

December, 1980

Well, Folks, 1980 was not my year but it certainly proved to be the most unusual year of my life.

I finally opened my restaurant (the cause of all my woes) on January 3. I had an opening party January 1 and surprisingly over 100 people showed up. I had entertainment and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. From there on it was downhill.

I hired two friends to work in the restaurant. They are excellent workers and have done many extra chores to make the restaurant what it is. Herman, the cook, did all the decorating and the work that went into it. Chad is the counter person and helps me with my books. However, dealing with both their personalities at times is enough to drive one mad. I had to suffer much verbal torture from Herman especially and icy stares from the other. Neither has gotten out of their adolescent stage and things can flare up for the most inane reasons. For instance, I asked Herman to label the containers in the refrigerator so we could identify what we had in them. That started a month long battle that was incredible. After a year of long suffering I am slowly getting Herman and Chad under some kind of control. I consider them very valuable employees despite their faults. But it is hell being a boss...

During the year the Cafe was burglarized once, a window pane in one door was broken, the keyholes were stuffed with toothpicks. O, yes, someone took money from the register when a new employee left it unattended. Kids come in and steal from the tip bowl on the counter. My first moped was stolen right from under my nose in front of the Cafe. Another was stolen out of my garage when some kids saw me put it there as I was headed for the Cafe.

My overhead for the restaurant is extremely high and I have steadily been losing money month after month. I am in debt up to my eyeballs and owe the government money which I can't pay so they continually penalize me and charge me interest. One bill was for over \$500 in penalties alone. But, I am confident things will improve. So what else can I do considering if I close I lose, maybe \$50,000 - most of which is in loans. The government gets theirs even if you go bankrupt.

I set up an office in one part of the restaurant where I will be doing income tax so that is another incentive to stay open. The Cafe is darling. We serve great food and people like it. It is just that we don't have enough volume, but it is building. We have featured some entertainment now and again and that has helped. We had some parties in what we call our garden room which is just a charming room (designed and decorated by Herman). We do have a lot going for us - if I can hold out.

In July I took a trip to Europe which I tried to get out of because of my financial problems, but I paid way in advance for the trip and could not get my money back. I reluctantly went on the trip and though I saw a lot - a two week Mediterranean cruise was included, I can honestly say I did not enjoy myself. First, the people I was traveling with were ultra conservative and militaristic, always talking about building up the military, etc. We had nothing in common. Second, the cruise was a disappointment because we only stayed in port the most a day, the shortest 6 hours. What can you see in that time? Anyway I know now which countries I would like to see at my own pace

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and with people I enjoy being with.

I lost 40 or more pounds since opening the restaurant. I am just bones. I work from 16 to 18 hours a day. Since we weren't doing well, I decided to try to get some Cafeteria accounts where I deliver sandwiches. Well, I got a couple of these accounts - blind vendors who have cafeterias in federal, state and city offices. So I am up at 6:30 to start delivering sandwiches on my moped. I get to my regular job at 8; then I moped it to the Cafe about 10 (breaktime) and do some shopping; moped it over again at 12 to help with lunch or do more shopping; moped it over at 3 for more of the usual and at 5:30 open the Cafe and work until 9 or later. In the interim I try to get my books done, do more shopping, call suppliers, find suppliers by phone, do repairs, write up and design leaflets, do press releases for art shows which we have at our Cafe for community artists who display their works and on and on. I have not cleaned my house in a year.

Despite all, I am very content, in excellent health (I can't afford to get sick) and very confident of success, or at least being able to make a modest living with the Cafe and my income tax business.

Nothing like a lot of work to keep one young. I am now 47 and not one wrinkle. I am looking forward to my first half century.

Re my Texas boyfriend of last year. He left for Texas to pick up a van (I paid his way by plane, plus other \$\$). He came back all right but with a wife and two kids with the sly intention of my putting them up. He never told me he was married so I just told him to get on welfare. After a couple of months he took his family back to Texas and I am short about \$500. I never got the \$500 or more I loaned to that political person last year and I never got \$1,500 plus interest I loaned to a woman last year. Now if I had all that money right now, I would be out of debt but, such is life in the big city.

Now you know my life story - aren't you sorry you asked? But, then what are friends for and at my age I can afford to be uninhibited.

Love you all,

Denise