

Job Searching 101

by Diane Carroll
Knight Riddler Newspaper

Spring break traditionally is a time for college students to escape their burdens and loll on sunny beaches.

Amanda Denning has friends at the University of Kansas who will carry out that custom in Acapulco, Mexico, and she could go with them. But with the job market for college graduates shaping up as the worst in a decade, Denning instead decided to visit companies in Austin, Texas.

She is setting up "informational interviews" in the public relations field, hoping they will lead to job interviews.

"I have friends who graduated with the very same major as mine last year, and they still are looking," said Denning, 22, who will graduate in May. "It's very scary. Very, very scary."

The booming job market of the late 1990s started to give way early in 2001 and soured significantly last year. This year it is even tighter. The bumpy economy and war with Iraq have dissolved earlier hopes that things might turn around this spring, said Philip Gardner, director of the Collegiate Employment Research Institute at Michigan State University.

"Everything is on hold," Gardner said. "I have employers who say they have intentions to hire. They just don't know when."

At universities in Kansas and Missouri, career placement directors see the same uncertainty. Some companies are hiring, they said, but not in the numbers of the past.

Graduates are in relatively the same fix as their counterparts were 10 years ago with the recession of the early 1990s, according to Gardner and others. The difference, they said, is that 10 years ago everyone knew that the economy would turn around after companies restructured.

This time, it is harder to predict when things will shake out, said Douglas Buchanan, director of career services at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. "Now it's like everybody is waiting on something," Buchanan said. "Everything depends on everything else."

That inability to predict a turnaround also weighs on Gardner. Because of it, he said, "in all my (20) years of doing this, I haven't been quite as pessimistic."

In August, a survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers showed that employers expected to hire 3.6 percent fewer graduates this spring.

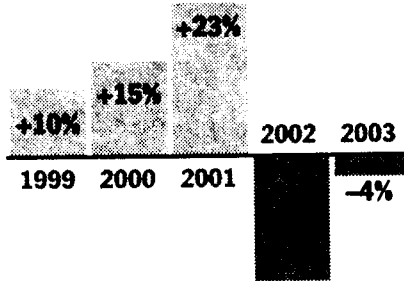
When the survey was updated in December, one-third of the respondents said they planned additional cutbacks.

"A lot of kids are trying really hard and still coming up short," said Camille Luckenbaugh, the association's employment information manager.

"Last year people were hoping the first quarter of this year would be a turning point, but that is not happening. ... We keep hoping we'll see a spark somewhere, but we just haven't seen it yet."

Drop in grad hirings

Annual percentage change in number of jobs expected to be filled with new college graduates:



Source: National Association of Colleges and Employers
Graphic: The Kansas City Star © 2003 KRT

Last month, the association released a report that showed salary offers to many new college graduates were lower than they were a year ago.

The average offer to computer science graduates sank 13.1 percent, from \$51,429 in January 2002 to \$44,678 this January. Starting salaries slipped in many engineering disciplines and increased about 1 percent for liberal arts graduates.

At the University of Missouri-Columbia, the 400 engineering students who will graduate this spring are feeling the pinch, said Matthew Reiske, assistant director for the school's careers office.

"I think we got spoiled a couple years ago because the economy was so good that students could push things off until last minute and still receive very good employment," Reiske said. "Now the companies that are hiring are not filling as many positions, so the market is pretty competitive."

Although the overall hiring picture looks glum, graduates in education, health care and the food industry are

among those who should fare better than most, area universities reported. Graduates in computer science, technology and consulting have bleaker prospects.

"The most optimistic place for college graduates right now is employment with the federal government," said Gail Rooney, director of Career and Employment Services at the University of Kansas. The government is not growing, she said, but 50 percent of the federal government's employees are eligible to retire between 2005 and 2010, and some are retiring now.

MU senior Jonathan Lloyd of Kansas City thinks his chances are improved because of potential retirements in his field of parks, recreation and tourism. The 23-year-old, who has one class to take this summer before graduating, said he initially might have to do something he doesn't like. But in the long run, Lloyd is optimistic he will get a good job.

KU senior Bridget Morrisey of Ottawa, Kan., said she had friends majoring in art who wanted to work at museums but who were so unsettled by the employment prospects that they weren't even looking.

Morrisey, 21, will graduate in May with a degree in psychology. She hopes to land a job in sales and has had several interviews. If nothing pans out, she plans to go to graduate school.

She is not the only one thinking along those lines.

Applications for MU's law school in Columbia are up, Assistant Dean Donna Pavlick said.

Pavlick said that the school usually receives 700 applications for the 150 spots in its freshman class. Last year, with the big drop in the job market, applications soared to 903. This year, Pavlick said, she expects them to hit 1,000.

At Kansas State University, placement officers are talking about how to help those they call the "NIKE" graduates — "no-income kids with education," said Kerri Day Keller, interim director of K-State's Career and Employment Services.

Keller said she expects some graduates who fail to find jobs will return home this summer and live with their parents. With a "NIKE in the home," she said, those parents may start pushing their children in their job searches. K-State plans to offer online help, she said.

