

What do you want to be when you grow up?

If it's working as a journalist at a newspaper, you'll need talent. That's a given.

Aside from that, you need the ability to hyperfocus, get the job done right the first time – and yes, mostly on deadline. Creativity will get you a decent first raise, too.

For the right person – let's just say Type A's do well, along with assorted other multi-taskers – the adrenaline rush of making this happen in one work shift is worth the stress of digging deep, working late and/or losing your spot on front page when "breaking news" in Uzbekistan just happens on your big day.

But take heart. In this digital media age where multimedia rules, the possibilities are pretty good that you can bring your blog, your video report or some new maverick communications idea into the mix. And that news can be transmitted from any place in the world.

The paycheck's not bad either.

Work will be fun, fast paced and repetitive. Day after day for the first year or so you'll constantly ask: Where do I begin? Who knows the players? How do I trim this masterpiece? Is there art? You want a chart? You'll also answer this question about the liberal media more times than necessary: "No, we aren't scum, we're just the messengers."

At some point, though, your veins will pulse with press ink, and your mojo will be on fire. You will crack the big story, capture a moment for eternity in a photo or design an award-winning page.

You might just be hooked for life.

Within a newsroom, you'll find page designers, reporters, copy editors, photographers, graphic artists, section editors, columnists, editorial assistants, Web producers, tech freaks and bosses of bosses (corporate scum), whom you might question. "Whas up with him/her/that?" is not an unfamiliar refrain. Not everybody is in the

know, which is pretty funny when you're in the business of dishing out details. But that's a different story.

In the "cub" years, you'll probably be one of the first four mentioned above. And more than likely as a reporter, you'll be in a bureau covering commission meetings or high school games – at least 20 miles from any real downtown action after work – if you land a job in a metropolitan paper.

The jobs are what you make of them. Those bosses of bosses will take notice. Some players prefer to stay in the background. Others go for the juggler and rise in the ranks quickly. The word "anal" comes up a lot.

Be prepared to work late – in fact you can pretty much count on midnight or later, have split days off in the beginning and take it on the chin when one of those higher-ups just doesn't get it or you.

If you're looking for the real scoop, though, give it a try. You have nothing to lose, except possibly some sleep.

-- By Peggy Musial, who is currently wordsmithing in the Web world after 20 years of newspapering. Contact her at [peggita@usa.net](mailto:peggita@usa.net)