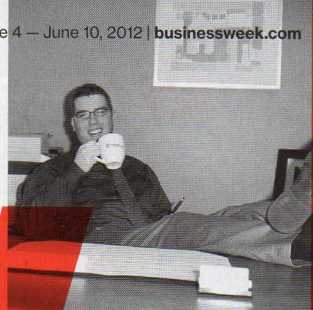
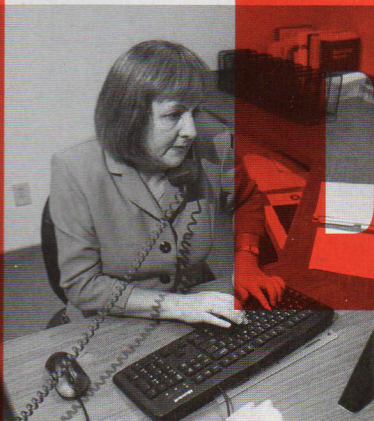


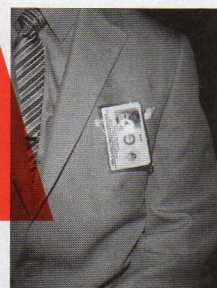
# Bloomberg Businessweek

# BACK TO WORK

"The last time I was looking for a job you didn't have the Internet"



New job pays 20 percent more



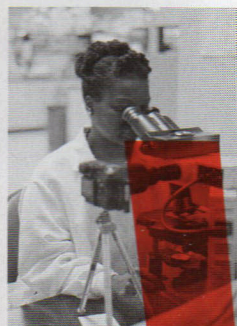
The Hollywood Casino in Toledo is hiring

How hard is it to leave the ranks of the long-term unemployed? Twelve stories of heartache, humiliation, and triumph

p52



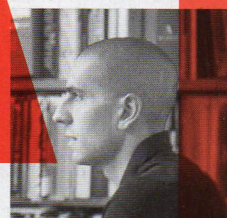
"You've got to pay the bills"



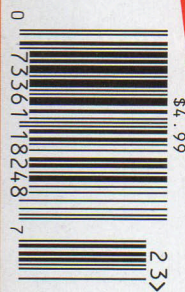
"A large part of how I defined myself was gone"



38 months unemployed



Finally, the perfect fit





# Back To Work

By Katherine Reynolds Lewis

Unemployment is a closely watched statistic, and for 12.5 million Americans, a humbling reality. The percentage of people out of work peaked at 10 percent in October 2009, and while the rate hovers stubbornly at 8.1 percent, at least some of the long-term unemployed are beginning to find permanent jobs. This spring, *Bloomberg Businessweek* assigned 11 photographers to follow 12 people as they returned to the workplace after absences ranging from seven months to three and a half years. Each story is unique, yet there are common themes: feelings of uselessness, the disturbing ease with which one's professional identity slips away, the humiliation of asking family or friends for a loan, and, finally, the rewards of adaptability and persistence.



For more of the gallery, go to  
[www.businessweek.com/backtowork](http://www.businessweek.com/backtowork)





## **(Previous Page) Kenya Cohane, 42—antibody product development scientist**

15 months unemployed. Started on March 26 at the Dedham (Mass.) office of drug developer Covance. Shown on May 14 in the lab.

A science degree was supposed to be a golden ticket, but when Cohane was laid off from her job as a senior scientist at Genocoe Biosciences, she was unemployed for more than a year. “Being a 99 percent fit wasn’t good enough,” Cohane says. It was quite unlike an earlier period of unemployment, when recruiters were knocking down the door. ¶ She took contract research work and taught Zumba, the Latin-dance-inspired exercise program, while pursuing her next job. She drew strength from her husband and two young sons when the prolonged layoff challenged her identity. “To be a scientist, you have to be employed. I felt like a large part of how I defined myself was gone,” she says. “It was very humbling.” ¶ When a headhunter called about the job at Covance, a Princeton (N.J.)-based company, she recognized one of the contact names—it was a person Cohane had interviewed with months earlier. **Photograph by Leonard Greco**

## **Kathleen Wiederman, 40—senior privacy analyst**

7 months unemployed. Started on May 2 at Axiom Resource Management, a U.S. Department of Defense contractor in Falls Church, Va. On her lunch break standing outside her office building on May 17.

