

NEWS ANALYSIS

President Clinton acts on tobacco

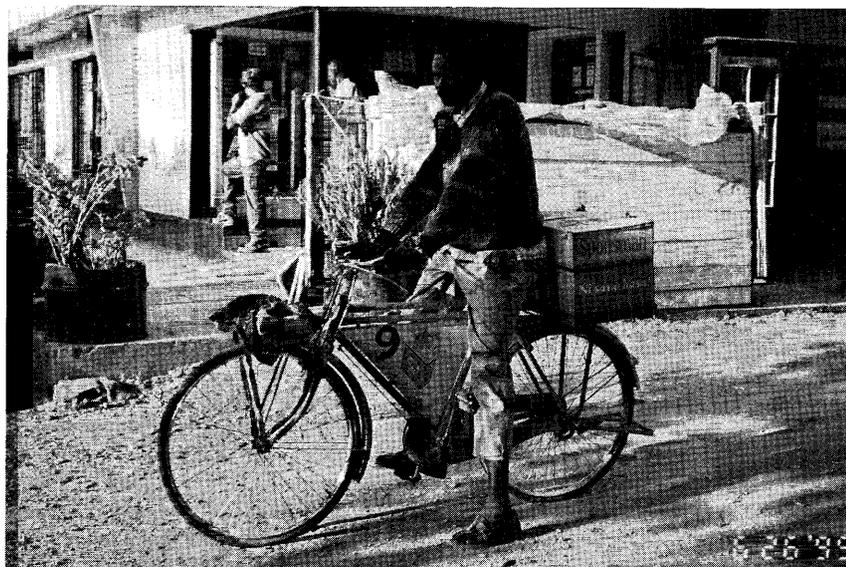
The biggest news story on tobacco in the United States in recent months – and, perhaps, in the three decades since release of the first Surgeon General's report on smoking and health – was President Bill Clinton's announcement on August 10th that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is moving forward to regulate tobacco advertising and promotion and minors' access to tobacco. Statements by the President and the FDA on the proposed rules are reproduced on pages 299-309 of this issue of *Tobacco Control*. An 18 month chronology of events leading up to the President's announcement will be published in the next issue of the journal. – ED

Africa after Paris

To many of the African participants at the 9th World Conference on Tobacco and Health in Paris, France, in October 1994 (see *Tobacco Control* 1994; 3: 302-4), the goal of a model tobacco control policy seemed but a distant mirage. Africa, home to 10 percent of the world's population (600 million), is the least prepared region in the world in terms of tobacco control initiatives. Seventy five billion cigarettes are smoked there each year, more than 50% of them in South Africa, Kenya, and Zimbabwe. In South Africa, where consumption has been established for over three decades, overall tobacco related diseases account for one out of nine deaths, while in the Western Cape they account for one in every five deaths. Anecdotal evidence suggests that tobacco related diseases are on the rise in other African countries including the Ivory Coast, Zimbabwe, and Kenya.

A recent World Health Organisation (WHO) survey indicated that fewer than 7% of the African ministries of health have national programmes to control tobacco use. Only 25% of African countries have restrictions on tobacco advertising. The survey revealed that with the exception of Comoros Islands, tobacco is grown in all the other member states of the WHO Africa Region (a total of 43). Furthermore, most of the African countries produce tobacco for domestic consumption and also import additional quantities. Tobacco trade results in a negative trade balance for all countries except Zimbabwe and Malawi. Tobacco manufacturing businesses are mainly owned by transnationals based in the USA, the UK, or France, and are operated as joint ventures with national governments.

Africa faces the toughest battle on



Transporting cigarettes in Kenya.

John M Nkuchia

tobacco control in part because the epidemiological transition is yet to occur for the majority of the population, and the option of concentrating on infectious diseases while ignoring prevention of chronic diseases seems the best policy for ministries of health. In addition, health ministries lack adequate resources to ward off the tobacco industry's efforts to establish tobacco use in Africa.

