

TOBACCO CONTROL

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL



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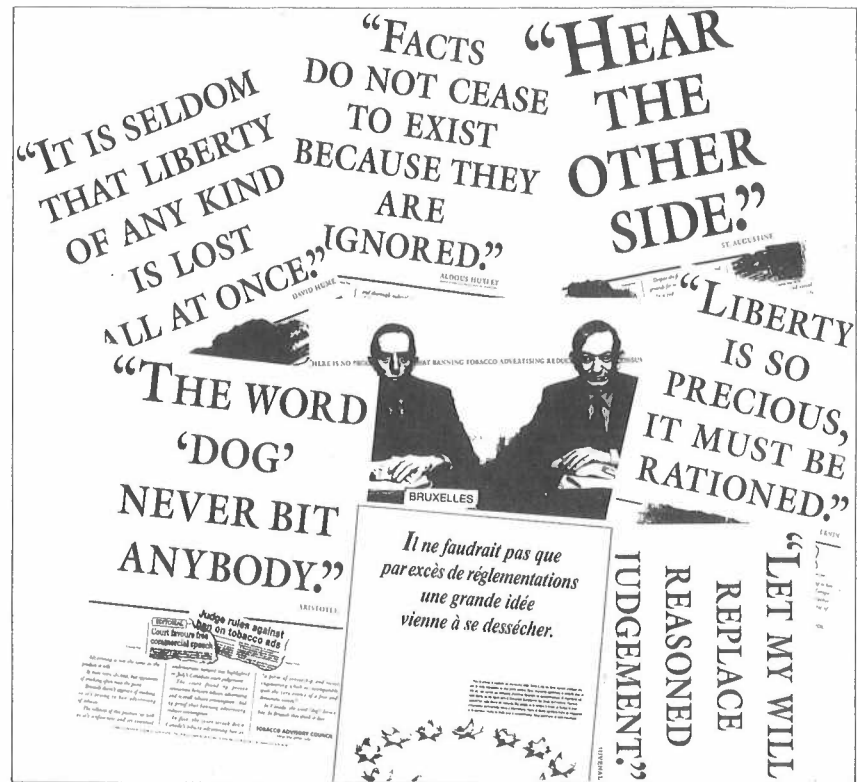
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NEWS ANALYSIS

Brussels sprouts tobacco ad ban plan

One of the most important organisations to emerge in the late 1980s is the European Bureau for Action on Smoking Prevention (BASP). The thoroughness and professionalism of BASP might lead one to conclude that it is both large and financially secure. It is neither. During a day long visit to Brussels in September 1991 to meet with the director, Luk Joossens, and the assistant director, Caroline Naett, I counted only two other employees. The pace is frenetic and the atmosphere intense, perhaps matched only by Steve Woodward's Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) office in Sydney. Joossens and Naett pay meticulous attention to correspondence with government officials, diligently cultivate contacts with the press, and with extraordinary detachment monitor the influence of the multinational tobacco conglomerates in Europe. The enormous, months long task of trying to influence the nations of the Commission of European Communities to pass a comprehensive smoking prevention programme left little time for social chatter during my visit. Even our lunch was taken up by an explanation of the workings of BASP and a debate on strategies for building support for a total ban on tobacco advertising in the European Community (see p 57). Later in the day we would be joined by chest physicians Dr Albert Hirsch from France and Professor John Moxham from the United Kingdom (and leader of Doctors for the Tobacco Law) for a discussion on ways to rally the health professionals in Europe behind the smoking prevention proposal.

BASP's quarterly bulletin, *Smoking Prevention*, published in a split French and English format, may be the world's best periodical on tobacco problems. Its recent issue of January 1992 (No 15) discussing the proposed ban on tobacco advertising in the European Community includes a reproduction of a print advertisement by the International Union Against Cancer (UICC) urging the ban as a way to help to insure a healthier future for children, as well as advertisements



A forest of advertising from the tobacco and advertising industries

by groups opposing the ban. While it is in no way surprising to see the British Tobacco Advisory Council citing Lenin ("Liberty is so precious, it must be rationed") in its advertisements defending the freedom to advertise cigarettes, BASP is especially irked by what it describes as a "huge campaign" in the print media launched by the European Publishers Council and the European Association of Advertising Agencies. According to BASP, "a large number" of European newspapers and magazines will allocate tens of millions of dollars worth of free space this year for publication of the anti-ban advertisements. BASP finds it "significant" that no newspaper has agreed to give equal space for publication of the UICC advertisement; all the more befuddling, notes BASP, since tobacco advertising accounted for only 1.6% of all advertising expenditures in the European Community in 1988, and even less in the print media.