The excitement of managing her own sales account and the potential to earn six figures persuaded Wiederman to quit a stable job with a government contractor and become an account executive selling data services for Fios in May 2011. Four months later she was let go. Given that she does recruiting on the side and has a strong network in Washington, Wiederman figured landing a new job would be straightforward. ¶ After four or five months of taking it relatively easy and spending time with her 3-year-old daughter, she became more aggressive. “I’ve never networked so much. I was always in LinkedIn looking at my friends’ friends’ contacts and asking for intros,” Wiederman recalls. A temporary position opened at her former employer, and it’s likely to turn into a permanent position. The money is about what she made at Fios, although she misses the flexibility and variety of a sales job. “On one hand, there’s the ‘I want to do something that really fulfills me and makes me happy,’” she says. “The other view is, you’ve got to pay the bills.” **Photograph by Caitlin Teal Price**









## Adam Sugg, 23—poker dealer (below left)

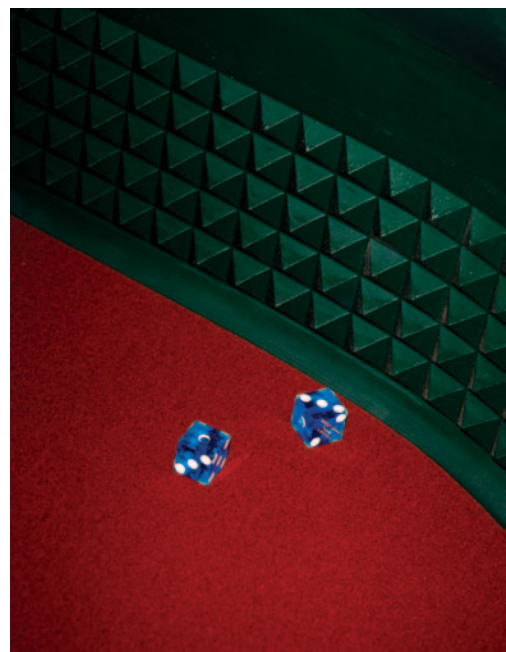
18 months unemployed. Started on May 14 at Hollywood Casino in Toledo. At a “mock casino” training week on May 21.

Sugg loved his job as a poker dealer in a charity poker room until his employer closed up shop in November 2010. With a half-finished bachelor’s degree, he couldn’t land any of the sales or retail jobs that had supported him during college. He tried making a living playing poker but ended up having to borrow money from his parents to pay the bills. ¶ When Hollywood Casino started hiring for a new location in Toledo, it seemed the perfect fit. He took an unpaid, 100-hour, five-week poker class from the casino and went through all of the required interviews and tryouts. He was thrilled to finally get a job offer. “I knew this was something I wanted to do for the rest of my life, and I was happy it was going to start off in a good way,” says Sugg, whose live-in girlfriend also landed a job at Hollywood Casino. They celebrated with hamburgers at Max & Erma’s in Toledo.

## Rickey Smith, 41—craps and blackjack dealer and manager

10 months unemployed. Started on May 14 at Hollywood Casino in Toledo. Stacking chips during a May 21 training session.

Thanks to the recession, Smith and his wife finally quit smoking. They couldn’t afford the habit. That’s about the only good thing that came out of the end of Smith’s lucrative career as a union bricklayer. He specialized in building furnaces in glass and steel factories, which have largely moved overseas. “You kind of feel like a failure, honestly,” he says. “You were living good, and then in a matter of a couple of years, you’re broke. You’ve gone through your savings; you’ve gone through everything.” Especially painful: being unable to afford a school trip to Washington, D.C., for his daughter, one of five children aged 16 through 22. ¶ Smith’s excited about his new occupation, despite having to take a 33 percent pay cut. “It’s a guaranteed job. It’s a guaranteed paycheck 40 hours a week for as long as I want,” he says. “I’m hoping to make it a career and do well at it and be able to retire in 20 or so years and enjoy life with my wife.” Photographs by Thomas Prior





## Evan Slaton, 23—talent scout

8 months unemployed. Started on April 16 at VisionIT, a recruiting company in Columbus, Ohio. At his desk on May 22.

