

Journalism job openings scarce in Oregon

But actual experience betters graduates' chances

By Gabriel Boehmer
Of the Emerald

Of the more than 100 newspapers published in Oregon — from small weeklies such as the *Oakridge Dead Mountain Echo*, to metropolitan dailies such as the *Portland Oregonian* — only a handful of job openings exist for journalists today.

The Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association's every-other-weekly bulletin *Up-to-Datelines* lists available positions in its classified section.

In the May 14 issue, only one position was available — but not for a reporter. The *North Side News* is looking for a sales manager in Jerome, Idaho, population 6,891. Responsibilities include directing a six-person staff for a "rapidly growing monthly specialty horse paper for two states."

"There is an over abundance of beginning reporters," says Marjorie Jamison, editor of *Oregon Publisher*. "Newspapers can afford to be choosy and pay lousy salaries."

As recently as two years ago, 10 to 15 positions were advertised in the bi-monthly newsletter — many entry-level positions were in advertising sales. "Our job listings in the past nine months have been zero," Jamison says.

Dave Bennett, the publishers'

association executive director, attributes the slump in newspaper hirings to the economy. "Newspapers have either cut staff or not replaced people who have left. What this means for journalism school graduates is a tighter, more competitive market."

The industry has suffered as much as any other business from the economic woes of the 1980s. Decreasing advertising sales and retailers' increasing use of pre-printed advertising inserts in newspapers has reduced industry revenues, Bennett says.

However, a survey of June 1980 journalism bachelor's graduates, conducted by the University Career Planning and Placement Service, shows that nearly 80 percent were employed in the media.

More than 70 percent of the graduates gained experience related to their present career while attending the University. Of that number, 28 percent worked at practicums while in school.

Most of the respondents — 31 percent — said they earned between \$9,000 and \$11,999 per year. Another 21 percent reported they were paid between \$12,000 and \$14,999 per year. Those graduates earning more than \$15,000 per year comprised 22 percent of

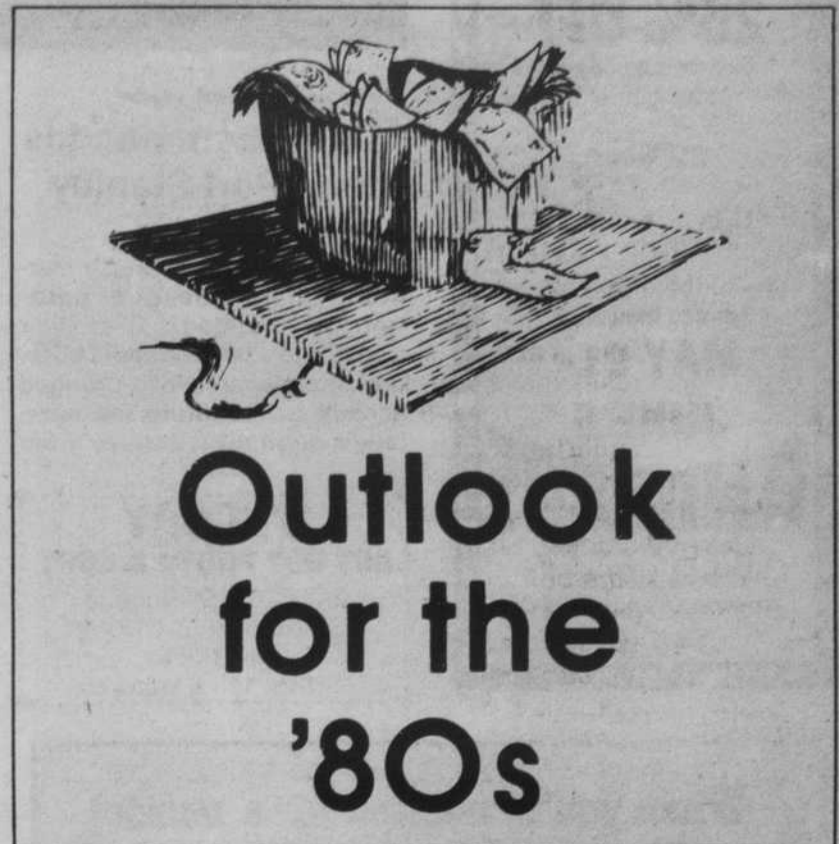
the respondents, and 21 percent earned less than \$9,000.

A more recent national employment survey, conducted by the Newspaper Fund and the Gallup Organization, shows that more than half of the 16,000 journalism and communications graduates in 1981 found jobs in the media.

Daily newspapers hired 11 percent of the 1981 class. Public relations and advertising followed with 10.8 percent and 10.7 percent, respectively. Television stations hired 10 percent of the class, and radio stations attracted 4.3 percent. Weekly newspapers hired 4.9 percent and commercial magazines 2.9 percent.

