



CareerStreet

A Publication of the Career Development Center
Macalester College

Vol. IV - Issue 1 - October 4, 2006

"He profits most who serves best." (Author - Arthur F. Sheldon)

Hot Jobs

Find details on these opportunities on our web site under [Grand Avenues](#).

Geologist

**Natural Resource
Group Inc.**

Minneapolis, MN

Full Time Position

Deadline: 10/9/06

This position specifically involves collecting data to prepare and write Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments and Fatal Flaws Analyses for property transactions. Entry level candidates will have gained applicable experience through college coursework and internships or other job experience while attending school or post graduation.

Associate Analyst

Municipal Bond Research

Ameriprise Financial

Counselor's Corner

Resume Writing

Your resume is typically an organization's first impression of you, so here are some things to ensure that the first impression is a positive one.

Try to keep it to one page -

Generally, as a current student or recent graduate, your experiences should fit one one page.

Make it easy to read - Make sure your resume has enough white space and that you are using a font size that is at least size 10.

Use descriptive words - Bring your resume to life with words like developed, interpreted, and implemented, instead of made, looked at, and completed.

Highlight your best accomplishments - Be selective

Macalester at Work

by Katie Lim '08

CDC Student Staff

Anne (VanderMeer)

**Carlson Macalester Class
of 2003**

**Junior Game Designer
Obsidian Entertainment**

(No photo available)

Anne Carlson graduated from Macalester in 2003, moved to Irvine, CA to apply for a PhD English program and wound up working at Obsidian Entertainment as a game designer. She tells the CDC about the experiences which led her to this position and her role in the process of developing and perfecting video games. Anne offers interviewing advice to Macalester students and explains how

Minneapolis, MN

Full Time Position

Deadline: 10/26/06

The Associate Analyst position is likely to be filled by someone with a BA or BS degree in statistics, mathematics, engineering, finance, accounting, or economics. This position is not on the Analyst track and we would likely see individuals in this role choose to pursue a MBA degree at a top tier university at some point.

Visual Display Intern

Mall of America

Bloomington, MN

Internship

Deadline: 10/20/06

\$10.00 per hour

Assist Visual Team in design changeovers including window displays, display cases, special events décor, seasonal décor and visual merchandising.

On-Campus Recruiting

To access a list of the most current on-campus employer presentations, information tables, resume deadlines and interview dates go to:

<http://www.macalester.edu/cdc/recruitcurrent.pdf>

on which accomplishments you select so they stand out to the reader. Better to have two very strong accomplishments than to add three so-so ones.

Customize content - Depending on the position you're looking at, you may want to emphasize some experiences in your background or de-emphasize others.

Never embellish accomplishments - Your resume is a reflection of you and should only include contributions that you have accomplished.

Proofread your resume - It is always a good idea to review your resume several times to ensure there are no spelling or punctuation errors. Have others take a look at it as well to make sure you didn't miss anything.

Remember, your resume is a reflection of you. Take the time to make sure you make the best impression possible. Just like research, the time you invest will improve your results. A great resume can't guarantee you the position, but a poor one can definitely keep you from getting it. If you are wondering if your resume is complete, take a minute to see if it contains the

her college experience prepared her for the workforce.

CDC: What and where is your current position?

Can you describe your typical day or week at your workplace?

AC: Currently I am a game designer at Obsidian Entertainment (a video game developer located in Santa Ana, California). It's a bit difficult to describe a "typical" day or week at work because what one does at any given time at a game development house depends entirely on what point one is in the process of creating a game, as well as what one's responsibilities are (which can change from project to project). Currently, I'm serving a design role on two projects: one which has just about wrapped up production and is ready to be released (*Neverwinter Nights 2*) and another which is just moving out of the pre-production phase and will soon go into full development.

For *Neverwinter Nights 2*, I handled the look and function of all of the items in the game (which, for the game's genre, is quite substantial – a first-

Upcoming Events

Graduate & Professional School Day

Talk to more than 100 representatives from Law, Business, Education, Health Sciences and a variety of other graduate and professional programs from across the country. For a list of participating institutions, go to: www.cclc.umn.edu/GSD.

