

Opinion

But sir, the fly's keeping the maggot company

Last summer I landed my first real job. I worked as a waitress in a restaurant that's one of a large chain across the country.

Patty Pascavage
Guest Columnist

Since I'd never worked in a restaurant, I was trained for a week before I was allowed to serve food to the guests. And during my training I experienced a horrible awakening.

Good health is valuable to me, and I suspect health is a major concern for others, too. Everyone has a right to know what really goes on behind the swinging kitchen doors of his favorite restaurant. And many think they do know. But they don't.

I was appalled at what I saw, but I was even more shocked that this was happening in a popular and respectable restaurant — or what I thought was a respectable restaurant.

I'll admit I'm no health expert, but I do recognize blatant disregard for basic sanitation requirements when I see them.

I would almost expect to see health violations in a greasy fast-food joint, but not in a restaurant where the average entrée costs more than \$10.

From the outside the restaurant seemed innocent enough, but the kitchen area and some of the employees were disgustingly unsanitary.

In five days, I was neither asked nor reminded to wash my hands before I began to work. And it was obvious that none of the other employees were encouraged to wash their hands, either.

food to their poor unsuspecting customers without washing the hair spray and makeup residue from their hands.

A hand sink was mounted in the alley — the area where salads are made and the food is received from the kitchen — but that was only for appearance.

The counters and walls were coated with coffee and tea stains. Cabinets and shelves were covered with chunks of petrified salad dressing that had been hardening for weeks — maybe months.

And the floors could have passed for a city dumping site.

The salad bar also was a disgusting spectacle. Carelessness mixed the lettuce with the cole slaw. The Italian dressing was filled with cucumbers and cherry tomatoes. And the French dressing was contaminated with blue cheese, cottage cheese, and something that looked like rancid guacamole.

I knew the servers wouldn't eat that junk, so I couldn't understand why they were serving it to customers.

When they were in a hurry at the salad bar, the servers would grab for lettuce with their bare hands — the same dirty hands mentioned earlier — they were too lazy to take five extra seconds to use the tongs.

But perhaps the most serious violations occurred in the window where the food is transferred from the cooks to the servers. The servers dress and arrange all the food with their hands.

If a server dropped a baked potato or a scoop of butter onto the floor, it was still considered serviceable at this

restaurant as long as the ten seconds was followed — put it back on the plate in ten seconds.

And if the servers were hungry, they just saw something appetizing, they snatch a roll or some french fries, paying customer's plate without thinking twice.

After watching these grotesque procedures on a weekday, I knew I couldn't possibly stomach the same environment on a busy Friday or Saturday night when the mess was times greater. So I quit my job and eating at restaurants until the memories left my head.

The health department is responsible for enforcing public health standards, but our sanitarians can't be everywhere at once. Our personal health is our responsibility!

Since an individual can't realistically change an employee's carelessness or a restaurant's unsanitary procedures, he can at least BE AWARE of potential health hazards and choose restaurants carefully.

I assume since everything was happening behind closed doors, the employees thought what the customer didn't know wouldn't hurt them — in this case it just might.

Patty Pascavage is a journalist and guest columnist for The Battalion.

