

Editorial

AMA shouldn't aim for tobacco ad ban

Cigarette ads have been banned from broadcast media since 1971, and if the American Medical Association is successful in its most recent anti-tobacco crusade, cigarettes, chewing tobacco and other tobacco products will be prohibited from all advertising.

In a policy approved Tuesday, the AMA announced intentions to urge legislators to ban tobacco product advertising from all media. Use of tobacco products is linked to cancer, and advertisements encourage people to use it, the association argues.

The association is correct in citing a link between cigarettes and cancer, but it is not justified in seeking a blanket prohibition of all tobacco advertising.

First, a ban would infringe on the industry's First Amendment right to freedom of expression. The manufacture and sale of tobacco products are legal. Thus the industry has a right to advertise its products.

The reasoning behind a ban on cigarette broadcast advertising is understandable — it is generally assumed people have little control over advertisements they are exposed to while watching and/or listening to regular programming. But a ban on other forms of advertising cannot be justified. People can choose what they look at and read when faced with print or outdoor advertising.

The AMA also asserts tobacco advertisements persuade people to smoke. This hints at a question that is probably as old as advertising itself: Does advertising make people do things they do not want to do?

No. Advertising does not convince people to do anything they would not do otherwise. It simply increases consumer awareness of products and product features. Advertising usually boosts product sales because people are more likely to purchase a product they recognize and know something about. Suggesting advertising manipulates people far underestimates people's capability to make intelligent choices.

The ban also would discriminate against tobacco products. A direct causal relationship between tobacco use and disease has not been established, but it is likely that tobacco does cause disease. But if tobacco is banned from advertising because of a link to disease, why not prohibit alcohol, coffee, tea, high cholesterol foods and foods with high sugar content from advertising?

Clearly, alcohol consumption can cause death, particularly when combined with driving. Consumption of high cholesterol foods can cause hardening of the arteries, sugary foods can cause obesity which can lead to heart disease and other maladies, and recently reported evidence links caffeine consumption to heart disease. Tobacco is addictive, but alcohol and caffeine are as well, and a good case could be made for at least a psychological addiction to unhealthy foods.

The ban also would infringe on consumer choice. If all forms of tobacco advertising were illegal, consumers would have limited access to information about new products and differences between existing products. Cigarettes are not homogenous, but available in varied tar levels, lengths, flavors and with or without filters. Consumers that choose to smoke have a right to information concerning a legal product.

Economic factors are also involved. Newspapers and particularly magazines, advertising agencies and owners of outdoor advertising facilities such as billboards rely heavily on income derived from cigarette and tobacco product advertising. A ban on tobacco advertising would extend far beyond the tobacco companies.



Warning: Smoking may be hazardous to your health.

Letters

Be sensitive

I am appalled at and ashamed of the ignorant behavior some students continue to show toward foreigners and minorities. There are so many derogatory stereotypes Americans have of others, it is embarrassing.

I will at least give you credit for knowing what most of them are, so I need not waste time or space on them. Some of you can't seem to get that we are not our government, but people, people with feelings, and so are they.

Do you believe that if you make an insensitive remark to a foreign student that they don't feel hurt? Most of them are here to get an education and learn about American culture. What exactly do you want them to think about us? How many of you feel it is all right to be stereotyped as rude, obnoxious and inhumane? Have you forgotten our ancestors created this nation to leave behind the persecution and ignorance they faced in their own countries? Where would you be today if they hadn't had the opportunity?

So, next time you are feeling

the need to be a bigot, instead of approaching a foreign student or minority with an insult, take five minutes to find out they are just like you — in more ways than you can imagine. And maybe you can dispel the ignorant misbeliefs you have. They are probably more receptive to talking to you than you think.

Shawn O'Connor
U of O student

Ignorance

I am utterly appalled that Mr. Jaques has the audacity to publicly display his ignorance of the continent of Africa.

Why is Africa a filthy environment, Mr. Jaques? Why? In effect, you are trying to tell us the entire continent of Africa, four times the size of the United States, with 54 different countries and a population of over 455 million is a heap of filth! SHAME ON YOU.