The only European countries that still support voluntary agreements and oppose bans on advertising – the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Germany – are places where the

private tobacco industry predominates over government tobacco monopolies. BASP cites an independent report commissioned by the Dutch government acknowledging the failure of the tobacco industry to observe the spirit or intent of the voluntary agreement in the Netherlands. Specifically, expenditure on tobacco advertising has more than doubled since the voluntary agreement came into effect in January 1989, and the broadcasting ban on tobacco advertising has been undermined by intensive sports sponsorship and indirect advertising on clothes and other items. BASP cites a similar experience in Italy.

On 12 February the European Parliament voted 150 to 123 in support of the total ban on tobacco advertising. Although a council of health ministers that ultimately decides policy may well adopt a weaker plan, BASP's efforts will not have been without success. When the smoke clears in 1992 the European Commission may well have banned the marketing of smokeless (spitting) tobacco, recommended limits on tar and nicotine yields for cigarettes, increased the size


WITH GRATITUDE THANKS TO THE PRESS FOR THEIR SUPPORT

"GIVE OUR CHILDREN THE CHANCE OF A HEALTHY FUTURE".



* Without tobacco advertising, of course.

Article 10 of the European Convention of Human Rights:
1. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. (...)
2. The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions or restrictions as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society. (...) for the protection of health (...)

 — INTERNATIONAL UNION AGAINST CANCER —
3, rue de la Croix-Cedre • 1201 Geneva • Switzerland

of warning labels, and raised cigarette taxes.

All of these measures pale in comparison with the impact of a true ban on tobacco advertising, however. The sobering lesson for BASP and other organisations around the world is that the mass media are not "on side" when it comes to the subject of tobacco advertising. Those who spend time currying favour with journalists – to be sure, the tobacco industry does this extremely well, to judge by the paucity of sportswriters who support restrictions on tobacco advertising – need to understand that the first loyalty of the press is to its advertisers. In a sense, this is how it should be. Newspapers and magazines are not public utilities but rather private, for profit corporations designed to engage readers and attract business for advertisers. Editorials are most often reflections of the publisher's viewpoints, not public opinion. For BASP to cite an apparently objective survey among all the member states of the European Community that found that 73 % of the 12 800 persons questioned were in favour of legislation banning all forms of tobacco advertising is, sadly, irrelevant. Surveying public opinion and mobilising public support for legislation are two completely different things; it is the tobacco industry and its allies in the mass media who are experts in manipulating public opinion and in mounting advertising campaigns in support of a right to advertise. Well intentioned anti-tobacco advocates must learn how to move beyond pamphlets, press releases, and publicity stunts in moving the public to act on an issue. For the UICC, BASP, and the World

Health Organisation (WHO) to have failed to raise funds for the purchase of advertising space to expose the shameful conduct of the ministers in the United Kingdom, Germany, and the Netherlands is a major missed opportunity. Then to complain that no newspaper would publish the UICC advertisement is absurd, even as the press reveals its bias in publishing the publishers' council/ad agencies' advertisement that may well have been ghostwritten by the tobacco industry. No newspaper is under any obligation in a free society to publish someone else's public service advertisement, even in the interest of providing "both sides" with the chance to express their views. BASP is clearly confusing letters to the editor or editorial rebuttals with advertising space.

None the less, despite its shoestring budget, BASP has managed to earn the enmity of the tobacco industry and its lobbyists in the European parliament – a sure sign that this small but mighty outfit is heading in the right direction.

Key contact: Luk Joossens, BASP, 117 rue des Atrebatas, 1040 Brussels, Belgium. (Tel (32 2) 732 24 68; fax (32 2) 736 91 92.)

