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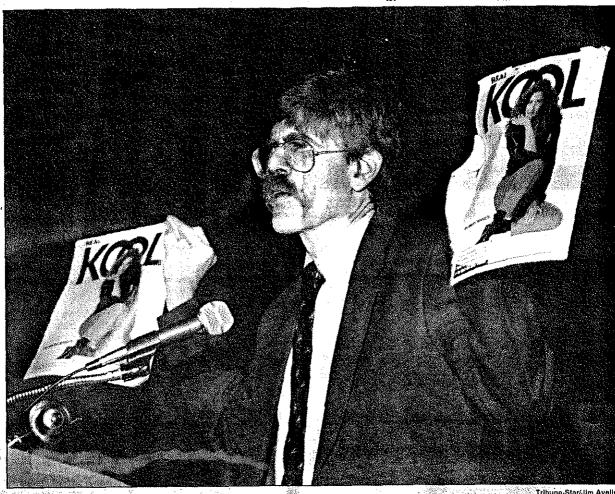
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Tribune-Star/Jim Avells

Smoking is cool? Dr. Alan Blum holds up examples of cigarette advertisements on the back of supermarket tabloids. He says the ads are aimed at young people.

Anti-Marlboro man

"Society blames seventh-

graders for getting into it. They

blame peer pressure. But it's

propaganda."

Dr. Alan Blum,

anti-smoking advocate

Seventh-graders hear all about ills of tobacco

By Deborah D. Heldman Tribune-Star

Dr. Alan Blum believes tobacco and alcohol companies are nothing more than drug pushers who use advertising in magazines and sponsorship of sporting events to

lure children to their products. On Friday, Blum urged Vigo County's seventh-graders to fight back in a variety of ways. He provided them with anti-Marlboro man stickers, which he suggested be put on magazines that contain cigarette

The sticker contains a warning that says: "Many of the ads in this publication are misleading, deceptive and/or a ripoff. For example, smoking does not make one glamorous, macho, successful or athletic. It does make one sick, poor and dead.

Blum also suggested writing to the Hulman family, which owns the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, and "say enough is enough. We don't need Marlboro at the Indianapolis 500."

companies sponsor racing Tobacco teams and display their product by painting race cars with product colors and logos. A message about Blum's comments was

left with the secretary in the Speedway's executive offices Friday, with an invitation to respond. The call was not returned.

Blum is founder of Doctors Ought to Care, a national organization designed to increase awareness of how cigarette+companies recruit smokers through advertising. He spoke to the students as part of a weekend-long cancer symposium spon-sored by Union Hospital's Medical Education Department. The students are part of the Smoke-Free Class of 2000, a national project designed to create a nonsmoking

The physician, who also is an associate professor of family medicine at Baylor College of Medicine in Texas, showed students how tobacco companies and breweries use advertising to make their products appealing to minors, from Camel cigarettes Joe Camel character to the Miller Brewing Co.'s player of the game during sporting events.

Blum waved ads in tabloid newspapers

and magazines to illustrate his point. He also showed pictures of popular sporting events and pointed out the advertising to the audience

"Society blames seventh-graders for get-ting into it," Blum said. "They blame peer pressure. But it's propaganda.

Students gasped as pictures of cancerous lungs, blackened mouths full of cancer and a diseased liver were displayed on the screen in the front of the auditorium at Indiana State University, where Blum addressed the students.

"This is what they don't tell you," he said.

Brian Mason, a seventh-grader at West Vigo Middle School, didn't need to see pictures of diseased organs to keep him away from cigarettes.

"I don't plan to smoke," he said. "I don't know why, but I just don't want to do it."

However, not all students were convinced of the dangers of smoking. A student who would only identify herself as Heather said she has smoked a few cigarettes, but she wants to keep it a secret from her parents.

"I really don't think I will become a smoker," she said. "I just tried a couple of

Blum admitted he is fighting an uphill battle against multimillion-dollar corpora-

"But I think bit by bit we are making some headway," he said. "Five or six years ago, you could buy cigarettes in hospitals and now you can't."

By Jo Tribune

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