Slaton quit his job as a manager at a movie theater, where he'd worked during college, to hunt for something with better prospects. He soon regretted it. "I didn't really have any specific marketable skill," he says. "I started feeling desperate." ¶ A friend texted him about an opening at VisionIT, and he soon landed the job, which pays 20 percent more than his movie theater gig. For his first day he put on the nearly unworn suit he got as a graduation gift. "I woke up really early to make sure all my clothes were ironed. I wasn't too nervous. I felt pretty confident," he says. **Photograph by Brian Sorg**



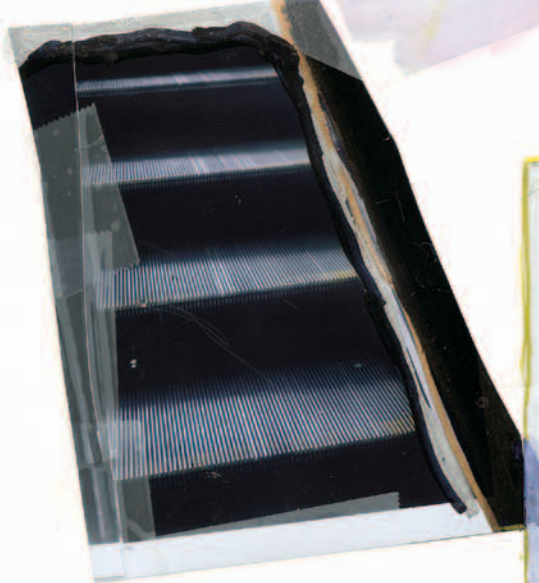
## Lyndsey Kuykendall—30, trademark examining attorney

38 months unemployed. Started on March 12 at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office in Alexandria, Va. Shown on her lunch break on May 22.

Kuykendall grew up in a safe part of “the hood” in Inglewood, Calif. “If you went down the hill one way there was one gang, and if you went down the hill the other way there was another,” Kuykendall says. When she earned her J.D. and landed a federal clerkship, she never thought she’d go back. But her first private sector job in Washington, D.C., ended after a few months, and she struggled for years to find a permanent position. ¶ “I had to ask my two retired parents to loan me money,” she says. “That was probably the lowest point for me.” She targeted the Patent and Trademark Office because of a lifelong interest in entertainment, checking in regularly with friends and a cousin who worked at the PTO. She was about to give up and move back to California when an opening arose. “I’m still giddy,” she says. **Photograph by Rob Brulinski**







## Russell Clark, 41—elevator mechanic

29 months unemployed. Started on March 5 at BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) in San Francisco. Fixing an escalator at the Montgomery St. station on May 23.

Clark says he could actually see the recession in Northern California. “We watched job after job around us shut down in mid-construction,” he says. “That’s something I’d never seen in my lifetime. That’s when I really knew it was getting bad.” In the construction business, he says, the union benefits usually tide people over. This time was different. ¶ Clark and his 11-year-old daughter had to choose between health coverage and putting food on the table. Even though his new job with benefits at BART pays less than his old union position, he’ll have some time for extra work, which will help him rebuild. One unexpected benefit: His daughter now appreciates the importance of hard work and discipline. “She’s going to keep that work ethic for the rest of her life,” he says. “She needs that more than she needs material items.” Photo collage by Jim Goldberg









## Kay Roseland, 64——product manager

41 months unemployed. Started on March 19 at enterprise software company Infor in St. Paul, Minn. Enjoying the grounds at work on May 14. A view of her cubicle is superimposed.

