

## Using athletes to push tobacco to children

### Snuff-dippin' cancer-lipped man

In 1983 nearly 4,000 cigarettes are expected to be sold for every adult in the United States; in 1880, the per capita consumption was 25. The astronomic increase in cigarette smoking during the past 100 years has corresponded to the decline of all other forms of tobacco (cigar, pipe, plug, snuff), not to mention the disappearance of the spittoon.

Ironically, the popularity of cigarettes began in large part as the result of concerns about health. The spread of tu-

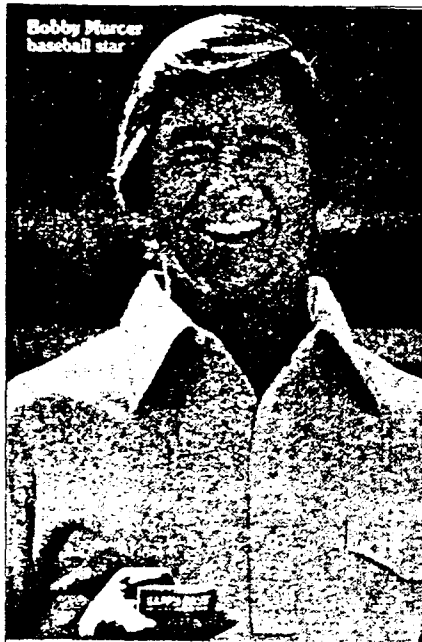
berculosis in the latter half of the 19th century led to an increase in antisputting laws and a resultant shift by tobacco companies into the promotion of cigarettes—mass produced on newly invented machines.

Until the 1960s consumption of smokeless tobacco products steadily declined. With the publication in 1964 of the Surgeon General's *Report on Smoking and Health*, sales of smokeless tobacco began to rise. Although subse-

quent reports of the Surgeon General have discussed the carcinogenic properties of all forms of tobacco, between 1960 and 1970 sales of snuff and chewing tobacco rose 25%, and between 1970 and 1980 sales doubled again (*Adweek*, July 13, 1981).

Until recent years snuff dipping was a practice confined largely to black women in the rural Southeast, in whom the chance of contracting oral cancer has been found to be 50 times that of non-

users of snuff.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, tobacco chewing was a custom of rural southern men. In 1980 Christen, McDaniel, and Doran<sup>2</sup> called attention to widespread snuff-dipping and tobacco chewing among baseball and football players in college, high school, and elementary schools in Texas. These practices have been described as "the latest crazes" among teenage boys in the suburbs in the



Bobby Murcer  
baseball star

### How to enjoy tobacco without lighting up.

I've learned a lot since coming to Chicago — and not just about baseball. I've learned how to get full tobacco enjoyment without lighting up. I use smokeless tobacco. And you guys that are just starting out...well, you should try mild Happy Days mint. It's the perfect smokeless to begin with because it's got a taste that's mild and easy to enjoy. And just a pinch between your cheek and gum is all it takes. It's just right whether you're cutting the lawn or cutting down a baserunner.

If you're interested in trying a few pinches, write: Smokeless Tobacco, U.S. Tobacco Company, Dept. ST-078, Greenwich, Conn. 06830.



Smokeless tobacco.  
A pinch is all it takes.

Northeast and in Washington, DC (*Washington Post*, November 12, 1980). One in 10 Colorado high school students surveyed by Greer uses smokeless tobacco; the age of the average user is 15.

There is no mystery to this phenomenon. Unlike cigarette advertising, commercials for these carcinogenic products

have not yet been shown. Television, and manufacturers have taken advantage of the situation. The heroic imagery evoked in expensive promotional campaigns for snuff and chewing tobacco is—in a word—matchless. The array of celebrities employed to cultivate the puberty rite of tobacco use includes baseball players George Brett, Carlton Fisk, Catfish Hunter, Sparky Lyle, and Bobby Murcer, and football players Terry Bradshaw, Nick Buoniconti (now a tobacco and candy distributor), Earl Campbell, Joe Klecko, and Laurence Taylor (*Advertising Age*, June 23, 1980; *U.S. Tobacco Journal*, March 8, 1982). Singer Charlie Daniels appears on a collection of high-priced paraphernalia for a brand of snuff, Skoal, a product of

**U.S. SKI TEAM**

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## We're out to in the mouth



Take a pouch instead of a puff.