The urgent need to prevent expansion of tobacco use has been highlighted over several meetings by Africans, most recently at the Paris World Conference: African delegates resolved to create the Tobacco Control Commission for Africa (TCCA), which will work in partnership with ministries of health, the WHO regional office, and other partners across the continent and globally in trying to prevent a tobacco induced public health crisis in Africa. TCCA's specific objectives include developing leadership in tobacco control through training in research, policy, and advocacy; identifying data needs and

setting research priorities; monitoring activities of tobacco transnationals, including promotion and marketing, particularly when targeted at vulnerable populations; assisting ministries of health and other agencies in policy and programme evaluation; providing forums for African researchers, policy makers, and tobacco control advocates to share ideas, develop strategies, and monitor progress; disseminating research findings; and conducting media advocacy.

An eight-member Board will oversee four regional centres and a Secretariat. TCCA began operation with no financial resources, but with office space and secretarial services provided by the Medical Research Council of South Africa.

Progress to date includes selection of Board members (including Zimbabwe's Minister for Health); a training course for tobacco control leaders in Botswana and South Africa, held in Pretoria; and the development of a TCCA partnership with the US Centers for Disease Control and Pre-

vention (CDC) in the training of tobacco control advocates: three African tobacco control advocates were sponsored to attend the CDC-North Carolina Summer Course in July (see advertisement in *Tobacco Control* 1995; 4: 9). In addition, in May the African Rural and Information Service (IRIS), one of the TCCA Regional Centres, launched an African tobacco control newsletter.

Among TCCA's policy initiatives is a statement addressed to the meeting of the Organisation for African Unity (OAU), due to be tabled by Dr Zuma, South Africa's Minister for Health, urging OAU member states to limit expansion of the tobacco trade. The Commission is also planning a conference in December on research and policy development priorities for the continent.

Looking to the future, TCCA needs official recognition as a non-governmental organisation within the UN framework. It lacks both human and financial resources, and it has to establish smooth working relations with national ministries of health.

TCCA needs the support of other tobacco advocates within and outside Africa. Its challenge is immense: success means averting the expansion of tobacco in Africa, but failure will see worsening health status in a continent already faced with serious health problems that include AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria.

Based on a report by John M Nkuchia, who was a research and policy analyst at the Tobacco Control Commission for Africa. He is now an epidemiology fellow at the CDC in Atlanta.

World No-Tobacco Day in the Himalayas

A Ladakhi mother found a very handsome young man to be her daughter's husband. She could not understand her outright rejection. "He smokes cigarettes and will die too soon and leave me," was her response.

There was a funeral procession with solemn Buddhist music and chanting of the Bhuddist prayer OM MANI PADMI HUM. "He was such a nice man, why did he have to die so soon?" people were asking. Alas, the relatives replied, he was a heavy smoker.

These were two of a number of short episodes broadcast on Ladakhi radio around World No-Tobacco Day. As part of the campaign three schools in the capital city (Leh)-

Buddhist, Islamic, and Christian - were asked to give anonymous questionnaires to their 8th to 10th classes (ages 15 to 18). One third of the boys had experimented with a cigarette, and nearly one in 10 (9.4%) of 16 to 18 year old boys were smoking regularly. Twenty nine percent of the fathers of boys and girls were smokers. No Ladakhi women or girls smoke at present.

Six hundred boys and girls of the Buddhist Lamdon school squatted on the floor for two hours to hear from the school chairman and health workers about the tobacco problem, which is so serious in India. Numerous questions were asked. Why do teenagers smoke so much in the West when they know much more about the risks than we do? At the end the headmaster proposed that it be a non-smoking school and students were invited to pledge themselves aloud to be non-smokers.

The small village of Umla, in a rocky valley 30 km from Leh, is becoming health conscious. Solar winter greenhouses provide green vegetables in February, despite the temperature falling to minus 30 or 40°C. Fertiliser- and pesticide-free agriculture is the norm. And Umla has declared itself a non-smoking village. Western countries could learn much from Ladakh.

