

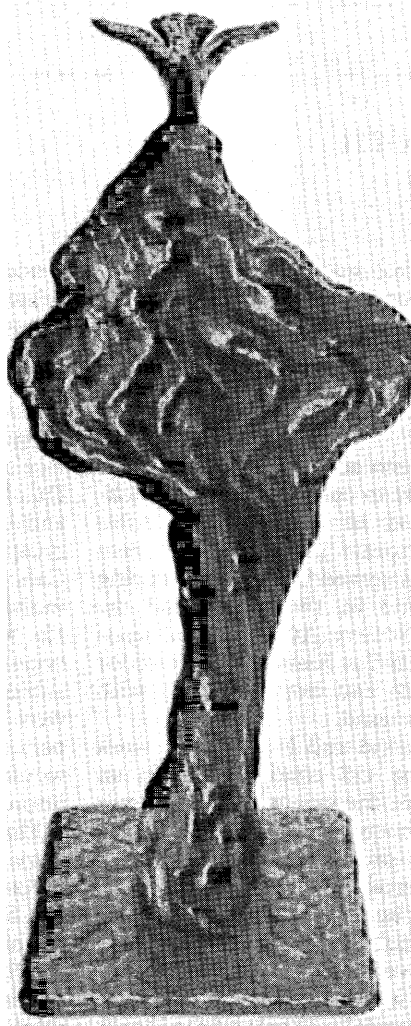
nant pharmaceutical retailer in the nation. The Smoke Screen award is given to persons or organisations that claim to promote health but undermine that claim by promoting smoking, the leading preventable cause of disease.

During the summer of 1992, ANSR conducted a random survey of pharmacies to see whether they would sell to an underage decoy, a 16-year-old girl. Previous research had shown that over half of the pharmacies in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area do not sell tobacco. Of the pharmacies that do sell tobacco, 78% sold to the decoy; 85% of Walgreen stores (11 of 13) sold to her. When store managers were informed of their failure to obey the law prohibiting sales of tobacco to minors under 18, only one Walgreen manager talked with ANSR about what he could do to improve his performance.

The award ceremony provided an opportunity for Rochester, Minnesota, sculptor Charles Gagnon to unveil "Smoke Screen," his latest bronze work. Gagnon described the sculpture as a "conceptual symbol of a culture and society moving toward a cleaner environment, specifically the elimination of smoking. The primary form of the sculpture is a symbol of smoke displacing clean and healthy air."

At the ceremony, Jeanne Weigum, president of ANSR, said, "We would not present this award if we did not believe Walgreens has the potential to change and set an example for leadership in the community.... We hope that "Smoke Screen" will be a positive motivation to change." She urged Walgreens to stop selling cigarettes or at least stop selling them to minors.

The award ceremony generated several newspaper articles and a large photo of Mr. Gagnon and the sculpture as well as radio and television coverage. The pressure on Walgreens and other pharmacies to stop hiding behind a smoke-screen and to say no to selling death could be increased if other



Smoke Screen, bronze sculpture by Charles Eugene Gagnon

tobacco control organisations were to "honor" them in a similar way.

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1 Davis RM. Tobacco sales in pharmacies: mixing good drugs and bad drugs. *Tobacco Control* 1992; 1: 84-6.

The 'habit' of nicotine

To the editor—Let me express my congratulations for your editorial¹ on the "habit" of calling nicotine addiction a "habit". Your past and present efforts to purge the word "habit" from our lexicon are commendable.

In this context, I should mention that during the preparation of the Pan American Health Organization report on "Tobacco or Health: Status in the Americas" (recently published in English and Spanish), a special effort was undertaken to purge the use of the word "habit" in connection with the consumption of tobacco.

Unfortunately, this practice is extremely pervasive, both in the lay and scientific languages, and is even more common in Spanish because the word "smoking" is too often translated as "el hábito de fumar" (the habit of smoking). Nevertheless, a new term—"tabaquismo"—has been coined and is beginning to become popular. This term conveys the connotation of an addiction (similar to alcoholism, heroinism, etc) rather than that of a mere habit as inoffensive as drinking milk or shaking hands.

Let us join our efforts now to "kick this habit."

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1 Davis RM. The language of nicotine addiction: purging the word "habit" from our lexicon. *Tobacco Control* 1992; 1: 163-4.