

Opinion

Educated dude wiff post grad blues

by Andrew Festa
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Guest Columnist

I ain't got no job to speak of, and I don't pay no dues; I are a educated dude wiff the post grad blues.

In the Independent Record (Helena, Montana, 3/3/93) there's an article about job seeker blues. The headline reads, "Job seekers encounter new wave of rudeness." The subtitle is, "Kick them when they're down" becomes motto of the day."

In following a lead, someone from Atlanta, Georgia called a Tampa executive. The reply was, "I don't have time for you. Why are you calling me?"

Some prospective employers will fail to get back to the prospective employee falsely assuming "that job seekers should get the hint."

There is little one can do about such rudeness except to be polite, take it in stride, and swallow his or her pride.

Life might suck lollipops, but you don't have to let it kick you in the beach balls. Be creative. Begin the job search process even earlier than what the Career and Placement Office personnel suggest. Use the Career and

Placement Office, first floor of Reed, but don't rely on them.

If you have friends in other cities and states, ask them if they'll send you the want ad sections every so often. (At least you'll get an idea of the hiring trend in that/those city(ies).)

If you have a particular city in mind, send for information about that city. The best source of information is the area Chamber of Commerce. (You'd be surprised how much information the Chambers have about their respective cities, most of it free.)

Another great source is the local telephone directory of the city in which you're interested.

Send off as many letters as you can -- put aside the cost of a pack of cigarettes or a beer every week for envelopes and stamps -- and also study the companies in which you are most interested. What are the companies' hiring practices? Are they growing, or down-sizing? What qualifications are they searching for in a prospective employee? ...and so on...

Keep in mind, too, that you are a package for sale. When a company finally does consider hiring you, it is contemplating a purchase. Aside from how many kegs you can exhaust in a

weekend, what about you is worth the purchase?

Were you involved in student clubs or organizations, or non-college related volunteer organizations? If so, was it in-depth or superficial? What did you accomplish for/with the club or organization? Are you outgoing? introverted? personable? Remember, once employed, you become an extension of the hiring company.

Companies are more and more image conscious. They tend to hire those people whose personalities, attitudes, charm, and appearance best mirrors the image the companies wish to portray. Do you fit their image? Do you know what their image is?

Granted, rude executives are pathetic examples of corporate image, but they have the 'power', they already have the job, and you're only an employee waiting or hoping to be.

No matter how tough things get, and Clinton's plans will make things very tough, persevere; unless you want to be President, in which case you have to keep in mind two thoughts: "Voters are gullible," and "If you can't dazzle them with brilliance, baffle them with bullshit." (Don't

use this approach in the business world. Chances are the personnel director was hired because of his ability to sniff out the bullshitters.)

If you still can't find employment, you might want to consider going for your masters degree. The Career and Placement Office has the *Graduate School Guide*. If you're interested in an Eastern college or university, stop in the C&P office and pick up a copy. The guide contains some background information and lots of postage-paid postcards for various colleges and universities.

If you're interested in a Western school, you'll need to send for the guide to the schools in those states because the C&P copy only covers the eastern states.

Know your degrees before you send for information about the schools. You're working presently on your bachelor degree which is what is known as a non-terminal degree (meaning, it is a precursor to the next degree.) Most masters degrees are also non-terminal (meaning 'you ain't done yet!') The PhD is terminal, and so is the MFA.

As a result of my post grad blues, I've begun to reevaluate my options and goals. I'm seriously thinking about the

MFA program and the option of teaching. (Then I can bug the administration from the other side of the coin.)

Some things to consider now, while still an undergraduate student: Most of the schools from whom I've received information require a 3.0 minimum undergraduate GPA, some expect the MAT (Millers Analogy Test) and your GRE scores, and almost all want letters of recommendation from three or more undergrad teachers or professors.

Because my interests lie in the humanities, (English, communication, and art) I would be expected to present a manuscript or portfolio. Keep this in mind when writing papers, doing projects, or creating anything for your classes. All of this material is suitable for a manuscript, portfolio, or collection.

This is the 90s. Be creative. (Clinton was creative, and look at him now -- of course, Socks the cat actually gives all the orders.) The sooner you get started, the sooner you can avoid the post grad blues.

Andrew Festa missed the trials and tribulations of *The Behrend Collegian*, so he decided to write for us once more.