WEDNESDAY, 10/11/06

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

COFFMAN UNION

GREAT HALL

UNIVERSITY OF MN

- Discuss application/ admission procedures
- Explore degree requirements
- Attend workshops on "How to Apply" (10:15 am & 1 pm) and "Funding Graduate/Professional School" (11:30 am)
- Obtain information on admissions tests (e.g. LSAT, MCAT, GMAT, GRE)
- Compare programs and

three C's. Is it Clear, Clean, and Concise?

- Clear - Is the message you are trying to convey in your resume coming through?
- Clean - Visually, is it easy to read? Is there enough white space, and have you used indents, bolding, and italics effectively?
- Concise - Is the resume too wordy? Could you say the same thing more succinctly?

Resume writing can be tough work, but the CDC can help. Set up an appointment today to meet with a career counselor to review your resume. In addition, we have numerous resources available in our library as well as online examples of different resume styles that can give you a great head start!

Contributing Writer, John Mountain, Associate Director, CDC

**Senior S.L.A.M.
(Seeking Life After
Macalester)**

person shooter may only have a handful of items within the game, while a role-playing game such as *NWN2* has thousands), and a typical day was full of very precise, pointed tasks: I would check a bug queue ("bugs" being problems within the game) and fix errors on a case-by-case basis – "Item X has an inaccurate description" or "Item Y is tinted incorrectly" – and spend the rest of the day playing through the game and writing up bugs myself, and sending those off to be fixed. At the end of a project, everybody is typically handing the same family of tasks they've been doing the entire time, but the primary focus is getting the game playable, fun, and as free of errors and annoying bugs as possible. This usually involves one of the least-loved parts of game development – the dreaded "crunch time," where long days and late nights and dinners delivered to the company (and eaten at desks) are not uncommon. Nobody loves crunch time, but the goal behind it is to get as much done as possible in as short an amount of time to make sure the game that gets shipped is as high a quality product as possible – everybody on the

find the right school for you

- Free and open to the public!

For a complete list of upcoming CDC programs and events, be sure to check out:

<http://www.macalester.edu/cdc/events/index.html>

Beyond the Piggy Bank

In this section, the CDC provides you with links to information on managing your personal finances. We hope you find this useful. This newsletter's topic is: "[Paying for Grad School](#)"

Suggestion Box

Food Safety Tips for College Students

When students pack up for college, they take along the basics - TV, laptop, MP3 player and cell phone. Many students will also arrive at school with a microwave oven, tabletop grill, mini-fridge and toaster-oven in tow. Most students, however, don't know there are food safety considerations when cooking

For those of you who are **currently job hunting...** **Think they might look for a job** after graduation.... Or think they **might EVER have to look for job....**

Here's an article that may be of interest to you! The source website has some other great information for job seekers.

Weddle's Research Factoid

We recently asked the visitors to the **WEDDLE's Web-site** to tell us how they found their last job. A total of 708 people participated in our survey.

Here's what they told us were the **top ten sources of hire:**

- 31.2% Answered an ad on a job board
- 10.6% Sent their resume to the company
- 9.3% Answered an ad in the newspaper
- 8.5% Responded to a tip from a friend
- 6.8% Were referred by an employee of the company
- 6.6% Received a call from a headhunter
- 5.1% Answered an ad posted on the company's Web-site
- 4.9% Attended a career fair

team wants to see the game do well, so it's also a labor of love.

As for the second project (which I will move on to full-time after *Neverwinter Nights 2* is fully wrapped-up), it's just starting production, which means that the general look and feel of the game is still getting roughed-out. The details of story and gameplay are still being worked out and discussed with the design team, and the roles of the designers (handling the game system, levels, story, etc) are being assigned as the game moves out of planning stages and begins to develop actual content.

CDC: Can you describe the path which has led you to your current position? How did you find your current position? What did you do your first year out of college?

AC: I've wanted to design games ever since I was a little kid – I'd sort of put that dream aside in high school when I wanted to be a voice actress, but during college I got more and more into gaming and the promise of interactive narratives. I'd thought about actually trying to study games as

with these appliances.