Through the looking glass

by Mike Pingree, KRT Campus

GASP, NO, WAIT, I'VE CHANGED MY MIND

An 85-year-old woman in New Forest, England, felt that simply filling out medical forms was not enough. She had the words "Do Not Resuscitate" tattooed on her chest.

JUST HOLD ME UNTIL I FEEL BETTER

In order to get attention from attractive women, a short, fat Florida man has been pretending he is choking, then—after the ladies employ the Heimlich maneuver on him—he hugs and kisses them out of "gratitude."

When a local newspaper printed an account of one woman "saving" him, other women came forward. He has done this at least a half a dozen times. He is described as 5-foot-6, 245 pounds, with a bald spot.

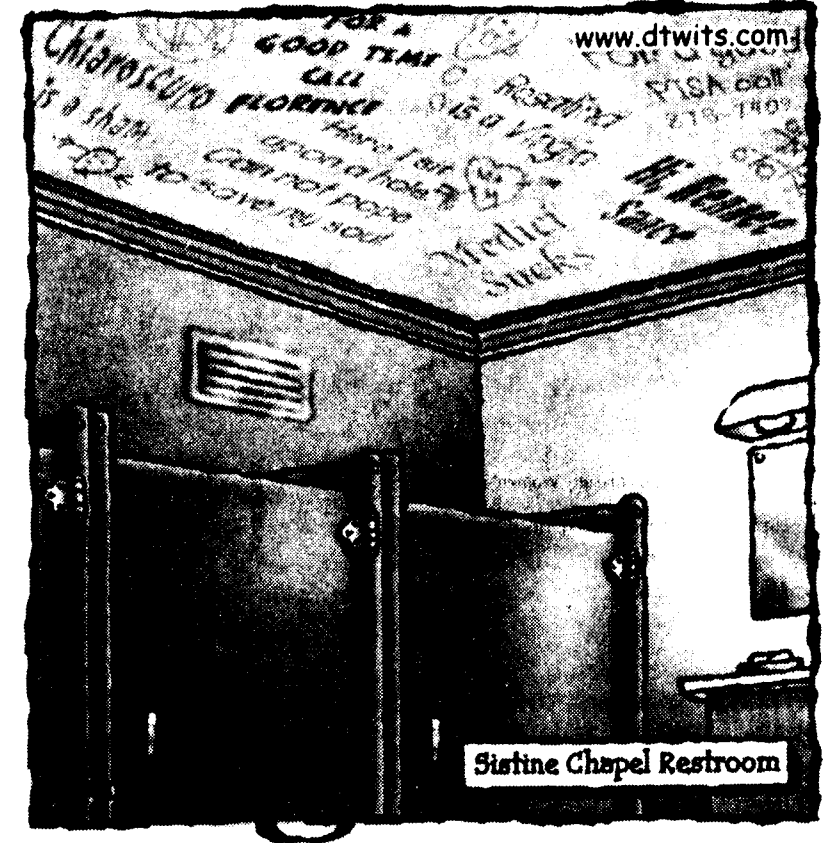
SO THEY KNOW 'SHODDY' WHEN THEY SEE IT

Workers did such a bad job putting up a government building in Germany that it will cost millions in repairs. The building in question is the Ministry of Construction.



