

Opinion

Banning magazine ads won't snuff out cigarette smoking

The American Medical Association wants to ban all cigarette and tobacco product advertising. By now, you've probably noticed the absence of cigarette advertising on television.

Glenn Murtha

Most of us are too young to remember the infamous Marlboro Man galloping into the sunset with cigarette in mouth. Congress stopped the advertising of cigarettes on television and ended the ride of the Marlboro Man Jan. 1, 1971.

Today, the only glimpse of the Marlboro Man is in the pages of a magazine or on the face of a billboard along the highway. If the AMA has its way, these too will disappear.

We are all aware of the dangers of cigarette smoking. You may have noticed the stronger Surgeon General Warnings on cigarette packages and advertising. The new warnings appear in equal rotation and state:

1. Smoking Causes Lung Cancer, Heart Disease, Emphysema, And May Complicate Pregnancy.

2. Smoking By Pregnant Women May Result In Fetal Injury, Premature Birth, And Low Birth Weight.

3. Cigarette Smoke Contains Carbon Monoxide.

4. Quitting Smoking Now Greatly Reduces Serious Risks To Your Health.

These stronger warnings replace the familiar "The Surgeon General has determined that cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health."

The new warnings are a step in the right direction. But the AMA wants to go too far. What's the next thing they'll try to ban? Cigarettes themselves? The advertising of foods with high cholesterol? Automobiles? After all, driving can be hazardous to your health. The list is endless. A few years back, the AMA tried to ban boxing. It never caught on.

Doesn't the AMA have better things to do than to silence speech or stop activities they don't agree with? Surely a better way exists to lessen the incidence of cigarette smoking than preventing the tobacco companies from speaking freely, from advertising their product.

The incidence of cigarette smoking actually increased after the television ban. Before the ban, broadcasters were required to carry equal time for public service, anti-smoking messages. These messages actually proved more effective in deterring smoking than the cigarette ads did for encouraging it. When the cigarette ads stopped, so did the anti-smoking messages. Broadcasters are no longer required to carry them.

The ban on television advertising of cigarettes was challenged in court but upheld. Traditionally, the courts have made a distinction between commercial and political speech and have been less willing to protect commercial speech. Free speech is free speech and this distinction is ending. Lawyers, pharmacists and other professionals are now permitted to advertise.

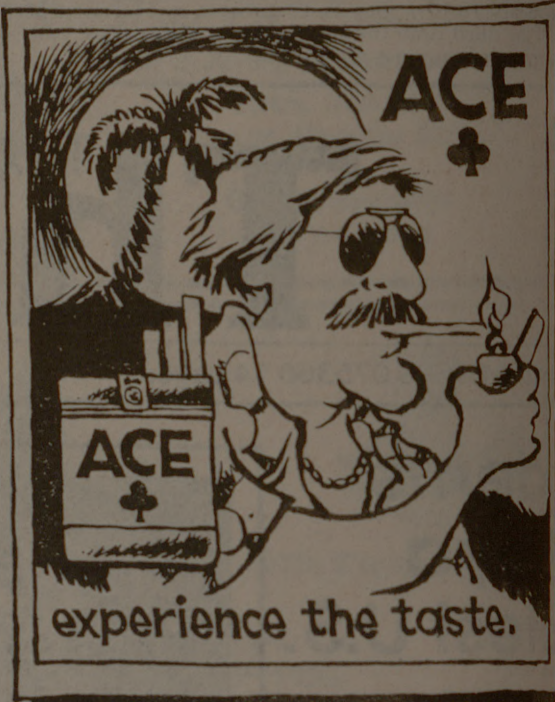
Presently, the tobacco, advertising and publishing industries, and the

ONE OF THESE IS HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH. GUESS WHICH THE A.M.A. WANTS TO BAN?

(A)



(B)



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American Civil Liberties Union, are joined in opposition to the AMA's proposal. Legislation to ban cigarette advertising would have to muster support in Congress, win approval of the president and survive a court challenge before it could take effect. The chances of suc-

cess are minimal. Instead of working to ban cigarette advertising, the AMA should use its influence to get cigarette advertising back on television along the public service, anti-smoking messages. Pictures of a dying man or woman coughing up blood

while wired to a respirator would certainly overshadow the Marlboro Man galloping into the sunset.

Glenn Murtha is a senior political science major and a columnist for The Battalion.

What if we lost?

Fear of nuclear war makes us ignore overriding questions

"Mein Bruder ist in die Armees," I said to the German couple behind the counter of their tiny specialty shop. They both broke into approving, delighted smiles, reaching out to me for a customary German handshake.

Cynthia Gay

To them, I was no longer a dubious tourist invading this untarnished foothold of Bavarian tradition, 50 kilometers from the Czechoslovakian border. But rather, I was in their eyes an American connected with a much larger purpose: preserving freedom.

This scene was re-enacted repeatedly over the Christmas holidays during our family's two-week sojourn in Deutschland. We went to be with my brother, who is serving his third year on border patrol in his armored cavalry squadron. We returned to the States not only with strengthened family ties, but with a renewed sense of hope for America and our NATO ally.

The American military is protecting the West Germans from the ever-encroaching forces of communism. Stationed all along the East German-Czechoslovakian border, U.S. Army troops maintain a constant vigil of what the guys on the other side of the fence are up to.

Sometimes it's not too pleasant. My brother told me about one East German border guard who tried to escape to freedom. He had to pass through three rows of barbed wire fences, numerous mine fields and open land constantly patrolled by search lights and dogs. He had to risk leaving his wife and children — all border guards behind the Iron Curtain must be married to help insure their unwillingness to escape.

For this soldier, freedom became an irresistible attraction, and one night he made a dash for it. His fellow guards shot him down as he neared the actual border line. Some American soldiers later found his body rolled up against the fence, just a hairbreadth from escape.