The U.S. Dept. of Agriculture receives many calls from parents or students with questions about the handling and storage of food for college kids. [Here is a sampling of those questions about how to safely cook and prepare foods while away at school.](#)

Web Watch

Job Star

Time to start a resume or cover letter? Or need some quick ideas for revising? Job Star is a website that provides countless tips, advice, and samples for resumes and cover letters. The website has several great and useful sections. One of which helps readers decide how to set up their resume... chronologically, functionally, by curriculum or experience, etc. Another part of the website is designed to assist people on what they should, and more importantly, what they *shouldn't* say in their cover letters. Job Star explains that sometimes employers only quickly scan resumes and cover letters for certain key words.

4.8% Used networking at a business event

2.7% Received a call from a staffing firm

2.7% Responded to a tip from a family member

In addition just 0.04%—four-tenths of one percent—found a job by using a social networking site.

What the Findings Mean

1. For those who think newspaper advertising has gone the way of carbon paper, please think again. Almost one-out-of-ten of our respondents found their jobs through the print medium.
2. For those who have bought into all of the hype about finding a job on MySpace and other social networking sites, please think again. Almost no one among our respondents was hired that way.
3. For those who think that a job search is simply doing the same old thing time-after-time, please think again. The top five methods of

a professor – not in terms of psychological or medical studies, but as stories and as an interactive medium – although the promise of making games always seemed more appealing, even though at the time I'd thought it was something out of my reach.

When I graduated, I moved down to Irvine, and started trying to get into their PhD program for English, and working as an assistant manager at a video game store to help cover the bills. Amazingly enough, that same store was at the epicenter of a great deal of game development houses – Troika, Interplay, and Blizzard, to name a few – and I had a chance to talk with a lot of designers from those companies that came in to hang out on their lunch breaks. Talking to them reawakened that dream of designing games, and I started to actively apply at different developers. In the summer of 2004, a friend of mine who worked at a small developer called Papaya Studio told me they needed a writer and urged me to apply, and I soon got the job. From there, I worked at learning more about game design (handling sound,

Want to know the words? Just log on to Job Star at: <http://jobstar.org/tools/resume/index.php>

Contributing Writer, Lisa Herndon '09, CDC Student Staff

Grad School Notes

Preparing for Graduate Exams

If you are planning graduate study, then you probably will take one of the graduate tests: the LSAT for law, the GMAT for business, the MCAT for medicine, or one or more of the GRE's, the basic test and the subject tests. Though these tests cover different materials, many of the strategies for preparing are the same.

An early start to your preparations is the first step. Being a sophomore or junior means you have the time to practice and get assistance in both test taking and the subject areas. As a Mac student, you probably have taken a lot of tests, but familiarity with the format of these graduate exams will help you score well.

Plan ahead so that you have

finding a job in our survey—responding to ads posted at job boards, sending your resume to an employer via the mail, answering a newspaper ad, networking with friends, and networking with others in the workforce—provided the greatest assurance of employment, producing two-thirds (66.4%) of our respondents' jobs.

4. Headhunters and search firms work on real jobs and definitely fill them. When taken together, they accounted for almost one-in-ten (9.3%) of the job offers received by our respondents.
5. For those who think that employers rely more on their own Websites than on job boards, please think again. Our respondents were six times more likely to find their jobs through the ads posted on a job board than through openings posted on a company site.

dialogue, and story design), and left Papaya to work at Obsidian Entertainment in January 2006, starting out as a design assistant and eventually being promoted to junior game designer this past July. It's been a strange and twisty road that eventually led me here, but I'm working my dream job at one of my favorite game developers – I love my job, and I'm extremely lucky and honored to have it.

CDC: Where are you originally from and how did you find your way to Macalester?

AC: I'm originally from Mesa, Arizona: my parents both hail from the Midwest and went to a small liberal arts college, and always extolled the virtues of a well-rounded, liberal arts education. Also I somewhat imagine they wanted their daughter to experience actual *seasons* outside of Arizona's twin periods of "warm" and "blisteringly hot"! The cold of Minnesota did in fact take some getting used-to, but luckily I found my niche (and eventual spouse) at Macalester, and flourished there.

