

# EDITORIAL

## Rise in teen smoking blamed on Joe Camel

The surgeon general speaks. Smoking teens ignore her. Cigarette advertising comes under attack. Again.

It's become an all-too-familiar course of action. Some leading medical authority provides even more evidence of the undeniable health risks of cigarette smoking, and when that evidence fails to stop kids from lighting up, everyone looks around for someone to blame.

And there he is — tuxedoed, suave, always smoking and always smooth. Joe Camel makes a perfect scapegoat, because he saves this country from having to admit the true reason why cigarette smoking among teens stubbornly refuses to decline:

Kids are stupid. End of story.

The evidence is in, and even oblivious teen-agers can't have missed it. Smoking is a killer and they know it. They just don't care.

And why don't they care? Some say it's because of ol' Joe Camel and his fellow advertising icons who are, the argument goes, deliberately targeting kids in the hope that they will start smoking.

How do advertisers target these teen-agers? By making smoking look like fun. (Hell, the Marlboro Man doesn't even do that. He never looks like he's having any fun.) But by showing these images of happy, successful people (and camels) enjoying a smoke, we send the message that smoking can be a cool thing to do.

Guess what, folks? That's advertising.

Critics of cigarette ads seem to have unrealistic expectations about the way advertising works. Sure, advertisers do try to "target" one audience or another. They choose images carefully, so as to attract the attention of a particular audience. But it is not an exact science.

Joe Camel, because he is a cartoon character, is usually the first to be attacked. Using a cartoon to sell a product is *obviously* a way of targeting kids, right? Well, no, not necessarily. Joe Camel clearly appeals to adults, too. Camel is the best-selling brand of cigarettes on the market. Many — and probably most — of the smokers who buy Camels are adults, who apparently are as impressed by Joe's smoothness as teen-agers are.

Even if cigarette advertisers are limited to only "mature" images, however, teens will still see the ads and react to them. Many teen-agers start smoking in order to look older. If the only people they see smoking in ads are apparently successful adults, then advertisers will still attract teen-agers, even though the ads were technically "targeted" at adults only.

The solution is not banning advertisements which seem to be aimed at teen-agers. The solution is effective enforcement of laws which restrict smoking to those eighteen and older. The surgeon general's report showed that if a teen-ager makes it to 20 without smoking, he or she will probably never smoke. It's up to cigarette vendors to make sure they stop selling tobacco to minors, and up to government to come up with a system of penalties that ensure vendors obey the law.

If that doesn't work, then perhaps a total ban on tobacco ads is in order. The only way to be certain that advertisements aren't reaching teen-agers is to make sure they don't reach anyone.



## OPINION

### Norway, beyond an Olympic stage



Marius Meland

If you've been watching the Olympics on television lately, you might have asked yourself: Where on earth is this place called Norway?

As a full-blooded Norwegian, I seize this opportunity to tell you a little bit about my home country, knowing that this is probably the only time you will care. After the closing ceremony on Sunday, most people will in all likelihood go back to believing that Norway is a solid-brass wall lantern sold at Fred Meyer. Or something like that.

And frankly, we don't care if you don't know about us. We're just like Oregonians in that way, thinking that we've got something extraordinary that we don't want to advertise to the world.

The only problem is, everyone knows about Oregon and Norway now, although for different reasons. The last time I called a friend back in Norway, he said, "You're in that state Oregon, aren't you? Say, you wouldn't happen to know Tonya Harding, would you?"

As you've watched the wintry television images from Norway, it must have dawned upon you that Norway is a cold place. Every time I watch the news about the severe winter weather on the East Coast, I think: "Ha! They call that a snowstorm? In Norway, we'd call it a summer's breeze!"

I remember one New Year's Eve 13 years ago that my family and I spent in a hotel in a small town called Roros in central Norway. Roros is known to be one of the coldest places in Norway: so cold, in fact, that the people there complain about how hard it is to find thermometers with a deep enough negative scale. This December had been particularly cold, even by Norwegian standards, and on New Year's Eve I

could hardly believe my own eyes as I read the thermometer outside my hotel window: minus 58 degrees Fahrenheit!

Curious as to what it would feel like to experience such freezing temperature, I ran to the hotel door but was halted by a bellboy. He told me that the city had ordered a curfew and added that my skin would freeze in less than 40 seconds if I went outside.

I was only 10 at the time, and I remember how disappointed I was that I couldn't go outside. Like most Norwegians, I had experienced freezing my eyelashes so that I could hardly blink. But having my facial skin freeze would've been an entirely novel experience.

If you think such cold temperatures seem dreary, then remember that Norwegian winters aren't only frigid; they're pitch dark as well. When I visit my grandparents in Trondheim, I will sometimes sit and paint in my uncle's old bedroom, which faces straight south. Around Christmas time, I will see the sun roll slowly above the mountains in the east around 10 in the morning. Four hours later, around two in the afternoon, I will see it dip down behind the same mountain range a little bit further to the west.

And four hours of sunshine is a luxury compared to what they've got in the northernmost part of Norway: four months of continuous night, with no sign of the sun whatsoever. And they complain about the rainy winters in Oregon!

In the summer, however, we get our reward for living through those cold, dark winters. Contrary to what many people believe, it's actually reasonably warm in Norway in the summer. And what's more: the days are so long and light that many people forget to sleep. As a Norwegian poet once remarked, there are so many things you could do in a summer's night that you shouldn't waste it in your bed. At least not if you're sleeping in it.

One summer we had some American relatives visit us. Maryanne and Bobby Ray were farmers from Ohio, and they told us, in the typical immodest way of Americans, that they grew "the

best beef in the state." I remember thinking, as I envisioned cattle bursting up from the Ohioan earth: "America! It's the land of the future! Nowhere else can they actually grow beef!"

Maryanne and Bobby Ray stayed with us for about a week, and by the time they went back to their beef fields in Ohio they were so tired that they could hardly walk on board the airplane. They hadn't slept in a week.

"I don't see how you can stand it here," Maryanne said as she stood in our bathroom the last day and counted the bags under her eyes. "How can you sleep when the sun's shining through the curtains the whole night?"

Perhaps it's because we sleep so much in the winter. Research has shown that Norwegians sleep much more than average in the winter, but cut dramatically down on their sleep in the summer. I guess you could say that the Homo Norvegicus is a hibernating animal. This year, of course, our sleeping pattern has been upset, as we have had to wake up for the Olympics.

Now, there's one last thing that I'd like to clear up about Norway. You might have heard about the traditional Norwegian cuisine. You might have been led to believe that the Norwegians eat rotten fish, sheep's brains and reindeer's kidneys.

Well, you're absolutely right. Here's a sampling of some traditional dishes:

**Lutefisk:** dried cod pickled in a potash lye, often served with bacon and a mustard sauce.

**Smalahove:** sheep's brain, considered a delicacy on the west coast of Norway.

**Brunost:** literally, "brown cheese," a Norwegian favorite made from goat's milk that goes on every breakfast table.

**Rakefisk:** half-fermented trout, served in a potato tortilla.

We invented the skis and exported them to the rest of the world. But something tells me it'll be a while before Norwegian cooking becomes standard fare at the MacDonald's of the world.

Marius Meland is a columnist for the Emerald.

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