

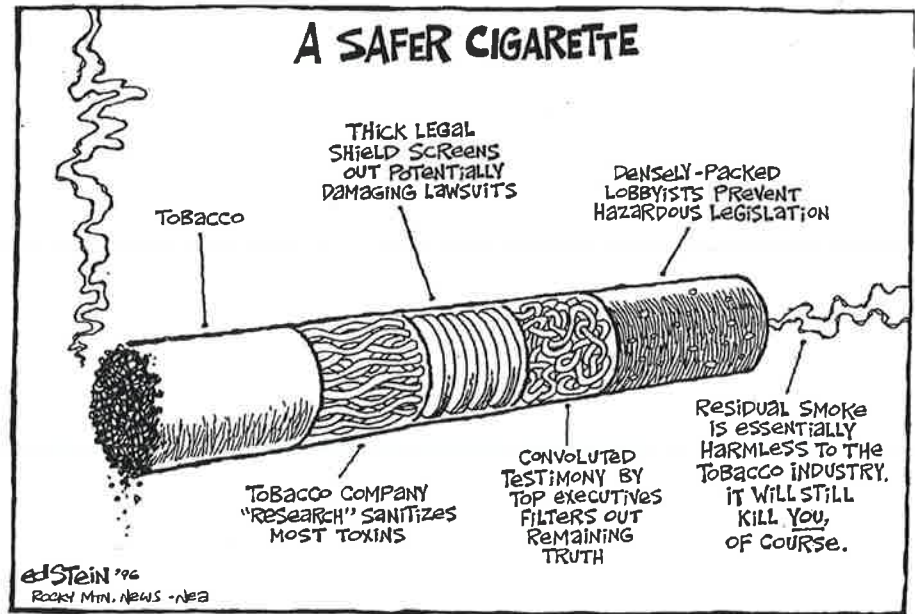
Wholly Smoke

Smokin' Cartoon Show Goes on the Road

"Cartoonists Take Up Smoking," an exhibition of editorial cartoons about the tobacco controversies of the 20th century, debuted in April at the Ann Tower Gallery in Lexington, Kentucky in conjunction with the annual convention of the Association of American Editorial Cartoonists. 2004 marks the 40th anniversary of the publication of *Smoking and Health*, the landmark report of the Surgeon General. Its unequivocal scientific conclusion that cigarettes cause lung cancer and other diseases should have ended a debate that had raged for decades, if not centuries, but the tobacco industry merely blew more advertising smoke in the eyes of the public and the politically naïve health community.

Curated by AAEC associate member Alan Blum, M.D., a professor of family medicine at the University of Alabama, "Cartoonists Take Up Smoking" is an exhibition of original political cartoons on a single theme. The University of Alabama Center for the Study of Tobacco and Society, which Blum founded and directs, holds one of the world's largest sociocultural archives on tobacco, including more than 300 original editorial cartoon artworks on smoking-related themes and 1000 newsprint tearsheets of editorial pages featuring cartoons on tobacco.

More than 80 American and Canadian editorial cartoonists are represented in the show, which will travel to several cities before concluding its run in Washington, DC in 2006 at the National Museum of Health and



Ed Stein

Medicine. The cartoons are supplemented by more than 100 smoking-related items, from front-page headlines about the events that inspired the cartoons to outlandish cigarette ads through the years with health claims like "Just what the doctor ordered" and "More doctors smoke Camels."

Retracing the modern era of anti-smoking advocacy, many of these trenchant cartoons satirize tobacco company executives and political cronies for sabotaging clean indoor air legislation, airline smoking bans, and restrictions on cigarette advertising. But others also poke fun at the intolerance shown by some antismoking crusaders and the hypocrisy of state attorneys general seeking cash damages from an industry with whom the states had long been in cahoots. One recurrent theme of the show is that the most addictive thing about tobacco is money.

The exhibition grew out of an invited presentation Dr. Blum gave at the 2001 AAEC convention in Toronto.

Encouraged by past AAEC president David Horsey, he sought and received the cooperation of AAEC members.

Lexington host Joel Pett and AAEC president Mike Ritter came up with the idea to bring the show to the heart of tobacco country.