We're introducing a legitimate alternative to smoking. Starting in September, we'll be launching Skoal Bandits nationally with a comprehensive effort that will tell our story to 95% of all male smokers.

### Expect great things from Skoal Bandits:

A variety of pouches to choose from with the flavor of your choice. No tar, no nicotine, no smoke, no ash, no smell.

### Sampling

Try a pouch of Skoal Bandits today. No purchase necessary. Simply fill out the coupon and return it to us. We'll send you a free sample pouch.

## put a pouch of America.

### Promotion

Get a free sample pouch of Skoal Bandits today. No purchase necessary. Simply fill out the coupon and return it to us. We'll send you a free sample pouch.



### National Radio

Listen to Skoal Bandits on the radio. We're sponsoring a national radio campaign that will tell our story to 95% of all male smokers.

### Network Television

See Skoal Bandits on network television. We're sponsoring a national television campaign that will tell our story to 95% of all male smokers.

### National Magazines

Read about Skoal Bandits in national magazines. We're sponsoring a national magazine campaign that will tell our story to 95% of all male smokers.

U.S. Tobacco. The Smokeless Tobacco Experts.

the United States Tobacco Company, Greenwich, CT. A race car driver, Harry Gant, drives a car painted with "Skoal Bandit"; his entourage includes a group of cheerleaders called the Skoal Bandettes. In 1983, a commercial record, "Skoal Dippin' Bandit," sung by New York Yankee Bobby Murcer, was frequently played on teenage-oriented radio stations. "The people at the stock car races walk around in their Skoal T shirts and Skoal caps and they greet one another as people who belong to something special," said Per Erik Lindqvist, vice-president of marketing at United States Tobacco (*U.S. Tobacco Journal*, March 8, 1982).

Responding to a question from the *U.S. Tobacco Journal* about why so many young males are buying smokeless tobacco, United States Tobacco Company chairman and president Louis

## Catch the SKOAL BANDIT

Practice Runs—October 6, 1983  
Qualifying Runs—October 7, 1983  
Race Day—October 8, 1983

For Tickets Call:  
800-634-8698 (Except Nevada); 782-737-7865  
and in California 213-426-9952

Catch Ted Faber—1983 INDY Rookie of the Year—in his March-Cosworth 33C Forsythe Racing Skoal Bandit, winner of the pole position at the 1982 INDY 500, as he tours the U.S.A.T. circuit. Ted's car is named, after and sponsored by SKOAL BANDIT'S individual portions of wintergreen-flavored tobacco in neat pre-moistened pouches.

FOR YOUR FREE SAMPLE OF SKOAL BANDIT'S FILL OUT AND SEND TO:

Take a pouch instead of a puff.

Bantle said, "I think there are a lot of reasons, with one of them being that it is very 'macho'."

Bantle estimated that 80% to 85% of his company's customers are new users and not just those who switch from cigarettes out of concern for health. He also reported that United States Tobacco is intensely aiming at a budding international market.

A public relations operation, the Smokeless Tobacco Institute, in Peekskill, New York, issues press releases to let the public know about the shortcomings of medical research reports implicating snuff as a cause of oral cancer (*Advertising Age*, April 13, 1981).

