

# Education

## "THE REPORT CARD"

**AOIP Family and  
Community Reading  
Newspaper**

Yvonne Atkinson



Several recent issues of the SENTINEL VOICE have provided information about the Assault On Illiteracy Program (AOIP). I am reminded that when we discuss illiteracy, the term for most of us does not carry an emotional response, yet for any individual who does not possess the basic skills of reading and writing, the term illiteracy is more than emotional. It is a relegation to a way of life that is hard for most of us to comprehend.

Being actively involved in the education of our students has been both a challenge and a rewarding experience. Each day I am privileged to meet with students, parents, and our educational staff. Many of the meetings are designed to investigate issues facing our schools and in some instances, to

review problem areas. The task for the Clark County School District is to enroll students in a series of learning experiences which will provide them with the valuable opportunity to realize their potential and to become literate adults. I emphasize the word literate because the figure for those who cannot read and write can only be estimated, but the best guesstimate today is that 20 million Americans do not possess these basic life skills. The 20 million Americans are teenagers, young adults, and those who are approaching middle age and senior citizen status. The Assault On Illiteracy Program has been designed to meet the needs of this segment of the American population. A group of people who can never fully realize

their potential as individuals can never obtain and hold technical positions or jobs, can never appreciate the great literary works, and individuals who have difficulty simply surviving in a "verbal world." So, while I am an advocate of a strong public education system, I am also a strong supporter of the program designed to assist these individuals who for whatever the reason, have not been able to obtain the education so important in today's modern world.

In future issues of the SENTINEL VOICE, you will be hearing about a section of our paper that has been designed to help individuals overcome their inability to read and write. We in District C, who have long supported education, need to get behind this project. We also need to be emphatic to those who lack these basic skills. I use the term emphatic because it implies that we need to be conscious of the predicament of the individual who is illiterate, but not sympathetic. We need to feel with them and not for them. In the past, it was understandable that some students may have exited school before they had achieved the reading and writing skills. There may have been any number of reasons for the student making this exit from school, but today, through special programs and an awareness of the need for verbal training, every school is making a dedicated effort to retain students. Still, there are those who escape the efforts of school personnel, parents, and community. They arrive at adulthood and

## SCHOOL TALK

By Dr. Marshall C. Darnell

### Computer Education

Anyone over the age of 40 can remember when a computer was a massive sophisticated electronic machine which simply processed information. In the early days, such computers were housed in environmentally controlled rooms and were huge by

the stigma of illiteracy becomes so great that they avoid even the topic. Education is not, nor should it ever be, considered to be an activity between the ages of 7 and 17. It is a life long process and if we have not taught some of our citizens to read by the time they reach age 17, then we need to renew our task and assist them before they reach age 20 or 30.

Human potential and success of our community cannot be obtained until we have provided literacy training for all of our citizens. The Assault On Illiteracy Program is one where we can all become involved. We can offer our support, through our finances and through our actions. The effort to aid a significant segment of our community and nation's population should be our goal. Public education makes a difference. Public awareness can make a difference, and a strong publicly supported program can improve the quality of life for many of our citizens. It is through this effort that together we can eradicate illiteracy from Clark County and Nevada.

modern day comparisons. Only the most informed mathematician could appreciate the system which had been built, and only the most skilled technician could operate the equipment.

What a difference a few years has made for the computer and for all of us who have come to realize its potential and subsequently turn to its importance as a modern day life necessity. Computers have become so common place and an accepted part of our everyday work life that it is difficult for us to think of the time when we didn't have this type of system in our office or in our home. The time is rapidly approaching when every home will be maintained by a personal computer. Other facets of our lives will be supported by these new systems. This past week, over 100,000 visitors to our city participated in the Consumer Electronics Show. They saw the latest technology and modern electronic conveniences which would be available for the public, but as more and more changes take place in this way that we live, the greater the need will be for computer programmers, computer repair technicians and installers.

Today, every student in the junior high school will have an opportunity to become familiar with the general operation and programming of a personal computer system. As they progress through the senior high school years, many students will select to enroll in job specific classes which teach computer operation or programming.

Few private sector offices today are maintained without a computer backup support system. Job requirements for secretaries entering the work

force in 1986 will require a need for these individuals to have a knowledge of both computer programming and word processing. Students who are being trained in auto mechanics now receive instruction in console computer use. In the span of only a few years, programs in the Clark County School District, entitled Business Computer and Console Operation, Word Processing, Business Data Programming, Computer Literacy, and Computer Awareness have become either required or important elective course offerings.

There are 952 juniors and seniors enrolled this year in programs that would have been placed at the university or college level only a decade ago. The Clark County School District has made a tremendous effort to provide staff training for this critical area. An equal effort has been made to purchase the sophisticated equipment which is needed for student instruction.

Computer technology has changed our way of living and will continue to make changes. Job opportunities are also changing in this important industrial field. The Governor's Conference on Secondary Education recently recommended that every student who graduates from a high school in Nevada must be computer literate. This implies that future graduates will be knowledgeable about computer operation and elementary usage. The Clark County School District has already developed a program to address this recommendation, but more significantly, Clark County is meeting job requirement needs for the future through specialized occupational training classes.

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