

## Dinner For One

Out alone?

By Haidee E. Allerton

### Pet Peeve of the Month

The pet peeve in the October Working Life triggered memories of my own pet peeve. As a trainer and consultant who travels on business, I often dine alone. The restaurant greeters look at you askance and ask, "Just one tonight?" I usually respond that my imaginary friend will join me later.

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### Pet Peeve of November

Just read your Working Life blurb on annoying concession stand servers always bugging you to upgrade to a larger size. I agree wholeheartedly, but I must share with you just how seriously theaters take these upgrades. (That's how they make their money.) My son worked for the past two summers at a local multiplex. He's by nature shy and agrees with you...but he was reprimanded and "unscheduled" for three shifts for failing to suggest an upgrade when a mystery shopper was at his

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stand. Even at only \$6.25 per hour, that's a big hit for a guy saving for college.

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Editor's note: As the mom of a son who worked as a teen, I feel terrible now. But as the Working Life writer, I must put aside such feelings for the sake of journalistic truth. ☺

### True Tales From the Workplace

As a training and development manager, I report to the HR director. I can't remember ever having a meeting with her that wasn't interrupted by her cell phone ringing. She's the mother of five growing children, so you can imagine the number of phone calls.

Right in the middle of my performance review, her cell phone began ringing ever so faintly. She reached deep into her bra, pulled out the phone, took the call, and then went back to conducting my review as if nothing had happened.

Name withheld

### More True Tales

A doctor left her stethoscope on the car seat and was taking her daughter to preschool. The little girl picked it up and the physician thought, "Maybe she wants to be a doctor like I am!" Then the child spoke into the instrument, "Welcome to McDonald's. May I take your order?"

## Shot of Reality

**59** Percentage of Americans who believe employees should take a sick or personal day if they don't get enough sleep

**38** Percentage of Americans who slept eight or more hours a night in 2001

**30** Percentage of Americans who say they currently sleep eight or more hours a night

**US\$148 billion** Annual cost of hangover-related absenteeism

Source/Health



# First and Foremost

Firstborns achieve more than laterborns, according to recent studies. Need data?

- More than half of U.S. presidents have been firstborns.
- Two-thirds of entrepreneurs are firstborns.
- Of the 23 U.S. astronauts, 21 were firstborns.
- Of female world leaders, 45 percent of those in the past 40 years were firstborns.
- Two-thirds of the people listed in *Who's Who* are firstborns.

The results are from a study by performance and behavior expert Thomas K. Connellan, author of *Bringing Out the Best in Others! Three Keys for Business Leaders, Educators, and Parents* (Bard Press, February 2003).

Connellan also identified three essential environmental factors:

1. Firstborns receive more positive expectations.
2. Firstborns are given more responsibility.
3. Firstborns consistently receive more feedback.

Anyone provided those elements can be a peak performer, says Connellan, who has advised such corporations as Dell, Sony, Neiman-Marcus, and the U.S. Air Force Academy.

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