Despite US pressure, Taiwan won't take to the Hills

In contrast to European health strategists, Taiwan's eight year old John Tung Foundation, headed by David Yen, may have set a new standard in timely, sophisticated, cost effective, attention getting campaigns. During the third week in January – in the midst of a wave of anti-Japanese sentiment for Japan's restriction of US imports – the foundation ran two separate advertisements in the *New York Times* and other American newspapers welcoming increased imports of American products... "EXCEPT CIGARETTES." Those two words in a boldface headline must have spoilt the breakfasts of Philip Morris and RJ Reynolds executives, not to mention US Trade Representative (and tobacco industry defender) Carla Hills and elected officials backed by tobacco industry political action funds. The simple, understated, positive advertisements not only generated news stories in the print and

broadcast media but also no doubt became food for thought in the minds of many business and labour leaders, economists, and politicians. In effect, the John Tung advertisements imply, fewer American cigarette promotions to Taiwanese youth will mean greater American business opportunities in Taiwan during a time of major economic growth. The placement of the advertisements also coincided with United States-Taiwan trade meetings at which the US Trade Representative was likely to object to a comprehensive bill in the Taiwan legislature that would ban cigarette advertising, brand sponsorship and promotion, sampling, vending machine sales, sales to minors, and spitting tobacco.

The extraordinary advertising campaign by the John Tung Foundation calls to mind the tireless efforts of Dr Greg Connolly and Congressman Chester Atkins over the past few years to bring greater congressional scrutiny to the subject of pressure by the US government on Taiwan, South Korea, Thailand, and other countries to permit stepped up marketing of American cigarettes. At a time when cigarette consumption in the United States is slowly declining as healthy lifestyles take hold, middle class Americans may not take kindly to such actions on the part of their government. To add fuel to the fire, *Mealey's Litigation Reports on Tobacco* revealed in January that an organisation representing 400 000 American tobacco farmers, Tobacco Associates Inc, received \$3.5 million from the US Agriculture Department to encourage the use of American tobacco in cigarettes manufactured in Taiwan, Turkey, Korea, and Russia. If the word can continue to get out, US voters en masse may well begin to make it known to their elected officials that they are sickened at the thought that tobacco is one of the United States' fastest growing exports. (Although the tobacco pandemic has never been an issue in a US presidential election, the hypocrisy of candidates in 1992 decrying the rising cost of health care while taking campaign contributions from tobacco companies would seem a natural subject for political pundits.)

Despite the public confrontation sought by the John Tung Foundation, the state of tobacco control in Taiwan is not entirely optimistic. The damage caused in 1986 by the Reagan administration, which threatened retaliation against Taiwan were US tobacco companies denied increased access to the Taiwanese market, is still being felt. By 1988 the market share of American cigarettes reached 17 %, representing a 24-fold increase

in less than two years. Moreover, cigarette consumption in Taiwan increased by 1% a year in the late 1980s, which the tobacco industry trade publication *Tobacco Journal International* (2/89) attributes to "rising disposable incomes [especially among young, affluent town dwellers] and the lack of a strong domestic anti-smoking movement."

The government of Taiwan has been roused to action, however. Although not apparent during my own 24 hour visit to Taipei in September, the government has launched a five year anti-smoking advertising campaign. Taiwan has also stopped free distribution of cigarettes to the armed forces and forced a name change for its leading domestic brand, Long Life. An initial step towards comprehensive tobacco control policies was taken by the national health department on 31 July 1991, when it proposed a complete ban on tobacco advertising. This Smoking Hazard Prevention Law was being considered by the Taiwan legislature at the time of the United States-Taiwan trade talks. The John Tung Foundation was instrumental in bringing about this proposal and in inviting international tobacco and health experts Judith Mackay from Hong Kong and Prakrit Vateesatokit from Thailand to brief Taiwanese officials.

Key contact: David Yen, John Tung Foundation, 12/F-3 No 57 Fu Hsin N Road, Taipei, 10559 Taiwan. (Tel 7766133; fax 7522455.)

