

William Lauer/DN

Todd Vegas, manager of the Nebraska Union Burger King, looks over job applications.

Many jobs can mix with career plans

By Bryan Peterson
Senior Editor

I have held quite a number of jobs in my life. Most people work one job for a lot of hours, but I tend to work several smaller jobs at once.

If asked where I work, I usually reel off an extensive list, but the reality is not so impressive, because most of them are very part time.

My career plans are about the same — I want to be doing several things at once, not stuck in one job or routine.

I occasionally wonder about being a writer. I am not yet confident enough about that to use the capital W when I spell "writer," but I may get there someday, someday a long time from now.

One thing that gives me hope is the fact that almost every time I read a little biography of a novelist inside the book cover, there is always a list of all the weird and seemingly unrelated jobs the person ever held before stumbling upon writing.

In fact, almost every writer I have ever read for a literature class worked as a journalist at one time or another, so even now I might be on the threshold of writing that special work that makes it.

Rather than practice writing like I should, I have tried to work as many jobs as possible, getting no

particular depth in them but aiming for a long list.

I usually try to work jobs which somehow dovetail with other interests or studies of mine, and each job seems to provide its own unique rewards.

What better job could there be for a student than getting paid for attending class? Well, notes do have to be taken and typed, but Jon's Notes offers a great chance to sit through a class for free, and I have done so for several courses in my areas of study.

With the same idea, I have graded philosophy exams for several classes and tutored a few students in basic logic. Later, I offered Supplemental Instruction for psychology students, getting a chance to hone my skills in these areas.

I was also a student assistant for three semesters, a job which did not pay but which did offer free housing as well as intense interaction with floor residents and other staff members.

During my early semesters in the residence halls, I spent obligatory time working for Food Service. Such jobs are usually good for the free food they offer, but the point was moot in this case.

In my first semester at UNL, I rode the bus to Omaha and worked at a record store called Drastic Plastic every Monday. As a result, I now have a tremendous collection of

obsolete, obscure punk records which, if laid end to end, would reach from here to a CD factory somewhere near Boise, Idaho.

Before finishing high school I already was judging at speech and debate tournaments, events which tend to stretch into 48-hour marathons.

Naturally, one gets paid by the round, not by the hour. But a large duffle bag full of political buttons and bumper stickers for sale helps make judging debates more rewarding.

Another great way to make money on weekends is by selling various bodily fluids. Now this does not tie into my academic studies directly, but can provide good study time, whether making twice-weekly trips to the plasma center or being confined at Harris Labs.

It is harder to tie jobs into my course work during the summer, but it can be done. One of my jobs for the past several summers has been painting addresses on curbs, a physically draining task on steaming August nights which offers copious time for the recitation of Milton sonnets or the composition of pedantic essays upon the most obscure subjects.

And of course, like all good writers (and many bad ones), there is the requisite time spent writing for a newspaper.

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working. I hate to look for work that I won't like, having to debase myself for scabby old bosses.

And, truth be told, I hate work. I used to be ashamed of this. I felt like there was something wrong with me, that I hated work so. And I do, so very much.

But now I'm out of the closet. (And into the fire?) And I'm not

alone. There is, it seems, a whole army of us out there, secretly hating the process by which we buy our bread on credit.

We should band together. We should take a stand and defeat the market that would parcel out our lives into fiscal years. We should rally. But it sounds too much like work.

So here I am, with no marketable skills and little desire to acquire. I just don't have the attention

span to learn to drive the big rigs like those retirees on television.

I don't work well with others, I don't trust long division, and I can barely read.

So, I came to college. I came because I figured my lack of skills could be made into a virtue, that here I might find a job scribbling. I figured that here I wouldn't need to do much of anything to get by.

So far, I've been right.

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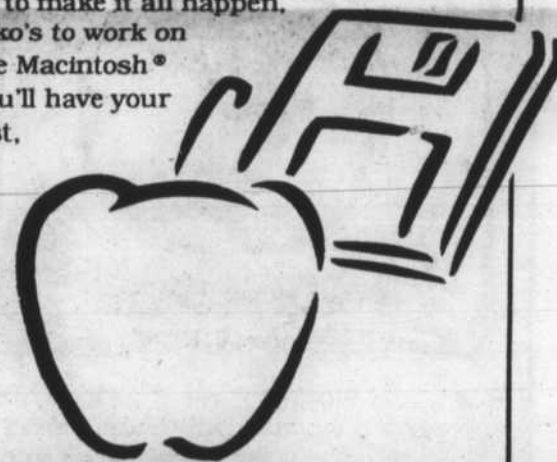
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