"Graduates of colleges with journalism schools usually don't get a job with a daily," Jamison, editor of the publishers association monthly magazine, said. Newcomers to the profession have to be willing to do everything from reporting to paste-up on a small paper and work their way up, she said.

Salaries at weekly newspapers for entry-level positions range from \$180 to \$200 per week, according to Roy Halverson, a University journalism professor specializing in



Graphic by M. Schatbuch

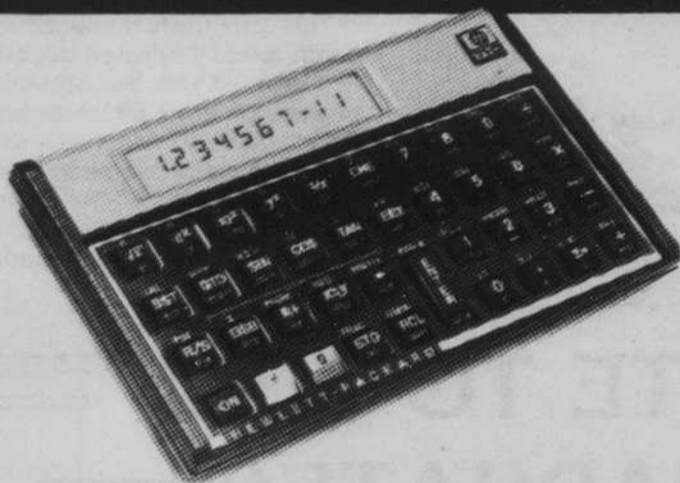
newspaper management.

The survey also shows that a higher proportion of students who earned a B-plus or better average found work than their classmates with lower grades. Students hired by daily newspapers and advertising agencies had the highest grade point

average.

However, Jamison gives academic performance a different priority. "Actual experience always outweighs your GPA." She suggests working part-time or interning at a community paper is the best experience while attending school.

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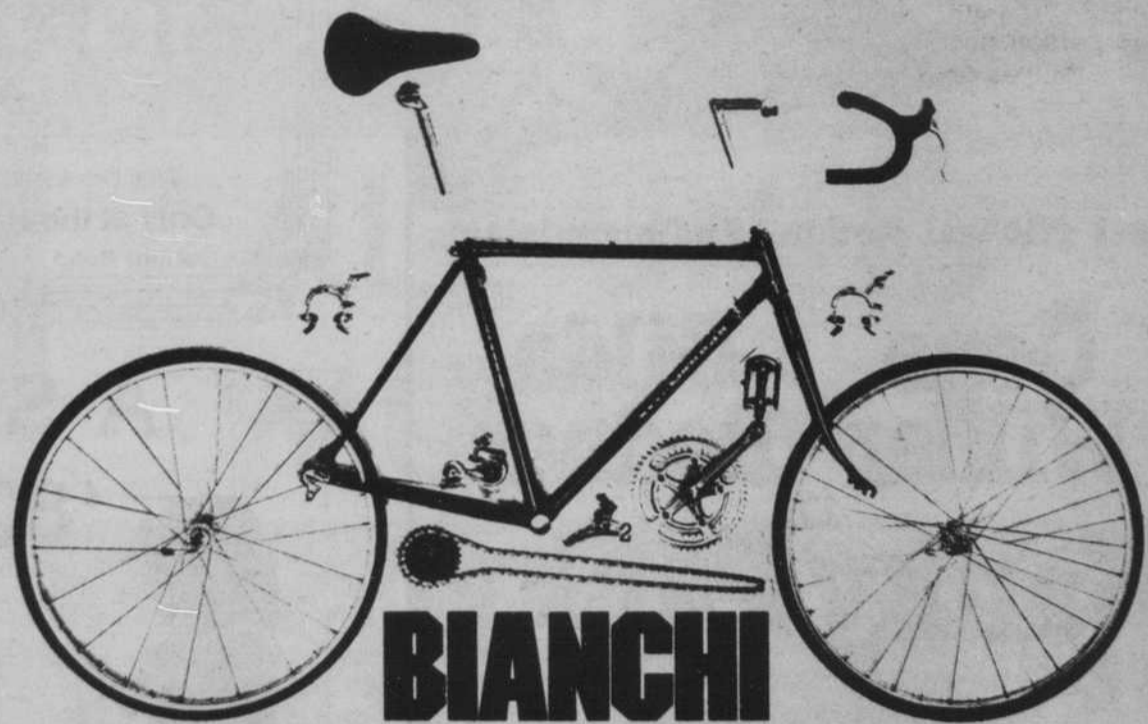
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