Mr. Jaques should recheck his source of information — if he had any — and spare the public the embarrassment of misinformation.

I suppose the abominable disease AIDS could not have possibly originated in a civilized Western country; it had to have started in Africa! The American "experts" working in some obscure, remote village in the jungles of Zaire, using a village interpreter and having

spent six months, come up with an authoritative report which shows beyond any shadow of a doubt that AIDS began in Africa and mysteriously spread to the United States and other parts of the clean, civilized, developed world. Incidentally, why are there more AIDS victims in the United States than in Africa?

It is very unfortunate that the American people, through the media, are daily bombarded with tons of false material about Africa, and worst of all, is they believe it.

It might next be suggested that obesity, homosexuality, drug abuse, child abuse, abortion and the like had their origin in Africa.

Morompi Ole-Ronkei
Journalism

Ignored point

The well-documented commentary written by Glenn Sacks (ODE, Dec. 4) was an informative response to the nasty little diatribes of the Oregon Commentator concerning Soviet involvement in Afghanistan. Not surprisingly, it put the Commentator's right-wing ideologues on the defensive. James R. Young's responding commentary (ODE, Dec. 10) largely ignored Sacks' main point: The Afghan "freedom fighters" are not interested in the establishment of a "free and democratic society," but a semi-feudal Islamic state. Given the Islamic Jihad's ideological underpinnings, a "free" Afghanistan would be more akin to Iran's present day Mullahtocracy. If the unification of church and state and the unequivocal denial of women's rights are the Commentator's idea of social progress, they should cut the rhetoric and simply admit it.

Christian Gunther
U of O student

Letters Policy

The Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing fair comment on topics of interest to the University community.

Letters to the editor must be limited to 250 words, typed, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is turned in. The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style. Letters to the editor should be turned into the Emerald office, Suite 300, EMU.

Oregon Daily Emerald

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published Monday through Friday except during exam week and vacations by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403.

The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices on the third floor of the Erb Memorial Union and is a member of the Associated Press.

The Emerald is private property. The unlawful removal or use of papers is prosecutable by law.

General Staff

Advertising Director: Susan Thelen
Production Manager: Russell Steele
Classified Advertising: Vince Adams
Assistant to the Publisher: Jean Ownbey
Advertising Sales: David Wood - Sales Manager, John Boiler, Michael Gray, Robin Joannides, Carlos Lamadrid, Marcia Leonard, Shawn Leuthold, Julie Lewis, Catherine Lilja, Anne-Marie Vranizan, Laura Willoughby.

Production: Vince Adams, Kelly Alexandre, Shu-Shing Chen, Ellen Cross, Monica Dwyer, Stormi Dykes, Manuel Flores, Steve Gibbons, Rob Hare, Jim Marks, Ross Martin, Mary May, Mary McGonigal, Rob Miles, Angie Muniz, Kara Oberst, Charla Parker, Ken Parrott, Jennifer Peterson, Geoff Rainville, Michele Ross, Alyson Simmons, Peg Solonika, Gregory Tipps, Colleen Tremaine, Steven Wall.

Editor
Managing Editor
News Editor
Editorial Page Editor
Sports Editor
Photo Editor
Friday Edition Editor
Sidelines Editor
Night Editor

Associate Editors
Higher Education
Community
General Assignment
Administration
Student Government
Student Activities

Reporters: Sean Axmaker, Dan Coran, Ron Gullberg, Deborah Jones, Kim Kaady, Andrew Lamar, Capi Lynn, Chuck Thompson.

Photographers: Kamila Al-Najjar, Shu-Shing Chen, Steve Gibbons, Rob Hare, Derrel Hewitt, Jim Marks, Ross Martin, Steven Wall.

News and Editorial
Display Advertising and Business
Classified Advertising
Production
Circulation

Julie Shippen
Diana Elliott
Jolayne Houtz
Michelle Brenc
Robert Collias
Robert Stallwood
Sheila Landry
Allan Lazo
Julie Shippen

Gary Jimenez
Scott McFetridge
Linda Hahn
Kirsten Bolin
Mary Lichtenwalner
Julie Freeman

686-5511
686-3712
686-4343
686-4361
686-5511