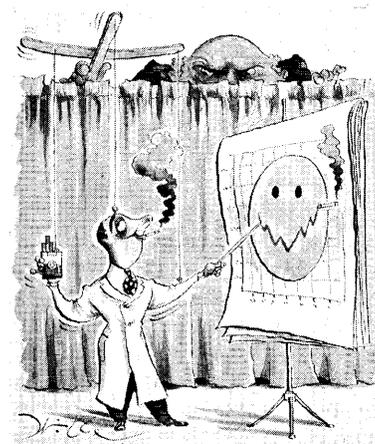
KEITH BALL
London, UK

An earlier news article on tobacco control activities in the Kingdom of Ladakh was published in the Spring 1995 issue of Tobacco Control. - ED

Cape of good ethics

A major row over attempted tobacco industry sponsorship of a new sports science institute in South Africa has ended in a significant victory for health. In 1994, the Rembrandt Group, proprietors of Rothmans, was found to be offering a reported 20 to 30 million rands (US\$5.6-8.5 million) for a new sports science institute in Capetown (*Tobacco Control* 1994; 3: 102).

Such was the outcry, especially from staff at the Medical Research Council (MRC), that the MRC instructed its ethics committee to undertake a policy review. This developed into a wider debate about private sector sponsorship of research, with particular focus on funding by the tobacco, pharmaceutical, alcohol, sugar, oil, baby food, meat, and dairy industries. A Medline search of the recent literature was commissioned,



By Michael Witte/© 1995 The Walt Disney Company; reprinted with permission of Discover magazine.

and detailed consultations were held with leading international health and medical agencies, medical school deans, and senior researchers in South Africa, and with the pharmaceutical and food industries.

In the end, the committee published a consensus report setting out new guidelines. Only tobacco was isolated, with recommendations affecting the other sources aiming at mutual benefit. Thus any research which could overtly link medical/health researchers to the promotion of any tobacco company, tobacco brand, or tobacco linked product, is not permitted.

Funding sources must be disclosed in all published output, which should be publicised in peer reviewed journals. Private sector funding should preferably be channelled through the MRC and the universities, and should be scrutinised by their ethics committees, with final arrangements being negotiated between researchers, funders, and institutions, and principles of confidentiality and the right to publish being clearly specified.

Medical researchers in South Africa claim that theirs is now one of the few countries in the world with such a policy (see *Tobacco Control* 1994; 3: 297-8, 308-15 for previous coverage of this issue). They believe it offers a particularly important model for developing countries, as the tobacco industry is poised to "buy" scientists for respectability. Ironically, what many believe was an attempt by a tobacco company to gain an important foothold in sport, and perhaps sow dissent among the medical and health community, has left South Africa's defences against the tobacco industry significantly stronger.

DAVID SIMPSON
News Editor

Thailand survives art attack

Art sponsorship has been used as a marketing tool by transnational tobacco companies for years (see figure), but it is new to the ASEAN group of countries (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand) and has resulted in some initial actions by Thai tobacco control authorities. Most recently, the Philip Morris Group of Companies (PM) began sponsorship in October 1994 of the ASEAN art awards. This programme consisted of an art competition in each country followed by a regional competition among the winners.

Dr Hatai Chitanondh, president of APACT (the Asia Pacific Association for the Control of Tobacco), heard about the ASEAN art awards in June 1994 through monitoring tobacco related news. He was particularly concerned that the contest was to be co-hosted by the oldest government supported fine arts faculty in Thailand, at Silpakorn University. He immediately protested to the university, and sent information to the media and to tobacco control campaigners in the other countries involved.

Several difficulties arise when dealing with art sponsorship. First, in countries where there are no advertising bans, art sponsorship may be overlooked among all the direct advertising and promotion. Second, multinational corporations often negotiate agreements before publicising sponsored events, making it difficult to halt the sponsorship. Third, tobacco companies hide their marketing and promotion motives behind the public relations image of the "good corporate citizen" willing to provide support to the national culture through art sponsorship. And fourth, tobacco companies may recruit tobacco funded art organisations to lobby against tobacco control policies, as happened recently in New York City (see *Tobacco Control* 1995; 4: 15-17).

Dr Chitanondh began an information campaign to expose the art sponsorship as a marketing technique. The PM representative in Thailand denied the contest had anything to do with product promotion, calling it "corporate philanthropy" divorced from product advertising. This denial was rather hollow since the regional representative had just stated in a company news release that cultural support was to be used as a promotion

strategy because no advertising was permitted in Thailand.

