SENIOR

Journalism grads, don't fret

By Jenna Ekdahl

MY OPINION

USUALLY when I tell people I'm majoring in print journalism and religious studies they react in one of two ways: muffled snickers followed by a fake optimistic cover-up or a sympathetic cock of the head to one side and a lengthy "mmmrrmhmhmmm."

Some do congratulate me on attempting the impossible: landing a job in the journalism industry after graduation. There are the few who applaud my apparent ambition for doing the whole real-world job thing we're conditioned for throughout college.

I'm here to tell you now that I, the grammar geek and the science scaredycat, am no longer subject to their pity and ridicule. I have secured a job as a local editor with **patch.com** in Northampton Township, Bucks County, Pa. Holla!

I really don't mean to brag, but I want to say there are jobs out there. I'm here to offer a dose of hope to counteract all the negativity you're used to. The industry we communications students learn about in class every day (all the while chewing down our nails and biting our pen tips) isn't dead. It's not even dying.

It's simply changing.

Community journalism, the news about what's going on in your backyard, can't disappear because people will always want to know what's happening in their towns.

Sometimes, a school board's decision to require uniforms is more important than a piece of legislation passed on Capitol Hill — that's just the way it is.

But as far as finding that job goes, I was clueless and panicky back in September. I'm convinced the reason is because I let all the literature about the wilting economy color my perceptions of the job market.

After the Wall Street Journal ranked Penn State No. 1 for students looking to be recruited for a career, my hopes became a little more inflated than they had been at the beginning of the semester. But landing zero opportunities when I attended the career fair deflated those spirits fast.

I spent hours of my precious senior downtime searching site after site for paid internships, entry-level multimedia positions, reporting jobs and otherwise related careers. I heard back a lot of no's and the rest was silence. But I persevered.

Finally, I heard about a company called Patch.com from an alumnus who also worked for The Daily Collegian. He told me they were hiring journalists to run Web sites in suburban towns across the country covering community events where the local media coverage needed a boost.

In the scope of positions I was looking at, nothing combined web, multimedia and writing quite like this. It was the trifecta position, and I decided to go for it.

After many phone interviews and a grueling writing test that lasted almost four hours, I was offered a job and verbally accepted immediately.

What you can't do is let people get to you when they quote statistics about unemployment rising and fewer jobs being created. Find a company you want to work for and contact their human resources department or editor to explain why they simply can't live without you. Play yourself up. Make your interviewers laugh.

With Dec. 18 terrifyingly close — my last week as a senior in college dissolving in my hands — I'm so blessed to have a job waiting for me. I can't say it was easy and I can't say I didn't sweat it, but I also know I tried to keep a steady hand.

So chins up, journalists. We are better prepared than anyone to take control of this industry. All we have to know is that we can do it.

Jenna Ekdahl is a senior majoring in journalism and religious studies and is a multimedia reporter for The Daily Collegian. Her e-mail is **jme5107@psu.edu.**

Study abroad changes insight

By Daniel Bott

MY OPINION

IMAGINE a place where skin-tight jorts and crazy patterned leggings are the norm. Now imagine that half of the guys you see walking down the street are sporting the ever-popular mullet.

No, you aren't in some hip neighborhood; you're in New Zealand, and I was lucky enough to live there last semester. The opportunity for me to spend a semester away from Penn State was one that I was both excited and very apprehensive about, but I knew it would be something I would never be able to do again.

When I first considered my chance to go abroad, I was torn between going to Germany — a country where I would have undoubtedly enjoyed liters upon liters of great beer — or New Zealand.

I know roughly 10 words of German, so to say that affected my decision would be an understatement.

While I may despise the fact that people in N.Z. seem to love trance music and "Jersey Shore" much more than we do here in the United States, I grew to really enjoy the place.

Having been to N.Z. for a short time before, I at least had a bit of an understanding of how the country worked and how to decipher that interesting accent. But by no means had I ever spent this much time alone so far from home.

Little did I know what the next three months had in store. Initially, I arrived with no official place to live. I had to go through the stressful situation of finding housing on my own — on the other side of the world. Luckily, I ended up in a cottage with a great group of people: two Germans, a girl from China, and a girl from the great state of Minnesota.

Not only did I gain an understanding of the Kiwi and native Maori cultures through my classes and daily interactions, but I was able to do countless things I would never have dreamed of while being back at home.

I climbed to the top of Wairere Falls, the highest waterfall on the North Island. I raced down a hill on a small cart overlooking a volcanic lake in Rotorua, and (attempted) to camp on a secluded beach along Hakwe Bay, and hiked around Mt. Ngauruhoe, the stand-in for Mt. Doom in "Lord of the Rings."

