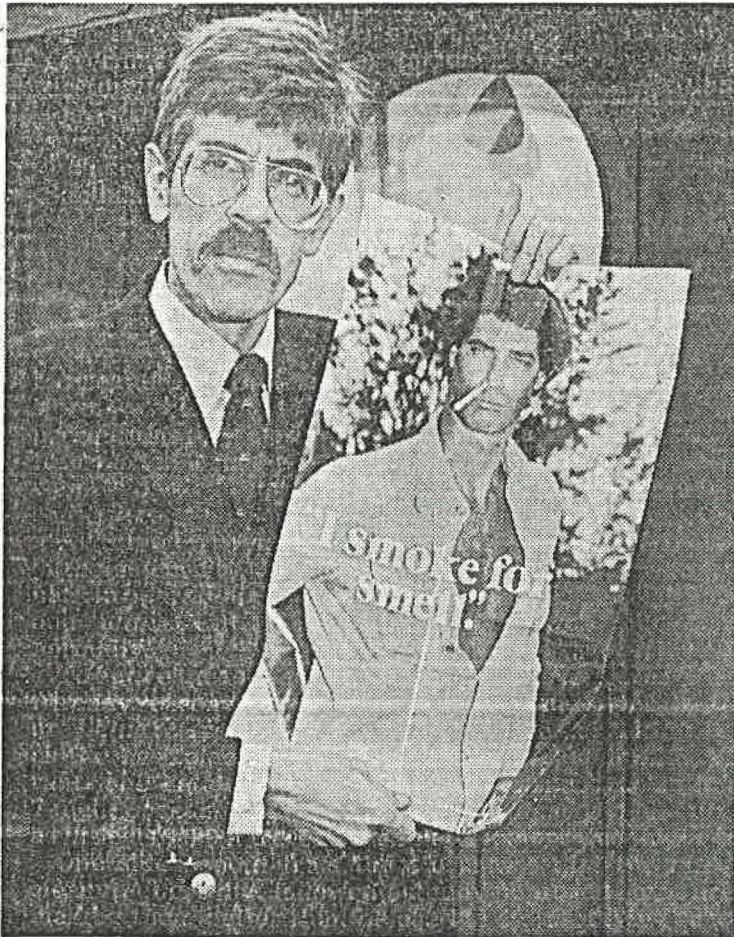


DOC Takes on a Goliath — Smoking Industry



DR. ALAN M. BLUM, anti-smoking activist, holds a poster being distributed by DOC, Doctors Ought To Care.

Imagine a media advertising campaign that turns cigarette advertising upside down, ridiculing the pleasures of men on horses, women in liberated outfits and friendly animals, and you will begin to enter the mind of Dr. Alan M. Blum.

Founder of Doctors Ought to Care (DOC), Blum has seen the failure of information — of the knowledge that smoking causes disease and death — to prevent the spread of nicotine addiction to new generations of smokers.

So after 11 years of speaking on the road, making some 600 presentations, including his talk Wednesday to the American Lung Association of New Hampshire annual meeting, Blum believes an emotional belly-punch is what kids need to get the message: "Don't Smoke."

In his scenario, the Marlboro man becomes "the Barf-boro man" vomiting into his hat, the "women's cigarette" Virginia Slims becomes Virginia Slime, and smoking becomes the moral equivalent of cocaine-addiction.

Indeed, one accepted strategy for quitting smoking is to

smoke until you get sick. But Blum says the best way to deal with the problem is to prevent people from ever starting to smoke.

"The National Institute on Drug Abuse has called tobacco the number one addiction," Blum said.

"Surely the onus should be on our society to prevent the spread of disease and the disease of smoking is being spread with greater efficiency than AIDS, cocaine or marijuana," he said. "Suicide, AIDS, homicide, accidents — if you add all of those together, you don't equal the number of tobacco-caused deaths in a given year."

DOC has taken on a Goliath. While the group, which claims a mailing list of 1,300, raised \$9,000 to sponsor U.S. Boomerang Team in international competition, tobacco companies spend billions of dollars a year on advertising.

"Cigarette advertising buys complacency, so that you don't think 'My God, they're advertising the AIDS virus,'" he said.

Blum acknowledges his constant criticism of smoking has won him no friends among the powerful tobacco lobby,

but he holds his greatest criticism for the medical profession, which he said has complacently stood by while thousands of Americans smoke themselves to death. Blum speaks of "willful ignorance on the part of the medical corps" for putting more money into researching treatments of advanced diseases caused by smoking than into their prevention by educating the public not to smoke.

"They (doctors) wouldn't deign to deal with something as intellectually simple as telling people not to smoke, when everybody knows it's bad for you," he said.

"Medical schools are not teaching doctors to prevent smoking in their patients," he said. "Not one medical school has a course on smoking."

