

# Global Trendsetter: Future Teenagers Represent Billions of Dollars

By GINA R. RUCKER

While studying abroad in Tokyo, Japan in 1993 and 1994, I was amazed at the impact black culture had on their youth. The streets of Shinjuku and Shibuya were crawling with 16 to 25 year olds adorning baggy pants, pierced belly buttons, listening to hip-hop music and using electronic gadgets that have yet to hit the streets of America.

Before going to Japan, I studied the language for 4 years, so it was fairly easy for me to communicate. I also discovered how to communicate via an unwritten, yet mutually understood culture. It is a culture that is spreading with the speed of the Internet. It represents the growth of a new culture known as the "Global Teenager."

This emerging group of teens is more technologically advanced, and are more culturally accepting than past generations. However, like all

teens past and present, they share common characteristics of adolescent stage. These are the years when they come of age-filled with exuberance, innovation, confusion and rebellion against old structures.

This is true everywhere in the world. Youth tend to identify with each other anywhere, apart from any other age group. The mere size of their numbers (approx. 2 billion by the year 2005) will be so immense that it will reshape the world and the way we do business. This is an essential factor in transitioning small businesses into this new age of technology, telecommunications and business incubation.

Who would make a better partner than these emerging young innovators? They are creating new markets, new styles, new technology and a new way of communicating. They represent a new lightning rod of collective energy and creativity that if trained and channeled prop-

erly will have a significant impact on new and old business markets. This new collective entity encourages self-employed young people to work together for the benefit of the whole, which in turn supports the individuals. In this process of building for their collective success:

*Morale will go up.  
Mistakes will go down.  
Motivation will be at an all-time high.*

#### The bigger picture.

As research analysts, we have poured over thousands of news articles, reports and reviews that appear daily in journals, newspapers, and magazines. By reviewing and constantly sifting through news details, we are able to extract the major trends, giving us a glimpse of the future "bigger picture."

More important still, these trends are often in their earliest stages. They are just tiny fragments of change that have no collective force, out of

sight and largely ignored.

However, they are under the radar screens of futurists, economists and corporate consultants. As Urban Futurists, we use advanced information to steer safely and prosperously, through the tumultuous changes that lie ahead. We recognize what is coming just in time to get prepared and seize every advantage. Practicing the "Science of Seeing", a model and simulation process developed by researcher Paul McDonald, allows us to lay out the future before our eyes.

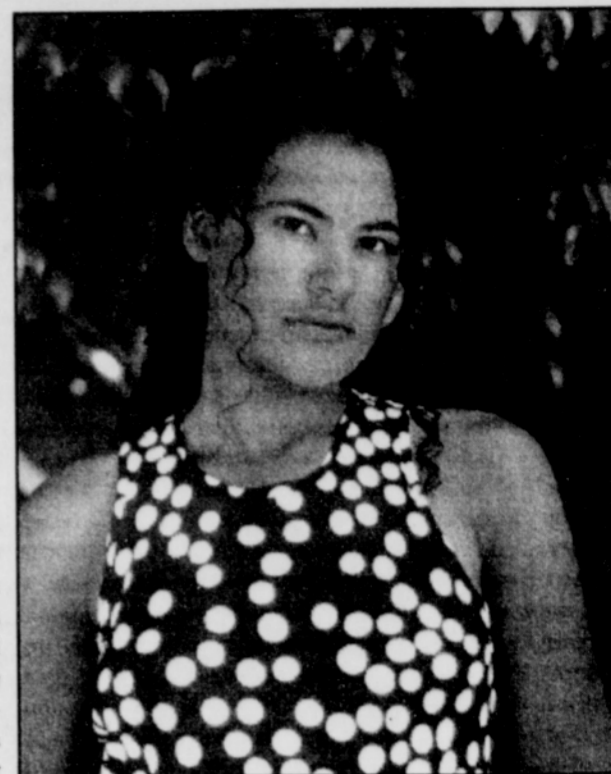
Through the "Science of Seeing," we share business strategies with full confidence, as we anticipate all the twists and turns that lie ahead. Having studied the future, as scouts for the small business industry, it is imperative that we heed three major trends:

1. Business Incubation as the engine that drives small businesses
2. Technology as a tool to cooper-

ate and communicate in the global economy

3. The "Global Teenager" as our future partners and customers.

If we, as African Americans heed these trends and act on them responsibly, we can benefit like every other community in the Information Age. We may not have been in position to capitalize on the Industrial Age, but we are for the Information Age...let's not miss out again.



Gina R. Rucker, Urban Futurist.

## Ready For Chaos Or Community?

By SHARIF ABDULLAH

Do you think Y2K doesn't affect you because you don't own a computer?

At some point you will realize that you life is surrounded by micro-chips, in phones, cars and street lights, any of which may fail because of Y2K. One survey said that the average American encounters seventy micro-chips every day - before lunch. The following is a story that could happen because of Y2K.

#### First Scenario: "What's Going On?"

You wake up in the morning. You notice that your alarm clock did not go off. In fact the digital readout is blinking "12:00". You dress hurriedly, thinking you may have to stop after work at the supermarket for a new clock. In the bathroom, the water is only trickling out of the faucet.

On the way downstairs, you pick up the telephone to tell your co-workers that you will be late. There is no dial tone. Did you pay the bill? You go back down the hall to your son's room and check his phone line - his line is working! You make your work call from his room; no answer, not even a voicemail message.