The pushers are coming! The pushers are coming!... To Russia

One can't help contrasting the prompt outpouring of American drugs, surgical supplies, and staff to the Soviet Union following the disaster at Chernobyl with the signing of contracts by American tobacco companies Philip Morris and RJ Reynolds to supply billions of cigarettes to Russia in 1992. This is all the more outrageous in view of the scarcity of even the most basic hospital supplies in a country where surgeons are reported to be operating with razor blades. Notwithstanding serious inflation spirals in the new country, cigarettes still cost less than a loaf of bread. Even well intentioned visitors continue to bring cartons of Marlboro to use as currency.

Whatever rumours exist of Russian efforts to curtail smoking are sheer bunk. In London last September at the British Health Education Authority's "look after your heart" conference I met the WHO regional director for cardiovascular disease risk factors - a single individual, albeit talented and vivacious, charged with educating 970 million people with virtually no budget. Meanwhile, the president of Philip Morris International is quoted in the January 1992 issue of the trade journal *Tobacco Reporter* as saying of the company's plans to expand Russian production of Marlboro and other brands, "We are extremely pleased with the co-operation we have with our Russian partners and are impressed by their timely fulfilment of all their obligations. We are committed to playing a leading role in the modernisation and development of the tobacco industry in Russia and other republics." According to the *Tobacco Reporter* (10/91), US cigarette exports to the Soviet Union increased more than 7200% in the first six months of 1991. To add further proof to the argument that cigarette sales are recession proof, the tobacco industry in the United States finished the first half of 1991 with a trade surplus of \$2.7 billion, an increase of nearly 10% over 1990.

American cigarettes are not the only toxic waste being dumped on Russia. In December 1989 I was invited to address the first Soviet-American conference on alcoholism, held in Greenwich, Connecticut. The spon-

sor of the meeting, US Tobacco, the Greenwich based manufacturer of Skoal and Copenhagen spitting tobacco, may not have realised that the conference coordinator had asked me to speak, but immediately after I had shown the Soviet audience the kinds of alcohol and tobacco advertising they should expect to see - as well as photographs of patients with oral cancer - an executive from the company raced to the front of the room, grabbed the microphone, and attempted to explain through a translator that what the audience had just seen just wasn't so. "In this part of America there is no glasnost," I yelled out to the audience in the absence of a microphone. "The sponsor has the final word." Many participants began to catch on, and they peppered me with questions about the nature and possible motives of US Tobacco.

Why would a tobacco company sponsor a meeting on alcoholism? Ironically, US Tobacco has a highly regarded programme to help employees who have alcohol related problems. One of the directors of the programme confided to me that while he was proud of his work, he was not at all proud of the company's products. The company's president, Louis Bantle, a recovering alcoholic, portrays himself as a benefactor of academic and religious institutions. Sponsorship of a meeting on alcoholism surely did not hurt his chances to introduce Skoal to Russia.

Hardly a month goes by without some new word of an expansion of US tobacco interests in Eastern Europe. We learned in February, for instance, that RJ Reynolds Tobacco International (the profit generating arm of RJR Nabisco) will build a \$33 million factory in Warsaw with the capacity to make eight billion Camel cigarettes a year and that similar ventures are planned for Hungary by Philip Morris and BAT. If there is little that can be done under the Bush administration to stop the aggression by tobacco companies in Russia and elsewhere in Eastern Europe, then perhaps the American corporate allies of cigarette manufacturers should be called to account for joining in a consortium to promote trade relations between the United States and Russia. According to the January 20 issue of *Business Week*, Eastman Kodak, Coca Cola, General Motors, and Pepsi Cola have teamed up with RJR Nabisco to develop Russian business ventures. Kodak makes cigarette filters, by the way.

EXCEPT CIGARETTES

We Welcome All American Products To Taiwan.



Don't Build America's Image With Cigarettes...

Five years ago, the USA forced Taiwan to spend the most on US cigarettes in order to balance the trade deficit between Taiwan and the USA. Since 1987 the USA has reduced its annual expenditure of tobacco products from Taiwan.

The US tobacco industry spends more than US\$60,000,000 on promotional campaigns every year. As a result, the consumption of cigarettes has risen 15% every year. This increase comes mainly from women and young people. If the situation does not change, the women and young people in Taiwan will continue to be in danger of the US smoking crisis.

