

Recession forces younger generation to pay dues

By Stuart Eskenazi
The Seattle Times

SEATTLE (KRT) — Her fabulous cellular phone hanging fabulously off her fabulous messenger bag, Jarrah Juarez was prone to outbursts of self-confidence that would echo through her office.

"I am The Queen! I am The Master!" she would bellow.

For a time, she was. A flamboyant, self-styled punk-rock techie with bangs dyed bright red and a flair for Web page design, she was earning enough money to stockpile a fleet of Vespa scooters, buy rounds of Guinness Extra Stout for her friends and treat her mother to a night on the town in a limousine.

Life was fabulous. She was paid handsomely. Her job encouraged her to be brash. She didn't have to conform to anything or anyone.

The computer girl

Juarez's techie ways started in the third grade, when her mom bought her a computer with a 2400 baud modem. She'd stay up all hours of the night making friends on the Internet and designing Web sites for friends who played in bands. When she was about 16, while working at the movie theater, people began to pay her to design Web sites.

Her mother, a flight attendant, would tell passengers about her daughter who made "those Website things" and give them her e-mail address. Random offers poured in.

"At that point, I stopped aspiring to go to medical school and started pursuing a degree in media communications and technology at Bellevue Community College," Juarez says. "I kept getting job offers from people who said, 'You have hard technical skills; you don't need a degree.' It was trendy and fashionable at the time to have a kid without a college degree working for you."

She quit the movie theater and worked for a couple of high-tech start-ups. In August 2000, she became a contractor for Volt, which placed her at Microsoft.

To be sure, the notion of tech

workers becoming instantly wealthy was often exaggerated. The average annual salary in the industry was \$129,000 in 2000, according to the American Electronics Association.

But that figure was distorted by the few workers who earned astronomical salaries mostly via stock options; locally, only about 10 percent made that kind of money, says a recent report by the Washington Alliance of Technology Workers, a labor group.

Still, by nearly any measure, Juarez was in a rarefied sphere.

Barely old enough to drink legally, she was earning \$70,000 a year at a time when her monthly bills amounted to \$700. She thought highly of herself for being one of the first people in Seattle to purchase a personal digital assistant. She would summon taxis, order groceries, buy movie tickets — all online.

"It was more than a job; it was a lifestyle," she says. "It was more than what I did; it was who I was."

She was valued, and she thought she was cool.

But feeling devalued in the labor market leads to feeling devalued in general, which is why a recession can cause so much psychological distress, Scarborough says.

"I'm afraid many of these young people do not have the long-term perspective that economic trends are cyclical," she says. "I'm seeing people leap to the conclusion that the world has changed on them in a terrible way, that the window of opportunity has closed and they are going to be doomed to a life of eternal despair in this awful economic climate."

Juarez is dealing with her unemployment better than many, allowing self-deprecation to conquer self-pity.

She is never far, however, from her bottle of antacid tablets to soothe what she is sure is the onset of a stomach ulcer. The pills are store-brand generic, which Juarez purchased because they are cheaper than brand-name varieties.

To save money, Juarez recently canceled a \$700 session with a tattoo



Knight Ridder Tribune

Jarrah Juarez has recently gone from riches to rags after being laid off at her \$70,000 a year job at Microsoft. Juarez is back to square one.

artist who planned to draw swooping swallows on her lower back.

For Christmas, instead of buying her mom a portable DVD player, she knit her an afghan. Money is nice, but Juarez says she is more concerned about getting a job that allows her to have fun and be herself.

"A lot of members of this generation rushed into the new economy not for the money, but for the culture it offered," says Richard Florida, a professor of regional economic development at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh.

Florida, who also writes a column for Information Week magazine, says he hears many young high-tech workers say that, in retrospect, the fat salaries and stock options they earned were insane.

"That's not to say they are happy to take lower salaries, but they realize they can be satisfied as long they have the freedom to live the life they are comfortable with," he says.

"They might be willing to buy fewer Porsches, but they are not willing to go back to a life as their father."