You go out to your car and start it up. All of the red lights on the dash start flashing, and the on-board computer voice says, "Warning: your car is in need of servicing. Driving your car in this condition could cause major damage." As you pull out of the driveway, the message starts repeating.

When you get to the intersection, traffic is jammed because the lights are malfunctioning. Once through the intersection, you pull over to stop at the ATM for some cash. There is a long line at the cash machine, with many people getting angry. One yells, "The ATM is saying my account is closed!!!"

There's an ATM at the supermarket; you'll stop there and get your clock, too. You crawl through five more blinking light intersections, then pull into the supermarket parking lot. As you approach, you see a long line - no one can get into the supermarket because the computer-controlled security locked everyone out.

It slowly dawns on you that you have a different kind of problem now: if they can't get the doors open, what are you going to do for food?

The above is considered a "moderate" Y2K scenario. Consider the "serious" Y2K scenario:

#### Scenario Two? Y2K Breakdown

You wake up in the morning. You notice that your alarm clock did not go off. It isn't working at all: the electricity is off.

What woke you up was a series of explosions coming from the direction of the industrial sector of the city. You find a battery-powered radio and turn it on for news, but all you get is static.

You try the telephone - there is no dial tone on any line. You try the car - it doesn't start. You start walking downtown, trying to find out what's going on. You notice people running past you. One of them you recognize as a neighbor. "Food, man, there's no more food! I'm going down to the store to get what's left!"

You start to run also, carried along by the crowd. There is a steady stream of people in and out of the broken doors of the supermarket. People are emerging with shopping carts, baskets, wagons, bundles wrapped in coats and shirts. In the dark store, the sound of display cases breaking pierces an ominous silent shuffling. You walk past the sporting goods section, noticing that the guns and ammunition have been cleared out.

On your way out, you notice a gang of youths with baseball bats stopping an elderly woman with her full shopping cart. You turn away quickly; there's nothing one person can do. You have responsibility to get your bag of food to your family.

As you turn your street, you notice six young men coming toward you. They are carrying shotguns, some with the price tags still attached. "Where you think you goin'?" one asks softly.

Before you sink into despair, consider this third scenario?

#### Scenario Three: Y2K Breakthrough

You wake up in the morning, to the sound of your wind-up alarm clock. You junked the digital one months ago. You go to the bathroom, admiring the two holes drilled into the wall: one provides water from your rooftop cistern that collects rainwater, the other empties the bathtub water into the water tank that waters the vegetable garden.

You go downstairs. "Who's fixing breakfast today?" Your partner checks the schedule taped to the refrigerator door.



Sharif Abdullah

"Ms. Thompson down the street." You hold your head in mock grief, "Damn! Lumpy oatmeal again!" Your partner retorts, "I like her lumpy oatmeal!" The 21 houses in your area have been organized to provide hot meals throughout the community, on rotation.

The designated households are paid in community credits. The credits are worth more than money; the community credits get you what you really need: heat, energy, community services, etc. Your turn to cook comes next Thursday; you will be fixing lasagna.

On your way outside, you run into ten young men standing on the corner, hats pulled down and hoods pulled up to ward off the cold. They are waiting for their ride to work. They are self organized into teams, called "gangs," that cut firewood, bag coal, deliver food and services to the elderly, recycle newspapers and turn them into toilet paper, operate the hydrogen production station and the wind power generator. They used to be in violent street gangs, but got the Y2K message: "you don't work, you don't eat."

You walk over to them. "How's Ms. Thompson's oatmeal today?" They look at each other, then say, in unison, "Lumpy!" You leave them as they are laughing and exchanging high-fives.

On your way to Ms. Thompson's house, you notice Oscar coming toward you, highly agitated. "My phone won't work! Neither will the water! My car won't start! I'm going downtown and see if I can get some money from the ATM!"

You say with irritation, "Man, what is your problem? Didn't I tell you this would happen? You had a whole year to prepare, to become a part of this community and you did nothing. Now look at you. Instead of going downtown, why don't you go read that community preparation workbook I left with you half a year ago? Why don't you decide to be a part of this community?"



### CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH



**Harriet Tubman**  
Conductor, Underground Railroad  
1820-1913

Harriet Tubman's name is synonymous with the Underground Railroad, that clandestine path to freedom for so many enslaved African-Americans. As a conductor on this secret route, Tubman made more than 20 trips, guiding as many as 300 slaves to freedom in Northern states, earning her the nickname, "Moses" and a \$40,000 bounty on her head.

Beginning in 1860, she campaigned publicly and aggressively against slavery and for women's rights. During the Civil War, she worked as a nurse as well as a soldier, spy and lookout. After the war, she moved to Auburn, N.Y.

Despite her Civil War service, she did not receive a pension until more than 30 years after the war. When the \$20-a-month pension did arrive, she used it to establish the Harriet Tubman Home for the aged and needy. In 1978, she became the first African-American woman to be honored with a commemorative postage stamp from the U.S. Postal Service.

Kaiser Permanente honors outstanding individuals such as Harriet Tubman for inspiring us to make a difference. We encourage these aspirations by making a diversified workplace a priority. Kaiser Permanente welcomes persons from all backgrounds to join our team and to make a difference. Opportunities abound in the following areas:

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