

Tobacco industry being treated unfairly

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If you can't outright prohibit a behavior such as smoking, gradually chip away at it.

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I've heard it all about the great smoking debate.

Those on one side of the debate believe the tobacco industry should be compelled to pay medical expenses of those whose illnesses are directly related to smoking. Some of them also believe the tobacco industry has geared its advertising toward minors, and *ergo* are immoral. And, if that's not bad enough, some hold the belief that the tobacco industry concealed the gory details on smoking just so they could make more profits.

Those on the other side believe that the tobacco hearings, the class action lawsuit, et al., are all part of what is called "legalized extortion." And, if left unchecked, what's happening to smokers' rights could be a nightmarish precursor to what may happen to the rest of us.

For those who may have been voluntarily out of touch with reality, the arguments in the great smoking debate seem to go as follows: side one claims that the tobacco industry geared its advertisements to minors, and that the nicotine in cigarettes is more addictive than practically anything else on this planet Earth.

Therefore, one who starts smoking more than likely will never be able to stop so long as they live. And the tobacco industry should be obligated to pay medical expenses of those whose illnesses are directly related to smoking.

Side two of the argument consists of the civil rights argument—a threat to the rights of some is a threat to the rights of all—and of the argument where all the government is doing is practicing a form of "legalized extortion."

Here's my take on the debate: while I personally don't smoke, and wish others wouldn't, either (at least not around me, anyway), I won't stop those who smoke from doing so. After all, the last time I checked, this country was still the United States of America, more or less meaning we had the right to do what we want to do (so long as we don't interfere with others enjoying the same rights).

Talk about "those who don't learn from history are doomed to repeat it": Didn't we try to do something like this before, where we tried to stamp out destructive behavior by prohibit-

ing it outright?

Back in the 1920s, the US government passed the 18th Amendment, prohibiting the sale or possession of alcohol; it, and the period of time in which it was law was referred to as "Prohibition." It was a massive failure because it attempted to forcibly sober up American citizenry, practically cold turkey. It failed so miserably that in retrospect, one wonders just what the people who drafted the 18th Amendment had to have been thinking of in the first place.

After all, it's been proven numerous times in a great many things: the greater your desire for something (whatever it may be), the more you'll do to achieve or obtain it. Since people could no longer get their alcohol through legal means, they went through illegal means to obtain it. Now while this wasn't the only reason Prohibition went quickly to crap, it was so major a reason that it couldn't be overlooked.

It's evident that the government learned its lesson from Prohibition: if you can't outright prohibit a behavior such as smoking, gradually chip away at it. So, guess what the government's doing?

My problem with this strategy is that it will set a dangerous precedent. Sure, it might be smoking today, but what will it be tomorrow? If the government is intent on employing that strategy, we the people must monitor the government to make sure it doesn't overstep its boundaries.

If it's true that, as some claim, the government is practicing "legalized extortion," then the government is doing no better than the tobacco industry; in fact, it is far worse. What the tobacco industry is doing (had been doing for years, in fact) is called part of the American economy: they put out on the market a product people want, people buy the product and the tobacco company makes money the old-fashioned way.

And what the government's doing is raising taxes on cigarettes practically every chance it gets. Its perceived goals are twofold: to price cigarettes out of reach for a lot of smokers and to raise money for health care. Some call raising the cigarette tax the aforementioned "legalized extortion"; they can make their case for that.

What do I think we can do about it? To begin with, let's finally sort out what the facts are about tobacco use (objectively would be preferable). To be honest with you, I didn't know if those hearings were conducted fairly; still don't, as a matter of fact.

But the whole point of this column of mine is: we'll all have to monitor the situation closely to make sure neither side gets out of hand.



News Briefs

The Registrar's office is now accepting graduation petitions for the 1997-98 school year. Inquire at CC 100.

The Annual Spring Plant Sale sponsored by the Clackamas Horticulture Club will be held Friday, May 8 from noon to 5 p.m. The event will be held next to Clairmont Hall in the main parking area. Annuals, perennials, herbs, fuschia baskets, shrubs and many more varieties will be available for purchase.

All returning students of the college enrolled in a Spring term class will receive an Early Fall Registration Appointment flier in the mail during the week of May 4. The letter will list the dates and times of advising and registration sessions. If there are any questions, call ext. 2770 or stop by the Help Center.

The Anxiety Screening will take place today, May 6 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. in CC 127. For more information contact David Campbell at ext. 2600.

Learn CPR and First Aid: Tuesday, May 12, there will be class sessions for CPR from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and May 22 for First Aid from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. People signing up must be CPR certified before taking First Aid. Cost is \$29 for both classes or \$17 for each individually. Register in CC140.

The Coyote Circle will be sponsoring a Mother's Day flower sale May 7 and 8 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Community Center.

To honor the Writers' Club contest winners, there will be a ceremony on May 13 at 3 p.m. in the Gregory Forum, room 108B. Refreshments will be available and winners will share their work with the audience in a reading.

Mother's Day: Close to my heart



She has seen me grow up to be the man I am, yet in her company I still feel like a child.

Jacob Boenisch
ASG President

There are not many things more lovable than mothers. This coming Sunday, America celebrates a "Hallmark" holiday that is very close to my heart. Almost 21 years ago, my mother brought me into this world. She has seen me grow up to be the man I am, yet in her company I still feel like a child. Mothers do that to men.

Mom has taught me important lessons in life and when I am about to do something wrong, I can hear her voice telling me not to do it. I believe my mother's voice is that of a guardian angel. It helps me make the right decisions and gives me words of encouragement when times are rough.

Her constant prayers are what keep me safe. I believe they also help me do well in school. I have always asked my mom to pray for me during finals. "You know what?" I would say to my mom after the grueling tests were over, "It really worked. I could feel your prayers helping me."

My mother is part of me, she understands me, she cares for me and she loves me.

Life isn't always perfect however. Sometimes things just don't seem fair. At least that's how I would describe my mother's battle against breast cancer.

No more than four months ago, my mother was diagnosed. For the first time in her life, my mother had to face the question of death. At first she was very sick. The whole family was concerned about her failing health.

But my mother has never backed down from a fight, so she wasn't about to let cancer get her down. It is my belief that cancer doesn't have a chance against her pure will to survive.

The battle has been tough, though, and even as I write, my mother is in chemotherapy, the symptoms of which are nauseating to talk about.

But although she will be very sick,

my mom will always tell me she loves me and manage a strong hug. That's all I need to feel satisfied. I love you, Mom.

Let this coming Sunday be a reminder to everyone to thank their moms for what they have done. They deserve so much respect. They deserve everything good in the world; they brought us into it.

Thanks, Mom.
Jacob Boenisch
ASG president

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