In a world where fuel, cigarettes are hazardous to human health. Unfortunately there are many people and women who start smoking every year. Do not receive any additional cigarettes and

used to be in the past. Once they start this habit, it is extremely difficult to stop. We welcome all kinds of American products into Taiwan, but not tobacco products!

As our government is currently implementing a US\$200 billion The Year National Development Plan, we strongly believe that a greater contribution to America's industry in this area is a better solution in solving the trade deficit.

A world five nations in the world pack of health-loving people all over the world "Smokeless Taiwan R.O.C." is our policy now. Please express our anti-smoking campaign and tell the prohibition on cigarette advertising. Don't allow the presence of American tobacco companies to erode America's image in our country with cigarettes.



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JOHN TUNG FOUNDATION



亞太地區禁菸聯盟
ASIA PACIFIC ASSOCIATION FOR THE CONTROL OF TOBACCO

1107 300027 P.O. Box 46, Taipei, 10599 Taiwan, ROC. TEL: 7672333 FAX: 7522333

What did you do in the (tobacco) war, Daddy?

Who says tobacco industry people don't have a sense of humour? Consider the following headline over an article in the trade journal *Tobacco Reporter* (10/91) on efforts to curtail tobacco use and promotion in the European Community: "Health bias threatens free trade." And consider these comments in *Tobacco Journal International* (2/89) by Dr Paul Cattelain writing of the European Commission's fight against cancer, and in particular its proposal to mandate lower tar yields for cigarettes:

Since the middle of this century, smoking has been caught up in a whirlwind which has devastated everything in its wake. At the height of this "scientific" storm a raging current of panic and frenzy has been unleashed....

The European Commission did not spare any pains in its support of this crusade. It declared quite dogmatically that in the fight against cancer the anti-smoking campaign must be given absolute priority.

As one who has never believed that requiring a reduction in tar yield of cigarettes provides any health advantage whatsoever to the user, since brand switching may be offset by compensatory deeper and more frequent inhalations, I was struck by Cattelain's wrath over proposed reductions in the tar yield. I have always railed against the US National Cancer Institute for wasting precious years and tens of millions of dollars in the 1970s to develop "less hazardous" cigarettes and fuelling the tobacco industry's time buying argument that more such research was needed. To me, so called low tar cigarettes are, and always have been, "low poison," and there is simply no safe level of poison.

As it turns out, if I read Cattelain correctly, the lower tar requirement may prove to be as crucial as an advertising ban in ending the dependence on tobacco of several countries in the European Community, including Greece, Italy, Spain, and France. Citing a tobacco industry study, Cattelain claims that the tar limitation proposal of the European Community constitutes a threat to "83% of the present cigarette market, thus affecting the economic survival of 1.7 million people engaged in the tobacco industry." Specifically, if the regulations came into force there would be an "entire loss of employment for 250 000 people in the agricultural sector, excluding seasonal

workers," and mainly in the poorest regions of the European Community.

Now comes the funny part:

This disappearance of jobs would then have a secondary effect, that is to say the complete depopulation of the regions in question, as a satisfactory switch to other varieties of tobacco or to other cultivation products is practically impossible.

Without mincing matters or trying to disguise the situation, the result would be a countryside of desolation, bequeathing the deathly initiative which could spring only in a moment of mental derangement from the minds of sorcerers' apprentices.

Not only the tobacco trade itself, which is directly affected, but every person in possession of sound human understanding must now hope that the responsible bodies at the head of the European Community, after being warned of the dramatic consequences of such a draft directive, whose scientific foundations are more uncertain than ever, will either simply reject this draft out of hand or at least examine the situation more thoroughly and see in what form and under which conditions a reasonable decrease in the average tar content of cigarettes could be achieved.

* * *

Along these lines is a comment by John Maxwell taken from a profile in the trade journal *Tobacco Reporter* (1/92) of this revered author of the international tobacco industry's market share analyses, the *Maxwell Report*.

"The most important things are your wife and your health," he says in earnest... During summers now, Jack and Adrienne retreat to their cottage in Pretty Marsh, Maine. There, he relaxes - but not with a cigarette in hand. "I used to smoke Lucky Strikes," he says, then adds good-naturedly,

"but they took all the fun out of it when they lowered the 'tar' and nicotine levels."

