

To find out how Shell is helping prepare for the new energy future, visit [www.shell.com/us/realenergy](http://www.shell.com/us/realenergy)



HOME THE MAGAZINE INTERNATIONAL EDITION

# Newsweek

SEARCH SITE WEB

Subscribe to NEWSWEEK

Business Technology Science Enterprise Project Green Women and Leadership Small Business Video

## THE ROAD TO THE INAUGURATION

★ INTERACTIVE: OBAMA'S CABINET ★ POWERING UP: BLOGGING THE TRANSITION ★ PARDON WATCH

### MORE IN POLITICS

- ★ MICHELLE OBAMA INTERVIEW
- ★ SECRETS OF THE 2008 CAMPAIGN
- ★ VIDEO: BEHIND THE 'SECRETS' PROJECT
- ★ VOICES OF EXPERIENCE

**Top Story**  
Gay Marriage: Our Mutual Joy  
My Journey to the Top

**Latest News**  
Obama: Economy to get worse before it improves

**Video**  
Promises: Where Will the Jobs Come From?

SEE MORE FROM THE HOMEPAGE

### CAREERS

## Turning a Layoff Into Lemonade

How losing your job might be the best thing to happen to your career.



### What About Us?

Wall Street's problems have captured the attention of Congress, the White House and the media. But ordinary folks are wondering if anyone is paying attention to them. A look at how Americans are coping with the economic crisis.

- The Crunch: Video Stories From the Economic Downturn
- Corporate America's Love of the GOP
- How to Play Catch-Up On Retirement Investments

By [Gwen Moran](#) | Newsweek Web Exclusive  
Dec 5, 2008 | Updated: 8:25 p.m. ET Dec 5, 2008

#### Recommended (6)

- [Why Don't McCain and Obama Talk](#)
- [About Immigration?](#)
- [See All](#)

#### Topics (3)

- [Christine Marchuska](#)
- [Robin Ryan](#)
- [See All](#)

Type Size

- Print
- Email
- RSS
- Social Networks
- Links to this article
- Get and Share

For a few years, [Christine Marchuska](#) was living the high life. After graduating from Cornell University in 2002, she worked as a day trader and eventually landed a plum job at a major investment bank. But last winter she, like many Americans, began to feel the economic squeeze. "I had learned from my time as a trader that one day you could be up and the next day you could lose everything," says Marchuska. She was right to worry; she was laid off in May. She wasn't the only one. Since January, more than 1.9 million Americans have lost their jobs. About 533,000 of those jobs were lost in November alone,

according to Friday's Bureau of Labor Statistics report. Last month's losses amounted to the largest

single month drop since December 1974.

But rather than linger among the ranks of the growing unemployed, Marchuska has found a way to turn her layoff into lemonade. When her pink slip finally arrived in May, she lumped her savings together with her severance pay and some seed capital from her brother—altogether about \$40,000. With that, she took a flurry of classes, networked with anyone who would speak with her, and ultimately launched her dream [business, Marchuska](#), a line of sustainable clothing that donates 5 percent of its profits to charitable causes. Despite the broader economic downturn, the fledgling company, based in Endicott, N.Y., has gained the attention of a few Manhattan boutiques and may rack up \$100,000 in sales this year. And according to Marchuska, there's one invaluable benefit: "I'm not at the mercy of some corporation that can get rid of my job at any time."

Layoffs often provide an opportunity to undergo an extreme career makeover, giving you the chance to pursue options you might never have considered when your former job was a given. Of course, not everyone has a big stash of cash or monied relatives to get them through. However, even if you don't have a fat bank account, you can still make a career transition, says [Robin Ryan](#), a career counselor in Seattle and author of "60 Seconds and You're Hired!" (*Penguin*). The severance and unemployment insurance payments that often come with a layoff can give you time to re-examine your career path, she says. Plus, she adds, "The biggest salary increases typically come from moving from one job to another when you negotiate effectively."