With the recent 16c rise in the federal excise tax on a pack of cigarettes, United States Tobacco has begun a national \$2 million advertising campaign for Skoal Bandits—little pouches of snuff, like seabags. The campaign was launched initially in New York City on radio and TV and in newspaper sports sections, including *The New York Times* and *Newsday*. The television advertisements on such programs as ABC TV's *Wide World of Sports* and NBC TV's *Football Game of the Week* teach the potential young "Bandit" the technique for using snuff. (*Advertising Age*, June 27, 1983)

During the 1980 Olympic Games, the United States Tobacco Company, an official sponsor, spent \$2,500,000 promoting snuff. For 1984, it has created a United States Tobacco Sports Medicine Program. Various sports writers, TV editorialists, athletic commissioners, team owners, players, and nontobacco sponsors of professional sports have vied for media attention in 1983 to condemn drug abuse among athletes and teenagers. Yet none has publicly challenged the

campaign of the United States Tobacco Company.

It could be argued that the morbidity and mortality attributable to smokeless tobacco is so much less serious than that of cigarette smoking as to be an acceptable lesser of two evils. But the more likely hypothesis, in light of the cigarette companies' not having objected to the exclusion of smokeless tobacco from the ban on television advertising, is that the Skoal ads serve as an initiator to a milder form of tobacco use and may start even younger children on the road to cancer.

Can there be a more cynical attempt to capture the youth market than that by the makers of cigarettes, snuff, and chewing tobacco? Apparently so. A child walking through almost any candy store, supermarket, pharmacy, airport souvenir stand, or variety store cannot fail to come across a prominent display for candy cigarettes (with brand names identical



to the real ones), cigars, pipes, and pouches of Big League Chew, a shredded bubble gum that produces "man-size wads" and that in the words of its inventor, former baseball player Jim Bouton, is "designed to look like chewing



tobacco used by baseball players" (*Advertising Age*, June 23, 1980). Then there is Chaw, powdered bubble gum in a round little box resembling a tin of snuff. A display for Chaw features a cowboy with a bulging cheek and the slogan, "Best chew this side of the Pecos."

What next can we expect from the candy companies—bubble gum cocaine?

ALAN BLUM, MD  
Editor

#### REFERENCES

1. Winn DM, Blot WJ, Shy CM, Pickle LW, Toledo A, Fraumeni JF: Snuff dipping and oral cancer among women in the Southern United States. *N Engl J Med* 1981; 304:745-749.
2. Christen AG, McDaniel RK, Doran JE: Snuff dipping and tobacco chewing in a group of Texas college athletes. *Texas Dental Journal* 1979; 97:6-10.

### GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IN SMOKING AND HEALTH

The Office on Smoking and Health is the focal point for all smoke-related activities of the Department of Health and Human Services.

The Office prepares and disseminates the annual Surgeon General's reports on smoking, the last five of which have honed in on specific aspects of the problem: *The Health Consequences of Smoking*; *The Behavioral Aspects of Smoking, Education, and Prevention* (1979); *The Health Consequences of Smoking for Women* (1980); *The Changing Cigarette* (1981); *Cancer* (1982); and *Cardiovascular Disease* (1983).

Using computer and microfilm, the Office's Technical Information Center serves researchers by providing literature searches, references, abstracts, and copies of articles. Last year, approximately 4,500 inquiries were received.

In addition, the Center publishes the periodic *Smoking and Health Bulletin*, an annual cumulation of abstracts of research papers (*Bibliography on Smoking and Health*), the biennial *Directory of Ongoing Research in Smoking and Health*, and an annual summary of legislative actions (*State Legislation on Smoking and Health*).

The Office is responsible for analyzing scientific information for the purpose of maintaining Federal smoking policies. It is one of four centers serving the bibliographic needs of the World Health Organization on smoking and health.

The Office develops educational programs and public service announcements targeted to women, ethnic minorities, teens, and children, and disseminates model programs both for preventing teenage smoking and for encouraging smoking cessation.

To be placed on the Office mailing list or to receive further information about its services, write to:

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| Department of Health and Human Services | 5600 Fishers Lane    |                           |
| Office on Smoking and Health            | Park Bldg., Rm. 1-10 | Telephone: (301) 443-1690 |
| Technical Information Center            | Rockville, MD 20857  |                           |