

SMOOTH

In the sea of tables at the Fashion Centre at Pentagon City, three teenage girls are producing a stratus cloud of cigarette smoke.

When I introduce myself and explain that I would like to ask them about their smoking, they swap panicked looks and beg me not to use their names. None of their parents smoke. One of the girls—she is 15—recently vowed to stop after her mother discovered cigarettes stashed in her book bag. The girl's grandfather died of emphysema. "I'm trying to quit," she declares.

"I am too, actually," adds the 14-year-old across the table. Having promised them anonymity, I am by this time sitting down, and the oldest of the three, who is 17, has considerably switched seats and attempted to blow the low-lying cloud away from my face. "I don't smoke," she says, waving with the hand that doesn't hold the cigarette. "I'm, like, a party smoker."

She explains that this is a party of sorts. The 15-year-old is her cousin, visiting for the weekend from a Connecticut prep

By Susan Cohen

ILLUSTRATION BY TIM GABOR

The tobacco industry, which spends billions on advertising and promotions, says it's not trying to recruit teen smokers. Opponents say the industry's just blowing smoke

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school, and the youngest girl is her cousin's friend, a student at a local boarding school. I've caught them at the mall on a Sunday afternoon sharing soft drinks and Camel Lights.

Whose cigarettes? I ask, and the 14-year-old admits they're hers. She is delicate-featured, blue-eyed, her blond hair swept back from her face into a French twist, possessed of the kind of fresh, healthy looks that recommend themselves to advertisers of dairy products. She's a competitive tennis player whose coach would kill her, she confesses, if he knew she smokes up to half a pack a day when she can. She tells me she cut back some when she noticed that "nicotine made my heart palpitate" on the court. But at school "everybody smokes," she insists, and there are kids who "dip," meaning they use smokeless tobacco.

I ask them why they smoke. "It starts out as a social thing," the oldest girl responds. She seems to have appointed herself to instruct me, and does so as patiently as an anthropologist explaining tribal coming-of-age rituals. She and her friends from Walt Whitman High School in Bethesda drink at parties, and when she drinks she likes to smoke, bumming cigarettes from the boys. The boys usually start out with Camel or Marlboro Lights, then move on to Reds—Marlboros with more tar and nicotine. She also has used smoking to control her weight. "For a while I'd have coffee and a cigarette for lunch. It deadens your appetite."

The other girls laugh. "Healthy lunch," remarks one.

But the main reason she smokes is "stress reduction." The others nod their agreement. They all know smoking is bad for them, but it helps them relax.

When they rise to go, apologizing that the Connecticut cousin must rush to make her plane, the 14-year-old plucks up her pack of cigarettes, suddenly self-conscious. "I'm definitely not going to die from lung cancer," she assures me, though I haven't said anything to indicate I think she will.

SMOKE SIGNALS

The tobacco industry will tell you that teenage smoking is on the decline. And it is, if you look back to 1975, when 27 percent of high school seniors smoked daily, compared with 19 percent in 1993.

But the statistics also tell a more complicated story. Smoking among teenagers fell by about a third during the 1970s; during the past decade, levels remained frustratingly static, according to annual surveys done for the National Institute on Drug Abuse by the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research. This in spite of the fact that during the same period, the surveys showed that fewer high school seniors used illegal



Ads that appeared in Vibe and Sports Illustrated respectively. Newport is heavily promoted in black communities.

drugs and alcohol; adults in droves gave up cigarettes; and no one in the country could miss the messages linking tobacco to cancer, strokes, emphysema and heart disease.

Even a steady level of teen smoking "has dramatic implications for the eventual morbidity and mortality rates," notes the University of Michigan's Lloyd Johnston, who directs the annual survey. "One in four regular smokers will eventually die from this product. I don't know any other product, including guns, that has that death rate."

In 1993, the news got worse. Johnston's most recent results show that, in the past year, daily smoking increased in each of the three grades he surveys: 8th, 10th and 12th. So did casual smoking, with almost 30 percent of high school seniors reporting that they had smoked in the previous month. In California, an aggressive taxpayer-funded anti-tobacco campaign has persuaded many adults to quit, but left teen smoking rates flat. Adolescents remain unimpressed by intimations of future mortality.