Even after the Medical Council of Thailand sent a letter to Silpakorn University requesting withdrawal of its support for the event, the Dean of the Faculty and several art supporters still defended the contest and their participation in it. This prompted letters from Dr Chitanondh to the Thai Prime Minister and the presidents and prime ministers of all the countries participating in the contest. By the end of August, good press coverage had been generated of the "smoke screen" of art sponsorship, creating a public debate about the motives and importance of art sponsorship by transnational tobacco companies.

Unfortunately, coverage of the awards often pitted tobacco control campaigners against art supporters. This happened for two reasons: firstly, PM hid behind its professed philanthropic motives, and secondly the media ran stories framed by tobacco company interests. In countries where transnational tobacco influence is new, these companies' lack of credibility is not yet understood and their capacity to buy full page announcements about their art sponsorship is well understood by

Lift up your heart.
THE AMERICAN COLLECTIONS, THE PAPERS AND... 1983-85

It's so simple for some folks.
THE FLOWERING OF AMERICAN FOLK ART 1740-1980 1974

Precious Legacy.
JUDIC TREASURES FROM THE GEEZ HANLOWAN ST. COLLECTIONS 1969-80

Bearden plays Bearden.
ROMARE BEARDEN 1908-1981 1980-82

Johnny Apple seeds of the dance.
THE AUSTRIAN BALLET NATIONAL TOUR 1981-82

See the South you've never seen.
PRINTINGS IN THE SOUTH 1500-1980 1984-85

So ordinary, so extraordinary.
EDWARD HEWES: THE ART AND THE ARTIST 1916-82 1980-82

Sometimes style is everything.
FAS DONS AND DESIGNS OF GORJUN GINSKOW 1916-1981 1981-82

Go! Go! Go!
CHAMPIONS OF AMERICAN SPORT 1981-82

"Take an object."
DORISCH MOTEK. Do something that isn't. Do something that is. 1977-78

It takes art to make a country great.
TWO CENTURES OF BLACK AMERICAN ART 1977

Which is "primitive"? Which is "modern"?
PRIMITIVISM IN 19th-CENTURY ART 1984-85

**We have a very simple reason for sponsoring them:
It takes art to make a company great. Philip Morris Companies Inc.**

(If you were pleased, or moved, or touched, or enlightened by any of the art exhibitions or performing arts groups we've sponsored, we're glad. We were, too.)

Makers of Marlboro, Benson & Hedges 100's, Merit, Parliament Lights, Virginia Slims and Players; Miller High Life Beer, Lite Beer, Löwenbräu Special and Dark Special Beers, Meister Bräu and Milwaukee's Best; 7UP, Diet 7UP, LIKE Cola and Sugar Free LIKE Cola.

© Philip Morris Inc. 1985

A Philip Morris advertisement from the 23 December 1985 issue of Time magazine, celebrating 12 art exhibits or performing arts groups sponsored by the company. The ad lists the cigarette brands manufactured by the company but does not include the government-required health warning.

editors and reporters, who are encouraged and rewarded for presenting an industry funded perspective. In short, transnational tobacco companies can quite easily appear philanthropic and supportive of culture and emerging artistic talent.

On 29 September 1994, just two days before the selection of the five national winners of the Thai stage of the contest, Silpakorn University withdrew its support of the awards. This withdrawal was little reported in the Thai press because it was announced during the regional contest – that is, *after* the art competition in Thailand. Despite Silpakorn University's withdrawal from the contest, little impact was made regionally.

One striking feature of the protest was the low profile given to the art exhibit of the Thai winners in Thailand before they went on to the regional competition in Singapore. It appears there was some concern by the sponsors that the exhibit might be disrupted. A media protest at a well publicised exhibit could have generated much negative publicity for Philip Morris.

Neither artists nor the public want cultural exploitation by tobacco companies. The question is how a culturally rich nation can use its own resources to support the arts instead of letting tobacco companies "buy" these cultural treasures for promotional purposes. Australia has pioneered the use of tobacco taxation to support sports and arts in place of tobacco sponsorship. Among the diverse countries of the ASEAN group, both national and regional plans for dealing with tobacco sponsorship of sports and arts are still needed. WHO's World No-Tobacco Day 1996 has the theme: "Sports and arts without tobacco". The Fourth Asia-Pacific Conference on tobacco or Health being held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in November will address strategies to strengthen national policies in tobacco control, and Thailand's experience with the ASEAN art awards will ensure that the subject of tobacco sponsorship of cultural events gets regional attention in time to help shape World No-Tobacco Day.