So how can you profit from a layoff? Some companies offer job retraining and career counseling as part of their severance packages, so be sure to ask the company's human resources department about any such options, Ryan says. Community colleges, alma maters and professional associations also have low- or no-cost career transition resources, as well as networks of alumni and members who may be able to help. Information about federally and state funded workforce development and training programs is available at your local or state labor department, local unemployment office and community college workforce development department, Ryan advises. These may include classes or on-the-job training programs that are available at little to no cost, especially in geographic areas or industries that have been hard-hit by [job losses](#). In Marchuska's case, she paid for her classes out of her own pocket, but made contacts that helped her find out about other classes and contacts that have helped her business.

You can also use the skills that you have from your current job to transition into doing something similar in a new field, says New York City career consultant [Jeri Sedlar](#). That's what Tabitha Frizzell Hanes did. Blindsided by unexpected job loss after she returned from a long weekend with her long-distance boyfriend in his hometown of Richmond, Va., she took a few weeks to get her affairs in order, packed up her dog and headed back there. While searching for pet-friendly apartments, she found an opening with the local branch of the [Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals](#). Once she got her foot in the door with an entry-level gig, she eventually became the shelter's first community relations manager.

To make up the initial income difference, she took a second job as a waitress. But that was fine with her. "I was so fulfilled working with animals, really doing what I loved to do. It was hard, but it was worthwhile to feel like I was making a difference," she says. With her promotion came more pay and she was able to give up her second job. Before making a big transition, Ryan says that you need to ensure that you're moving into a field that offers a future. "Ask yourself, is this a job that will be in demand in five years? Is it a growth industry? What kind of training do I need to pursue this career?" she says.

Once you've decided to go for it, both she and [Sedlar](#) say that networking is essential. Ryan adds that about two-thirds of all jobs are found through networking. "Get out and meet people. Talk to your friends and former co-workers and bosses, colleagues and neighbors," she says. "Anyone who can help



**gemalto**  
security to be free

Find out more at  
[www.gemalto.com/digitalsecurity](http://www.gemalto.com/digitalsecurity)

Capture that \$7,000 moment!

Enter to win \$7,000  
in the American Life Photo Contest!

Entries must be received by January 5th, 2009.



Upload Now!

CapitalOne Newsweek

Top Ten More Topics

**Technology/ Business**

MOST VIEWED MOST E-MAILED GET & SHARE

- 1 Gross: Luxury Retailers Get Desperate
- 2 Dubai's Last Hurrah
- 3 Begley: How the Brain Regulates the Urge to Shop
- 4 Rupert Murdoch Revitalizes the Wall Street Journal
- 5 How to Turn a Job Layoff Into a Positive
- 6 How Boomers Are Redefining Retirement
- 7 Detroit: How Ford Might Overtake GM and Chrysler
- 8 President George Bush Buys A New Home In Dallas
- 9 The Rich are Feeling "Luxury Shame"
- 10 Gross: Paul Krugman on America's Economic Crisis

Set Range:  Past 24 hrs

Updated 12/7/2008 9:49PM EST

you make connections."

Landing an internship or part-time job in your target field are good ways to gauge if you'll really like the job, says Sedlar. For those with more discretionary income, companies like [Vocation Vacations](#) let you test-drive a variety of coveted occupations—chef, event planner, bed and breakfast innkeeper, actor, etc.—for a week or so by arranging experiential working vacations in your chosen field. That way, she says, you don't sink time and money into a transition that turns out to be worse than where you started.

© 2008

**Recommended (6)**

- [Why Don't McCain and Obama Talk About Immigration?](#)
- [See All](#)

**Topics (3)**

- [Christine Marchuska](#)
- [Robin Ryan](#)
- [See All](#)

**Discuss**

Enter Your Comment

**POST YOUR COMMENT**

**Posted By: sthope @ 12/07/2008 8:44:23 PM**

Comment: This person a one of the luckier ones. She at least had 40K to turn into something. Many people have nothing (live from pay check to paycheck) - What's the advice for someone with no money

**Posted By: YashBudini @ 12/07/2008 4:11:07 PM**

Comment: Hey, enemployed? You're not sending thousands every year to Bush's quagmire and draft dodger Cheney's Halliburton, and this is your opportunity to move money from your regular IRA to a ROTH IRA and permanently avoid future taxes for very low if any taxes. What's not to like? Screw the whole lot of them, they had no problem doing the same to you.