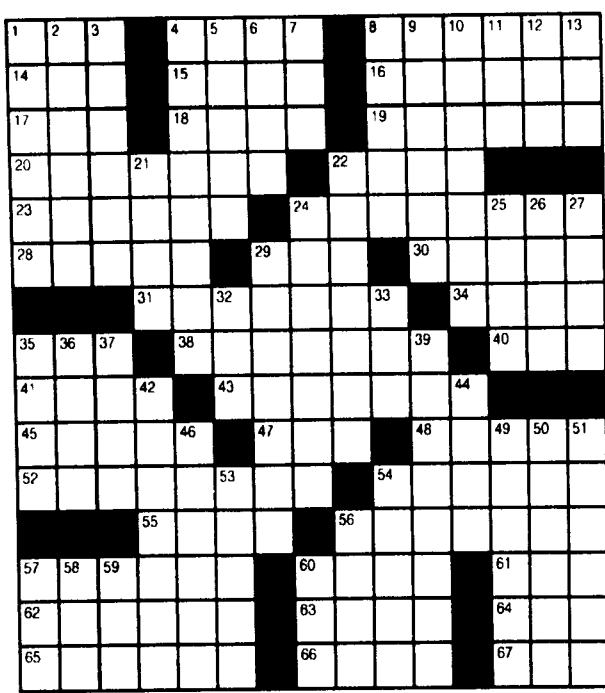
DITHERED TWITS

by Stan Waling



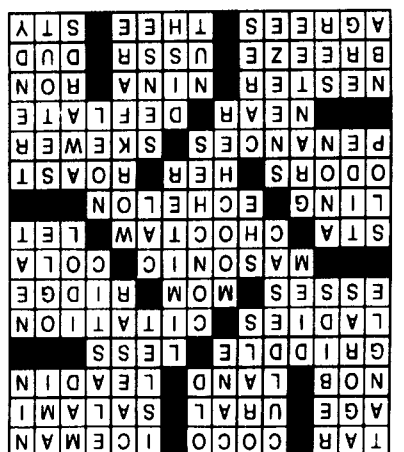
Crossword

- ACROSS
- Tobacco smoke residue
 - Designer Chanel
 - "The ___ Cometh"
 - Ripen
 - River to the Caspian
 - Deli purchase
 - San Francisco hill
 - Touch down
 - Introduction
 - Cooking surface
 - Not as many
 - Women
 - Ticket
 - Double curves
 - May honoree
 - Narrow crest
 - Of a certain fraternal order
 - Soft drink
 - RR stop
 - Mississippi people
 - Permit to
 - Cod cousin
 - Level of authority
 - Scents
 - That girl
 - Friar's Club function
 - Acts of self-mortification
 - Shish kebab pin
 - Close by
 - Collapse
 - Squalter
 - Singer Simone
 - Ely or Howard
 - Gentle wind
 - CCCP, to us
 - Flop
 - Consents
 - Old pronoun
 - Porker's pad



© 2003 Tribune Media Services, Inc. All rights reserved.

Solutions



- DOWN
- Greek markets
 - Makes a new offer
 - Blind alley
 - Some exams
 - Walking stick
 - Aged
 - Archipelago member
 - Roman salad?
 - Flexible
 - Like Carroll's hatter
 - Pierre's friend
 - "The Delta of Venus" writer
 - Per ___ (for each day)
 - Rules maker
 - Horn shells
 - Excessively admired one
 - Eye flirtatiously
 - Tidy
 - Sponger
 - Haggard novel
 - Coolidge's nickname
 - Swill
 - Ocean's rise and fall
 - In due time
 - Public-service job
 - Recipient of an endowment

- Coward of theater
- Sternutation
- Prizes
- Begin a journey
- Fashionable
- Concerns
- Feel
- Culinary concoction
- Hoopsters' org.
- Work unit
- Sun. talk
- Fanatic

Freedom: Do you want fries with that?

by Ryan Russell
staff writer

Have the men and women elected by America to our Congress finally gone insane with their power? No, and while planning to attack Saddam is a good idea, Congress announcing that french fries and french toast are now known as "freedom" fries and "freedom" toast may not be the best plan ever to drum up Allied support.

You read right, freedom fries and freedom toast. On March 11, U.S. Rep. Bob Ney, Ohio, Chairman of the Committee on House Administration, responded to a letter from U.S. Rep. Walter Jones, NC, calling for just such a change to the House menu.

According to Ney, "This action today is a small, but symbolic effort to show the strong displeasure of many on Capitol Hill with the actions of our so-called ally, France."

And yet, maybe it's not. This action seems to be a small, but symbolic effort to show to the rest of the world why America is seen by some as the dumbest country on earth.

Never mind that China, Russia and Germany have also voiced their opposition to our fine war efforts. It must simply be that Congress sees France as the next biggest threat to American safety after Saddam

Hussein, Osama Bin Laden, those "Truth" commercials, and Hulk Hogan, so we must attack them before they attack us.

It must be pointed out that ideas like freedom fries have been thought of before this. During World War I, in a fit of anti-German propaganda, sauerkraut was known as "liberty cabbage" and hamburger was known as "liberty steak." There was one major difference between what

economy, and dealing with budget deficits to focus on the French, then we, as patriotic citizens, need to join in the anti-France stance.

With that in mind, here is a plan, secretly obtained from the same place where the Behrend Underground Tunnel, Jimmy Hoffa, and the "real killer" O.J. always talked about, are located. This is phase two of "Operation Kick France In The Freedom."

Why stop at freedom fries and freedom toast? I can't wait until I can freedom kiss a girl at a party some night. After we get married, I'll make her an appointment to get a freedom manicure. While waiting for her, I'll have a salad with freedom dressing, thank

you very much. Then when I'm done, I'm going to have a good old time and serenade my woman with my freedom horn. After we put the dog to bed, I'm going to make sure the little lady has a good time in bed and use a freedom...well, you figure that one out.

By the way, french fries actually originated in Belgium. And for some reason, the rest of the world doesn't take us seriously?

Must be those damn French people. Go freedom yourself, France! Just please don't send any pretzels to President Bush.

occurred during World War I and what is happening now: France is, at least on paper, our ally. At least until they begin taking our propaganda against them seriously.

Right now, however, the French are laughing (or crying) about the new fries in town. Nathalie Loisau, a spokeswoman for the French embassy, said, "We are at a very serious moment dealing with very serious issues and we are not focusing on the name you give to potatoes."

Well dammit, the United States is never wrong, so if Congress wants to take time out of planning for the war, propping up our sagging

"This action seems to be a small, but symbolic effort to show the rest of the world why America is seen by some as the dumbest country on earth."