Roseland lost her job as merchandise analyst for online retailer Bellacor.com, along with a quarter of the company. The next day, she updated and printed her résumé at Kinko's, called six contacts, applied for unemployment, and set up an appointment at her university's career center, according to the detailed spreadsheet she created to track her job hunt. ¶ "I really hope to work for the rest of my life. Retirement does not compute," she says. The low point was when COBRA ran out in April 2010, and Roseland gave up biking because she was uninsured. After attending ProductCamp Minnesota, an event focused on product management and marketing, Roseland followed up with one of the presenters on LinkedIn and suggested coffee. A few weeks after they met for "a great conversation," a job opened up, and the presenter recommended Roseland to Infor. She was hired with benefits after a telephone interview. Photo illustration by Josh Poehlein





## **Branden Torres, 25—legal and business affairs coordinator**

**10 months unemployed. Started on March 26 at Rockwell Group, an architecture and design firm in New York City. Photographed on his May 11 commute and at his new workplace.**



## **Sunny Rowe, 26—front desk representative**

**7 months unemployed. Started on April 9 at Crunch gym in Burbank, Calif. Shown at reception on May 14.**

Torres graduated from Pace University in 2009. His first job as a Justice Department clerk after graduation grew out of a college internship—and didn't have tremendous career potential for a non-lawyer. In May 2011 he was let go from his second position as a marketing and public relations associate for a small interior design firm. In his sixth month of unemployment, Torres began to panic. Then he chanced on a staffing agency that found him a monthlong assignment at a financial firm. "It was really good to go to work every day and have something to do," says Torres, reflecting back on months of submitting online résumés and networking, with only dog walking for friends giving his days structure. ¶ A series of temporary jobs in the winter provided much-needed income and also a window into potential careers, some of which he had never considered before. He says his new position at the Rockwell Group seems a perfect fit for his economics degree and love for a creative environment. **Photographs by Marcelo Gomes**

When Rowe saw the crowd of applicants for the new Crunch gym in Burbank, she started to get nervous. Landing a job at the Burbank Crunch was the cornerstone of her plan to spend as much time as possible with her 23-month-old daughter, Jovie. The part-time babysitting she'd been doing since Jovie arrived and Rowe left her previous gym position wasn't covering the growing family's needs. ¶ "I decided I could work really early in the morning, so I could work at a gym. My mom did that when we were young," she says. Fortunately, Rowe clicked with her new manager in the second round of interviews, and there wasn't much competition for the shift opening the gym at 4:45 a.m. Once Rowe gets home at 10 a.m., her husband leaves for his job as an assistant manager for Starbucks in Hollywood. "All three of us are happier this way," she says. "Our whole family life got better when I started working." **Photograph by Luke Gilford**









## Cindy Harris, 53—payroll/administrative assistant

23 months unemployed. Started on April 30 at Powers Accounting & Business Services in Liverpool, N.Y. Shown at her desk on May 21.

Harris was shocked to be laid off from the Destin (Fla.) accounting firm where she'd worked for 25 years. Her mother was visiting at the time, so Harris drove to a coffee shop to sit quietly until she regained her composure. "It was hard to face somebody else or tell her at the time," she says. ¶ The job hunt was unnerving. "The last time I was looking for a job you didn't have computers or the Internet," says Harris. After a few fruitless months of submitting her résumé, she decided to sell her house and move back in with her family in Syracuse, N.Y., in November 2010. She says her age hurt her, but the support of her family and friends carried her through. "If I feel like I'm starting to get down, I just bring myself back up again. I don't allow myself to stay depressed," she says. ¶ In January 2012, Adecco Staffing placed her in a temp job with a small accounting firm. In April the owner decided to hire her on a permanent basis. Finally out of limbo, Harris plans to start looking for her own apartment. **Photographs by Gregory Halpern**



## Angie Clarke, 39—claims adjuster

15 months unemployed. Started on May 29 at insurance company USAA in Norfolk, Va. At home preparing for her first day back at work.

After Clarke lost her job in the spring of 2011, she found that the positions she'd held in the past now required a college degree, a credential she didn't have. Her mother encouraged her to look beyond Flint, Mich. ¶ "I've been employed since I was 15," Clarke says. "Not having a job that was enough to sustain myself was foreign to me." When an opportunity at USAA arose, she flew at her own expense to an interview in Norfolk. ¶ "Even though it was a tough year, a challenging year, I think it was necessary for my journey," she says. Once her son Bishop, 16, heads to college, Clarke plans to finish her bachelor's degree. **Photo illustration by Francesco Nazardo**