CDC: What was your undergraduate major?

time for both your practice tests and your scoring and review. The MAX Center has resources to help you, including staff who can help with both test preparation and subject studying. Having someone who knows the material well can help you study more efficiently.

Get yourself at least one study guide. These books have tips and valuable practice tests. Many newer books come with software to help in study and practice. Because other books will have some different tips as well as additional practice tests, it also makes sense to get additional practice tests, perhaps from older books at used books stores or from the library if money is an issue.

Get started soon on your preparation. The MAX Center and CDC are here to help you, so feel free to stop by any time.

Contributing Writer, Dave Ehren, Math & Science Counselor, MAX Center

What is the CDC?

The Career Development Center is

Bottom Line: Landing the job of your dreams is best accomplished when you:

- use a multifaceted job search strategy that maximizes the number and diversity of employment opportunities to which you have access and
- identify and prioritize (with the time you devote to them) the methods that consistently yield the best results for job seekers.

Contributing Writer, Denise Ward, Assistant Dean for Student Services

Junior Jumpstart

Like, Um, You Know

I was talking to a student the other day. He said "like" 15 times in approximately 10 sentences worth of speech. I became so distracted by this speech pattern that I had a difficult time following what he was trying to say! Sloppy speech habits not only get in the way of transferring information, it creates a negative image. As

How did you decide on your major?

AC: I was an English major! I know this might be of little help to those undecided and searching for inspiration of what their major should be, but I'd always known I wanted to major in English. The advice I might offer to students is to focus on what you truly love, and don't be afraid to seek out interesting things to minor in as well. Don't let the fact that your major and minor don't seem to go inherently hand-in-hand stop you – part of the beauty of Mac (to me, at least) was picking out the most fascinating, unlikely connections between disciplines. My one regret is not trying harder to get that minor in geology!

CDC: How do you think your liberal arts education has helped you in the workforce? What experience at Macalester or elsewhere do you thinkas prepared you for your job?

AC: Above all, my liberal arts education has helped me in being flexible. As a game designer, one performs many different functions in their job depending on the structure of

here to assist students in planning, articulating and applying their educational experience to meet their future goals. The office is located on the first floor in Kagin Commons, and offers individual counseling sessions with a career counselor, an extensive career resource library, job/internship listings and opportunities from around the globe. The CDC resource library features: Information about Fellowships, Internships and Job Postings; information on Companies and Government Opportunities; pamphlets and materials on resume and cover letter writing; books on etiquette, interviewing, grad school and the job search process; and an extensive alumni directory, sorted by career.

HOURS

8 .am. - 4:30 p.m. Monday – Friday (Daily Drop-ins between 2 - 4 p.m.)

Macalester College
Career Development Ctr.
Kagin Commons
1600 Grand Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55105
(651) 696-6384
Fax: 651-696-6131
cdc@macalester.edu

juniors, you'll be out interviewing for internships, jobs, graduate schools in no time. Think about this important part of your communication strategy and personal presentation.

The following is excerpted from an interview by Alyssa Danigelis in *Fast Company* magazine (5/06), with Diane DiResta, a speech pathologist who runs her own communication consulting firm in NY.

Are there consequences if we don't pay enough attention to the way we speak?

DD: If you want to get to a certain level, especially in a professional environment like most businesses, you have to project the right image. You have to speak the way people you aspire to be speak. Your speech is related to status.

What's the best way to rein in ditzy-sounding speech?

DD: It's such a habit that we don't even hear ourselves. The first step is ear training and awareness. Listen to yourself on tape. Once you can hear yourself doing it, you can work on stopping it. If you're worried

the company they're working for, the type of project they're working on, and the different stages of the project's development. Being able to adapt to multiple different situations and evaluate how to approach different problems, or offer up unique ideas or ways of looking at an issue, is absolutely critical to a designer's job.

