

FEARS	Rankings		
	1987	1988-89	1990
Environment: greenhouse effect/climate change, ozone loss, deforestation, species loss, acid rain, toxic waste, trash disposal, drinking water pollution, ocean pollution, soil erosion, water salinization, indoor pollution	2	1	1
Economic Jitters: borrowing from the future, US budget & trade deficits; plausible Great Depression	1	2	2
Drug Wars	*	4	3
Poverty/Homelessness	6	7	4
AIDS Pandemic	4	5	5
Health Care Costs	7	8	6
Arms Races: crippling expense; threat of nuclear weapons, chemical & biological weapons; terrorism	3	3	7
Education/School Reform	*	*	8
Energy Crises	5	6	9
Traffic Congestion	*	9	10

(Future Survey Annual 1990 from World Future Society, 4916 St. Elmo Ave, Bethesda, Md 20814; 301/656-8274; \$25)

#### ITEM OF IMPORTANCE TO PRACTITIONERS

"Millionaires Are Now More Accessible than many of them probably want to be. Who's Wealthy in America, a directory of the 50,000 wealthiest, was recently published by DC-based Taft Group. Provides names, addresses & phone numbers as well as wealth estimates, insights into lifestyles, political spending habits of monied elite. While money alone does not an opinion leader make, this database of US billionaires, multi-millionaires & millionaires should be a boon to fundraisers & networkers. (\$295 from 800-888-TAFT)

#### WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

ELECTED. Nat'l School PR Ass'n '90-91 ofcrs: pres, Bob Grossman (Mid-Continent Regional Education Laboratory, Aurora, Colo.); pres elect, Steve Knagg (Garland, Texas, Independent School Dist); vp at large, Jenelle Elder-Green (Milwaukee Public Schools); new vp's, for S. Central Region, Connie Blaney (Putnam City School Dist, Oklahoma City); N. Central Region, Judi Mollerus (Minnetonka Pub Schools, Excelsior, Minn).

AWARDS. Morris Rosenbloom (pres, American Surveys International, DC) receives David Apter Memorial Award for Public Service from National Capital Chapter/PRSA.

DIED. Vern C. Schranz, first pr oficer, Ball Corp, in whose honor Schranz Lectureship at Ball State U was created in '79 by the company. He endowed the Schranz Scholarship at the school in '88.

Vol.33 No.28  
July 16, 1990

The Weekly Newsletter of Public Relations,  
Public Affairs & Communication

603 / 778 - 0514

#### DESPISE CLAIMS TO THE CONTRARY, RESEARCHERS SAY TEEN PUBLIC STILL VITALLY IMPORTANT -- AS A HUGE MARKET NOW, AND BECAUSE FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT MAKES THEM FORM LONGTERM BELIEFS EARLY

Teens spent \$55.9 billion last year just on their day-to-day needs, like food, entertainment and clothing. This has grown from \$25.3 billion in 1975, according to Rand Youth Poll. If that isn't reason enough to court them -- & help them form impressions now on issues & products -- there's more:

1. Teens are also in the market for big-ticket items. Car ownership is up 13% for new vehicles & 9% for used, compared to 1989 levels, according to Teenage Research Unlimited. Nearly half of all teens own television sets, 20% own VCRs.
2. More important for some industries, teens have an incalculable ability to influence their parents -- often on critical subjects like fear of hi tech. TRU finds that 57% of teens influenced the purchase of a personal computer this year. Also, 69% had input when it came to making family vacation plans, 49% had a say in which car their families bought, and 43% helped parents pick out a tv. They're the ones who can get resistive adults to use ATMs & other impersonal but useful electronic marvels.

Changeover from manufacturing to service economy has boosted the financial power of teenagers, says Rand Youth Poll's Robert Williams. With that comes the self-confidence to consider the issue agenda seriously. "Teens as a percentage of the population are decreasing in size, but the service economy has given them more jobs & more money," he told prr. Since people are still "fascinated by youth, communications with a youth orientation appeal to adults as well."

Teens' influence is due to sociological factors, according to Peter Zollo of TRU. "An increase in dual-income families and single-parent families means parents spend less time at home so teens are needed to do a great deal of the family shopping," he told prr. "When teens are out there spending family money, they're learning as consumers & making their own brand decisions." Practicing decisionmaking (the "foot in door" theory), they're more apt to start making them on social issues, political views, etc.

