

WELCOME TO THE RAT RACE

By Beth Mayall, Assistant Editor

How six recent grads became big cheeses

Want to give your parents a heart attack? Right after graduation, after the pictures are taken and the gifts opened, tell them that you won't be looking for a job after all. Wait for the shock to register, pry their fingers from your neck and tell them the real story: you want a *career*.

Still, you can't have a career without that first job. You've probably heard tons of advice on how to nail down that first one, but what really works? Take it from these grads, whose techniques just might help you get a job you actually like.

Gimme a Break

Let's face facts. Blindly sending out stacks of résumés won't get you noticed by anyone but the Environmental Protection Agency — and that'll only be for wasting a small forest's worth of paper. The key? Be pushy. We're not suggesting that you hang from the twelfth floor washer's platform and bang on the C.E.O.'s window, but you might want to try the method of Matt O'Donnell, a gainfully employed U. of Delaware '94 grad.

While many students toured Key West over spring break, O'Donnell, a wannabe TV journalist, left his sunblock at home and blazed a trail on the East Coast, following up on résumés and audition tapes he'd sent to small-market TV stations.

To actually get into the stations and meet the right people — and get ahead of the faceless résumés piled on personnel office desks — O'Donnell would call and mention he'd be in the area, then stop by if an invitation was offered. "If you sneak your way in and make an impression, they'll remember your face," he says.

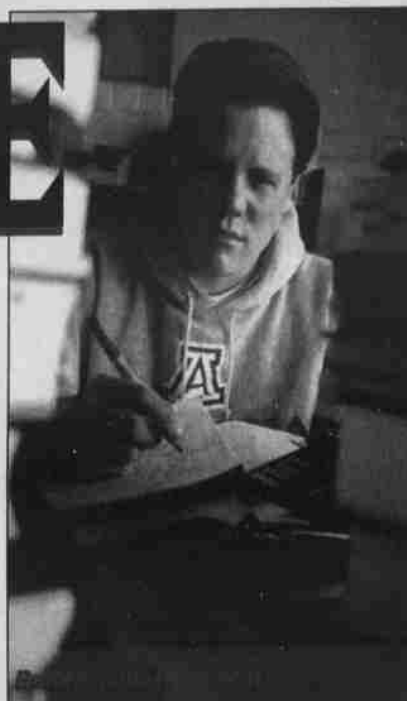
In the end, O'Donnell racked up 17 interviews, and by graduation he'd landed a job as the one-man reporter, photographer, editor and producer for the 11 o'clock news at WICZ, an NBC affiliate in Binghamton, N.Y.



To get a job, Matt O'Donnell put the brakes on his spring break.

Butter — er, rather — Batter Up!

Networking. It's one of the buzz words forced down our little Gen X, 20something, post-Nirvana throats. But for Cara Bernosky, a '93 grad of



After: head honcho

Cliff Jetts, U. of Arizona

Chatham College in Pennsylvania, the cliché paid off.

At 16, she responded to an ad that landed her a job handing out "team support stuff" at Pittsburgh's Three Rivers Stadium, home of the Pirates. Today, after six years of striking up connections with stadium co-workers, she's made the field of baseball her full-time job.

But there's more to networking than mere schmoozing, Bernosky says. It means demonstrating your competency to those around you, even when working conditions aren't the best. Like when you're a guest relations representative — a job, she recalls, at which "you get paid to be screamed at by drunk, rowdy fans."

On non-game days, she worked in the front office, which neighbored the public relations department. Through inter-office traffic, she ran into members of the PR team, became a PR intern, then met the marketing team. From there, it took just two more contacts to land a position — a *paid* position — with Major League Players Alumni Marketing.

"It was all the internships and meeting the right people that made the difference for me," she says. Ahh — it's good to know that *someone* in the baseball world is working.



Cara Bernosky suggests striking up connections.

Voluntary Kindness

Sure you're busy. You can't work at the school paper because you're too busy with the band. And you can't join the band because you're too busy donating your time to the school paper. But would you volunteer if it could get you a job?

Psychology classes alone would not have prepared Kristen Blazewicz, a '94 grad from the U. of Delaware, for a career of helping patients with dementia, bipolar illnesses and schizophrenia.

That's why she hooked up with VOICE (Volunteer Organization Involved in Community Events), a group at the U. of Delaware that coordinates visits to Delaware State Hospital. One night a week for four years she visited the types of patients she hopes to treat one day.

"I joined VOICE because it was new exposure to my field — I'd never even been in