* * *

"Substances like tobacco, coffee, tea, and spirits play an important role in improving the state of mind, and easing stress, and therefore benefit one's health," writes Dr Manfred Korner, German correspondent for *Tobacco International* in the trade publication's issue of the 15 December 1991. His article, entitled "In defense of smoking," reports on a workshop organised by a group of 16 academic scientists who call themselves Associates for Research in Substance Enjoyment (ARISE). According to Dr Korner, these scientists "feel that it is high time to resist the ever more pressing Calvinistic attacks on those substances mentioned above." The group is led by David M Warburton, professor of psychology at Reading University in the United Kingdom. ARISE believes that "many doctors' advice to stop smoking, drinking alcoholic beverages, or eating too many sweets is based on moralistic views, rather than on sober medical diagnosis." The group is especially concerned about the loss of freedom of choice, such as would be the result of a tobacco advertising ban in the European Community. Korner writes, "As humans are pleasure seeking beings and have a right to enjoy substances which fulfil this need and are at the same time legal products, the ARISE group rejects all efforts to discriminate against those substances and those who use them. Hence, the group is opposed to advertising bans on alcoholic beverages, tobacco, or food as being discriminatory." Your news and commentary editor will endeavour to contact this undoubtedly independent minded group and report further in a forthcoming issue on its members' sources of support.

* * *

A note on Argentina from the 1 June 1989 issue of *Tobacco International*, an industry trade journal: after discussing the modest but increasing restrictions on cigarette advertising, correspondent Sheila Misdorp writes,

Ending on a lighter, brighter side of the Argentine cigarette market, empty cigarette packs have developed a market with a "craze" amongst youngsters for collecting them. Few people who sit down at a cafe with a cigarette pack, especially a foreign one, in front of them are safe from being inundated by pleas for the empty pack. Waiters in some establishments have started a thriving business selling discarded packs! The craze came about as a result of a charity organization which, for every one thousand empty packs, would give a wheelchair to a handicapped

The 1991 Maxwell Report: In the Top World Cigarette Market Leaders report, Marlboro is again for the 16th consecutive year, No.1 in USA and the World.

Marlboro
No.1 in USA and the World.

person. As well as serving a charitable purpose the youngsters find themselves learning valuable geography lessons as they identify and often write to the companies in the countries from which the cigarette packs come.

* * *

Perhaps one of the most truthful cigarette advertisements of all time appeared in the late 1930s. It showed a lovely young woman with a pack of cigarettes in her hand and a seductive look in her eye. "After a man's heart," read the headline, and, in smaller print, "when smokers find out the good things Chesterfields give them." Now another such candid advertisement has appeared in the form of a Sunday newspaper insert for Liggett's Eve cigarettes to tell smokers what is in store for them: "Discover what's in the stars for you in '92: The 1992 Eve Astrological Guide. It tells you future...and it's free! (with 2 Eve pack proofs of purchase)."

And as if we haven't grown up a bit from the 1940s when Philip Morris's Marlboro brand was advertised to women with the slogan "red tips to match you pretty lips," the same company has been touting a cosmetically appealing new brand for more than a year in the *Los Angeles Times* with the following description: "Cartier Vendome pearl-tipped cigarettes, so luxurious they are presented in specially designed packs of 10 and 20."

It is ironic that a new brand would be test marketed in California, site of the most successful taxpayer supported campaign against smoking in the United States and one of the few to pay for counter advertising in the mass media. One of the most memorable advertisements includes a suggestion for tobacco company executives: "Maybe they should sell phlegm and just skip the middle man." Other advertisements have painted a demonic picture of the executives themselves.

Eighty million dollars of the \$700 million raised each year from a 25 cents per pack increase in the cigarette excise tax approved by California voters in 1988 is earmarked for anti-tobacco educational efforts. The mass media budget of \$16 million has served as a potent immunisation against the ubiquitous barrage of cigarette advertising messages on billboards, in sports stadia, in the print media, and in stores.

Alas, in late January the governor of California, Pete Wilson, citing a budget crisis, effectively ended the mass media campaign by redirecting the money to pay for health care. Naturally, the decision was made with

It tells your future... and it's FREE!

