



ZOOM in on america

A Monthly Publication of the USA Mission to Poland. Warsaw • Krakow • Poznan

Volume IV. Issue 38.

Many American high school students have part-time jobs either after school or on the weekends. Of course, the best time to take a job is over the summer holidays. You can work as a lifeguard, cook, shop-assistant, babysitter or a cashier and earn some money to spend on a vacation, a first car, or new clothes. Summer jobs are also a chance for students to earn money for college.



Exclusively for the readers of *Zoom in on America* here are some true stories of six Americans who took summer jobs while still in high school. Read and listen and then answer the questions on page 4:

Susan Parker-Burns:

My first summer job was working as a waitress at a restaurant called *Friendly's*, which is a popular chain on the East Coast of the United States. *Friendly's* was famous for its ice cream, and on busy nights I would come home sticky from serving sundaes all evening. The best part of my job was that *Friendly's* was the cool place for kids my age to hang out during the summer. The only problem was being seen in the blue and white checked polyester uniform, which I hated! Everyone who worked at *Friendly's* dreaded working "the counter", a place where single people could come and sit down. The same old man named Mr. Potter came in every day to order toast and coffee. He would yell at us if his coffee was not hot enough or if his toast wasn't brown enough. One day he yelled at me, "This isn't toast, it's hot bread!" and made me get another order. We tried to be sympa-

A waitress

thetic, as Mr. Potter was obviously lonely, but it was difficult!

I ended up staying at *Friendly's* to work part-time during my last year at high school. I liked earning the extra money, but it was very hard to juggle school and work. My first job really taught me how to organize my time and to plan ahead, because I couldn't afford to procrastinate with school assignments. The most valuable lesson, however, was learning to get along with different types of people: the fifty-year-old professional waitress, the stressed-out manager and the temperamental cook who would swear at us if we had any special instructions for the food. You can't pick who you work with, and learning to work well with others sounds simple, but it is really one of the hardest things in life.

Click to listen: <http://www.usinfo.pl/zoom/audio/audio4.wma>

A delivery man

John Surface:

I had a variety of jobs when I was in high school in Los Angeles. I worked as a fry cook at McDonald's, managed a movie theatre, washed cars and drove a delivery truck. I enjoyed the delivery job the most. It gave me almost complete freedom to drive and see the entire city. I organized my route the day before, to do deliveries in one part of the city at a time. I always tried to find new routes. L.A. is a huge city, stretching over 120 miles north to south and from the shore to the desert. I averaged a hundred miles a day. Some days I drove the massive freeways through the middle of the city; some days I drove through the mountains, some days along the beaches – always something new to see.

I worked for a candied popcorn company so the boxes were very light. I had a medium size van that I stuffed full of boxes in the morning. I could do ten to twenty deliveries a day. I delivered to the airport, big business buildings, small businesses and car racing tracks.

We also rented junk food machines to carnivals to pop corn, make cotton candy, and serve nachos with cheese sauce. Popcorn machines are top heavy and stand on wobbly legs, so moving one by hand truck was always an adventure. I once had to push a popcorn machine up a hill on a brick street about a quarter mile to get to the park where the carnival was. When I tripped over a brick, the whole machine came crashing down on me. The machine was fine, I was not – I had smashed my foot badly. But I had to get the delivery done. I limped my way, painfully, through the rest of the day. I remember my boss laughing at me when I got back to the warehouse that afternoon. The other workers called me Gimp from that day forward.

Click to listen:

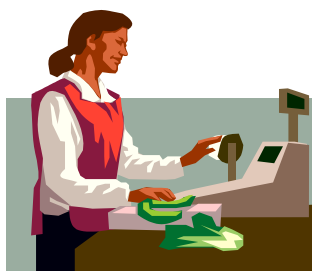
<http://www.usinfo.pl/zoom/audio/audio5.wma>



Pomona Freeway leading into downtown Los Angeles Photo © AP Images



A popcorn machine Photo © AP Images



A cashier

Catherine McGeary:

My sister worked at the local McDonald's or Dairy Queen, where customers sometimes asked her for a cheeseburger without cheese (not a hamburger!) or complained if the ice cream was too cold. I decided to avoid the fast food industry. Some summers I was a baby sitter or worked in a retirement home serving food to the residents.

The job I enjoyed the most, though, was at a neighborhood deli and convenience store called The Trolley Stop. I was a cashier and my best friend made sandwiches at the back of the shop. The cash register was really old and did not calculate the customer's change automatically. Even though math was my worst subject, I still managed not to make mistakes. The owner of The Trolley Stop was a man with the nickname "Red" since he had red hair. Red let the employees have a free sandwich and drink during the work day, and did not mind if I changed my work schedule if I had a soccer game.

The Trolley Stop was a great place to work since I got to meet nearly everybody in the neighborhood (and know which is their favorite sandwich, newspaper or type of candy) and have lots of fun with my best friend right after our work was done.



