast food companies during his senior year. When he graduated, he stayed on at Bojangles' as an outside maintenance worker. Now he's unit manager of the Wilkinson Blvd. Bojangles' restaurant.

"It's a good career," Huntley advised. "As long as you put something in, you'll get something out. There's no limit; it's up to me." When Bob Raspanti took a job at the biscuit table at the Central Avenue Bojangles' seven years ago, he was just looking to make some extra money while a math and computer major at UNCC.

Now he's director of training for one of the fastest growing chains in America. And he's all of 25.

Kim Archer also started at Bojangles' while in college. Although she had never thought of making a career in fast foods, with a little help from the company she worked up through the ranks to her present position as unit director of the South Blvd. store.

While still in high school, Steven Robinson began working on the grill at the New Hope Rd. Bojangles' in Gastonia. He stayed on after graduating, with plans to eventually go into the Army. But after a year,

Robinson said, "They asked me if I wanted to go into management." Now he's senior co-manager of the Sugar Creek restaurant. And, he added, "I'm real happy with it."

These are not isolated instances. With over 300 company-owned and franchised units in operation in 20 states and the District of Columbia, district supervisor John McCain cited 16 in the Charlotte area alone who began as "crew" and are now in management for the company.

The ability to move from crew into management is dependent on two major components: the company and the employee.

Huntley pointed out, "The moment you're interested in any position, they'll teach you. I took a stab at all of them." He was helping train others in biscuit-making when he asked his unit manager about moving into management. The manager replied that he could if he would develop a "businessman attitude."

But the unit manager didn't leave it at that. "He let me run shifts to help me get ready," Huntley recalled.

Training is an important component of Bojangles' program. According to Raspanti, it's "designed to make people at the crew level work their way into management. It's easier to take a crew member who knows all the positions and make him or her management than it is to train a person from the outside."

Obviously, however, not every person behind the counter at a

Bojangles' restaurant is going to wind up managing the store. What makes the difference??

While "it's there for the taking," Raspanti remarked, "you have to be willing to work a little harder. You have to be willing to step beyond what I call the 'comfort zone' and be willing to reach out to learn and grow. If you're afraid to do that because others might think you're dumb or stupid, you won't make it."

Robinson commented, "The more you know, the more valuable you are. I was pretty good at making biscuits, and I was training everybody. I guess I impressed someone." But, he admitted, "If they hadn't helped me, I wouldn't have made it."

Archer also credited the company with being very helpful, noting that she was encouraged in her desire to move from the biscuit table to master biscuit maker and on up. Now, she's helping one of her crew people who wants to move up.

Huntley, too, has helped crew members advance. He explained, "The more we train, the easier it makes our position."

Many other people in fast foods management changed from one company to another on their way up. And people who became successful in other fields got their first taste of the business world behind the counter or grill of a fast food restaurant.

So don't knock the fast food industry. The end is as alive as you make it.

As Robinson put it, with motivation, "You can make a career out of it."



Unit manager Anton Huntley pours tea for customers at Bojangles' Restaurant on Wilkinson Blvd. (Photo by Audrey Lodato)

Democratic Women

The Democratic Women's Club of Mecklenburg County is sponsoring a forum with the U.S. Senate hopefuls who are running in the May primary. The forum will be held at the County Office Building, 720 E. Fourth St., fourth floor, on Tuesday, March 18, at 7:30 p.m. Fountain Odom, Bill Belk, Milton Croom, Betty Wallace, and Katherine Harper have promised to be there. The other Democratic senatorial candidates have also been invited. The forum is open to the public.

Pot Luck Supper

Women Helping Women: The WomanReach Monthly Networking Pot Luck Supper will be held Tuesday, March 11, from 6-8:30 p.m. at the WomanReach Center.

Bring a dish and beverage to share, and a friend! Doris Cromartie will be sharing "herstory" of struggle and triumph. The WomanReach Center is a United Way Agency. The facilities are handicapped accessible and services are freely given and freely received.

For more information, call a WomanReach peer counselor during Monday - Thursday 10-9 p.m., Friday, 10-4 p.m., Saturday, 10-3 p.m., at 334-3614.

Support Our Advertisers

Martin Proclaims March "Older Worker Month"

Special To The Post
Raleigh - Governor James G. Martin has proclaimed March, 1986, as Employment of the Older Worker Month in North Carolina.

In his proclamation, the Governor stated that "Many North Carolina business leaders have pledged their commitment to hiring middle-aged and older workers because they bring both experience and maturity to the labor force. It has been found that older workers have high performance rates and low absenteeism."

