

College of Community  
Health Sciences

Center for the Study of  
Tobacco and Society

March 28, 2007

THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**ALABAMA**  
HEALTH SCIENCES

Ms. Patty French  
Exhibitions  
The Lane Medical Library  
300 Pasteur Drive  
Room L 109  
Stanford, California 94305

Dear Ms. French:

As we discussed today by telephone, several different colleagues with whom I work on tobacco-related issues forwarded the article by Steven Winn in the February 28, 2007 edition of The San Francisco Chronicle that reviews the exhibition at the Lane Medical Library, "Not a Cough in a Carload: Hiding the Hazards of Smoking." They were struck by the fact that the exhibition essentially duplicates one of my own tobacco-related exhibitions, which I created for the Houston Academy of Medicine/Jesse Jones Library at the Texas Medical Center nearly 20 years ago, and which has since been periodically on display at medical libraries and other health institutions. (Ironically, too, I testified at the United States Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions hearing on February 27, which was the other peg for Steven Wynn's article.) I want to provide you with just some of the documentation and provenance for my original exhibition, "When More Doctors Smoked Camels: Medical Claims in Cigarette Advertisements, 1888-1988," which has also carried the subtitle, "A Century of Health Claims in Cigarette Advertising."

The exhibition debuted in November 1988 at the Houston Academy of Medicine/Jesse Jones Library of the Texas Medical Center. It was timed to coincide with the First National Conference on Tobacco Use in America, sponsored by the American Medical Association and held in January 1989 at MD Anderson Cancer Center. As the conference's keynote speaker, I gave an illustrated presentation on the history of tobacco sponsorship of sports entitled, "Striking out against tobacco." The exhibition was extended several times, and a two-page review featuring five of the advertisements on

display was published in the June 23/30, 1989 issue of American Medical News (article enclosed).

An abridged version of the exhibition received the Outstanding Scientific Exhibit Award at the 1991 annual conference of the American Academy of Family Physicians. In 1992, the full exhibition was on view at the Oregon Research Institute and also at the Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine, Kirksville, Missouri. In addition to excerpted versions at medical meetings and tobacco conferences through the years, the exhibition was shown in 2000 at the Reynolds Historical Library of the Lister Hill Medical Library at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Last fall, the exhibition was on display at the Tuscaloosa Arts Council, along with a companion exhibition I created, "Smoking in the Balcony Only: When Movie Stars Sold Cigarettes."

Between 1992 and 2000 I used various images from "When More Doctors Smoked Camels" to illustrate two other exhibitions I curated for the Jones Library at the Texas Medical Center, one on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Surgeon General's report on smoking and health and the other on the history of the relationship between the American Medical Association and the tobacco industry ("The Unfiltered Truth About Smoking").

Last month, I met with librarians at the New York Academy of Medicine to work out the details of bringing the full, updated "When More Doctors Smoked Camels" exhibition there in 2008 (we have been in discussions for several years). A companion exhibition that I curated, "Cartoonists Take Up Smoking" (developed over a decade with the cooperation of the Association of American Editorial Cartoonists), is completing a year-long run at the National Museum of Health and Medicine and will next be shown in Lincoln, Nebraska and Buffalo, New York. My most recent lecture at the National Museum of Health and Medicine on February 17 was entitled, "When More Doctors Smoked Camels: A Century of Health Claims in Cigarette Advertising."

That first exhibition in Houston in 1988 comprised 66 original print cigarette advertisements, most in their original uncannibalized context, selected from several thousand tobacco advertisements and commercials from my collection, begun 30 years earlier at the suggestion of my late father, also a physician. As a senior medical student at Emory University School of Medicine in 1974, I created a slide presentation, "A Light Refresher Cough on the History of Cigarette Advertising," which I began showing at medical meetings and hospital grand rounds throughout the country, as well as at the first public forum on smoking ever convened by the American Cancer Society in 1977.

