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OPINION

editorials, letters, commentary and perspective

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Smoking needs sales tax

OUR OPINION: Higher tobacco prices will help non-smokers get even with a terrible habit

While Feb. 1 may go down in Oregon smoker history as "Black Saturday," we couldn't be happier.

Measure 44 is now in full effect, adding a \$.30 tax to each pack of cigarettes and a 35 to 64 percent price increase to other tobacco products, and the usual reactions are coming in.

Smokers are mad. Big surprise. They're complaining about the higher prices. Oh no. They have to buy cheaper brands now because of the higher rates. What a pity. They're practically going broke on a habit they just can't quit. Too bad.

No matter how loud they are, smokers won't be getting any pity from us. We endorsed Measure 44 in November and now that it has become reality, we're enjoying the benefits — and the potential benefits.

The best result of the new tax would be a mass number of smokers quitting the habit, making our lives a bit easier. For when it comes down to it, we hate smoking. We make no bones about it.

We hate walking behind smokers as the rancid smoke floats into our faces. We hate walking out of any major doorway on campus to multiple smokers lighting up after class. We hate all the discarded cigarette butts on the ground at strategic campus locations.

In our extreme distaste for the habit, however, it is important to note that we don't believe smokers are out to get us. It's just unfortunate that the nature of their habit negatively affects everyone around them, not just themselves.

Realistically, mass quitting won't happen. But some benefits of the tax are far more tangible. Most of the \$85 million generated from the law will go the Oregon Health Plan and anti-smoking education, two worthy causes.

Ironically, smokers may even benefit



from the tax as their bodies start to feel the effects of the habit and a health plan becomes more of a priority.

So despite smokers' ranting and raving, the new tax only gives us joy. Health care will receive more money and some smokers

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What's your opinion on the new cigarette tax? Write us a letter expressing your opinion or E-mail us at ode@oregon.uoregon.edu. Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted. The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style.

may be enticed to quit. It's high time this disgusting habit becomes a relic of the past. Perhaps this tax will help.

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board.

All thumbs



Disaster Movies

From "Dante's Peak" to "Asteroid," movies and television have gained a sudden obsession with natural disasters. Sure "Twister" had some great action shots, but how many times can the same plot be repeated? We say, if you've seen one natural disaster flick, you've seen them all.

The Cosby Extortion

On the very day Bill Cosby's son, Ennis Cosby, was murdered, Autumn Jackson launched accusations that Bill Cosby was her father. Whether there is any truth to this, the timing of the charges was particularly insensitive.



The Collier House

The second oldest building on campus is getting a little tune up. The removal of contaminated wood from the over 100 year-old deck will guarantee many more years of use from this historic site.

The real Fugitive

Dr. Sam Sheppard, the man on whom both the television series and movie "The Fugitive" were based, got more support for his alibi that he didn't kill his wife. DNA tests of the blood taken from the 1954 murder site support claims made by Sheppard, who died in 1970, that an intruder killed his wife.

READER VOICES

Do you think the new cigarette tax is fair?



"I think it's too much. Thirty cents a pack is just... ridiculous. I can't afford it and I smoke."

Jessie Maynard
Freshman
Spanish



"I think it's a good thing if we want to stop cancer. If you have to find something to tax, I think cigarettes are a good thing to tax."

Kristin Ruegg
Senior
General Science/ Environmental Studies



"If people choose to smoke, I think they should be taxed because second-hand smoke does bother a lot of people. Therefore, they should be taxed more than people who don't smoke."

Nick Panagotacos
Sophomore
Education



"It seems right that something that causes so many health problems should go toward paying them."

Chris Thomas
Senior
Environmental Studies



"I think people shouldn't smoke, so the tax is a good thing."

Angela Laurita
Sophomore
Psychology



"You figure that when you smoke you do damage to other people and the environment. There should be some compensation for that."

Michael Alarid
Junior
History

Speak your mind in the ODE

What's your opinion on University, state or national issues? Be a staff columnist or submit a guest commentary and share your views with over 10,000 readers.

Submitted commentaries must be on a topic of importance to the University community and one of personal experience or knowledge to the writer. A 500-word maximum length is also recommended.

Staff columnists are enrolled University students who write twice a month on topics of their choice and are paid per column inch. Along with general columnists, a writer who comments solely on University affairs is also sought. The person must be well-versed in campus affairs and willing to write as often as once a week.

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