About three million East Germans freely left their country in the 1950s, before the 1961 erection of the Berlin Wall. Many still seek to get out; some make it. As you can see, they risk everything to reach the "Freistaat," or free state of Bavaria.

Several of the Germans that live in the little towns dotting Bavarian farmlands also have known the confines of communism before they came to West Germany. These people can now work and eat and sleep a few kilometers from this threat with the assurance that the American military forces will hold the

line. We have a 40-year record of success, and the Germans I met were still grateful. No wonder that when I said the words "America" and "Armees," I received many a strong smile and a hearty handshake.

But wait just a darn minute. I bet you thought all Germans were united in resistance to the American military and our deployment of nuclear weapons in their country. Sure, our actions are unpopular among many West Germans, especially the youth who do not know the costs of freedom but fear a nuclear war. However, anti-nuke demonstrations are not as vogue as they once were in Germany's central cities.

Ask any American officer stationed in Germany, and he'll tell you that the United States' presence still is not completely appreciated — except near the border. Under the shadow of communism, these West Germans are eager to make our GIs feel welcome.

It seems rather ridiculous that one has to leave the States, fly across an ocean, most of Western Europe and come within a relatively short distance of the Iron Curtain before encountering united resistance to communism. It's as if we in the free world have been so programmed by our media and our politicians to fear a nuclear war, that we

wish to ignore the overriding question: What would happen if we ever LOST a war?

It's not a comforting thought, and yet we constantly refuse to consider the possibility, or rather probability, that communist forces could defeat our nation without blowing up the world in a nuclear holocaust.

The Soviet Union has never slowed its build-up of conventional forces. They outnumber us in manpower 3:1 and in tanks 10:1. As one lieutenant told me, that means if we were to pull together 50 ranks in a skirmish at the German border, we'd be hopelessly matched up against 500 Soviet tanks.

Cut the defense budget?! Absurd, but sadly true. Now more than ever, we need more soldiers, more tanks and more smarts.

But the General Accounting Office is now mandating under the Gramm-Rudman law that we cut our military programs by 4.9 percent. While we strip billions of dollars from our national defense, Social Security remains untouched.

Should we secure our freedom as a nation or our personal retirement? Social Security is far from secure itself, but many Americans persist in kidding themselves that a potential government handout will be worth more to them

than an M-1, or an F-16 or a few C-17s.

One day Americans may be forced to become individually responsible for their freedom. In Germany, as in West European countries, all men are required to serve a few years in the military. They don't protest; they know they are aiding the cause.

All our SALT talks and hoped-for continued negotiations with the Soviet Union have never convinced the Europeans that they ought to put a halt to their military training. Even now Gorbachev has proposed we limit the world of nuclear weapons by the end of the century, the Europeans still are willing to stay prepared for the defense of their countries.

Reagan is a popular guy in Western Europe. He is trusted.

Gorbachev? Well, about 50 years ago a little Austrian with a distinctive mustache also proposed that the rest of the world cut back on their military defenses. Hitler's olive branch was intended to hide his intentions of conquest.

Must we be fooled again?

Cynthia Gay is a junior journalism major and a columnist for The Battalion.

You haven't come far enough, baby

New York Gov. Mario Cuomo is upset about "increasing references" to his ethnicity. He's tired of people making an issue of his Italian heritage. He's tired of bigoted remarks about him. Most of all, he's tired of feeling that people are judging him by his roots rather than by his ability as a politician.



Michelle Powe

Columnist Andy Rooney recently wrote an open letter to Cuomo disputing Cuomo's claim that people are picking on him because he's Italian. Rooney said the claim is baloney, that Americans don't care what politicians are as long as they like them.

There is some truth to that — if Americans like a politician they don't

care what he is, or at least they'll find it in themselves to overlook what he is. After all, these same Americans voted a B-rated actor into the office of president, and before that a peanut farmer from Georgia, and before that a hick rancher from Texas and before that an Irish Catholic with a funny accent.

But Rooney is being a bit naive about Americans. He's giving them more credit for open-mindedness than they deserve. Americans may not care what a politician is as long as they like him, but what he is certainly affects whether they like him.

Has there ever been a black, a Jew, an Italian or a woman president of this country? No. And please, don't tell me that's just an unfortunate coincidence.

But Rooney seems to think it is coincidence, or at least not as significant as Cuomo thinks it is. Rooney wrote about a sign displayed in a crowd after Cuomo pardoned a man convicted of being in-

involved in the killing of a police officer. The sign read: "KILL A COP. GET PAROLED BY THE WOP." Cuomo saw the sign as a personal attack against his heritage and evidence that Americans are prejudiced.

Rooney said the sign was written by the kind of "ignorant, bigoted American who joins the Ku Klux Klan or the American Nazi Party," and is not typical of American voters.

He's right about the idiot who wrote the sign. And I sincerely hope that kind of ignorant, bigoted thinking is not typical of Americans. But I'm not so sure. Unfortunately, that kind of thinking is all too prevalent.

Rooney's on the right track. It shouldn't matter to voters who a person's parents were, or what color his skin is, or what gender she is. And Americans have come a long way since the days of segregated restrooms and all-male corporate meetings. We've

crossed over religious, social and geographical boundaries to elect people who never would have been elected 20 years before.

But Americans haven't come as far as Rooney seems to think. He's ahead of most Americans. He doesn't judge people by their roots because a person's heritage shouldn't matter. But it does. Americans still have a long way to go before they honestly can say they are living up to the Bill of Rights.

When we vote for a politician — or choose our friends — extraneous factors such as race, religion and sex shouldn't even come into play. We've had an actor and a peanut farmer in the White House, why not an Italian ex-second baseman?

Maybe someday.

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