"If they died when they were seniors, so we could make the connection more clearly and dramatically, this would be the number one problem in the country," Johnston says.

Each year more than 1 million American children under 18 become regular smokers, according to the federal Office on Smoking and Health. That means they replace at least two-thirds of the adult smokers who either quit or die. If the grown-ups are getting the message, why aren't the kids?

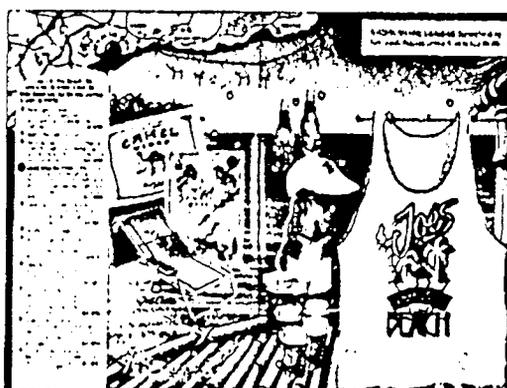
The answer, anti-smoking activists maintain, is that kids get other, more powerful messages from the advertising and promotions on which American cigarette companies spend billions—\$4 billion in 1990, the latest figure available. In the magazines they read, the billboards they glimpse, the stores where they hang out and the events they attend, children and especially teenagers are exposed to the notorious cartoon hipster Joe Camel; to logo-bearing Marlboro gear; to images that play on adolescent fears and aspirations. They see fun images that associate smoking with social acceptance, rugged images that link it with independence and masculinity, sexy images that connect cigarettes with being fashionable and thin. In short, the activists believe, cigarette companies have targeted children because they need to replenish their pool of customers. And in response, the anti-smoking movement has set out to target the cigarette companies.

Unfairly, according to the companies.

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Camel's Cash Catalog is full of "the smoothest stuff Camel Cash can buy."

Says Tobacco Institute Vice President Walker Merryman, speaking for the industry: "All of us agree on one thing, and that is that kids shouldn't be smokers."

'LOOK, DADDY, HORSES!'

"Meet five of America's richest 'drug pushers,' " reads the paid advertisement in the October 7, 1993, edition of The Washington Post. It features five mug shots of middle-aged white businessmen, none of them associated with the Colombian drug cartel. Rather, three head tobacco companies. Two are publishing moguls whose magazines are widely read by teens and carry heavy quantities of cigarette advertising.

The militant ad, which some other newspapers, including the New York Times, refused to run, has been taken out by Stop Teenage Addiction to Tobacco, or STAT, to kick off its three-day conference at Arlington's Key Bridge Marriott hotel. Here, among the hallway exhibits presented by anti-smoking groups, you can still find a picture or two of a corroded lung. But it is much easier to find buttons, posters and T-shirts grimly mocking cigarette ad campaigns. On the posters here, Joe Camel—R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co.'s suave, pool-playing, blues-loving, cigarette-bogarting mascot—comes dressed as the Smooth Reaper and carries a scythe.

In 1985, when the industry was spending only about \$2.5 billion on advertising and promotion, STAT founder Joe Tye had what he describes as a "kind of epiphany." That's the sort of language the slim and intense Ohio hospital administrator uses, along with phrases like "corporategenic holocaust." In 1985, Tye was getting an MBA at Stanford University. He describes driving south of San Francisco with his 5-year-old daughter when she spotted a Marlboro billboard that excited her so much she began squealing with delight. "She was jumping up and down and saying, 'Look, Daddy, horses!'" as they passed the glossy image of galloping hooves splashing through a stream. Tye says he realized with a shock that, whether Philip Morris intended to or not, its imagery was reaching children. It wasn't until he began a business school project on corporate ethics and looked into Philip Morris's campaign to get cigarettes onto college campuses in the 1950s and 1960s that it occurred to him tobacco companies might be reaching children because they were *trying* to.

