

SECTION
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PORTLAND OBSERVADOR

In Our Own Words



See Article and photo on page C2.

Special Election Day is Tuesday, September 17

Your vote is needed to help set the course for our community in three key areas on Tuesday, September 17.

The Zoo:

Adequate funding for the Portland Metropolitan Zoo is a vital consideration when you consider the overall quality of life in the Northwest. The zoo serves a population far greater than your neighborhood and our city. The Portland Zoo serves a civilization. Voting YES on Measure 26-47 will help the zoo fulfill its mission and lower maintenance costs at the same time.

Portland City Council:

16 candidates are vying for the vacant seat on the city council, and the person filling that position will have a great deal to say about the future quality of life in your neighborhood. From a minority perspective, we feel that the race for City Commissioner, Position 2, boils down to a choice between four candidates who have proven themselves on issues effecting your community's minority populations, and who also have the essential combinations of experience, commitment, leadership ability and a broad base of

support to perform effectively on your behalf in city government. The Portland Observador throws its weight behind the candidacy of **Bruce Broussard, Lucious Hicks, Berna Plummer and Erik Sten.** It's too bad that there is only one position open. Now you have nearly a full week to read your voters' pamphlet, do your own homework, and make a decision among these four fine candidates.

School funding:

If you are a voter residing within the Gresham-Barlow school district boundaries, then you can make the

difference for generations of children. This special election offers you the opportunity to demonstrate to the rest of the state that in Gresham, education—and the future—comes first. We urge you to get out and vote YES on Measure 26-50. Be a trend-setter!

The Observador encourages all of our readers to vote in every election. Take every opportunity to exercise your rights as a citizen of the United States and of the community in which you live. Your vote is your voice. *Su voto es su voz.*



Latinos caught in technology gap

Computer revolution fails to even playing field

BY JEORDAN LEGON, SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS

Technology has sweetened the lives of tens of thousands of Sandra Rodriguez's Silicon Valley neighbors—rewarding them with ritzy homes, flashy cars and six-figure incomes.

But like many valley Latinos, Rodriguez has been left behind by the technological revolution. Instead, the unemployed 24-year-old single mother of two sits in computer class, catching up on the basics.

As technology transforms the lives of millions of computer-savvy Americans, low-skill, low-wage workers—many of them Latino and Black—stand to lose the most from global shifts making their jobs obsolete and pushing employers to other countries in search of cheaper labor.

Ethnic technology gap is widening

What observers hoped would be the greatest economic equalizer of our time, putting whites and minorities on an even technological keel, has substantially widened the gap of wealth, education and power between the haves and the have-nots.

Technology replaces agriculture

This paradigm is most evident in Silicon Valley, where technology has replaced agriculture as the region's largest employment source. The change has left many Latinos who used to work in the orchards scrambling to find jobs that don't require computer knowledge—not an easy task in an area where almost 50 percent of jobs are linked to technology.

Census statistics analyzed by the Tomas Rivera Center show that only one U.S. Hispanic household in eight owns a computer—half the figure of whites. And Hispanics lag about seven years behind the total U.S.

population in using computers on the job: in a 1993 survey, only 29.3 percent used a PC at work compared to 47.1 percent of white employees.

As a result, Hispanics—who constitute 22 percent of Santa Clara County's population—have been largely unable to take advantage of the computer industry's hiring binge.

An analysis of federal employment statistics shows that Hispanics hold only 9 percent of the jobs in high-tech firms in Silicon Valley.

Other ethnic groups fare much better.

Asians, who make up an estimated 18 percent of the region's population, account for 29 percent of the industry's workers. Whites, 55 percent of the population, hold 58 percent of the jobs. Blacks fill 4 percent of such jobs, a proportion equal to the county's population.

Observers say the dismal employment situation among Silicon Valley Latinos may repeat itself on a national scale when Hispanics become the largest U.S. minority and technology becomes the country's chief employment source.

If Latinos continue to be ill-prepared to capitalize on technology, a large number of adults will be unable to fill existing jobs.

"This great digital divide is not just a Latino issue. It's something that should concern all of us," said Harry Pachon, director of the Tomas Rivera Center in Southern California, a Latino policy institute. "It means that as many as a quarter of our work-force will not be prepared to operate in a 21st century."

Technology barriers

Ask Ana Hidalgo the reasons why so many Latinos are not keeping up with technology, and the 22-year-old college student rattles off the same answers offered by industry insiders: lack of money, inadequate educa-

tion, hopelessness, fear and language barriers.

Hidalgo has learned these answers by volunteering in one of the few computer centers in East San Jose. The Mexican American Community Services Agency Youth Center offers a gymnasium, pool hall and snack bar. But the 16 computers monitored by Hidalgo are the center's most popular attraction.

"Sal si puedes"

In a neighborhood known as "Sal si puedes" (get out if you can), more than 60 students showed up for the room's opening day, far too many for the machines available, Hidalgo said.

So now, the center restricts computer use to kids under 14 who agree to complete 45 minutes of homework each day.

"They're really anxious to learn," Hidalgo said, struggling to be heard over the incessant beeps of computer games. "But a lot of them don't have any access to the information."

Latinos trail across income-level spectrum

By most accounts, poverty and lack of education are the biggest contributors to Latino's computer skills deficit, but middle and high-income Latinos also trail their non-Hispanic counterparts in access to personal computers in the home, as do high school and college graduates.

Schools appear to add to the disparity. About 53 percent of Latino students nationwide use computers at school, while about 63 percent of white school children use the machines, according to 1993 Census figures, the most recent available.

Differences in schools

In California, a Mercury News survey of 237 middle schools last year indicated that the difference may be even more pronounced. Predominantly Latino schools scored 16 per-

cent lower than preponderantly white campuses in the level of technology present.