Another very valuable skill is being able to balance the ideal with the real – taking a wider view of a genre or medium while still balancing real-world concerns such as time, budget, difficulty, genre, and audience. The penultimate question for the game designer is “what is fun?,” which, as you might imagine, is best balanced between the abstract concepts and real-world concerns. Macalester stressed the importance of not only thinking in an open-minded, abstract fashion, but also in trying to bring those loose concepts to bear in concrete, real world applications: one of the opening addresses during orientation week (I believe) for my class described this as the “what” and “so what?” of Mac's teaching philosophy.

about sounding stilted in an interview, just tone down your speech without eliminating your expressings. Your passion and energy are what's most important.

What if you're still having trouble controlling it?

DD: Another effective method is to assign a buddy to give you a signal, whether it's just raising a finger when you're at a meeting or tallying the number of times you use pause fillers. It gives you a record. Practice around your friends and family. It usually takes 30 consistent days of working on. You need awareness, you need and substitute, and sometimes the substitute is silence. People are afraid of silence so they say "um," "okay," or "like"...

Are there more subtle verbal mistakes that hold people back?

DD: Absolutely. I was working with a woman at a director level, and her boss said to me, "She should be able to fill my shoes and be the next VP, but she's not standing up for herself." The problem was that she used wimpy words such as "sort of," "hopefully," "maybe," and "kind of." These are words that

Finally – and I must mention this – was the support of Professor Stephen Burt, who I had the privilege of precepting for my senior year (in a first-year course on superheroes), and who tirelessly helped me through my honors project (a literary defense of fantasy and science-fiction). Professor Burt's championing more modern, emerging mediums such as the comic book was an inspiration to my own pursuits of studying the unique elements of literary genres and the possibilities within the medium of video games.

CDC: Do you have any advice regarding the interviewing process?

What was the toughest interview questions you were asked?

AC: Advice for the interviewing process – that's tricky to state, precisely. It's hard to say precisely what interview questions are "tough" in applying for a position in the game industry, because many are very specific... I would say that above all, while it's all right to describe something as "cool" or "awesome" *once*, don't make a point of it. Nothing against those words linguistically, it's

weaken conviction. .. It was never about her skills or her intelligence. She just needed to present herself powerfully.

Contributing Writer, Denise Ward, Assistant Dean for Student Services

Sophomore Syllabus

Choosing a Major - Steps in a Process

Step 1: DECIDE TO DECIDE

Getting started is half the battle. Be clear about your motivation and timeline. What is it that you need to determine? What is the Registrar's Office's deadline?

Step 2: GATHER INFORMATION

Learn about yourself. Consider your skills, values, preferred environment, lifestyle preferences, etc. Look at the [major pages](#) on the CDC website, review books such as the classic *What Color is Your Parachute?* (see [The Bookshelf](#) for further information), or work with paper inventories and assessments such as the Myers Briggs Type Indicator or Strong Interest Inventory (both are

just that they're extremely vague: if you're asked why you liked something and one's response is simply "it was cool," that doesn't go into any detail and gives the interviewer nothing to work with. If you like something, spend some time thinking about *why* you enjoyed it. If you like doing a particular task, what about it makes it exciting? Above all, though – and this is critical in the game industry, which can be extremely tough and demanding – let your love for the subject come out. Get across that you really love playing games, or working with games, that the medium intrigues you, that it's really what you want to do with your time. When interviewing at Obsidian, I emphasized above all my love for making games, and my intense desire to learn. While I can't say if that netted me the job, I would imagine that it somewhat helped!

CDC: What would you say is the most challenging aspect of your job? What is the most interesting or exciting?

AC: Probably the most challenging aspect of being a game designer is being adaptable – to demands, to

available from the CDC).

Learn about each major that interests you. Review the catalog, speak with juniors and seniors, speak with faculty. Write down which classes you most would like to take. Do these classes have a common thread?

Step 3: ANALYZE THE INFORMATION

Look at the lists you have created for clustering, overlaps, etc. - are there common elements? Most people find that the things they have pulled together will cluster in one or two different types of areas. At this point, you can begin to put names to the types of majors that represent those areas. If you have not already done so, this might be a good point to meet with a CDC career counselor.