Since then, there have been major changes in tobacco marketing—all of them, from Tye's perspective, for the worse. Not only have the advertising and promotion budgets soared, there's been a dramatic shift in how the money is spent. Cigarette manufacturers, who barely skipped a beat switching to magazines, newspapers and billboards after Congress banned them from advertising on television and radio in 1971, now put most of their marketing money into promotions such as free samples (up nearly 75 percent from 1989 to 1990) and giveaways and special offers at the point of purchase, where store owners are paid to plaster the walls and windows and doors with brand logos. They also offer mail-order catalogues: Clip the coupons from your cigarette packs and send them in, along with a signed statement that you are 21, a smoker and willing to receive free samples in the mail, and you can order any of hundreds of items. Like print ads, these items carry brand promotions; unlike print ads, they are not required to carry the surgeon general's health warnings.

Often these deals are linked to a larger campaign: Marlboro's promotional trinkets, for example, are tied to its Marlboro Adventure Team. Philip Morris kicked off the effort in 1992 with a contest that chose a team of smokers who shot through the dust and white water in "Marlboro Country" astride motorcycles, horses, four-wheel-drive vehicles and rafts. Consumers collecting Marlboro Miles off cigarette packs could then order related gear—Marlboro-embazoned Swiss Army knives, sleeping bags and such—out of a catalogue that went to three editions before the campaign ended this month. More than 4 million people responded in what Philip Morris calls one of the most successful campaigns in advertising history.

Similarly, Camel's Cash Catalog, now on its fourth volume

**An R.J. Reynolds spokeswoman says
she doesn't know Camel's market share
among teens: 'We don't do research
among young smokers because we
don't think young people should smoke.'**

and full of "the smoothest stuff Camel Cash can buy," is tied to Joe Camel ("Smooth Characters know where the action is—Camel Cash"). With 25 "C-notes" off packs of Camels, for example, you can send in for a tape cassette of the band Joe likes to hang out with, the Hard Pack, singing lyrics such as "born to be smooth," or "Hard Pack's tough, tough enough." Virginia Slims' catalogue has offered a different image, "the fashion collection with a streetwise attitude."

Tough, streetwise, smooth—these words have a special appeal when you're 13 or 14 and feeling insecure, activists say. "Kids 8 to 10 don't want to smoke, it's disgusting; they want their parents to quit," says Tye, whose daughter is now 13 and whose son is 10. "The 14- to 18-year-old age period is when they're really most at risk. That's really when kids are trying to establish their identity. Philip Morris and RJR are trying to give them a ready-made identity—all you have to do is light up and smoke."

All his intensity and moral outrage are in evidence today, as Tye, STAT's outgoing president, steps up to the podium and delivers the welcoming address at the Arlington conference. "Yesterday STAT put the finger on five of the richest drug

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Marlboro calls its Adventure Team campaign one of the most successful in ad history.

pushers in America," he tells the audience of more than 400. "These men have grown rich beyond our imagination by preying on the vulnerable, by lying . . . by trying to disguise the purposes of their promotional and advertising campaigns."

"There are more under-18-year-olds addicted to tobacco than when we started STAT," Tye thunders. "And it's almost exclusively because of Camel Joe and the Marlboro Man and the Adventure Team."

NOTHING BUT THE BLUES

As depicted in his ads and catalogues, Joe Camel has a lot of friends. But in the real world he has more enemies than any other single advertising icon in America. Anti-smoking forces believe he is the most blatant example—and the strongest evidence—that the tobacco industry is targeting kids.

In December 1991, the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) published two widely publicized studies: One, looking at children ages 3 through 6, found that 91 percent of 6-year-olds could match Joe with a Camel cigarette, meaning he was as well-known a logo to them as Mickey Mouse for the Disney Channel. Even more significant, a study of more than 1,000 adolescents reported that since the advent of the Joe Camel campaign in 1987, Camel's share of the market segment among smokers under 18 had increased from 0.5 percent to 32.8 percent. This, the study estimated, represented an increase in sales worth \$476 million a year.

In response to these reports, New York City's commissioner of consumer affairs, the American Lung Association, the American Heart Association, the American Cancer Society, former surgeons general Antonia C. Novella and C. Everett Koop and the attorneys general of 27 states have asked the Federal Trade Commission to ban the campaign. "Using a cartoon camel modeled after James Bond, 'Miami Vice,' 'Top Gun' and many other figures which appeal to young people, this campaign represents one of the most egregious examples in recent history of tobacco advertising targeted at children," reads a letter to the FTC from the Washington-based Coalition on Smoking or Health. More surprising than the fact that JAMA editorialized against R.J. Reynolds's campaign was that the editors of Advertising Age did, writing in January of 1992 that it "encourages youngsters to smoke" and urging it be dropped.