Human Resources Secretary Phillip J. Kirk Jr. joined the Governor in urging business, industry, and government to make a special effort to hire the older adult.

"Age should not be a criteria for jobs," Kirk emphasized. "Research has proven that older workers generally perform as well as younger employees and, in some cases, noticeably better. The fact is that many older adults want to work, and need jobs to make ends meet."

Elaine Stoops, Assistant Secretary of the N.C. Department of Human Resources' Division of Aging pointed out that North Carolina provides free employment programs to help the older citizen. They include the Title V Senior Community Service Employment Program, the three percent Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), and the Employment Security Commission Service which

has a network of offices serving all 100 counties.

The N.C. Division of Aging administers Title V of the Older American's Act, a federal employment program for low-income older adults. The purpose of this community service program is to employ people 55 years of age and older whose income is 25 percent below the nation's poverty level. Currently Title V provides over 1,600 older North Carolinians with part time work each week, regardless of their age.

Approximately 300,000 older North Carolinians are eligible to participate in the Job Training Partnership Act. The N.C. Division of Aging awards grants to public and private agencies who wish to take part in JTPA. The grants are earmarked to train people 55 and over for jobs in private business and industry. These are citizens who are economically disadvantaged, underemployed, or unemployed.

These jobs include homemakers, home health aids, inspectors, packers, fast food operators, medical secretaries, and many more. Some older citizens will be paid while receiving on-the-job training, and there is no age limit to participate in the program.

David T. Flaherty, Chairman of the Employment Security Commission of North Carolina, explained that the agency has a statewide

network of Job Service offices which provide job counseling, testing, and referral. In some cases, new skills can be acquired through training in community and technical colleges. The Employment Security Commission and the Community College System work closely together for the benefit of older job seekers and employers. This training develops skills that lead to employment. There is also an older worker specialist in each Job Service office. During the period of October 1, 1984 through September 30, 1985, more than 12,000 adults over the age of 45 have been placed in jobs. There are currently 835,000 North Carolinians (aged 45 and over) in the work force and 390,000 (aged 55 and over) actually employed.

"Employer participation is essential to the success of older worker programs and services," Flaherty emphasized. "I feel that it is good business to employ the older worker."

SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS

Colinda Howard

Continued From Page 1A
and I think I act like her. So when you see someone who you think is like you in so many ways, you can't help but like them," Colinda reasons.

Colinda's mother, Wialillian is at the tip-top of her favorite people list. "She can give me a hard time. That's the truth. But it usually comes off good in the end," Colinda points out.

This week's beauty attends St. Paul Baptist, where she's on the Usher Board and in the Youth Group.

READ THE POST

ADVERTISEMENT
NO PROFANITY PLEASE

ACCIDENT VICTIMS

WHIPLASH INJURIES ARE SERIOUS!
ACCIDENT VICTIMS
Call
DR. DENNIS WATTS
Chiropractic Physician
Whether You Feel Pain Or Not...
You May Have A Whiplash
CALL TODAY
393-3333
2501 Beatties Ford Rd.
Often, symptoms can appear months after the accidents; months after you've settled with the insurance company, and before any permanent injury starts to hurt.
(Then who pays the bill?? You do!)
WE ACCEPT INSURANCE

Be Well-Suited For Spring

MEN'S VESTED SUITS \$84⁹⁵ & up
Compare at \$169⁰⁰

SPORTCOATS \$52⁹⁵ & up
Compare at \$99⁰⁰

Visit Our Big and Tall Men's Department. Specialized Group Orders

Fast Expert Alterations Available • Lay-Aways Invited

BARRY MANUFACTURING COMPANY
Factory Warehouse
4035 South Blvd.
100 E. South of Sibleybank Rd.
527-2506

OPEN HOURS: Mon-Fri 9 AM - 6 PM
FRIDAY 9 AM - 9 PM
SATURDAY 10 AM - 5 PM

SEAGRAM'S GIN.

"They say it's the number one gin in America.
They say it's exquisitely dry.
They say it's satiny smooth."

"They also say if I mix it with grapefruit juice, you might stay...for breakfast!"

Everything they say...is true.
SEAGRAM'S. AMERICA'S NUMBER ONE GIN.

© 1985 - SEAGRAM'S GIN • 100% NEUTRAL SPIRITS • DISTILLED FROM GRAIN • 80 PROOF • SEAGRAM DISTILLERS CO., NEW YORK, NY