Lack of accordian repairers has reached a crisis

by Dave Barry
Syndicated Columnist

In these days of rising taxes, job insecurity and soaring medical costs, more and more Americans are asking themselves a chilling question: "What happens if, God forbid, I have to get my accordion repaired?"

This is certainly on my mind. I own an accordion. I used to own two of them. I bought them years ago at an auction for \$25, which worked out to \$12.50 per accordion, which struck me as an unbelievable deal. It's hard to describe the look on my wife's face when I brought them home. It reminded me of her reaction to "natural" childbirth.

One of my accordions was destroyed when I made the common consumer mistake of leaving it outdoors for 14 months. But I still have the other one, a Hohner "Student" model. It sits on a filing cabinet in my office, and sometimes, when I'm having trouble thinking up major issues to have opinions about, I amuse myself by causing it to make a scary wailing noise and swoop down at my two dogs, Earnest and Zippy, who jumped up violently and bang their

heads against the table they sleep under. Earnest and Zippy hate the Hohner "Student." It's an instinctive reaction they have, dating back millions of years, to when their wild dog ancestors often fell prey to larger, hairier prehistoric accordions.

But I like my accordion, although it is not in the best of shape, a fact that has me deeply concerned, in light of an article from *The Winona* (Minn.) Daily News sent in by alert reader Mike Jones. This article states that the board of Red Wing/Winona Technical College has voted to eliminate, because of low enrollment, the college's accordion repair program-- which happens to be the only such program in the entire United States.

I can't believe we would let this happen. We're talking about a vital part of our nation's history, dating back to the early 1800s, when each generation would seek to pass the secrets of accordion repair on to the next.

Father: Son, it's time for me to pass along the secrets of accordion repair.

Son: I'm moving to Utah.
That's right: Without accordion repair, Westward Expansion might never have occurred. And let's not forget

the critical role that an unrepaired accordion played at the Battle of Gettysburg ("Have the accordion player sound the charge!" "He can't, sir! He took a bullet in the bellows during 'Lady of Spain!'" "Good!")

I could go on, but I am clearly lying. This is why, in an unusual effort to include actual facts in this column, I called Red Wing/Winona Technical College and spoke with the accordion repair instructor, Helmi Harrington. She told me there are "eight or nine million" accordions in the United States, and that accordion repair can be "eminently lucrative." Right now, she said, "there are only a handful of certified accordion technicians," the result being that many accordions are being repaired by unqualified people.

"There are a lot of butchers out there," said Harrington.

I don't know about you, but when I look at the beautiful and innocent young people of today, laughing gaily and tossing their used Slurpee containers on my lawn, it pains me to think that they could grow up in a country where they would be forced to take their broken accordions to some back-alley practitioner.

In an effort to find out what the federal government is doing

about this, I called U. S. Sen. Bob "Bob" Graham of Florida, who is--and I mean this as a compliment-- the weirdest major politician I have ever met. I first interviewed him back when he was governor of Florida. In an effort to throw him off base, I asked him what I thought was a ridiculous question, demanding to know what he had done, as governor, to promote harmonica safety. Without a moment's hesitation, he delivered a two-minute, well-organized and extremely persuasive speech, featuring statistics, in which he claimed that his predecessor was responsible for most of Florida's harmonica-related deaths.

So I figured Sen. Graham was the man to call about this issue. I had barely got the words "accordion-repair crisis" out of my mouth when he launched in to a lengthy, impassioned oration, from which I got the following quotes, which I swear I am not making up:

"Just last night I ate at an Italian restaurant which, like thousands of other Italian restaurants across America, is now without music, because their accordion is in disrepair and has been returned from Winona, Minn., with postage due."

"We are preparing an anti-dumping order against Liechtenstein, which has become the center of accordion repair on a global basis and has developed some ferociously anti-competitive practices."

"I don't know whether the actual use of nuclear weapons is called for, but I do think we need a credible military threat."

(Bear in mind that this man is on the Senate Intelligence Committee.)

So some leaders are aware of the crisis. But so far, the failed Clinton administration has said NOTHING about it, despite proposing MILLIONS for saxophone repair, and despite the fact that accordion repair could provide jobs for thousands of unemployed Americans who have no useful skills, not that I am singling out Dan Quayle. What we need is for ordinary Americans like yourself, but with more spare time, to "get involved." Write to your congressperson. Write to the board of Red Wing/Winona Technical College. Write (what the heck) to your mom. Future generations will thank you. My dogs will hate you.

Dave Barry appears every week in *The Collegian*