Instead of dumping its dromedary, RJR set out to discredit the lead author of the key JAMA study, University of Massachusetts researcher Joseph DiFranza. The company has sent letters to the media and publications to retailers stating that

DiFranza has "admitted to bias and research manipulation in his work that purports to show that Camel has 32 percent of youth smokers."

"They've tried to harass me every way they could," says DiFranza, who adamantly denies cooking his data. RJR's allegations are based on subpoenaed research documents that, the cigarette company says, clearly show that DiFranza's study found the Camel ads most appealing to 18- to 24-year-olds, exactly its target market. But, DiFranza points out, this does not negate the study's published finding: that, looking at broader groupings, a larger percentage of children than adults fancied Joe Camel. And the RJR allegations don't bear on what he considers his most significant finding: the astonishing jump in the brand's market share among underage smokers.

R.J. Reynolds insists that the number of kids smoking Camels is actually nowhere near astonishing, citing a survey conducted for Advertising Age in 1992 by the research firm BKG Youth, which put Camel's share of underage smokers at 8 percent, making it a paltry fifth choice among kids. But there are other studies that support DiFranza's findings. Even before the JAMA article, a 1990 National Cancer Institute survey of ninth graders in 10 communities who said they purchased their own cigarettes reported 43 percent bought Marlboro, 30 percent Camel and 20 percent Newport. Marlboro was first or second choice everywhere, but its closest competitor varied by region and race, with Camel strong in the West and Midwest and Newport in the Northeast. Newport, a menthol brand heavily advertised by Lorillard Tobacco Co. in African American communities, was preferred by black students.

Summarizing national surveys on teenagers' brand use, the Centers for Disease Control's Morbidity and Mortality Report of March 13, 1992, noted that one year after the start of the Joe Camel advertising campaign, Camel ranked third among youths 12 to 18. Subsequent studies "report even higher rates of Camel preference among adolescents . . ."

A study done for the state of California attempts to make a direct link between the ad campaign and the number of kids who took up smoking. Looking back at smoking levels among teenagers over the last decade and a half, John Pierce, a researcher at the University of California at San Diego, found that smoking reached an all-time low among 16- to 18-year-old Californians in 1988 but then suddenly reversed, increasing by 0.7 percent annually in the first years of the Joe Camel campaign.

R.J. Reynolds regards Joe as a success story of a different sort, according to spokeswoman Maura Payne Ellis. The campaign, she says, is "absolutely not—never has [been] and never will be"—targeted at adolescents. It is aimed primarily at Marlboro smokers in their twenties and thirties in order to encourage them to switch brands.

Ellis describes how Camel approached its 75th anniversary in 1987 on a declining curve, perceived by smokers as a hot, harsh brand that was smoked by their fathers. Joe Camel has stabilized the brand at around 4.4 percent of the market. Given that, she says, the company has no intention of laying him off in spite of expected widespread cuts in advertising and promotion as a result of 1993's cigarette price war among premium brands. "We are going forward with our Camel program," Ellis says. She complains that "it has been blown well out of proportion to its share of the market simply because it gave the anti-smoking industry a rallying point." She says she

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doesn't know what the market share might be among underage smokers. "We don't do research among young smokers because we don't think young people should smoke."

As she speaks, I happen to have in hand the current Camel Cash Catalog, with its "Pool Player Cap," its "Pool Player Wall Clock," its "Pool Player 'Elbow Mug'" and its "Pool Player Zippo & Tin Set," all depicting Joe in a denim shirt and shades, his hat brim-backward, lining up his cue. I ask Ellis about the charges that the catalogue items are enticing to junior high and high school kids. She assures me there are people working for R.J. Reynolds "very carefully scrutinizing the merchandise to make sure it appeals to our target audience." For instance, she points out indignantly, although company critics frequently refer to the Hard Pack as a rock band, the group clearly plays blues, and she can't imagine it would appeal in any way to young people.

