

CALL TO ACTION FOR THE UNEMPLOYED/UNDEREMPLOYED

Are you unemployed or underemployed? Think May 18. Now read on.

I hope you will forward this link to as many people as you can.

I don't have to tell you our economy is in trouble. The national unemployment statistics are 6%. A KGO TV report on May 2, 2003 noted that in the Silicon Valley we have an 8.5% unemployment rate - we're down 200,000 jobs. That doesn't count the people who were unemployed so long they fell off of the charts; the contractors who never qualified for inclusion in these statistics; the underemployed and the ones who changed careers because there was no work in their original professions. Some estimate that our unemployment rate is around 10%, but I have a sense that it may be much larger.

And this will not significantly improve any time soon.

During the "New Economy" period, say 1998-2000, all kinds of companies and technologies flourished in the US. It was hard to find good candidates - unemployment in the Silicon Valley was less than 2% and people were pouring in from all over the world to be a part of this gold rush. Rents were outrageous, housing costs through the roof and companies were paying premium prices for each square foot of space. Everyone was busy and the economy was on a roll. (There was a lot of greed and nonsense, but that's another story.)

Our economy started going downward in March 2000. Since that time we've had:

- a recession;
- an energy crisis;
- corporate malfeasance;
- tech industry design, development, customer service and manufacturing jobs have moved overseas;
- terrorism;
- war;
- SARS.

All of the above impacted consumer confidence, business and spending. Our government has not been paying attention to the economy, and the solution proposed is to give us a small tax break. Meanwhile, US corporations need to keep industry here. Moving design, development, customer service and manufacturing overseas may seem tempting in the short run: it cuts operational costs. In the long run, when people in the States are not working, we can't afford to purchase technology products. Peripheral and supporting businesses cannot survive here and therefore you lose additional customers.

The slowdown in the technology industry has a huge fallout in our local economy: many vacancies in offices and properties, bankruptcies, hair salons, restaurants, dry cleaners, restaurants, leisure activities and local charities have all been impacted. Due to a smaller tax base, our state and local budgets are in serious trouble. We'll have a lot of cut services and if you'd like to read more about that, check the Mercury News article from May 5: it should be free to view for seven days. <http://www.bayarea.com/mld/mercurynews/news/5795724.htm>

I'm not an economist but I do understand fundamental issues. We need to be sure corporations are cleaning up their acts, being responsible citizens, having Boards that are actively involved and clearing out the corruption. Until this is done and the public has confidence, people will continue to shy away from purchasing company stock. The Silicon Valley must diversify - we need to

create incentives to move companies and new industries to our area. We need extensions for unemployment benefits and incentives to keep jobs here. What if we had incentives for companies to have 80% of their employees and contractors in the US? How could California entice companies to keep the jobs here?

It is in our national, state and local interest to encourage growth of small and large businesses and get Americans back to work.

Are you ready to make a statement about it?

Sunday, May 18, 2003 come to St. James Park in San Jose at 2:00. Our gathering place is near a small stage. The park is at St. James and 1st, right near the lightrail. There is free parking at Market and Santa Clara Streets.

We won't have speakers; we just want your presence for one hour. Just enough time to remind our politicians and business leaders that we're here. A simple, dignified presence. And we need to really show up! This will not make the news if 5 people are in the park.

Please do not bring helium balloons: we're in the flight path and this is prohibited. Although I'm interested in people's opinions, I'll have a lot of mail to answer so please don't bombard me with additional work. You can catch up with me at the park.

If you want to make a sign, there are step-by-step instructions at:
<http://csua.berkeley.edu/~alex/sklyarov/Picket-Signs-mini-HOWTO>

If you live in another city and want to set up your own assembly, contact your Police Department and Parks & Recreation. You should fill out the proper forms and ensure a space at the park. The last thing we need is to be fined.

And please, even if you feel strongly about other issues (guns, abortion, war, animal rights, etc.) - this is the time to concentrate on JOBS!

I hope to see you Sunday, May 18, 2003 at St. James Park in San Jose at 2:00.

Regards,

Marcia Stein, PHR
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