STEPHEN HAMANN
Faculty of Medicine
Rangsit University, Thailand

Warning: apart from dying, you may feel dizzy

On May 26, Philip Morris announced a recall of eight billion cigarettes believed to be contaminated with a chemical used as a commercial pesticide. Thirty six Philip Morris brands sold domestically, including Marlboro, were affected, and tobacco industry analysts estimate costs associated with the recall will top \$200 million.

Tobacco control advocates responded by calling Philip Morris hypocritical for recalling a product for such comparatively trivial reasons while ignoring that it is known to kill more than half of its long time users. "They've taken a product that kills you and have recalled it because it makes you dizzy", said Dr Alan Blum of Doctors Ought to Care (DOC). John Banzhaf of Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) said: "Recalling cigarettes because they contain a smelly chemical is like recalling the Titanic because there are splinters in the railing".

Philip Morris made the recall announcement late on a Friday afternoon before a long holiday weekend, after identifying the chemical, methyl isothiocyanate (MITC), in cigarette filters. When smoked, cigarettes which contain MITC have a foul odour and a "metallic" taste, and cause eye, nose, and throat irritation, dizziness, coughing, and wheezing. On Saturday, the company placed full page ads in many newspapers around the country to alert consumers, notified retailers of the recall by telegram, and established a free, 24 hour hotline to answer any questions about the recall.

Apparently, on May 19, a week before the recall was announced, a worker on the floor of a Philip Morris factory had identified an unusual, foul odour as cigarettes moved through the manufacturing line. Manufacturing and distribution were halted and an investigation was launched. The next day, scientists identified three contaminants, including butyric acid, in the cigarettes and narrowed the source of contamination to the filter plasticiser, a chemical applied to the cigarette filter to make it stiff. The following Wednesday, May 24, the contamination was identified as MITC and on Thursday, plant officials discovered that cigarettes which had already been shipped to stores also may have contained MITC.

In its public statement and newspaper advertisements, Philip Morris explained that the product had a "defective filter" contaminated with MITC. The announcement clearly stated that the contamination caused only "temporary" and "reversible" side effects but warned pregnant women and individuals with respiratory problems to avoid exposure to the product. The company provided no further information about the character of MITC, but newspaper reports noted that it is registered as a soil fumigant.

Philip Morris's statement of May 26 claimed that a filter plasticiser introduced the contamination. The manufacturer of the plasticiser, Hoechst Celanese Corporation, immediately denied responsibility, claiming that all of its products were "within specification". No other tobacco company using Hoescht's plasticiser reported similar problems.

However, several weeks after the recall, Philip Morris offered a different account of the contamination, declaring that only trace amounts of MITC were present in the recalled cigarettes, at levels too small to pose health risks. While maintaining that the plasticiser was responsible for the foul odour, Philip Morris said it now believed that MITC was present in the cigarette packaging preservative, a product supplied by Westvaco Corporation. Some independent scientists suggested that MITC, which some farmers use as a tobacco pesticide, may have been present in the tobacco leaves.

Tobacco control advocates expect the tobacco industry to cite its handling of the recall as evidence that tobacco companies are capable of regulating themselves. It is noteworthy, they say, that Philip Morris claimed it was not responsible for the contamination; identified the problem as a "defective filter", not as a chemical contaminant; and minimised any potential health risks associated with the product. By stressing the contaminant was shipped by an outside manufacturer, the company directed attention away from the lethal nature of the cigarette itself. Although not able to sustain its charges against Hoescht, Philip Morris simply shifted responsibility to another outside supplier.

Ironically, the health risks associated with MITC resurfaced as Philip Morris made plans to dispose of the contaminated cigarettes. EPA air quality standards prevented the company from burning the product because MITC is a pesticide.

An Important Announcement To Philip Morris Customers.