Photo © AP Images

Click to listen:

<http://www.usinfo.pl/zoom/audio/audio6.wma>

Duncan Walker:

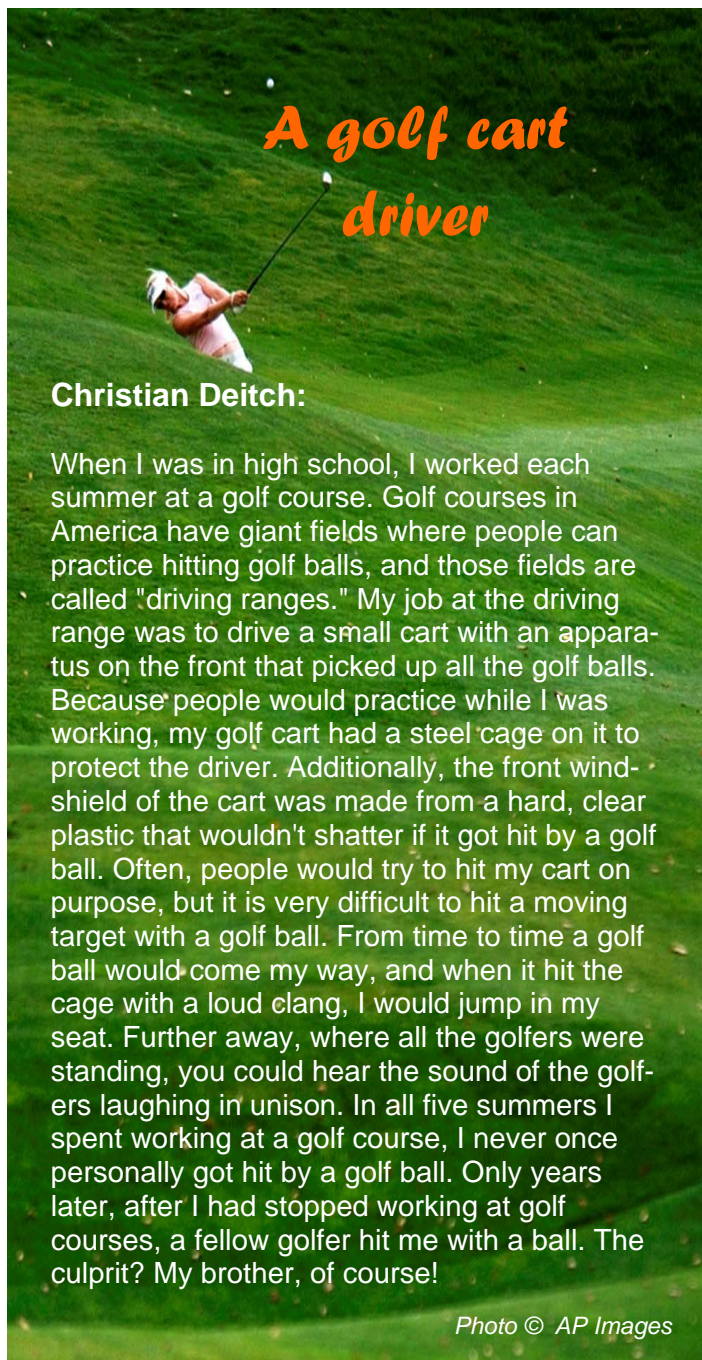
I remember when I was sixteen, and had just finished the school year in June, that I planned to spend the summer of my dreams lying on the sofa at home and watching television all day. My father however thought otherwise. He commanded me in his gentle way to leave the house that very Saturday morning and to not return home until I was no longer unemployed. He repeated his instructions, going so far as to threaten me with punishments just credible enough to push me out the door and into the ranks of the working man – from which I was never fully to return.



Photo © AP Images

I became a fry cook at a Captain D's (motto: "A Great Little Seafood Place!") fast-food franchise. I prepared and cleaned, and when not occupied in legitimate work, I engaged with other kitchen staff in acts of petty warfare with my sister and her fellow waitresses. They would put malt vinegar in our coca-cola; we would persuade them to needlessly clean paper plates collected from the trash can ("Help! We've run out!"). The climax of the campaign came when my sister put eight hush puppies apiece up the dual exhaust of the manager's Oldsmobile 442. I remember well him driving across the parking lot, backfire in the carburetor sounding like depth charges, hush puppies fleeing the tailpipes like cannon shot a foot off the ground.

Click to listen: <http://www.usinfo.pl/zoom/audio/audio7.wma>



Christian Deitch:

When I was in high school, I worked each summer at a golf course. Golf courses in America have giant fields where people can practice hitting golf balls, and those fields are called "driving ranges." My job at the driving range was to drive a small cart with an apparatus on the front that picked up all the golf balls. Because people would practice while I was working, my golf cart had a steel cage on it to protect the driver. Additionally, the front windshield of the cart was made from a hard, clear plastic that wouldn't shatter if it got hit by a golf ball. Often, people would try to hit my cart on purpose, but it is very difficult to hit a moving target with a golf ball. From time to time a golf ball would come my way, and when it hit the cage with a loud clang, I would jump in my seat. Further away, where all the golfers were standing, you could hear the sound of the golfers laughing in unison. In all five summers I spent working at a golf course, I never once personally got hit by a golf ball. Only years later, after I had stopped working at golf courses, a fellow golfer hit me with a ball. The culprit? My brother, of course!

