

# Summer jobs with a difference...

by Suzanne Lundrigan

The summer job . . . for most students it's a necessary evil marring the halcyon days of summer. A lousy salary, mindless tasks and irregular hours leave most of us waiting impatiently for the school year to start.

Nevertheless, in spite of poor odds five U of A students landed jobs that they considered interesting and rewarding.

These lucky persons discovered life beyond minimum wage and midnight shifts, giving those of us left behind in the wasteland reason to hope.

Among the five is Wayne Kushneryk, a second year Electrical Engineering student, who avoided the usual boring summer job by leaving the country.

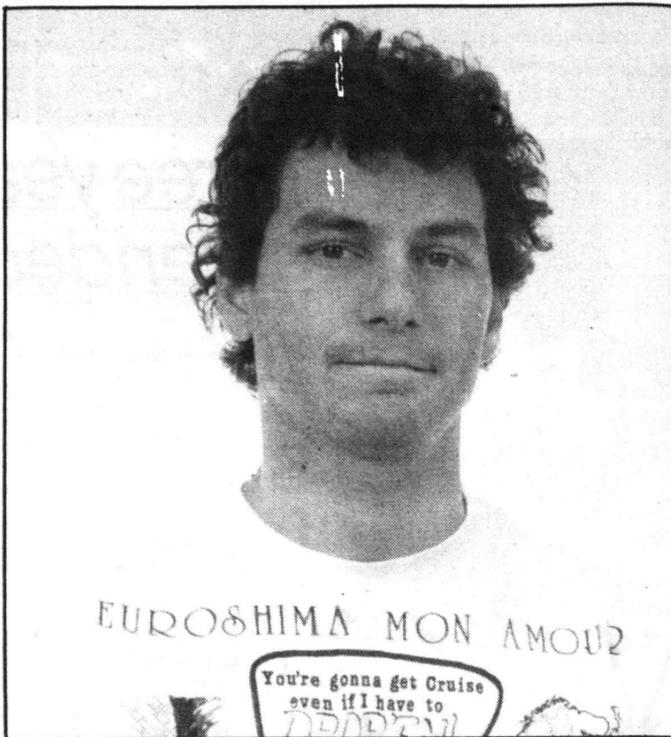
Kushneryk responded to an ad in an electrical engineering magazine, placed there by an organization called IAESTE which offers positions to engineering students who wanted to work abroad.

"I applied and was fortunate enough to receive a position in Finland, which was incidentally the country I most wanted to see."

Posted in Turku, a town in the south of Finland, Kushneryk worked for the state-owned Post and Telecommunication Bureau of Finland.

"It was a terrific position because through it, I was able to work with fiberoptics system which was comparable if not superior to those systems found in Canada. I doubt that I could have found that kind of position here at home. The training I received in Finland will prove invaluable when I look for a full time job here."

Though Kushneryk didn't make as much money as he have at



Wayne Kushneryk: Finnish beer expensive

home, "I would have probably made twice as much in Edmonton", there were other perks which offset the salary factor.

"The company was very interested in having me experience as much Finnish culture as possible. As a result they organized all expense paid trips to Helsinki and Lapland. The opportunity to travel in Finland and the experience I gained was well worth the cut in salary."

Kushneryk is quick to point out that he really didn't want to go home and is already planning to

apply for a similar position next year.

"Everyone was friendly and I really enjoyed myself. The only difficulty I ran into was the price of beer. In Finland you pay three dollars for a bottle."

Spoken like a true engineer.

From the coast of Finland we move to the parks and ravines of Edmonton. If you were at all observant you may have seen Jaimie Motta traipsing about. Motta, a fourth year Ag student is paid to go out and get mosquito bites.

As she explains "I'm called an

environmental technologist's assistant and it's my job to monitor the mosquito population."

Among Motta's responsibilities were the "bite counts".

During a "bit count" Motta moved from station to station in the city parks determining the nuisance level of mosquitoes.

"I run from station to station in order to build up my CO2 level which attracts mosquitoes. At each station I expose my arm and record the number of bites I receive."

I have an aspirator with me to collect the mosquitoes. This is done so that we can ascertain the species which are biting."

Motta, who reacts adversely to mosquito bites, has persevered for the past three years.

Says Motta, "We consider two bites per minute a nuisance level. However, I've been areas where I've received up to eight and nine bites."

The more gruesome aspect of her job aside, Motta enjoys the work.

"The staff I work with is terrific. All the summer students were given specific areas of responsibility. Thus if a difficulty arises in your section, it's up to you to solve it. As a result you learn to innovate. You learn to deal with problems as they arise, just as you would in any true work situation. Those kinds of opportunities rarely come up in a lab or classroom."

Motta, who graduates in January is certain that her experience with the Environmental Services will serve her well when it comes to applying for jobs.

"There is nothing that can compare with practical experience when it comes down to a job application."

While Jaimie Motta was out chasing or being chased by mosquitoes, Ed Shihadeh was probably getting ready for his first shift at the Golden Garter Casino. A sociology grad student, Ed is also a licensed blackjack dealer.

"I saw an ad in the paper for a blackjack training school and I answered it out of curiosity. Six weeks later I was working my first casino. For some reason my supervisor put me on the high limit table (bets up to \$100.00 accepted). Now blackjack is something that the players take very seriously and they are very hard on a dealer if he makes a mistake. To put it mildly, I was nervous. Anyway I sat there trying to remember my name and started to deal the cards. I dealt to seven people, which was fine except for the fact that only three people were actually playing. As I recall it was not a good night."

Nevertheless Shihadeh stuck with it and went on to get his license. It is not what he would call relaxing work.

"After an eight hours shift, you are exhausted. The tension is incredible. In fact you are given a fifteen minute break every hour just so you can relax. You are constantly worried about making a mistake and when you're dealing with thousands of dollars the tension is multiplied tenfold. I lost ten pounds this past summer."

According to Shihadeh the most enjoyable part of the job is telling people that you do it.

"Blackjack dealing and casinos are just tad sinister and people are always interested in what goes on behind the scenes. In truth there is a great deal of ritual involved in dealing."

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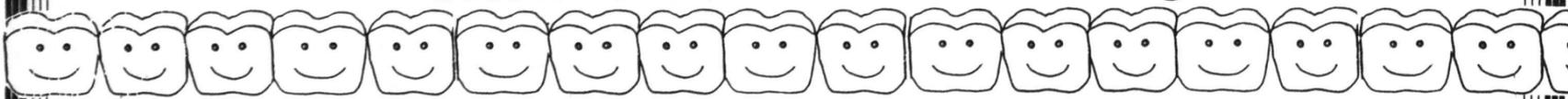
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