Because a very small percentage of cigarettes manufactured recently by Philip Morris USA has been found to have defective filters, we are voluntarily initiating a precautionary recall of all the cigarette brand styles listed below.

What happened

The defect is attributed to a material used in manufacturing filters. This material, which is made by an outside supplier, was contaminated before it arrived at Philip Morris facilities.

No evidence of affected product in stores

We have no evidence that any of the affected product is being sold at retail. In fact, it is possible that none ever reached retail shelves. Nevertheless, in the interest of absolute caution, Philip Morris is recalling all the cigarette brand styles that are involved.

Return for a full refund

If you believe you may have purchased one of the brand styles on the list, please return it to your retailer for a full refund of the purchase price. Cigarettes made with the defective filter may give off a noticeable odor and have a metallic or other off-taste. Continued use of the affected product could result in temporary irritation or discomfort.

Products involved

While it is not likely that our customers will encounter any of the affected cigarettes, we want them to know that very small quantities of the following brand styles were involved:

MARLBORO RED BOX
MARLBORO RED SOFT PACK
MARLBORO 100'S GOLD BOX
MARLBORO 100'S GOLD SOFT PACK
MARLBORO LIGHTS GOLD BOX
MARLBORO LIGHTS GOLD SOFT PACK
MARLBORO LIGHTS 100'S GOLD BOX
MARLBORO LIGHTS 100'S GOLD SOFT PACK
MARLBORO MENTHOL SOFT PACK
MARLBORO LIGHTS MENTHOL BOX
MARLBORO LIGHTS MENTHOL 100'S BOX
BENSON & HEDGES 100'S SOFT PACK

BENSON & HEDGES 100'S MENTHOL BOX
BENSON & HEDGES LIGHTS 100'S SOFT PACK
MERIT 100'S SOFT PACK
MERIT ULTRA LIGHTS KING SIZE SOFT PACK
VIRGINIA SLIMS 100'S
VIRGINIA SLIMS 100'S LIGHTS MENTHOL
VIRGINIA SLIMS LIGHTS 120'S
VIRGINIA SLIMS ULTRA LIGHTS 100'S
VIRGINIA SLIMS ULTRA LIGHTS MENTHOL 100'S
VIRGINIA SLIMS SUPER SLIMS
BASIC 100'S
BASIC 100'S MENTHOL

BASIC LIGHTS 100'S
BASIC LIGHTS KING SIZE
BASIC ULTRA LIGHTS KING SIZE
CAMBRIDGE LIGHTS 100'S
CAMBRIDGE ULTRA LIGHTS 100'S
ALPINE LIGHTS 100'S SOFT PACK
BRISTOL LIGHTS 100'S
PREMIUM BUY LIGHTS 100'S
PREMIUM BUY LIGHTS KING SIZE MENTHOL
BEST BUY KING SIZE FULL FLAVOR
SHIELD KING SIZE FULL FLAVOR
BRONSON KING SIZE FULL FLAVOR

Look for the blue Quality Label. For a very short time – no more than a few days – you may not be able to find your favorite Philip Morris cigarettes at your local stores. We are in the process of manufacturing and shipping new product now.

To further reassure our customers, we are posting a special blue Quality Label in all stores where all affected products have been replaced.

Call anytime. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause you. For more information, please call 1-800-757-2555, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



PHILIP MORRIS U.S.A.

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According to several news reports, many retailers continued to sell the recalled cigarettes throughout the weekend because their owners claimed they had received no notice from Philip Morris. In addition, the recall did not entirely eliminate demand for the tainted brands. Some smokers claimed to be unconcerned by the health concerns, such as the one who said, "At least it's not cyanide". Nevertheless, in an attempt to exploit the situation, RJ Reynolds placed stickers on vending machines which clarified that Winston and Camel cigarettes had not been contaminated. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta is investigating 50 complaints received from smokers who had used the recalled cigarettes during the time of the recall.

One lesson from the Philip Morris recall will seem obvious to tobacco control advocates: regardless of the harms associated with tobacco products, tobacco companies will continue to deny that their customers are at any great risk.