Discover what's in the stars for you in '92

THE 1992 Eve ASTROLOGICAL GUIDE

Includes \$24 worth of Eve coupons.

MAIL IN TODAY FOR YOUR FREE GUIDE, AND SAVE NOW WITH THE COUPONS BELOW!

MAIL TO: [Address]

NAME: []

ADDRESS: []

CITY: [] STATE: [] ZIP: []

REGULAR BRAND COUPON

SAVE 75¢

SAVE \$9.00

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Quitting Smoking Now Greatly Reduces Serious Risks to Your Health.

Light 120's Regular: 12 mg. "tar," 1.0 mg. nicotine, av. per cigarette by FTC method. Ultra Lights 120's: 5 mg. "tar," 0.5 mg. nicotine, av. per cigarette by FTC method.

the full support of the tobacco industry, which claims that its own advertising campaign, "We don't want kids to smoke," is a sufficient deterrent to adolescent tobacco use. Perhaps we can expect other such meaningless motherly admonitions to teenagers to appear as advertising campaigns: "Eat your spinach!", "Drink your milk!", and "Don't you dare read *Playboy!*"

* * *

Is Dr STHan, regional director of the WHO's Western Pacific Region, considering a run for the governorship of California? His concluding comments in a plenary address at the second Asian-Pacific conference on tobacco or health in Seoul last September seem to surpass Pete Wilson's comments in creative thinking:

Finally, a sensitive issue which has perhaps not been given enough consideration: would it be possible to establish a dialogue between anti-smoking and smoking-promotion agencies? It is probably safe to assume that the purpose of promoting tobacco use is not to kill people but to make money. And the purpose of discouraging it is not to ruin business but to save lives. Then perhaps some anti-tobacco professionals could sit down with some tobacco-promotion professionals to talk about making money and saving lives. It is conceivable that both sides could learn something from such a discussion, and that they could even come up with mutually beneficial ideas. Experience has shown that most problems can be solved by rational discussion. I see no reason why this could not be true of tobacco problems as well. In any case, a frank exchange of knowledge and opinions could do some good, while entrenched hostility usually just makes things worse.

"Do not put this product on any part of your body where you do not wish hair to grow"

Undoubtedly the most common New Year's resolution in the United States – a promise to oneself to reform in some important way – is to stop smoking. My New Year's resolution for the United States is not only for an end to smoking and tobacco advertising but also for an end to smoking cessation gimmicks and research that purport to be breakthroughs but are not. America is obsessed with quit smoking programmes and devices, each and every one claiming remarkable success.

The trend towards organised cessation programmes began more than 25 years ago with the Seventh Day Adventist five day plan, and few if any programmes since can match its understated approach. Fifteen years ago the American Cancer Society's Great American Smoke-Out helped attract national publicity one day each year to smoking cessation. Its success, in my opinion, is best characterised by the nurse who sardonically remarked that her brother quits smoking on that day every year. ("Why aren't there 364 smoke-outs and one day for the tobacco industry to 'smoke-in'?" I once asked a representative of the society, who was not amused.)

Many researchers and activists alike bemoan the fact that smoking cessation discussions are still not routine practice by family doctors, much less by other specialists. My own theory relates to what I consider a disturbing medicalisation of smoking cessation – a dysplacebo effect of sorts for the medical profession and the public alike that reinforces the notion that giving up cigarettes is much more difficult than it really is. This effect was for many years associated with the assumption that only (costly) hypnosis, acupuncture, or aversive electric shock therapy could end the problem. (Recent examples of these rigamarole techniques in the United States are the widely advertised "soft laser therapy" and the "Life Sign" computer that signals when you can smoke.) 1984 marked the introduction of nicotine polacrilex, known to everyone except the manufacturer, Marion Merrell Dow, as Nicorette chewing gum; its introduction and approval by

the Food and Drug Administration were based on a veritable handful of studies on a handful of patients, and its success or failure is impossible to separate from the enormous advertising campaign assuring the medical profession and the public that now the doctor could provide patients with a treatment to help them stop smoking.

