

Book focuses on the mother load

By **ANDREW B. ADLER**
For the Journal-Constitution

Bonnie Ulman looked no worse for wear arriving in Atlanta on a red-eye flight from California. She had spent a recent weekend in Huntington Beach moderating a five-person focus group of women, 34 to 45 years old, who answered an assortment of questions from marketers representing Fortune 100 companies.

The panel discussion was held as a special workshop associated with the Youth Marketing Mega-Event.

Ulman, 41, president of the Haystack Group, an east Cobb-based national marketing consumer research firm, used her expertise as a mother of two and co-author of the book "Trillion-Dollar Moms: Marketing to a New Generation of Mothers." Her message to marketers: the purchasing power of today's moms.

"Trillion-Dollar Moms," written by Ulman and Florida resident Maria Bailey and published by Dearborn Trade Publishing, conveys a strong message to industries and marketers that soccer moms are dead and mom entrepreneurs are on the rise.

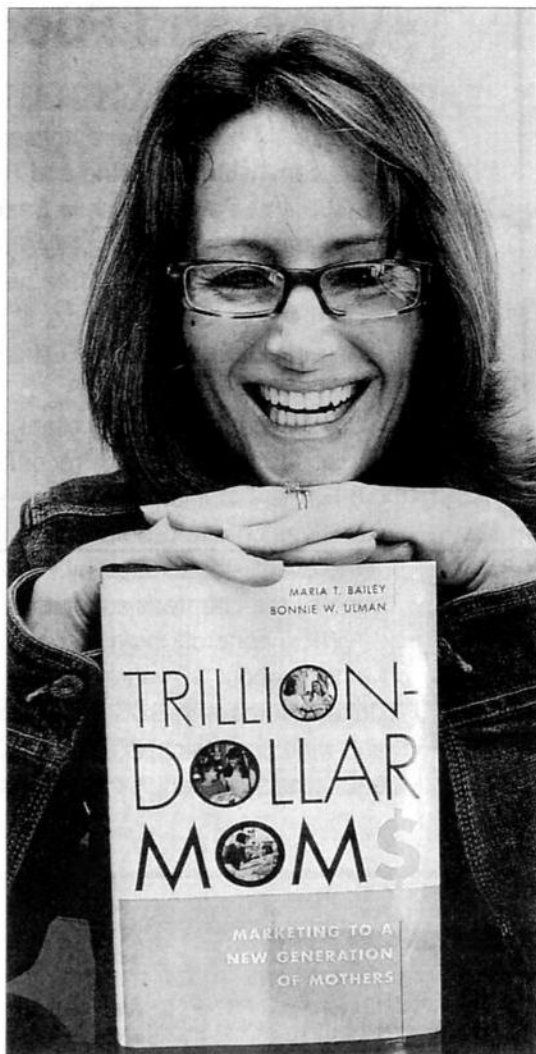
The authors examine why moms today are the decision makers in \$1.7 trillion in household spending annually.

Arriving at her east Cobb office in Village Trace, Ulman checked her e-mails and took phone calls before sitting down to talk about "Trillion-Dollar Moms."

Q: What was the main reason for you and Bailey teaming up to write this book?

A: We are both moms who work with numerous Fortune 500 companies. Over the years, we have become disillusioned by how traditional marketing firms treated women and mothers as sheer demographics and not taking into account their likes and dislikes.

Q: How do you perceive your-



ANDY SHARP / Staff

East Cobb resident **Bonnie Ulman**, co-author of "Trillion-Dollar Moms," says moms drive \$1.7 trillion in household spending.

self in terms of purchasing power?

A: My purchasing power is 24/7. Moms are purchasing agents from the time they wake up until the time they go to bed. We make choices in regards what to feed our fam-

ily breakfast, lunch and dinner. Moms have the same purchasing power at work and when they arrive home.

Q: What would be the first thing you would change about the way companies market their product to today's mom?

A: Companies have to market to moms based on the age of their children. They cannot sell a product to me based on a demographic category, female, ages 40-50. What I am is a 41-year businesswoman who is a mother with two children, ages 7 and 5.

Q: What is the most important aspect of your life as a businesswoman and mom?

A: That I am incredibly imperfect. A day doesn't go by where I do not make multiple mistakes. At the same time, I can sleep at night knowing that I have done my best. There are times when I tell my family that I'm on strike because what they want me to do is not part of my job description.

Q: When did soccer moms die?

A: When mothers stopped thinking of themselves as just chauffeurs and caretakers, and began to see themselves as multifaceted individuals who were productive both at home and in the workplace.

Q: What was the most interesting question asked by the marketers at the Huntington Beach focus group?

A: All five women had the same answer when a gentleman asked how a husband could help his wife more when it came to the purchasing of household products. They wanted their husbands to take more of an initiative in the decision-making process.

Q: What is it about the Internet that moms today like the most?

A: Companies should not underestimate the power of the Internet when it comes to marketing their product. The reason for that is that moms enjoy building online relationships, as evidenced by the high number of parent Web sites and support groups.

THE BONNIE ULMAN FILE

➤ **Work:** President, the Haystack Group; former senior vice president for Manning, Salvage & Lee/Atlanta and Ketchum/Atlanta.

➤ **Personal:** Age 41. Lives in east Cobb with her husband, Alan, and their two children, Madison, 7, and Jacob, 5.

➤ **Other publications:** Co-authored "Running to Stand Still," a study on the impact of exhaustion on American social behavior and consumerism.

What she says companies need to know about "Trillion-Dollar Moms":

➤ Market to a mom based on the age of her children rather than her age exclu-

sively.

➤ Personal relationships and word of mouth are the most powerful marketing tools among mothers.

➤ A mom is heavily influenced by what products her mom prefers.

➤ Understand the work styles of each generation of mothers — Generation X mothers compared with stay-at-home moms.

➤ A large number of today's grandmothers, the first wave of baby boomers, are becoming primary caregivers of grandchildren.

➤ According to the U.S. Department of Labor, 72 percent of mothers with children under 18 are in the work force.