When I founded the national physicians' health promotion organization DOC (Doctors Ought to Care) in 1977 as a way to involve the medical profession in the clinic, classroom, and community to counteract tobacco use and promotion, I made versions of my slides available to DOC members, resulting in thousands of presentations on cigarette advertising to students of all ages for the next 25 years. (I personally have given more than 1400 invited lectures, in all 50 states, on the history of cigarette advertising, in addition to writing articles on the subject, so I am most surprised that a medical historian

either would not have known about or acknowledged this in the creation of a duplicative exhibition for the Lane Medical Library.)

In the early 1990s DOC was invited by the State of California to train medical students and physicians in combating smoking. To this end, I have been invited to speak on the history of cigarette advertising and the physician's role in countering the tobacco pandemic at nearly every medical school in the United States and at all of the medical schools in California. (On November 13, 1981, I spoke on the physician's role in ending the tobacco pandemic as a guest lecturer in preventive cardiology at Stanford University School of Medicine. On January 24, 1987 I was invited by Stanford medical students to give a plenary address on "Motivating health professionals to act against tobacco use and promotion" at the Stanford Health Policy Forum. And on July 24, 1990, I gave a plenary address, "A history of advertising and promotion tactics by the tobacco industry," at Stanford's Fifth Conference on Health Promotion and Disease Prevention in the Community).

The collection of tobacco advertising (including hundreds of film, videotape, and audiotape commercials, as well as promotional items, signage, displays, in addition to newspaper, magazine, and medical journal cigarette advertising), which I largely amassed (with contributions from a network of countless individuals throughout the world) between the late-1950s and the 1990s (well before ebay), is constantly updated and forms the core of the Center for the Study of Tobacco and Society, which was established at the University of Alabama in 1999. The collection has provided the material for several educational films, including "Smoke That Cigarette" (a collage of vintage cigarette ads, commercials, and news clips through the years on smoking); "Medicine vs Madison Avenue" (a medical student training video on countering tobacco, which received top honors at the 1994 International Medical Film Festival); and two others on tobacco marketing to ethnic minority groups and cigarette sponsorship of sports. The Center has also been used as a resource on historical and current tobacco advertising by the World Health Organization, the Associated Press, the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, and USA Today and has served as the basis for numerous peer-reviewed presentations at national and world tobacco conferences.

As editor of the Medical Journal of Australia in 1982-83 and the New York State Journal of Medicine in 1983-85, I produced the first theme issues of any medical journal devoted to the cigarette pandemic. The hundreds of advertising images that illustrate the scores of articles are drawn almost entirely from my collection. One of the enclosed articles I wrote in the first such issue is an illustrated history of cigarette advertising in the New York State Journal of Medicine and other medical journals. I have also written numerous articles discussing the history of health claims in cigarette ads in the definitive textbooks of oncology and family medicine, as well as in peer-reviewed medical journals, the Encyclopaedia Britannica Medical Annual, Scribner's tobacco encyclopedia, and the lay press.

It is always good to know of interest on the part of libraries, health professionals, and the public alike in the tragic and outrageous history of cigarette advertising. And one should

be commended for wanting to share this information with others. But in this instance, "Not a Cough in a Carload," ought not to be represented as an original idea. No doubt I should be flattered that the same exhibition should emerge nearly 20 years after my own, but the fact is that my own is still going strong, and mention of a possible tour and book for "Cough," albeit with the noble goal of raising money for cancer research, is troubling.

I enjoyed our conversation and look forward to continuing our dialogue.

Sincerely,

Alan Blum, MD

Professor and Endowed Chair in Family Medicine

Director, The University of Alabama Center for the Study of Tobacco and Society

Addendum

3/31/07

I have put together a sizeable packet related to some of my work on the history of cigarette advertising. Doubtless much of this material predates the PubMed literature search Dr. Jackler performed.

He and I had a cordial conversation, in which we commended each other for our dedication to ending the tobacco pandemic. I appreciated his modesty in referring to himself as an "accidental tourist," in describing his involvement in tobacco advertising as a "second career," and in asking what I thought he might do to assure that we aren't stepping on one another's toes.