Ellis sends me Issue No. 1 of the company's "Right Decisions, Right Now," a pamphlet that's part of a campaign designed to help teens resist the peer pressure that the tobacco industry asserts is the main reason kids smoke. I notice it kicks off with a list of "What's Hot" among teens; the list includes both denim and playing pool. She also sends me "How to Talk to Your Kids About Not Smoking Even if You Do," a booklet to help parents urge their children ages 12 to 15 to resist the temptation to smoke—until they're adults. "A natural question your child may ask is, 'Why do you smoke?' If you smoke because you enjoy smoking— as most smokers do—say so," the booklet advises. Then tell them that "there are a lot of things adults do that kids can't."

GROWING CUSTOMERS

The Tobacco Institute, the lobbying arm of the industry, also runs a public service campaign based on the notion that kids need to be taught to resist peer pressure—not advertising.

Each year the institute also contributes an amount that Merryman, its spokesman, declines to specify, to the Washington-based Family C.O.U.R.S.E. Consortium, which has launched a "multimillion-dollar" effort called "Helping Youth Say No."

"Young people are aware of the claims that smoking presents risks to one's health," a line in this campaign reads, with-



With Virginia Slims' focus on sales to women, its catalogue offers a "fashion collection with a streetwise attitude."



The Imperial Tobacco and RJR Macdonald suit led to the release of internal documents showing that, at least in Canada, the cigarette industry has an interest in the adolescent psyche rivaling that of Freud.

out identifying what those risks might be (30 percent of all deaths from cancer and 21 percent of all deaths from cardiovascular disease, according to the Centers for Disease Control). The institute also conducts a "Support the Law" drive, to encourage retailers—some of whom make 25 percent of their annual gross sales from tobacco—to obey the laws that exist in almost every state, and the District of Columbia, prohibiting the sale of cigarettes to anyone under 18. Retailers who ask receive free "Support the Law" items for display.

"If you make a product that's legal in this country, you have a right to tell consumers about that product," Merryman says. Critics, he contends, misunderstand the purpose of advertising.

But Joe Tye thinks he understands it all too well. Considering that tobacco consumption in this country is shrinking by between 2 and 3 percent a year, it seems logical to industry critics like Tye that cigarette companies are trying to cultivate new customers by turning to kids. Especially since teen smokers, unlike the fickle adults who have flocked to generic and discount brands in recent years, are brand loyalists. And especially since studies consistently find that the majority of regular smokers (some put the number as high as 90 percent) start before age 21. The University of Michigan survey finds the peak period for initiation to be sixth and seventh grade, with a "considerable amount occurring even earlier," and John Pierce's recent California study found virtually no regular smokers who start after age 20.

Merryman counters that with American consumers spending \$50 billion a year on cigarettes, winning even an extra 1 percent of market share among *adult* smokers is worth giving away a lot of lighters. Advertising is "the only way in a mature market like the U.S. to take customers away from competitors," he says. "For a product like cigarettes, which is a product everyone knows exists, *continued on page 23*"

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advertising won't expand the market."

Or, as a Philip Morris representative tells me, "We're trying to get a bigger piece of a shrinking pie."

And, as I am told at R.J. Reynolds, "You don't advertise pet food to make people buy cats."

The industry has brought marketing experts to testify on its behalf and help defeat congressional initiatives that would have restricted its advertising in various ways, among them: banning the use of most pictures and illustrations; increasing the size of health warnings; banning tobacco product advertising in sports facilities, on sporting equipment and toys, and near schools; and forbidding brand-name event sponsorship, paid product placements in movies or video games, and the distribution of free samples. These experts have testified that the means used to reach tobacco consumers are no different from those employed in a mature market by other industries, which have also swarmed to promotions, free samples and discount pricing in a fiercely competitive economy.

With this in mind, I telephone James McNeal, a professor of marketing at Texas A&M University. McNeal is not involved in either side of the tobacco advertising debate. Instead he is an expert on marketing to children, having written three books on the subject. His specialty is studying the preferences of consumers as young as 20 months.