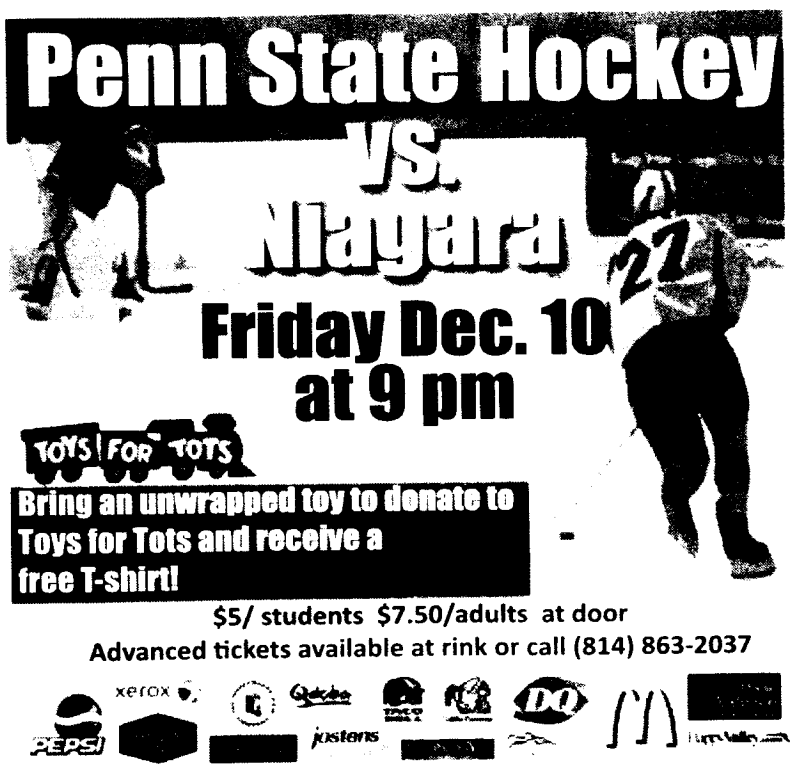
Oh, and did I mention I also got a chance to face my fear of heights by way of a 143-meter bungy jump from a platform suspended by cables over a giant canyon in Queenstown? There is no way to describe the experience other than having a rush of pure fear and adrenaline all at once.

Unfortunately, my fun was cut short with the untimely passing of my mother. While it was the most terrifying and difficult time that I have faced in my life, I still try to look on the bright side. My friends and family were there for me even when I was making travel arrangements at 4 a.m., and I never would have been able to make it home without all of help from the hospitable Kiwis that I had met during my semester.

Though my trip made me feel like a cast member on "The Real World," I wouldn't take back a second. I made friends for life and gained amazing insight about not only those around me, but more importantly myself.

What's key, though, is that this was all brought about by an amazing opportunity. While it may not come in the form of a study abroad experience for everyone, there will be a time during your college career to step out of your comfort zone. I can't encourage it enough. At the very least you will learn more about yourself than ever, and maybe even gain a bit of insight in the process.

Daniel Bott is a senior majoring in supply chain and information systems management and is a senior photographer for The Daily Collegian. His e-mail is **djb5118@psu.edu.**



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PRESENTS

WHAT'S GOING ON

YOUR GUIDE TO MOVIES, LATENIGHT, MEETINGS & EVENTS AT PENN STATE

LATENIGHT

Friday, December 10

MOVIE: THE OTHER GUYS starring Will Ferrell & Mark Wahlberg – 9 PM, Auditorium

MOVIE: DESPICABLE ME starring the voices of Steve Carell, Jason Segel & Russell Brand – 11 PM, Auditorium

THE NOMMO PERFORMANCE – Featuring NOMMO, RAM Squad, Spoke 'N' Wordz, United Soul Ensemble, and the Alpha Omega Step Team! – 9 PM, Alumni Hall

BALLOON ARTIST LOUIS PAUL – 9 PM–1 AM, 1st Floor

FRIDAY FOOD SPECIALS:
Sbarro: $1.99 Meatball Hero or Pasta Special and $1 slice of Cheese or Pepperoni Pizza – 9 PM–2 AM

Saturday, December 11

MOVIE: EASY A starring Emma Stone & Amanda Bynes – 9 PM, Auditorium

MOVIE: THE TOWN starring Ben Affleck & Rebecca Hall – 11 PM, Auditorium

SATURDAY FOOD SPECIALS:
Nathan's: 59¢ Mini-Hamburger, 99¢ Nachos, $1 Nathan's Hotdog, and 5 Kenny Rogers Roasters Wings for $1.99 – 9 PM–2 AM

Saturday movies are presented as a study break by Union and Student Activities. PSU Student Photo ID required for movies.

All events are in the HUB-Robeson Center.

NOW PLAYING

SPA LateNight Presents

Friday: 9 PM: THE OTHER GUYS

Friday: 11 PM: DESPICABLE ME

Saturday: 9 PM: EASY A

Saturday: 11 PM: THE TOWN

Saturday movies are presented as a study break by Union and Student Activites.
PSU Student ID required.
All movies are in the HUB Auditorium.

COMING UP

HUB-Robeson Gallery Exhibits
Gallery Hours:
Tuesday-Thursday - 12-6 PM
Friday-Sunday - 12-4 PM
closed Monday

HUB Gallery - First floor of HUB/Robeson Center
Oil Paintings by Patricia Griffin
Jan 14 - Mar 2

Robeson Gallery - Bookstore level of HUB/Robeson Center
Annual K-12th Grade Art Exhibition: SCASD Students
Jan 4 - Jan 22

Art Alley & Exhibit Cases - First floor of HUB/Robeson Center
Traveling Mercies: Roads to Activism, Photography by Aldo Magazzeni '72
Jan 21 - Mar 6

Involvement Fair
Jan 10 & 11 11 AM - 4 PM
Alumni Hall
New to University Park and looking for something to get involved with? Or did you take your time in the fall getting used to college life and are ready to find an organization to join? Come to the Spring Involvement Fairs and see what Penn State Student life has to offer you! Talk to current student leaders about what groups you can join. There'll be music, free stuff, and lots of people to meet!

The Center for Arts & Crafts at Penn State
New art class catalog and registrations will be available on Jan 10 for Spring 2011. Classes will start Jan 24. Catalog available on our website in January - www.sa.psu.edu/usa/craftcenter. Register in 3 Ritenour Building. Questions, call 863-0611.

Fraternity and Sorority Leadership Conference
Saturday, Jan 8

SPA (Student Programming Association) presents:
Dave & Ethan
Jan 22 8:30 PM
HUB Heritage Hall
Come to the HUB to have a laugh with Dave & Ethan. These "dating coaches" have a night of comedy planned for you! The event is FREE with valid PSU-University Park student ID.

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