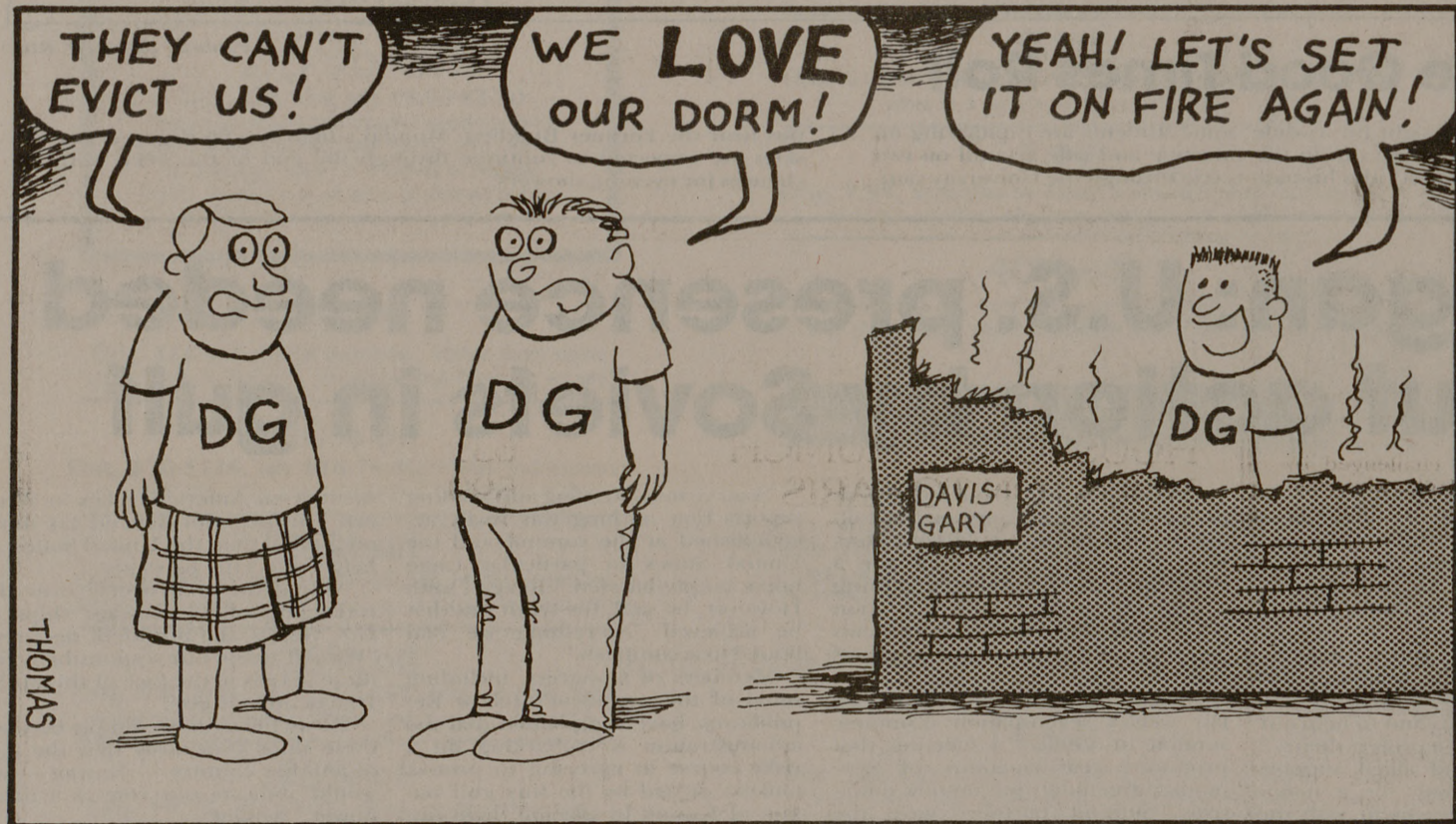


Some of the women would arrive early and spend 15 minutes primping in the mirrors.

They'd brush their hair, reapply their makeup, and then prepare and serve

I didn't see one person use that sink the entire week.

Not only were the employees unsanitary, but the entire alley looked like it had just been wrecked by Rambo.



Sex in Moscow — ain't it great?

As I read the reports of the sex-for-secrets scandal involving Marine guards at our embassy in Moscow and Russian beauties, I kept wondering why I hadn't seen any women in Russia to write home about when I was there.



Lewis Grizzard

I met a female conductor on a train. She could have pulled it. I met a tour guide who had fat ankles and hairy calves. She could curdle borscht.

The only woman I saw who had even the remotest chance of getting secrets out of me was a performer at a Moscow nightspot. She came on stage in a Russian bikini (tank top and knee-length exercise shorts) and entertained the crowd by twirling 11 hula hoops around her waist for what seemed like an hour-and-a-half.

If hula hoops are still going over that big in the Soviet Union, I thought to myself, wait until the Russians are introduced to Slinkies and Mr. Microphones. Let me put it this way: If the women I saw were any indication of

the beauty of the entire female population of the Soviet Union, Tammy Faye Bakker could walk down a street in Moscow and dogs wouldn't growl at her.

I recently received a letter begging my pardon about all this, however.

I'm not at liberty to disclose the name of the letter's author for reasons that soon will be obvious, but I can tell you he is from Deep South Georgia and was in Moscow to help plan an agricultural exposition not so long ago.

The man writes of walking into his Moscow hotel for the first time and spotting a gaggle of lovely, well-dressed young ladies who he later learned, by direct contact, were prostitutes.

I will allow him to describe what later occurred. "I was drinking vodka in my room with this gorgeous Tanya who spoke fluent English and assured me she was a direct descendant of Princess Alexandra.

"We began discussing price, and she said I could not pay her in rubles because it was her duty to take only foreign currency in order to help the Russian economy. With foreign currency, she explained, the Soviets could import more foreign goods.

"I had purposely left only one traveler's check in my wallet," the letter continues.

"I pulled it out and told her, 'I'm just a poor old country boy from South Georgia, and all I've got is this one traveler's check.'"

"She started rebuttoning things and then she noticed a book of withdrawal slips from the First National Bank of Babbitt, Ga., that was sitting on my night table. "She said, 'You have more than one traveler's check. Look at all these.'"

"I took a long gulp out of my vodka, smiled sweetly at her and said, 'Princess, I think me and you are about to do wonders for the Russian economy.'"

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Mail Call

Big brother shouldn't decide

EDITOR:

This letter regards the column by D.A. Jensen June 10. I totally agree with her column about abortion and adoption. Her opinion reduces a woman to a "baby machine" in order to make a few childless couples happy.

If these couples want children badly enough, all they need to do is look at the tens of thousands of non-infant, non-white, non-adorable little playthings in all of the state ward institutions around the country.

These couples only want blond-haired, blue-eyed babies, yet they ignore the older children who need just as much (if not more) care and love.

A woman's choice to have an abortion is usually not casual. Most women don't say, "Oh, I forgot that cruise to the Caribbean last month, I'd better get an abortion." Not only is it an emotional strain on a woman, but also it is a strain on her pocket book.

Abortions are not free — most cost at least \$200. Another fact is that there is not one abortion clinic in Brazos County, barring private doctors who may consider performing an abortion for a large sum.

I resent Ms. Jensen's assumption that every woman who has an abortion is guilt-ridden.

That may be true of some women, but she's neglected to mention that women who have had children also become depressed at the decision. Not only that, but counselors at these clinics tell the women everything there is to know about the procedure and the physical and emotional after-effects of an abortion. These so-called pro-lifers, on the other hand, show people colorful pictures of full-term babies thrown in dumpsters, saying they represent abortion. That is why counselors implore their patients to use birth control, which, by the way, is never 100 percent effective.

We should trust women to make reasonable and rational decisions about whether or not to have an abortion.

It is ridiculous to generalize about abortion, especially when it concerns having or not having a child. We must realize that abortion is a very personal and situational decision at all times. And if a woman believes it is morally wrong to have an abortion, it should be between her and God (or her conscience) and not between her and the rest of the nation.

Bonnie Harris '89

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The Battalion

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