

HEALTH AND EDUCATION

PLUS REPORTS ON THE SCIENCES AND ENVIRONMENT

Rising student debt cause for alarm, report says

Borrowing by students and parents to pay for college has exploded the last five years, threatening the country with a student debt crisis, a new report says.

The report by The Education Resources Institute, a nonprofit group that makes student loans, includes a survey that shows 68% of parents and students feel student loans are necessary but still "a major financial hardship."

The current level of borrowing for college is at a record \$24 billion, and could more than double to \$50 billion by the year 2002, the report says. Most of the rise occurred from 1993 to 1994 when borrowing rose 57%.

The report credits much of the rise to changes in federal higher education law in 1992. Families previously too wealthy for loans could now get unsubsidized loans; and parents could borrow up to the full cost of college under the Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students program.

But David Longanecker, with the U.S. Department of Education, called the report "alarmist." Most of the increases resulted from new limits and borrowers and most students can handle what they borrow, he says.

Ted Freeman, president of the education institute, says there need to be more federal grants — which don't have to be repaid — and new limits on loans, particularly in the PLUS program, before borrowers suffer.

Poll says women work out of necessity

Almost half of employed women (44%) work to support the family, not just to bring in extra money — up from 19% a decade ago, says the latest Virginia Slims opinion poll.

In 1995 only 23% work for extra money. And 72% of working women would have a hard time economically if they didn't work, up from 57% of working women in 1985.

But women are more likely than men to see their work as "just a job" (55%) rather than a "career" (43%); 60% of men feel they have careers. About half the working women believe they stand an equal chance with men in terms of salary (55%) and promotions (53%), while 42% say they

After cancer, no longer a model smoker

By Anita Manning
USA TODAY

Alan Landers, former advertising model for Winston cigarettes and Tiparillo cigars, is pitching a new message these days: Quit smoking. If you haven't started to smoke, don't.

An actor, teacher and model, Landers, 54, of Lauderdale, Fla., has endured two episodes of lung cancer in the last seven years. The second surgery caused paralysis of his vocal cords, leaving him voiceless for a year, until more surgery repaired the damage.

A former 2½-pack-a-day smoker, he's now going public — following the leads of Wayne McLaren, the former Marlboro Man, and Janet Sackman, the former Lucky Strike woman — on an anti-smoking crusade. McLaren spoke out against cigarette smoking before he succumbed to lung cancer in 1992 at age 51. Sackman, 63, has supported anti-smoking efforts since she lost her larynx and part of a lung to cancer.

"I don't know how long I'm going to be around," Landers says. "But I'd like to do a good deed. Help the kids."

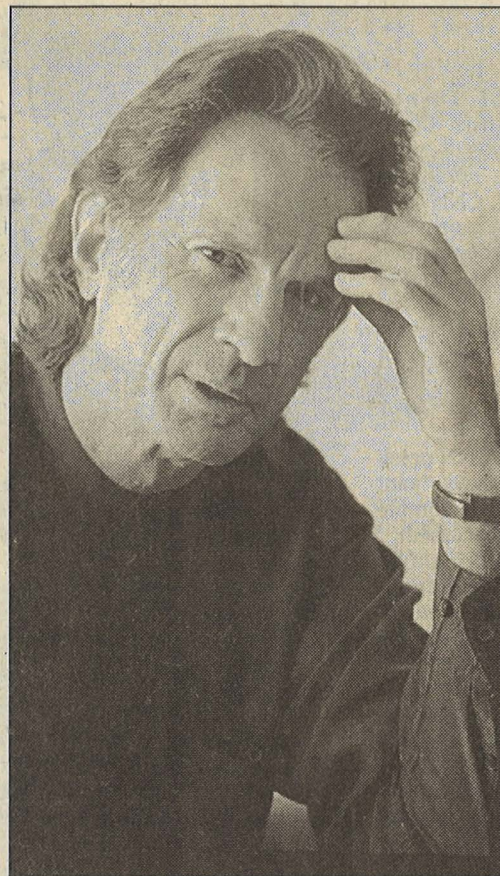
Landers says he was watching President Clinton on TV outlining his proposal to stop smoking by teen-agers by limiting access to cigarettes and advertising by tobacco companies. "After his speech, I saw the lobbyists (for the tobacco industry) come on," he says. "All they did was lie. It just got to me."

Landers got angry. He decided to offer his services, gratis, to Clinton's stop-smoking efforts. "I thought, if I can be

of any service, maybe I could help save a life," he says. "Adults won't listen — poor things, they have to go to the very end like I did. But you can get teen-agers to say 'I won't smoke.' I'd like to get across (the message) that cigarettes definitely kill you."

The White House declined Landers' offer, but he has agreed to be spokesman for a coalition of anti-smoking groups in Florida.

It was as a youngster that Landers began to smoke, sometime "before my



Left, By John Curry, Fort Lauderdale 'Sun-Sentinel'
FORMER SMOKER: Left, model Alan Landers, 54, blames tobacco companies for his two bouts with cancer. Above, a younger Landers is at left in an ad campaign for Winston cigarettes.

bar mitzvah," he says. "My father smoked. My three brothers all smoked. Everybody on TV and in the movies smoked — John Wayne, Montgomery Clift, Natalie Wood. You weren't considered a man unless you were smoking." By the time warning labels started to appear on cigarette packs, it was too late for him.

"When I did the campaign for Winston, the warnings said something like 'Caution: Cigarettes may be hazardous to your health.' Well, so is walking across the street in New York," he says. "And besides, you're addicted by that point. They didn't tell you the truth. They didn't tell you cigarettes cause

lung cancer, emphysema and heart attacks."

Landers, who has appeared in movies (*Annie Hall*) and TV shows (*Ellery Queen*, *America's Most Wanted*), was the gentleman in the "Should a gentleman offer a lady a Tiparillo?" ad campaign, and in the late 1960s, he was featured in an R.J. Reynolds ad campaign with the slogan "Down home with Winston cigarettes."

He moved to Los Angeles, opened an acting studio and lived the good life.

In 1988, when in the hospital for a hernia operation, doctors discovered a spot on his right lung. It was cancerous. Surgery was successful, and he was free of cancer for years.

But around Christmas 1992, he was preparing to go into the hospital again for surgery to repair a deviated septum. He'd had to get a chest X-ray as part of pre-admission testing.

"I was driving along in my car when my beeper goes off," he says. "I pulled into a 7-Eleven, called the number and my doctor tells me I've got a tumor on my left lung the size of a golf ball. You never think it will happen to you."

Now, nearly three years later, Landers is working on staying healthy. He has incorporated prayer, exercise and careful eating into daily life.

Landers' grandfather, an aunt and an uncle, all smokers, died of lung cancer. "I'm angry at the cigarette companies," he says.

"I wound up with lung cancer twice. They perpetrated a lie, which has really screwed my life up. I'm grateful and happy to be alive, but it has been torture."