Another lesson for advocates is not so obvious. Consider that, for the first time ever, a cigarette company urged its own customers not to use its products because of possible health risks. Customers were not asked to do anything difficult, such as quit smoking, even temporarily. They were simply asked to switch to a non-contaminated brand for a few days before returning to their regular brand. Yet it appears as though many customers ignored the warnings from Philip Morris and the media and continued to purchase and smoke their regular brands.

The primary lesson from the recall, then, may be that health messages – no matter how dramatic or how credible the source – may have limited effectiveness in changing people's behaviour. In this case, the message was direct and dramatic (specific brands had been contaminated with a chemical used as a pesticide), the behaviour change asked of consumers was small (switching brands for a few days), and sources of information were numerous (through the media) and unique (retailers and the manufacturer itself).

In an unintended way, the Philip Morris recall may have provided evidence that health messages can have only a limited effect. Policy changes, at all levels, are the most effective way to regulate the tobacco industry and prevent tobacco related death and disease.

ASHLEY BOYD
Advocacy Institute
Washington, DC, USA

See pages 282–286. – ED

Kleen out tobacco

For years, the manufacturer of Kleenex tissues refused to bow to pressure from shareholders about its tobacco related activities. For alongside its whiter-than-white manufacture of paper based products for household and hospital use, more than 5% of the US based paper making giant Kimberly-Clark Corporation's business has been selling cigarette papers and reconstituted tobacco sheets to the tobacco industry. Shareholder demands for the tobacco side of the business to be separated off from the core paper operations met with robust resistance – until finally, after months of activity by concerned shareholders, including a major letter writing campaign, the company announced in May that it was organising a "spin-off" whereby the tobacco business would be rearranged in a separate company.

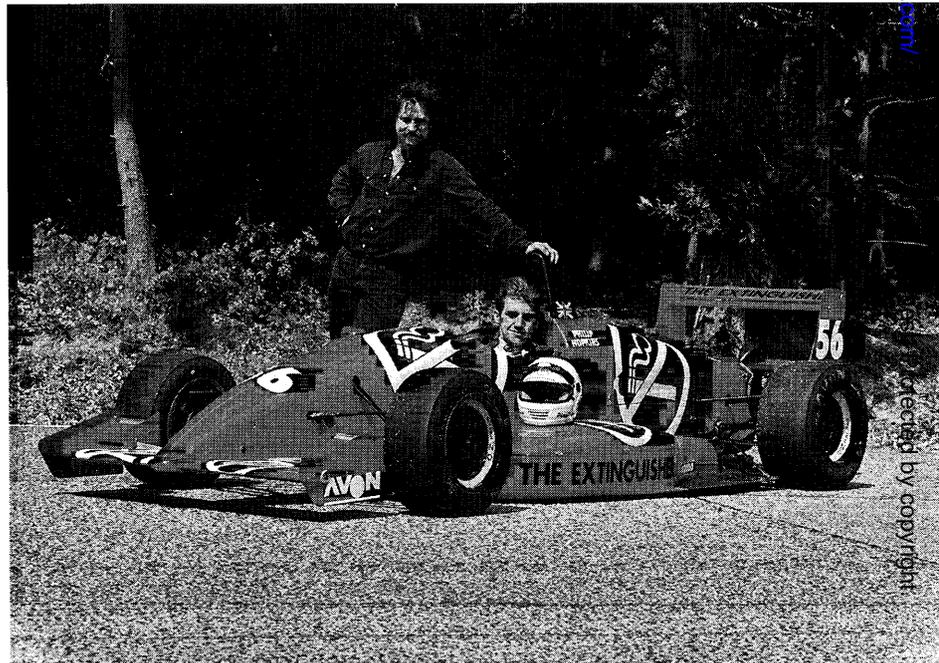
Chief among the activists who organised the protest was the Reverend Michael Crosby, a Catholic priest who runs the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility in New York. He stressed the importance of showing the company that the issue would not be allowed to die, because "a company that purports to be involved in health care should not be involved in tobacco, which so undermines health".