Zollo urges practitioners to think ahead. "Teens are up and coming, the next generation of big-ticket purchasers. It's important to target them now with a brand or company image before they are in the older market."



**IMPLICATIONS** Even those that don't market to teens must reach them:

- A. **Issue Positions.** At last month's 54th conference of the National Association of Student Councils, student leaders were asked, "Which is more important -- protecting the environment or protecting the economy?" 321 voted for the environment, only 48 selected the economy.
- B. **Community service** is important to teens. 54% say they are more involved in community service than their parents are.

**HOW TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH TEENS** One way to learn what's current in the minds & thoughts of today's youth is through organizations such as Youth Communication, which runs a news service by and about teenagers. It also coordinates youth-run newspapers in several major cities. (Details from prr)

Projects with schools remain popular -- but can be tough to get accepted, both because of the competition & a renewed "anti-propaganda" feeling among teachers & administrators. Fight over Whittle Communications' attempt to put tv commercials into classrooms has polarized the issue. Still, really useful material, presented as a service, is welcomed. (All of which sometimes complicates lives of school pr practitioners!)

College campuses are now more active than at any time since the 60s, in the view of many educators. This time, product as well as issue campaigns are prominent.

**PR LUCKS OUT AGAIN AS MASS. TAX PASSES OVER**

Compromise legislation between House & Senate eliminated public relations (& some other service professions) from Massachusetts' services tax. Five key points helped make pr's case:

- 1) State would have difficulty defining pr, and, therefore, what is taxable.
- 2) Lacking a strict definition, many political consultants, lobbyists, research & polling firms perform services some might consider pr. How would they know which of their services would be taxed?
- 3) Many of state's pr firms are small businesses and therefore would be threatened by the costs of administering the tax. Boston U survey of 105 pr firms in Mass found 55% have 5 or fewer employees.
- 4) Large number of pr firms & individual practitioners work for NPOs.

Note these positions:  
 majority of students at the conference feel 1) US should intervene to help oppressed people attain freedom & democracy; 2) US should continue to develop & implement nuclear power as our energy source; 3) using animals in medical research is acceptable; 4) eliminating drugs is more important than protecting the Bill of Rights; 5) public agencies should have the greatest responsibility to help homeless teens.

- 5) Collecting the tax would be costly for the state.

Strategy, developed by PRSA/Boston legislative committee chrm Terry McCarthy, also included meeting individually with key legislators, retaining a professional lobbyist to follow legislation daily. Committee continues to keep close watch on future legislation. "The tax situation in Massachusetts will remain volatile. We're pleased today, but feel strongly that it would be a mistake to think professional service taxes affecting public relations will not be proposed again."

Services hit with the 5% levy include fees of lawyers, accountants, engineers & architects -- one of the nation's broadest taxes on services. This precedent guarantees call to add other services later.

**FORGOTTEN STATE?** Tim Colwell reminds practitioners that his state, Oklahoma, almost enacted a tax on pr -- tho it hasn't been widely reported. "The legislature gave us a scare this spring," he writes. Tulsa & Oklahoma City PRSA chapters joined a coalition to head tax off, but "we expect it will be back!"

**FUTURE SOCIETY TRACKS MOVEMENT OF DECADE'S BASIC HOPES & FEARS**

Abstracts of 700 works -- covering trends, policy issues, forecasts of possible developments in technology & society -- appear in Future Survey Annual 1990. Since its first appearance in '79, 10,000 abstracts have been written. Included is a list of the major hopes & fears of those who study the future.

In contrast to the narrow & short-term picture given by economic indicators, Future Survey focuses on a "mid-term future of 2-10 years -- a time frame that is necessary for any serious planning," reports the World Future Society. (\* means the concern wasn't previously ranked.)

**Rankings**

HOPES	1987	1988-89	1990
End of Cold War/Better US-USSR Relations	1	1	1
Strategic Planning/Leadership Vision	2	2	2
Information Technologies: Computers, VCRs, etc.	3	3	3
New Materials/Superconductivity	4	4	4
Europe 1992 Integration	*	8	5
Outer Space Exploration	10	10	6
Voluntary Nat'l Service Program	*	*	7
State & Local Economic Regeneration	7	5	8
Biomedical Technologies	5	6	9
Rethinking LDC Development	*	7	10