

Graduate reaches realization: Life not as easy as it seems when education is complete

For four years they preached from the tiny podium in front of us. They drew countless graphs, diagrams and pictures for us to learn by on the overhead projector. They quizzed, tested and graded us.

We thought it was harassment; they were convinced it was education.

Reporters Notebook by Trevor Cartwright

"They" were our teachers. The memories of college. That was then; this is now.

Looking back, we remember the good times. Life, as we knew it, was secure. When we were bored, we would entertain ourselves with the thoughts of the future, the job we were guaranteed and the money we would make as a result of our education. We were superior, the "others" were inferior. That's what everyone told us.

When I graduated from college in March, I figured I had an advantage over the rest of the June graduates. I told myself that within one week, I would have a job. I had been planning the future for four years and, finally, I could make things happen.

'By Wednesday I was confused.... By the end of the first week I was feeling insulted. By the end of the second week I was feeling panicked and a little angry.'
— Trevor Cartwright

I arrived in Sacramento on Thursday. By Friday I had my first interview, during which, I learned, much to my surprise, that I had no experience.

However, they were "real happy" for the opportunity to have met me, or so they said. Monday I learned that I was "too green;" Tuesday I was "over qualified."

By Wednesday I was confused; nobody needed to tell me that.

By the end of the first week I was feeling insulted. By the end of the second week I was feeling panicked and a little angry.

Suddenly, it seemed as though the words from the podium had all been lies. What happened to the job that was supposed to be waiting for me? I finally realized it wasn't there waiting for me as I had been led to believe.

I also realized something else: Finding a good job was like getting a credit card — you can't have one unless you've got one.

The first couple weeks turned out to be a strong dose of culture shock. At the end of the third week, the situation took a turn. I latched on to the perfect job opportunity.

I felt as though I had caught my second wind after having been asked back for a second interview by the same company. They told me that they would make a decision after the weekend.

Naturally, they waited until the last possible minute to call. I guess it was an effort to prolong the agony — test my character.

I answered the phone and was greeted by a shrill little voice who told me that she was "really sorry, but there was someone else who was more qualified for

the position." Of course I said that it was fine and that I understood and thanked her for calling to let me know.

In a fit of rage, I began pacing again. I remembered what a professor once told me at the end of my senior year: "You have to be willing to risk yourself to win the job you want." I was worth the risk.

I decided that the best bet

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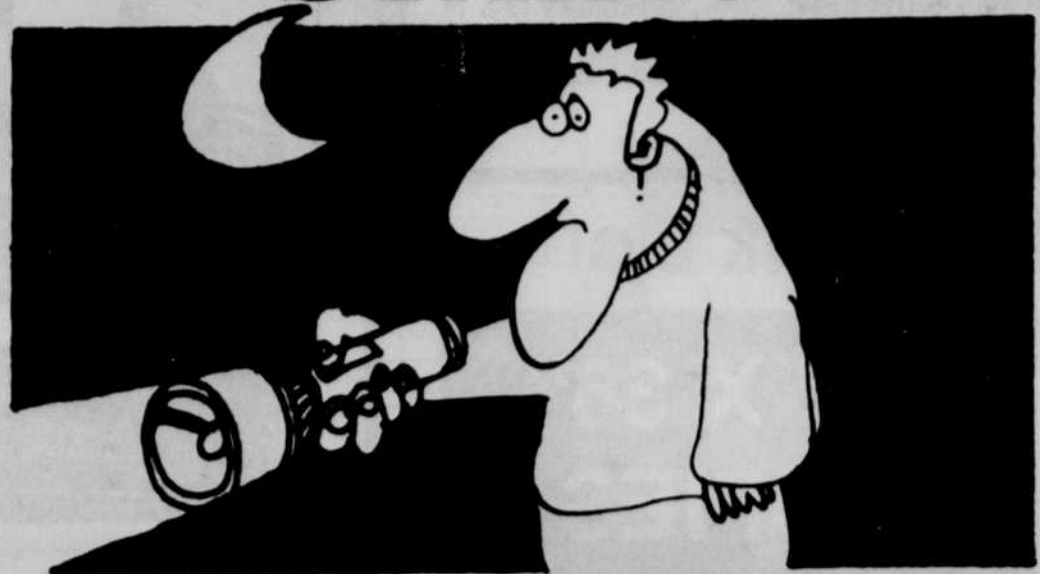
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