The embarrassment of continuous negative publicity generated by the shareholders' demands added to increasing nervousness among companies on the periphery of the tobacco industry that they may have to share

the costs of any successful tobacco litigation case. Kimberly-Clark had already been named as a defendant in the case being brought by the state government of West Virginia to recoup the health care costs of the its smokers. In March the Manville Corporation sued RJ Reynolds to end its contract to supply glass fibres for RJR's Eclipse cigarette (see page 00) (the lawsuit was settled in May). Also in March, Harley Davidson Inc sued Lorillard to break a nine year license relationship with the cigarette company, objecting that an advertising campaign proposed by Lorillard for the Harley Davidson cigarette brand would appeal to children. – DS

UK: Tobacco-free racing car

The Silverstone motor racing circuit in England saw the official launch in July of a tobacco-free Formula 3 racing car, the Dallara Extinguisher. Hugo Spowers, a British engineer and motor racing enthusiast whose company restores historic racing cars, is determined to break into Formula One motor racing and is seeking sponsorship from non-tobacco companies in the hope of persuading young people that not smoking "is stylish and cool". The Extinguisher follows in the tyre tracks of the Tobacco Free America Indy-Car, which first appeared in 1992 (see *Tobacco Control* 1993; 2: 10–1 and *American Medical News*, 8 June 1992, pages 25–7). – DS



Hugo Spowers (standing) with *The Extinguisher*

Double standards in tobacco warnings

In an effort to strengthen the hand of the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in its attempt to regulate the US tobacco industry (see *Tobacco Control*, 1994; 3: 99-100, 148-58, 362-9), Canada's Non-Smokers' Rights Association (NSRA) challenged US Congressmen to give American kids a decent chance to avoid addiction to tobacco.

On May 9th with support from the American Medical Association and the US Coalition on Smoking OR Health, the NSRA couriered a presentation box containing two packages of Camel cigarettes to every member of the US Senate and the House of Representatives, to the Washington, DC, press corps, and to the editorial boards of major US newspapers.

Each custom designed box contained Camel cigarettes sold in the USA and a Camel package marketed in Canada. The two packages were and are dramatically different, however. The Canadian packages carry bold warnings of addiction in white lettering on a black panel, on the top one third of both major faces of the Canadian packages (see the cover and pages 10-14 of the Spring 1995 issue of *Tobacco Control*). The US warning, with no mention of addiction or death,

is nearly invisible on the side panel of the American brand of Camel.

In a news conference at the National Press Club in Washington, the NSRA revealed the challenge implicit in the delivery of the Camel packs to Congress. "We think Americans will be surprised", said the NSRA's Garfield Mahood, "when they learn that both of these packages of an American brand - one with the bold, highly visible Canadian warning of addiction and the other with the inconspicuous warning - are manufactured by an American company on American soil.

"The Camel package with the serious warning, to protect the health of Canadian kids, is exported to Canada. The package with the weak warning that never mentions addiction is kept at home for sale to American kids at every corner store."

To underline the double standards between the warning systems being manufactured in the US for export to other countries and those sold at home, and to help create a more receptive environment for the FDA decision on regulation of the industry, the NSRA also showed the media packages of Marlboro, Winston, Lucky Strike, Kent, Salem, and Virginia Slims. All have bold, black and white, front face warnings. All are manufactured in US plants for export to Australia, Singapore, and Thailand.

The need for reform of the US

warning system was illustrated graphically in June with release of key findings from a joint University of Toronto/University of Illinois study on plain tobacco packages. This research shows that 83% of Canadian youth surveyed remember the prominent Canadian health warnings, compared to only 6% who recall the smaller US warning from among the youth surveyed in the state of Illinois sample.

Canada's NSRA initiated the warnings because the tobacco epidemic is international. Lower US tobacco taxes and the cross-border smuggling that resulted impacted on Canadian health policy. Similarly, a decision by the FDA to change the regulatory framework for tobacco would put pressure on the Canadian government to also regulate the cigarette as a drug delivery system. Cooperation with US health agencies on this project could bring benefits for the health of Canadians.

As American advocates have pointed out, shaming is a powerful advocacy tool. The NSRA wanted to create an opportunity for its American colleagues to embarrass legislators into support for FDA leadership and improved warnings.

GARFIELD MAHOOD
Non-Smokers' Rights Association
Toronto, Ontario, Canada