His enthusiasm and commitment resonated with me since it is reminiscent of my own. But there are a few differences. When, as a medical student, I hit upon the idea of employing old and new cigarette ads, along with Mad Magazine-inspired parodies of cigarette ads as a means of mobilizing the medical profession to take action on smoking in the clinic, classroom, and community, the climate was, to say the least, a lot chillier. I had naively assumed upon entering medical school at Emory in 1971 that the curriculum would emphasize approaches to countering the leading cause of death in society. But even today smoking is barely covered in med school and residency training beyond regurgitating the catalogue of diseases we'd heard about in high school and writing prescriptions for the latest smoking cure-alls.

I also was unaware that at that time the American Medical Association was still in cahoots with tobacco companies. When I began writing about cigarette advertising in the late-1970s, publications were fearful of reproducing the ads in part because of concerns about copyright infringement. Even as a Fishbein Fellow in Medical Journalism at JAMA, I could only convince the editor to let me write an unillustrated commentary on the role of the physician in counteracting tobacco use and promotion. I was a bit more fortunate with the Encyclopaedia Britannica Medical Annual, getting its attorneys to change their mind and agree that the reproduction of cigarette ads constituted fair use. But I had to wait until I became editor of the Medical Journal of Australia and the New York State Journal of Medicine to publish this kind of historical evidence that is a powerful indictment of the tobacco industry.

Even then leaders of organized medicine were wary of confronting the tobacco industry. When I joined the family medicine faculty at Baylor in 1987, I was urged by one dean to "get into something more socially acceptable, like cocaine," because taking on smoking was politically threatening, intellectually simplistic, and the subject of virtually no government or foundation funding. A year later, I was offered the editorship of the journal of the American Academy of Family Physicians, but only on the condition that I would not speak publicly on smoking. (Financial ties between the Academy and food subsidiaries of the tobacco industry persisted.) Given today's growing, politically correct anti-smoking bandwagon (since the lucrative tobacco settlement a decade ago), it is difficult to imagine the indifference or outright fear of health and medical organizations in taking action (or in devoting resources) against smoking or its promotion.

Thus I spent considerable time identifying and seeking out those few physicians, politicians, and others who had been outspoken on smoking through the years, such as Dr. Alton Ochsner. After many years as an activist and as an editor, I established the DOC Tobacco Archive in the hope of creating exhibitions for medical institutions and eventually a museum on the history of tobacco. The first such exhibition, in 1988, was "When More Doctors Smoked Camels," soon followed by a new exhibition approximately every two years. Dr. C. Everett Koop, among other individuals and organizations, donated materials to the collection. Dr. Koop championed our idea for a tobacco museum within a new national health museum on the Mall in Washington, but these plans fell through when he was not chosen to be in charge of the disbursement of settlement money as we had hoped. By 2000, I had been awarded a museum planning grant by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The University of Alabama Center for the Study of Tobacco and Society is the outgrowth of all this, and its advisory board and I still would like to create a national tobacco museum.

Clearly, it sounds as if Dr. and Mrs. Jackler have devoted considerable time and energy to improve the quality of reproduction and presentation of these aesthetically alluring, demonic old cigarette ads, which are now in the public domain. In this light, perhaps there is a way to combine forces rather than duplicate efforts. Regardless, we should keep each other informed of our respective plans. Who knows? Perhaps Dr. Jackler would be interested in helping us realize our goal of a national tobacco museum.

To date we are only in the incipient stages of putting our exhibitions on the internet, because cost-effective digitization capabilities did not exist until recently. We have just contracted with a large cancer center to digitize the first of several subcollections.

If the success of "Cough" does whet the Library's appetite for a sequel, perhaps consideration could be given to hosting our "Cartoonists Take Up Smoking."

Here's hoping we all might create a closer working relationship.

*Al*  
Please feel free to copy any of  
the enclosed materials and to  
share it with Dr. Jackler.  
Please return the packet if  
at all possible at your earliest  
convenience. AB