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BUSINESS

MARKETS ♦ HIGH TECH ♦ ECONOMY

TALKING BUSINESS

“There will just be fewer of us here.”

HENRY MCKINNELL,
Pfizer executive vice president
on Pfizer's layoffs

Reports of dramatic changes in top management at the San Jose disk-drive manufacturer are making the rounds, after a board meeting Tuesday in advance of Conner's scheduled announcement of quarterly earnings Thursday. The company deigns the rumors, and analysts are split as to whether any might be true.

Most setups have company founder Finis Conner stepping down from his chief executive role and either remaining chairman or taking an ordinary director's seat. Also on the "out" list is controversial and mercurial President Tom Mitchell, a man who has kept a hand grenade on his desk and whom many competitors blame for starting a disk-drive price war that has crushed profits industrywide.

In their stead, by most accounts, comes Rod Canion, the founder of Compaq Computer who was ousted from the Houston computer maker that is Conner's biggest customer. Others have former President William Almon returning to his old job.

More than one analyst termed the rumors plausible, saying the company might use a management shuffle to blunt reaction to Conner's dismal quarter.

The company denies the reports outright. A spokesman dismisses most as "wishful thinking." He said Almon paid a 10-minute courtesy call on Finis Conner within the past few days, but that neither he nor Canion was about to join Conner.

And one prominent analyst doubted anybody could give Finis Conner his walking papers. "He's got a pussycat board of directors," said Jim Porter of Disk/Trend in Mountain View. "It doesn't sound too logical."

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ZOOMING YEN: Were you one of those folks who thought all the personal digital assistants hitting the market would be a lot cheaper than they are? You're not alone: so are the folks at Palm Computing, the Los Altos company that did the basic design and later wrote the software for the

WHAT WE EARN IN THE VALLEY

White and Japanese men dominate the high-paying jobs in the valley's electronics industry and among all local employers, according to a new analysis of census data. Here are the mean annual incomes, based on 1990 numbers, of pay for men and women of ethnic groups.

Mexican-American women	15,122
Other women	15,947
Vietnamese-American women	17,848
Other Asian women	17,943
Other Hispanic women	18,315
Indian-American women	18,507
Korean-American women	18,792
Filipino women	20,551
Mexican-American men	20,641
African-American women	20,706
Other men	21,632
White women	22,724
Japanese-American women	23,494
Vietnamese-American men	23,872
Filipino men	23,894
Chinese-American women	24,676
Other Asian men	27,050
African-American men	27,569
Other Hispanic men	28,385
Korean-American men	30,761
Indian-American men	37,515
Chinese-American men	38,111
White men	41,663
Japanese-American men	43,329

ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY WAGES

Other Asian women	20,420
Other women	20,550
Other Hispanic women	21,214
Korean-American women	21,618
Filipino women	21,888
Vietnamese-American women	21,896
Mexican-American women	22,145
Indian-American women	23,018
Filipino men	25,408
African-American women	25,977
Vietnamese-American men	27,217
Mexican-American men	28,049
Other men	28,084
Chinese-American women	30,677
Other Asian men	31,451
White women	32,247
Japanese-American women	33,643

Top pay eludes minority women

BY MICHELLE LEVANDER
Mercury News Staff Writer

The earnings of Silicon Valley workers varied dramatically by gender and ethnic group, according to a new analysis of 1990 census data by the Pacific Studies Center in Mountain View.

White men dominate the high-paying jobs in the electronics industry, earning on average \$54,038.

Santa Clara County's diverse Asian community, which includes more recent arrivals from Vietnam and Korea as well as well-established Japanese, recorded significant pay differences, the study showed.

Japanese men, with average earnings of \$54,720 in the electronics industry, earned more than any other ethnic group, including whites. Filipino and Korean-American women were at the bottom of the economic ladder among Asians, earning \$21,888 and \$21,618 respectively in the electronics trade, according to the data.

Women of every race earned significantly less than their male counterparts.

The figures mirror research on ethnicity, pay and gender in other parts of the nation that concluded that white males earned the most and minority women the least, researchers said.

Lenny Siegel, the study's author and director of the Pacific Studies Center, argues that finding the same patterns locally challenges conventional wisdom about Silicon Valley as a place of opportunity. Siegel, who compiled the research for unions organizing in Silicon Valley, said President Clinton and Vice President Al Gore have

portrayed high-tech industries as the key to America's economic future and as a source of stable rewarding jobs.

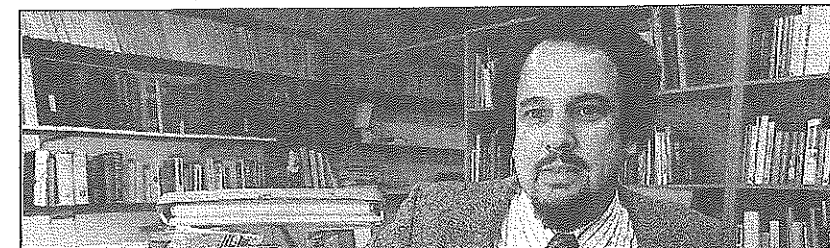
But Siegel also freely admits that the figures lack many other important details that could explain some of the pay differences. The numbers don't include information on whether workers had full-time or part-time jobs. Nationally, women represent 65 percent of all part-time workers. The figures also don't distinguish between newly arrived and more-established immigrant groups or gauge educational background and skill levels.

"The technology of the future hasn't solved the social problems of the future," Siegel said. "Any policy designed to promote high-tech industry as a solution to America's economic woes must take those differences into account."

Karen Hossfeld, a sociologist at San Francisco State University who has researched ethnic diversity and Silicon Valley's workforce, said the Clinton administration is following on the heels of many other business and political notables who have come to Silicon Valley looking to mimic the secrets of its economic miracle.

"People think that because Silicon Valley is innovative, that labor relations that go with it are innovative," she said.

"For every boy wonder who made millions tinkering in the garage, there are some who do the low jobs. It's not that Clinton and Gore are wrong that Silicon Valley can create high-skill, high-wage jobs, but it's not the whole picture."



Lenny Siegel argues that finding the same patterns of ethnicity, pay and gender