

FLYERS

The new generation takes off

STORY BY
Paul Coughlin

Photos by
Susan Green

They drive Hondas and ride scooters now, but soon it'll be BMW's and Porsches. Where it used to be straight-shots, now they drink "poppers." Their music is mindless but fun, and this is exactly how they want it. Mom and Dad's credit card limit is low so they have their own and prefer the fashionable ring of "charge it please" to "I'll pay for it in cash." They're the next generation. Although they are very eager to succeed, they are distinctly different than the last generation, the Yuppies.

To be a FLYER, you must fit three credentials: 1) enjoy a good time 2) be between the ages of 13 and 25 and 3) be on your way toward success. Today's college students are the model for this group.

The acronym FLYERS (Fun Loving Youth En Route to Success) was coined by two Harvard law students. Lawrence Graham, 23, and Lawrence Hamdan, 24, wrote a book, *Youth Trends: Capturing the \$200 Billion Youth Market* in which they tell companies how they can better their marketing strategies to target this group, whose members spend a mighty

\$200 billion annually in America's marketplace.

Locally, this 265 page book hit the shelves in August and has yet to attract much attention.

They were born into families where both parents worked, between the eras of JFK and tricky Dick Nixon. These youths were forced early in life to learn how to handle finances; doing much of the family shopping, paying phone and heating bills, and paying the paperboy, who often times happened to be his same age. These household chores, argue the authors, taught the youths about money, shopping, and banking.

FLYERS grew up in an era where the only thing for certain was change. The result, argues Graham, is a group whose politics are not as necessarily apathetic as they are jaded. They have no particular heroes or role models in the political realm and consequently turn toward sports figures and other entertainers.

FLYERS remain aloof about politics. They don't rally behind Reagan, nor as a group would they support his opponents. Together, they

contribute to causes like Live Aid, and take little interest in protests and demonstrations, which has brought them criticism from their older prototype: the Yuppie.

What Graham and Hamdan write and are lecturing about is nothing new. Analysts in the field of marketing, and more specifically, consumer behavior, have known for years that this small segment in the American population has spending power.

The Stanford Research Institute has conducted research for more than a decade, beginning in the early 1970's, in the values and lifestyles of American consumers. Their values and attitudes program (VALS) has received wide usage by marketers who desire information on how to target their clientele.

Marketers, such as Neil Roan, director of marketing and programming for the Hult Center for the Performing Arts, prefer the VALS program over the traditional use of pure demographics, which do not consider values and lifestyles and consequently do not target the consumer as accurately as Stanford's program does.