Photo © AP Images

Click to listen: <http://www.usinfo.pl/zoom/audio/audio8.wma>

Eric Salzman:

A lab assistant

When I was in High School, I lived in the city of Los Alamos, home to one of the United States' nine National Laboratories. During the summers, I got internships working as a research assistant at the Laboratory. The first summer, I worked for the Nuclear Research Division - learning how to write software and writing some small programs that became part of a computer simulation of a nuclear power plant. The next three summers, I worked for the Chemical and Laser Science (CLS) Division, in a research group that was working on a variety of projects involving light scattering. They did a lot of different things by shooting lasers at items and analyzing how the light bounces off. With their research, lasers could be used for a variety of applica-

tions, from detecting salmonella poisoning in eggs to eyeglasses for the hard-of-hearing that could sense the volume level in a room to identifying dinosaur gizzard stones.

As a high school student, I couldn't actually go in the lab or work with lasers. Instead, I learned how to use new pieces of equipment and trained other members of the group how to use them, created animated videos showing how to use the new technologies being created by the group, and ordered parts from vendors. The biggest project at the CLS group while I was working there was a security system that would take a picture of your eye and be able to recognize you based on the colors and patterns of your iris. Along with other student interns, I helped gather pictures of people's eyes so that we could test the system.

Click to listen: <http://www.usinfo.pl/zoom/audio/audio9.wma>

Activity Page

Win a Prize!

JUNE 2007 CONTEST

What is the difference between a permanent job & an internship?

Send the answer (with your home address) to:
zoom@usinfo.pl
Deadline: July 5

Win a Prize!

The answer in the May 2007 Contest was:

A freelance journalist works on his or her own

Thank you for participating

The winners are:
Piotr from Wrocław,
Magda from Pisz and
Halina from Lublin

CONGRATULATIONS

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Exercise 1

Read the stories on pages 1-3. Then answer questions by providing the first letter of the name: S - for Susan, J - for John, C - for Catherine, D - for Duncan, Ch - for Christian, E - for Eric.

Who:

1. thinks they have learned a hard but useful thing in life?
2. was once injured doing the job?
3. had to use special protective equipment on the job?
4. used high-tech?
5. didn't like their work uniform?
6. improved their skills in a subject they had problems with at school?
7. carefully planned their activities for the next day so as to avoid the routine?
8. was forced to find a summer job?
9. instructed others as part of their job?
10. played jokes on fellow workers?



Exercise 2

Some words have been removed from the paragraph below, which comes from an e-journal "American Teenagers". Put the words a - h in appropriate places 1 - 8.

Many children first learn this by receiving an ... (1) - a modest weekly or monthly payment - for doing ... (2) around the house. Later, they often take ... (3) jobs after school or on weekends to earn spending money, save for college, get practical experience, and gain a sense of independence. Opportunities are numerous and varied - from delivering newspapers to babysitting for neighbors, from ... (4) groceries at a check-out counter to bussing tables in a restaurant. In fact, many youth, ... (5) of the economic status of their families, receive their first paychecks before they even reach high school. But to protect children from labor ... (6), U.S. law sets the minimum age for employment at 14 years of age for most non-agricultural work and limits to 18 ... (7) the number of hours that ... (8) under the age of 16 may work during a school week.



Glossary -

(in the order of appearance)

sundae - a dish of ice-cream with syrup, fruits or nuts topping

yell - cry out loudly

procrastinate - put off doing

average (v.) - do or have an average of

candied - covered with sugar

wobbly - unsteady

trip over - cause to stumble

limp - walk lamely, especially with irregularity

deli & convenience store - small grocery store

nickname - descriptive name added to or replacing the actual name

credible - plausible, capable of being believed

franchise - authority to sell goods

legitimate - lawful, in compliance with law

warfare - conflict, an activity of fighting a war

climax - the point of greatest intensity or force

hush puppy - small cake of cornmeal fried in deep fat

exhaust - (or tailpipe) - a pipe through which exhaust gases from an engine are discharged

carburetor - a device in a car in which air and petrol are mixed together

flee - run away

windshield - a glass or plastic protective pane in front of the occupants in a car

shatter - cause to break

clang - a loud metallic sound

in unison - in harmony, together

culprit - a person who is guilty

bounce off - move jerkily, bump

gizzard - a muscular pouch behind the stomach in birds

iris - round colored part of the eye

a - hours

b - minors

c - chores

d - bagging

e - regardless

f - abuse

g - allowance

h - part-time



Find answers to activities on this page at www.usinfo.pl/zoom/