**Posted By: yopc @ 12/06/2008 3:18:00 AM**

Comment:

[View All Comments »](#)

- **Obama taps Shinseki as VA secretary**
- **Voters oust indicted La. congressman**
- **Boomer Sooner! OU likely in BCS title game**
- **Riots erupt in Athens after police kill youth**
- **Pacquiao has no problem beating De La Hoya**

VIDEO MORE



**The Crunch: Crisis in Our Backyard**  
5/8/08: Shortages hit food pantries while demand for their services increases. (Video: Ira Spitzer)



**The Crunch: Got Milk?**

**COVER STORY**



**There Is a Silver Lining**

Fareed Zakaria  
The crisis has forced the United States to confront bad habits developed over the past few decades. If we can kick those habits, today's pain will translate into gains.

[Preview Article](#) | [Comments](#)

- The Anatomy of Fear, and Its Effect on the Economy**
- The Economy's a Wreck, But We Can Fix It**
- Lyons: Cloudy Days in Silicon Valley**
- Economic Crisis: Europe's Response**
- How the Super-Rich Are Surviving the Meltdown**
- So Much for Bush's 'Ownership Society'**
- Shiller: The Trouble With Homeownership**
- Fineman: Obama, McCain: Come Clean on the Economy**

**FROM THE WASHINGTON POST**

- Obama Unveils Massive Public Works, Jobs Plan**  
Sun Dec 7 12:00 EST 2008
- Can't Put a Price on History**  
Sun Dec 7 12:00 EST 2008
- Talks Turn to Terms for Auto Aid**  
Sun Dec 7 12:00 EST 2008

**FROM SLATE**

- Slate V: Reviews of Cadillac Records, Frost/Nixon and Nobel Son**  
Fri, 05 Dec 2008 13:01:31 -0800
- Christmas carnage at FAO Schwarz and Bergdorf Goodman.**  
Sat, 6 Dec 2008 06:40:07 PST
- Why do we protect the moral convictions of only some health workers?**  
Sat, 6 Dec 2008 06:38:04 PST

**What's Inside**

**SECTION HIGHLIGHTS**

- Periscope
- News
- Politics
- Tech / Business
- Culture / Ideas
- Health



**PARDONS**  
**Can You Spare Me?**  
Big convicts seek presidential mercy

**SPECIAL SECTIONS**

- Project Green
- Enterprise
- Leadership
- Boomer Files
- Giving Globally
- CES Coverage

**STRATEGIES**



**The Paper Chasers**  
Daniel Lyons  
Isn't it ironic: Xerox is hoping it can profit by teaching companies how to reduce their printing.

[Preview Article](#) | [Comments](#)

Tip Sheet

Education

**Traveling  
Homepage**

Newsweek

**MUST READ** news  
and interactive  
information

**HEALTH COVERAGE**

Newsweek

**live**  
HAPPIER. HEALTHIER. GREENER.

Newsweek

**Newsweek**



- Give a Gift
- Change Your Address
- Pay Your Bill
- Renew

Only \$25!

First Name

Last Name

Email Address

**NEXT**

**NEWSWEEK SERVICES & TOOLS**

- Make Newsweek Your Homepage
- Podcasts
- Newsweek Radio
- Get and Share Widgets
- RSS
- Newsletters

[HOME](#) | [CURRENT ISSUE](#) | [INTERNATIONAL EDITION](#) | [NEWS](#) | [POLITICS](#) | [TECH AND BUSINESS](#) | [CULTURE](#) | [HEALTH](#) | [VOICES](#) | [THE CW](#) | [PERSPECTIVES](#) | [CARTOON](#) | [MY TURN](#)

[ABOUT NEWSWEEK](#) | [ADVERTISING INFORMATION](#) | [SUBSCRIBER SERVICES](#) | [PRESSROOM](#)  
[CONTACT US](#) | [USER AGREEMENT](#) | [PRIVACY POLICY](#) | [BACK COPIES](#)  
[RIGHTS AND REPRINT SALES](#) | [SHOWCASE ADS](#) | [ONLINE AND DISTANCE LEARNING DIRECTORY](#)

PARTNERS

[washingtonpost.com](#) [Slate](#) [BudgetTravel](#) [KAPLAN UNIVERSITY](#) [sprfg](#)

© 2008 Newsweek, Inc.