Step 4: ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR PASSIONS/REALITIES

Nothing is more fulfilling than when you are working on something you are passionate about. There is a direct correlation between how much you enjoy the work in your

learning new programs, to learning new systems, getting used to working with new genres, everything – there is constant need for the game designer to be flexible and quick to learn. While this is challenging, and sometimes the opportunity to work with a familiar tool or process is comforting, I crave new challenges and the excitement of learning something new. I've been very fortunate to work at Obsidian, where not only do my co-workers put up with endless barrages of questions from me as I strive to better learn how a system works, but they are such intelligent, creative, capable professionals that I learn something new from them every day. When I made the decision to pursue a career path outside of academics, I had a small fear that my opportunities for learning new things would diminish: I have never been more wrong in my life, and happily enough, I welcome that!

CDC: What are your future career plans? Where do you see yourself in ten years?

AC: As for my future career plans, or where I see myself in ten years... I want to be making

major to your GPA.

Step 5: FOCUS AND DECIDE

From this point, you will be able to distill your preferences. If you are having difficulty, it may be a good time to meet with a career counselor.

OK, it's a lot of work. But your satisfaction with your choice of major is important. Aren't you worth the time and effort? We think so. let us know if we can assist you with any part of this process.

The Macalester College Career Development Center Staff

First Year Focus

Stepping Correct from the Start: How to Jumpstart your Career Path This Semester without Even Skipping a Beat! (Part I)

Ah, it was not to long ago (about a decade) that I was taking my first steps onto campus. Was I thinking of my career, all the fine details, and how to do it?---nope, but during the course of the first year I acquired some valuable advice from more

games – always and always. Maybe I can see myself taking a year out of the industry to teach a few years down the road (when I have the experience and know-how to impart something useful!), but overall? I just want to make games. Video games as a medium are so tremendously under appreciated, and most people don't seem to get how remarkable the possibilities are: while I would still like to write and perhaps speak about games while I work, I cannot think of a more exciting, rewarding, and fun way to detail their positive aspects than to be involved in making them.

The Bookshelf

2006 What Color is Your Parachute? By Richard Nelson Bolles, Ten Speed Press, Berkley, California, 2006.

What Color is Your Parachute? offers a string of optimism in a world of uncertainty. Author Richard Nelson Bolles, a Harvard and MIT grad, tells readers to quit asking themselves “How do I convince this employer to hire

senior campus dwellers (this is the scene where you breakout your pen/cell/blackberry and take notes:

1. **Explore** : join student organizations, be in tune with classes and professors you really dig (I love that word *dig*), and participate with Res Life activities, and volunteer in the community.
2. **Get Your Study On** : develop good habits and grades so that when you figure out what direction you want to go with your career-- grades will act as your capital. Seek support from the MAX Center for tutorials on study skills, writing skills, and more!
3. **Ready? Set? Go!**- walk-no-run...ahh...you can figure that part out.

Check out the CDC (Career Development Center) @ **Kagin Commons**, next to Dupre Hall! Come inside! Use the computers! Meet the staff! Questions about Stepping Correct? Call the CDC @ ext.6384 or

me?” because it already implies that the employer and job are fantastic. Many people don’t know enough about the job or the employer (and of course the job search process) to make sound choices. The presented tips provide a relief to all the nervous job seekers out there. This best-selling job-hunting book in the world is an exceptional source of information, guidelines, and ideas for not just finding a job, but having a successful career that you are passionate about. The book effectively provides guidance about how to get a job a shrinking job market. Although the text at times seems too fluffy and lengthy, the meaning is there amidst the thoroughness. And it is insightful. This book is more of a reference tool than a self help book, as it helps readers learn how to market their most enjoyable skills and use them at a job they will enjoy. The book also provides beneficial worksheets and charts for the reader to complete, as well as thorough lists of resources to help readers learn more about themselves and their interests. This book is very practical and would be useful for anyone who wants to learn the best approach

cdc@macalester.edu. Part II?

It will be in the next
issue...until then PEACE!

*Contributing Writer - Christina
Cowens, Career Counselor,
CDC*

to finding a job, especially
upperclassmen. Seniors and
new grads may above all find
the information particularly
useful as they enter the job
market. (This book can be found
in the Kagin Resource Center,
Job Search-General Section of
the CDC resource library.)

*Contributing Writer, Lisa
Herndon '09, CDC Student Staff*