Thus a socially acceptable, medicalised entrée of smoking cessation in the physician's office based repertoire was accomplished, without the need for anyone ever getting emotional about the subject. Smoking could then become a disease and drug approach, wherein a practitioner educates about the importance of stopping because of the adverse health consequences and then provides a drug for doing so.

Could Marion Merrell Dow's role in increasing the involvement of physicians and the US National Cancer Institute in smoking cessation possibly be bad? In the long run, probably not. But notwithstanding the company's claim that its product was in theory to have been used in accordance with a comprehensive behaviour modification programme, we all know that in practice this is malarkey. Doctors may or may not be interested in improving their smoking cessation skills, but they all recognise that it is not easy. When they (and through questionably ethical television and newspaper advertisements) are told that they can turn to a pharmacological method, it says little for any such behaviouralist skill in the first place.

The fact is that the linguistic skills of physicians in imparting the bad news about smoking aren't any better than those of a patient's spouse or grandmother. Moreover, the patient probably knows a lot more about



Portrait of a Quitter

I'm embarrassed to tell you how many times I've tried to go cold turkey to quit smoking. But I never really lasted. Sooner or later, I'd start smoking again. Then, my doctor suggested a new approach that includes the Habitrol[®] (nicotine) patch.

'TIL NOW, I NEVER THOUGHT I COULD REALLY QUIT SMOKING.

Habitrol is a skin patch. When used as part of a comprehensive smoking cessation program, it has been clinically proven to significantly increase the chances of quitting by relieving the craving for nicotine.

In addition to the smoking cessation program, I was given a free kit. The kit includes tips on getting through the rough times and an audio tape for relaxation and motivation. My doctor is a big support as well. He even gave me a list of support groups I could attend.

Of course, Habitrol won't work for everyone. Only your doctor can determine if it's right for you. If you're pregnant or suffer from any serious disease, be sure to tell your doctor. The most common side effect is skin irritation.

If you're really determined to quit, ask your doctor about Habitrol therapy. Or call 1-800-YES-U-CAN, for more information, today.

If you're tired of quitting and failing, this could be your chance.

NEW Habitrol (nicotine)

IF YOU'VE GOT THE WILL, NOW YOU CAN HAVE THE POWER.

cigarettes than does the non-smoking doctor, anyway. That is why I feel that using the credibility of the physician to go beyond cognitive and behaviouralist objectives, such as by non-threatening, consumerist oriented education about the product, its promotion, and its producers, can enhance both the enthusiasm by physicians to change their patients' attitudes about cigarettes as well as the patient's motivation to stop buying this ridiculous product on his or her own.

But for now, the new wave of nicotine dependence drugs and clinics is all the rage. Welcome to the era of Habitrol (Ciba-Geigy's nicotine patch smoking cessation programme), Nicoderm (Marion Merrell Dow's "first membrane-controlled nicotine trans-

dermal system for the committed quitter"), Nicotrol (Warner-Lambert's nicotine patch), and Prostep (Lederle's nicotine patch). Ciba-Geigy advertises to physicians, "Finally the end of smoking dependence may be at hand" and gives away thousands of watches and other gifts to doctors. Marion Merrell Dow spends \$1.5 million in a single day to promote "the patch" on national television during the United States' premier sports event, the Super Bowl. Though Marion Merrell Dow has supported conferences on smoking and has contributed small amounts to various tobacco control organisations, it also withdrew a \$40 000 grant to Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada a few years ago after that organisation announced a physicians' boycott of pharmacies that still sell cigarettes. As for the other pharmaceutical companies in the smoking cessation business, their involvement in the prevention of the single most important risk factor for bad health has been non-existent. Indeed, Ciba-Geigy, among other pharmaceutical companies, is listed in the 1992 *Tobacco International Directory and Buyers' Guide* as a maker of fungicides, herbicides, and insecticides used in tobacco production.

Fortunately, smoking cessation is a multifaceted issue. Societal pressure for clean air legislation and workplace smoking policies may well continue to provide the lion's share of the decline in smoking.

Ideas and items for News Analysis should be sent to Alan Blum, editor for news and commentary, at the address given on the inside front cover, or to Eric J Solberg, assistant news editor, at the same address.