In his spare, stark style, Kentucky native son J.D. Crowe of the *Mobile Register* created an unsettling 2-panel cartoon for the exhibition that contrasts the quaint beauty of a family tobacco farm with the tragic deaths due to smoking.

Cartoon historians Cullum Rogers, Draper Hill, and Lucy Caswell provided invaluable background material about the history of political cartooning as well as about smoking as a subject of pictorial satire.

Blum also visited with several artists in the newsroom, including Chip Bok, Gary Varvel, Gary Brookins, Tony Auth, Scott Stantis, and Kevin Kallauger. Numerous others provided advice and assistance, including Jim

Lange, Etta Hulme, Andy Donato, Roy Peterson, Vic Harville, Milt Priggee, Ed Stein, Steve Greenberg, Matt Wuerker, Rob Rogers, and Jeff Parker. Joel Pett created the show's logo.

The timing of the exhibition could not have been better. On the day of the AAEC reception at the Ann Tower Gallery, an 84-point banner headline emblazoned the front page of the *Lexington Herald-Leader*, reporting the Kentucky Supreme Court's upholding of Lexington's clean indoor air ordinance, one of the strictest in the country. *The Herald-Leader* also devoted its editorial and op-ed pages to reprinting 18 of the cartoons in the exhibition. Some of those attending the reception were convinced that the show, which had opened two weeks earlier, had either influenced the judges or had been timed for the release of the decision.

The wide-ranging controversies surrounding tobacco are captured in the cartoons, from the misguided quest for a safe cigarette to the targeting of tobacco advertising to women and minority groups. Cartoons on smoking have had an impact at both the local and national levels. Editorial cartoonists practically laughed Joe Camel out of town and helped pass countless local clean indoor air laws.

Addressing the proposed ban on smoking in bars in New York City in 2003, *Newsday's* Walt Handelsman showed two customers bypassing a crowd smoking on the sidewalk outside a bar: "Let's go inside for a breath of fresh air."

Several AAEC members related in their artist's statements for the show that family members had died from smoking. "My mother and father died within a month of each other because of their inability to overcome their addiction to cigarettes," wrote David Fitzsimmons of the *Arizona Star*. "I understand, firsthand, the impact of tobacco on the lives of people."

For half a century, the cartoonist most unapologetically opposed to



Bruce Plante

smoking and the tobacco industry was Herb Block, several of whose pieces were reproduced for the show. They are in stark contrast to the old cigarette advertisements in the exhibition featuring cartoonists Rube Goldberg and Jimmy Hatlo endorsing Lucky Strikes. Perhaps the most prolific cartoonist in

parodying tobacco industry executives and their allies has been Wayne Stayskal of the *Tampa Tribune*, who has produced more than 90 cartoons on smoking, including the first cartoon ever to appear on the cover of a major medical journal.

Not all cartoonists have depicted tobacco as an evil weed. Indeed, several could be described as

anti-anti-smoking, in part based on their belief in the freedom to choose. Clay Bennett of the *Christian Science Monitor* wonders if there also should be laws against nagging and finger-wagging. In a cartoon from 1979, the *Miami Herald's* Jim Morin contrasted the harmfulness of smoking in restaurants with automobile and environmental pollution. New York freelance great Arnold Roth and the *New York Post's* Sean Delonas foresee the advent of a smoke police force roaming sidewalks and parks.

The rise in lawsuits against tobacco companies has also brought together political opposites Ted Rall, of Universal Press Syndicate, and Chuck Asay of the *Colorado Springs Gazette*. In his cartoon in the show, Rall conjures up a legal case over exposure to "third-hand smoke" and even one about "fourth-hand smoke," while Asay depicts trial lawyers as vultures more interested in picking the wallet in Joe Camel's pocket than in picking over his remains. Several artists such as Graham Mackay of the *Hamilton, Ontario Spectator* point to the hypocrisy of governments milking the cash cow of tobacco taxes while branding tobacco as a poison.

"We are looking forward to hosting 'Cartoonists Take Up Smoking' at the National Museum of Health and Medicine at the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology in Washington, DC," said Dr. Adrienne Noe, the museum's director. "The assembled cartoonists' works rival any scalpel we have on display for their sharpness. They span the humorous to the deadly serious and will allow visitors to relive a public medical and political debate about a health issue that continues to grasp us all. It's particularly fitting to host this wonderful collection at the nation's medical museum, where it will be seen amid other exhibits that inspire learning about medicine and health, including the real lungs of a smoker."