Schools lack resources

Armando Valdez, founder of LatinoNet, a San Francisco-based on-line service, said schools in poor, predominantly Latino neighborhoods don't have the resources to make technology a priority.

"They're saying, 'We have roofs that leak. We have asbestos problems. We have outdated playgrounds, and parents and teachers who don't want to use this stuff (computers). So why should we buy them?'" Valdez said.

"They should, of course, because without computers, the kids' chances are diminished. They are...going to earn less, be less employable. They will continue to do the service jobs and be less prepared to go to work in white-collar jobs."

Computer skills required

About 85 percent of the job referrals at the Center for Employment

Training in downtown San Jose require some computer knowledge, and the number related to computers grows every day. For example, sheet metal workers depend almost entirely on computers to do their jobs, unlike a decade ago.

Latinos lack training

Yet almost all of the center's students, three-fourths of them Latinos, have never had computer training. Many are laid-off farmworkers or injured construction workers who cannot return to their unskilled jobs.

After more than 25 years doing construction, CET student Arturo Chavez, 50, injured his back last year. Now he's learning how to design mechanical parts on a computer.

"I'm a little old to be learning this, but I can't keep building houses anymore," the Mexican immigrant said in Spanish recently, typing away at a PC.

Fear of technology

But many others fear the technol-

ogy.

After working for weeks with Plugged In, a computer access program in East Palo Alto, and even buying a computer, the Mexican-American owner of Los Temos Pizza on University Avenue abruptly abandoned the idea of keeping a customer database.

"There's a lot of fear of the unknown," said Hector Campos, Plugged In's associate director. "It's a bridge that needs to be crossed, but they are apprehensive, and so they put it off."

Don't be left behind

Not wanting to be left behind, Rodriguez, the former chicken plant worker, is embracing technology con ganas—willingly.

"I didn't want to keep deboning chicken for the rest of my life," she said recently while completing a typing lesson. "Maybe now some of those computer dollars will come my way."

U.S. schools suffer from textbook shortage

Escuelas E.E.U.U. sufren la falta de textos

—USA TODAY

Nearly 20% of public school teachers in the United States have problems stemming from outdated or insufficient supplies of textbooks.

According to a recent survey, of the 20% who cited problems:

70.6% have spent their own money for materials and 41.6% lack sufficient books to assign homework. 43.1% described class disruptions from students having to share books.

Additional problems included the use of texts which contain outdated or incorrect information, cited by 51.8%, and 56.5% saw that text materials were either in such poor condition or were so tedious that students lost interest.

These are serious factors that contribute to teacher fatigue, academic failure and an increased dropout rate.

Casi 20% de maestros en escuelas publicas en los Estados Unidos tienen problemas que nacen de textos anticuados o suministros insuficientes.

De acuerdo con un agrimensura reciente, de los 20% quien mencionaron problemas: 70.6% han gastado sus propios dineros para materiales y 41.6% les faltan libros suficientes para asignar tareas. 43.1% describieron interrupciones por estudiantes teniendo a compartir libros.

Problemas adicionales incluye el uso de textos los cuales contienen informacion anticuada o incorrecto, mencionado de 51.8%, y 56.5% miraron que materiales de textos estuvieron de condicion pobre o tan tediosos que los estudiantes perdieron interes.

Esos son factores seriosos que contribuyen a fatiga de maestro, fracaso academico y un proporción de retirarse incremento.

Welcome to the Portland Observador

Bienvenida al Portland Observador

Read! Learn! Act!

Léalo! Apréndalo! Hazlo!

The Portland Observer celebrates National Hispanic Heritage Month with our premiere issue of The Portland Observador. This section will appear in The Observer every other week. Some portions of the newspaper will be published in a bilingual format. Spanish-language text will appear in grey-shaded sections.

Among the highlights of our first Observador is the first annual Observador Community Betterment Award. This prestigious award honors a person or organization that has during the previous year benefited the Hispanic community in some singular way. Our charter

winner, you will see, sets the mark high.

In Our Own Words (En Nuestras Proprias Palabras) will be a regular feature of The Portland Observador, offering to Hispanic youth the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings—and to describe their experiences—as a Latino in a predominantly Anglo environment. The Observador encourages our young readers to submit your own writing and a photograph. We will try to find space in our pages for you.

Our 1996 Charter Issue winner is.....well, read! The Observador and learn! for yourself. Then act! You can be next year's winner. Léalo! Apréndalo! Hazlo!

El Portland Observer se celebra el Mes Nacional de Herencia Hispano con nuestra edición estreno de El Portland Observador. Este sección se aparecerá en El Observador cada otra semana. Algunas porciones del periódico estarán imprimido en una forma bilingüe. Texto en Español se aparecerá en secciones grisáceas.

Entre de los puntos más destacados de nuestro primero Observador estarán el primero anual Observador Galdón de Mejora del Comunidad. Este premio prestigioso la honra una persona o organización lo que ha mejorado la comunidad Hispano durante del año previo en alguno modo singular. Nuestro ganador fundador, ustedes lo verán, se pone la norma alto.

En Nuestras Proprias Palabras (In Our Own

Words) será un sección especial de The Portland Observador, ofreciendo al los jovenes Hispanos y Hispanas el oportunidad a expresar sus pensamientos—y describir sus experiencias—como un Latino o una Latina en un medio ambiente lo cual es predominante Anglo. The Observador los estimulan nuestras jovenes lectores a someterse sus propias escritos y una fotografia. Nos trataramos a hallar espacio en nuestras paginas para ustedes.

Nuestro ganador de la 1996 Edición Fundador está.....pues Léalo! el Observador y Apréndalo! por ustedes mismos. Despues Hazlo! Usted puede ser el ganador el año que viene. Read! Learn! Act!