When universities like Harvard accept money from tobacco interests, it is difficult to expect them to fairly address the issue of smoking and its danger, said Blum, who says he is keeping track of tobacco money flowing into universities and medical schools.

Blum also criticizes the press for accepting advertis-

ing from the tobacco industry. "There has not been a single major American newspaper that has editorialized against their own role in the spread of smoking," he said.

"The tobacco industry lost the argument about tobacco and death; they lost the argument about its effect on non-smokers; they lost the argument about their not aiming ads at kids," Blum said. "The only thing they can resort to is . . . patriotism. So, they sponsor the Presidential debates."

"Smoking doesn't shorten your life when you're 80, it's shortening your life from whenever you smoke the first cigarette," he said.

Blum acknowledges that the mortality figures he cites — 3.2 million deaths caused by smoking since 1980 — are also subject to dispute. But, he said, if anything, his figures are too low — as much as 1.8 million too low.

There are 140,000 lung cancer deaths in the U.S. each year, and 85 to 90 percent of those deaths are attributable to smoking, Blum said. "Where the real debate is is

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'Doctors Ought To Care', and This One Does

SMOKING

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heart disease," Blum said, noting he believes more than 200,000 deaths a year from heart disease are caused by smoking.

"Emphysema has basically only one cause — smoking —

it's worse than any other disease because you live and you can't breathe," he said.

"The lung cancer survival rate has remained unchanged in 30 years," Blum said. "Only 1 in 20 will survive for five years."

But, he said, "There is no cancer that is more prevent-

able than lung cancer. Far from winning the war on cancer, it has already been lost. What is clearly needed is what we proposed in the mid-'70s: multi-media educational programs, paid advertising, ridiculing and countering the imagery of the alcohol and tobacco industry."

Blum, who is the author of "The Cigarette Underworld", is an assistant professor of family medicine at Baylor

College of Medicine in Houston, and deputy editor of the Southern Medical Journal. Herecently received a Surgeon General's medallion from Surgeon General Everett Koop along with his DOC colleagues Dr. Rick Richards of Augusta, Ga., and Dr. Tom Houston of Wichita, Kan.

Blum called the introduction of so-called "smoke-less" cigarettes another advertising gimmick. "That cigarette is the latest in a long line of gimmicks," he said.

"We've got to laugh at them and laugh at every sports star, every newspaper, that takes money from them and start calling them drug pushers," Blum said.

"Human nature seldom admits that it looks silly or makes mistakes," he said. "It's not a good feeling, so I want to try to transfer their anger ... to the pusher."

Doctors Ought To Care can be contacted by writing DOC, 1423 Harper St., Augusta, Ga., 30912-3500.

Lung Assn. Presents Awards

MERRIMACK - Robert A. Wells of Hopkinton was presented the American Lung Association of New Hampshire's highest honor, the Robert B. Kerr Award, during the ALANH's annual meeting at the Hilton at Merrimack.

An attorney with McLane,

Graf, Raulerson and Middleton of Manchester, Wells has served on the ALANH board of directors from 1974 through 1988 and was board president in 1980 and 1981.

He has been active on many association committees, including Finance, Investment, Evaluation, Executive, Program and Budget, Structure Review and Environmental Health.

The Kerr Award is presented annually to a New Hampshire resident who has consistently rendered outstanding service in the field of health, demonstrated innovation and creativity and showed courage of conviction. It is named after Robert B. Kerr, founder of the ALANH, and the first recipient of the award.

In addition, a number of non-smoking in the workplace awards were presented to the following:

Kidder's Restaurant, New Ipswich; Saphikon, Milford; Cheshire County YMCA, Keene; Tim-Bir Restaurant, Littleton; Ocean Realty, Hampton Beach; The Bagel Boys, Manchester; Goffstown News, Goffstown; Ma-

Kahn-Tact Properties, Hudson and Butternut's Restaurant, Keene.

Foodstuffs, Keene; Dragon Fire Kenpo Karate, Hudson; Manchester Kenpo Karate, Manchester; Central Park Storage, Dover; Realty World, Hooksett; Erica's Beauty Salon and Barber Shop, Sanbornville; Butt Kickers of America, Salem; The Memorial Hospital, North Conway; Nurse Finders, Bedford and Family Hairstyling by Marie, Hudson.

Kathy's Naturally, Goffstown; Hampshire Hills Health and Fitness Club, Milford; The Rice-Hamilton, Manchester; The Pizza Barn, Center Ossipee; Davidson Technology Center, Dover, The Victory Pass Saddle Shop, Derry and Office Interiors Ltd., Dover; Appollo Travel, Concord; Fish and Maria Design Assoc., Salem and Slender You, Nashua.

Slender You, Manchester; The Center of Hope, Conway; Conway Scenic Railroad, North Conway; Homestead Restaurant, North Conway; Employee Benefit Plan, Administration Inc. Hampton; Great Northeast