



Looking for a high-paying technology career with good benefits?

You might be surprised by what the manufacturing and skilled trades industries have to offer.

The Changing Face of Manufacturing

A public forum hosted by John Tyler Community College
 Tuesday, October 9 • 6:30 p.m.
 Free and open to the community
 Chester Campus • Nicholas Student Center
 13101 Jefferson Davis Hwy.

Learn about career opportunities in the greater Richmond and Tri-Cities areas and the skills needed for these careers. **Connect** with manufacturing companies. Hear from **industry experts** about changes in advanced manufacturing.



FAMILY



Odd jobs and life lessons

I've been lucky in my life to work in a number of occupations, and I have tried to learn from each job I've held. Given the number of different jobs I've held, I should be the smartest person on the planet.

A partial list of my former gigs would include blackjack dealer, copier and fax salesman, crewman on a 53-foot sailboat during an Atlantic crossing, stand-up comedian, telemarketer, office products broker, bartender, press secretary for a congresswoman, substitute teacher, movie extra, advertising copywriter, bouncer and barback in a Caribbean saloon, speechwriter to a governor, retail sales, director of the Virginia Adopt-a-Highway Program, food service (many times), cigarette factory tour guide, daycare teacher, legal services sales rep, waiter (for two hours) and donut maker.

The first thing I've learned is that I apparently can't hold a job. But I've learned more.

My first job out of college was dealing blackjack at a Richmond club where patrons played for pretend money that was redeemable for absolutely nothing. The dealers earned a low hourly wage, and we supplemented our income with tips from the customers. Believe it or not, some patrons would tip us *real money* if we would help them cheat, so they could win more *fake money*. I used to think that was just dumb (because it is), but over time I've seen a deeper lesson in that behavior. I realized that it is very easy in this material, money-driven world to gradually begin giving up important things – like family, dreams or integrity – in order to get non-important things, like money and possessions.

Then there was the job bartending in a Mexican restaurant in Santa Cruz, Ca. Here's the thing: I love ice cream (this does relate to the Mexican restaurant job). Sometimes, at night before I go to bed, I will try – and fail – to resist the call of the Ben & Jerry's in the freezer. Standing at the kitchen counter, I'll power through an entire pint while reading the paper (the Chesterfield Observer, of course). I don't want to eat the whole pint, but it's almost as if I can't stop myself.

What's this got to do with tending bar in a Santa Cruz Mexican restaurant? Well, in this job I consistently pulled the Sunday morning shift – that's right, the Sunday morning shift. See, in California, the early NFL game on

Sunday kicks off at 10 a.m., and pre-game starts at 8:30 a.m. So at 9 a.m. every Sunday morning, I was behind the bar pouring pitchers for early bird football fans. I remember a young guy – a regular – sitting at my bar one morning. He was smart, funny, personable, and well into his second pitcher by 11 a.m.

"I can't help it," he said to me. "My old man was an alcoholic, and so I'm an alcoholic."

I think about that guy sometimes and about how difficult it is for me to say "no" to a pint (or two) of ice cream. How much harder must it be for someone with an alcohol addiction – or a weakness for any number of other life-devastating temptations – to just say no? And then I thank God that my weakness is only ice cream, and pray that it never becomes something else.

Then there was my time as a substitute teacher in Fairfax County after grad school while I was looking for a permanent position on Capitol Hill. Of all the many, many jobs I've had, this by far was the hardest. The elementary school kids weren't so bad – a combination of jokes and veiled threats about their permanent records were enough to keep them in line. That's not to say I could have done that job for more than five days in a row without trying to kill myself with the safety scissors, but I could handle it in short bursts.

It was the middle school and high school kids who were just about impossible, even for just one day or one-half a day. When you are a substitute teacher, the kids understand that you have no real leverage, and they do whatever they want. But for some of these kids it didn't matter whether I was a substitute or their regular teacher. They didn't see their future being enhanced at all by school, and so there was no punishment that they feared. They were impervious to guilt, demerits, detention, suspension, expulsion – there was no lever a substitute or a permanent teacher could pull to induce the kids to cooperate or behave. They, on the other hand, had any number of options for disrupting the class and making the teacher's life miserable. There are broader lessons here about our society and the way that some kids are being raised. But the immediate lesson was this: teaching is one of the hardest jobs there is.

One of my favorite writers, Henry David Thoreau, saw work not just as a way to feed yourself but also as a way to move beyond the theoretical and learn and live out one's philosophy of life. "It is to solve some of the problems of life, not only theoretically, but practically." For me it's been true that, beyond mortgages or car payments or toys, work provides an opportunity to learn about life and to learn about myself.



The Pleasure of Life
 Chuck Hansen

Who is Sheriff Dennis S. Proffitt?

He is your Sheriff, endorsed by these elected officials and business leaders.

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- Delegate Riley E. Ingram-62nd District
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- Kelly Miller-Chairman Board of Supervisors
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- David Wyman-School Board
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Prevention Services offers couples course

Prevention Services will offer a course this fall for couples who want to improve their relationship. "For Better or For Worse" will teach couples how to communicate more effectively, solve problems, and keep fun, intimacy and satisfaction in their relationships.

The course will be held Tuesdays, Oct. 23-Dec. 11 (excluding Nov. 6), from 6:30-8 p.m. The fee is \$50, and fee assistance is available.

For location and registration information,

call instructors Lee Archard at 717-6404 or Robin Jones at 717-6540.

Prevention Services is a division of the Chesterfield Department of Mental Health Support Services.

Chesterfield Observer

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