Juarez remembers psychoanalyz-

ing her father, who had a degree in sociology and psychology but labored five days a week as a pharmaceuticals rep.

"He was miserable in that job, and I knew I didn't want that for myself," she says.

Scarborough's counseling practice also allows her to hear from seasoned executives who hire managers for their companies.

"What I hear from them a lot is that they are surprised and annoyed by the sense of entitlement they perceive on the part of the younger generation," she says.

"Whereas the executives grew up thinking that success takes time and includes the necessity to pay one's dues — they believe that recent college graduates expect to circumvent any lengthy progress because during the tech boom, you really could land a \$70K job straight out of school with limited experience."

Executives also complain that recent college graduates have no respect for everyday business etiquette, Scarborough says.

"When they go on job interviews, they start by talking about what they require in a job rather than in-

roducing themselves by convincing the potential employer that they know how to make a contribution," she says.

A different look

Juarez says she is willing to compromise some things to land a job. Her red bangs are back to black. She has pulled out the two rings that once adorned her eyebrow.

She ditched plans for a new piercing above her gum line. She kept the silver stud below her lower lip but takes it out and covers the hole with makeup before job interviews.

But she vows to never settle in the long term for "a lame job that I'm not happy with and makes me be something I'm not."

In one wardrobe, she keeps her punk rock T-shirts. In another, her Lane Bryant black business attire. Juarez said she believes the two can co-exist.

"I'm always going to be the loud, sassy girl who doesn't take any crap," she says.

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Customs Service raids worldwide piracy ring

By Robert Salonga
Daily Bruin (U. California-Los Angeles)

(U-WIRE) LOS ANGELES — U.S. Customs officials raided University of California-Los Angeles and other major universities last month, seizing computers used by suspected members of a worldwide software piracy ring known as "DrinkOrDie."

According to the Customs Service, the raids were part of "Operation Buccaneer," an investigation into a global network of cyberspace groups who use the Internet to pirate billions of dollars worth of software.

The groups are also suspected of pirating movies and music. For instance, the films "Behind Enemy Lines" and "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone" were available before their respective premieres, said Kevin Bell, a spokesman for the U.S. Customs Service.

"We believe that students and (computer network) administrators were involved in using computer resources at these universities to illegally copy software," Bell said.

Federal agents have executed 44 search warrants in more than 27 cities across the United States and seized more than 129 computers. They conducted searches in businesses, residences and other major schools nationwide, including

Duke University.

U.S. officials have charged conspirators in foreign countries, Bell said, and indictments should be handed down in the next several months.

University officials issued a statement last month that UCLA is fully cooperating with the Customs Service and "welcomes the opportunity to work with federal agencies in this investigation."

The roughly 40-member DrinkOrDie is part of the "WAREZ" community, which Customs Service describes as "a loosely affiliated network of software piracy gangs that engage in the duplication and reproduction of copyrighted software over the Internet." It accounts for nearly 90 percent of Internet software piracy.

Software piracy violates the Criminal Copyright Infringement Act and the No Electronic Theft Act, according to the Department of Justice.

DrinkOrDie formed in the early 1990s in Russia and expanded to nations including Australia, England, Finland and Norway.

With insider help at software firms, the pirates can acquire software before it is publicly released, Bell said.

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FITNESS WORKOUT SCHEDULE - Winter 2002					
	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
12:00-12:50	Basic Step Jamie		Basic Step Jamie		Basic Step Rorey
1:00-1:50					Body Sculpt Rorey
2:00-2:50					
4:00-4:50					
5:00-5:50	Intermed. Step Jessica	Kickbox Aerobics Debbie	Kickbox Aerobics Jessica	Intermed. Step Debbie	
6:00-6:50	Body Sculpt Jessica	Body Sculpt Debbie	Body Sculpt Jamie	Body Sculpt Rorey	

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• In order to enter a workout, the participant must present both their punch card and photo ID.

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CLASSES RUN FROM January 14-March 15, 2002 (9 weeks)

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