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Suffolk U. Hosts Editorial Cartoon Exhibit

By Aiden Fitzgerald

“Campaigns, Conventions and Cartoons,” a provocative exhibition of original editorial cartoons, was on display at Suffolk University during the Democratic National Convention in Boston this past summer.

The show’s 83 illustrations, including work from 19 Pulitzer Prize winners, proved that a single drawing — with or without a pithy cutline — can spin a complex tale. Spanning several decades, campaigns and policies, the images evoked laughter and reflection.

According to guest curator Robert Bedart, about one-third of the show’s illustrations are not “giggle proof.”

“Editorial cartoons are a wonderful vehicle for targeting foibles or idiocy,” he said.

In addition to taking jabs at 2004 presidential candidates John Kerry and

George W. Bush, the exhibit recalled ludicrous moments of the Bush-Dukakis, Clinton-Dole and Bush-Gore races. It also addresses trickle-down economics, foreign policy, the Red Sox-

jects such as the West Bank and the drastic levels to which governmental candidates will go to get a vote.

Among the artists whose work was displayed were Paul Conrad of the *Los Angeles Times* (who made Richard Nixon’s Enemies List); locals Jerry Holbert (*Boston Herald* illustrator), Paul Szep and Dan Wasserman; Signe Wilson of the *Philadelphia Daily News*; Charles Barsotti of *The New Yorker*; and Tony Auth of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

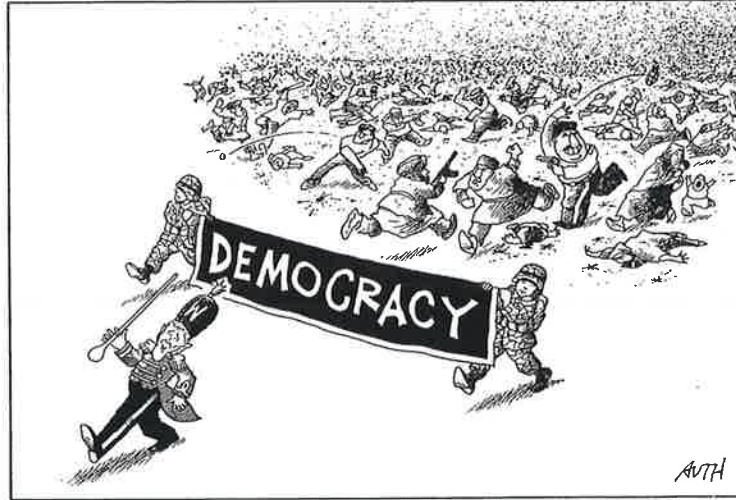
The exhibit, sponsored by the Moakley Archive and Institute and the *Boston Herald*, commented equally on Kerry and Bush. A couple of cartoons comment on Kerry’s indecisiveness and mixed messages, while others criti-

cize Bush’s blunders — both in language and in action.

One illustration, by Szep, depicts Bush throwing a tantrum. With crossed arms, he stomps his feet and cries, “I want my war ... NOW!”

The Boston Globe, July 2004

J.P. Trostle contributed to this article.



Tony Auth

Yankee campaign and the timelessness of politics.

“The more politics change, the more it stays the same,” reads the exhibit’s introduction.

“So much of what the cartoonists are lampooning never seems to change,” said Bedart, referring to lingering sub-

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Jenny Robb Dietzen, Curator of the San Francisco Cartoon Art Museum, hopes to bring “Cartoonists Take Up Smoking” to California., which has long been in the forefront of anti-smoking legislation. “The exhibition showcases the wit, artistry, and cutting commentary of cartoonists on all sides of controversial smoking-related issues,” she said, “along with fascinating supporting materials that enable viewers to put the cartoons into historical context.”

The University of Alabama Museum of Natural History is hosting the show until November 1. A symposium is planned in October featuring cartoonists J.D. Crowe and former *Birmingham News* cartoonist Charles Brooks. The museum will hold a cartoon drawing contest for visiting school groups, with the winning submission to be shown in the museum.



Tim Menees