McNeal lays out the three common elements in children's advertising: First is an emphasis on play and fun for kids up to age 10 or 11. After that, advertisers begin to address adolescent needs for affiliation and social acceptance. The third element, McNeal goes on, is playing to children's need—even stronger than adults'—for experiences that involve the senses. "The advertisers often do use a lot of words that would suggest these sensory experiences." Thinking about cigarette advertising, as I've asked him to do, McNeal observes that it contains all three elements advertisers use to reach kids—an emphasis on fun, through cartoon characters and promotional gifts; a promise of social acceptance, through being cool; and an appeal to the senses, through use of words like "smooth."

This, of course, does not prove that cigarette manufacturers are targeting children. But McNeal goes on to tell me something else. "During the past five years, particularly, there has been a strong move among almost all consumer packaged goods industries to target children," he says, even "products that don't sell to children." He uses air travel as an

example. Airlines work to make sure kids will be predisposed to a particular airline by the time they can buy tickets. "Marketeers recognized there's only two sources of consumers. You switch them. Or you develop the market for your product from childhood." This, McNeal informs me, is called "growing a customer," and it "produces a more loyal customer that's much cheaper to keep." As more

TEEN SMOKING BY THE NUMBERS

Why are more teenagers smoking? According to Tobacco Institute spokesman Walker Merryman, they aren't. Teen smoking "certainly has not increased," he says, although "you might see a blip or two" and "a leveling off" of the decline in the numbers of underage smokers. "It's very difficult to bring them much lower."

A spokeswoman for R.J. Reynolds tells me much the same thing: "Fewer and fewer kids are smoking, which we're delighted by." She cites statistics from the University of Michigan's annual survey of high school seniors to prove the point.

Since this is the same survey that the federal Office on Smoking and Health uses to describe the lack of progress in keeping teens off cigarettes, I decide the fastest way to sort through the competing percentages is to call Lloyd Johnston, who collects the data. He's not flattered that tobacco companies are using his numbers. What he says is: "The tobacco industry is a great source of sophistry."

While the industry focuses on "daily" smokers, Johnston, who served on the National Commission for Drug Free Schools during the Bush administration, also looks at "current" smokers, meaning those who report having smoked within the past 30 days. This is significant, he says, because while some teens are only experimenting, many light smokers in high school tend to become heavier smokers a year or two later, when they no longer spend most of their day in the classroom.

The tale his surveys tell him is this: Teenage smoking did decline by about a third in the 1970s, perhaps as a result of the broadcast advertising ban. Since then, black teenage smoking has continued to fall dramatically—only about 4 percent of black seniors smoked daily in 1992 and 1993, compared with 21 per-

cent of whites. But something froze the downward trend among whites and Hispanics, even as laws restricted access and smoking became more stigmatized. "Something's propping it up," he says. "I think four billion dollars is a big prop."

And in fact his latest survey found that in 1993 the percentage of daily smokers among all high school seniors rose from 17.2 percent to 19 percent. Merryman questions whether that's a significant increase, but Johnston believes it is.

Johnston finds tobacco more addictive than any other drug in the survey, including heroin and cocaine. Because the vast majority of people who smoke in high school will smoke all their lives, and very few people start smoking later, Johnston says, the failure to make more of a dent in teen smoking is a "scandal." Girls and boys smoke in about equal numbers.

Two years ago, the survey began including eighth and 10th graders as well as seniors, partly because of criticism that researchers were underestimating the rate of smoking, since it is heaviest among dropouts and the non-college-bound. What he finds among the youngest students, Johnston says, is especially disturbing. Sixteen percent of eighth graders are current smokers. Nearly half have tried cigarettes, and almost a third of the boys have tried smokeless tobacco. Most significant to Johnston is the finding that only about half of eighth graders believe that smoking a pack or more of cigarettes a day is dangerous.

The seniors are more knowledgeable about the health risks. That may be why almost all high school smokers believe that they will quit. More than half of the heaviest smokers have already tried—and found they couldn't. —S.C.



companies have done it, other companies have recognized the necessity of doing it. These days, McNeal says, "I don't know of any consumer packaged goods industry that doesn't target children."

THE CANADIAN MODEL

American tobacco companies deny they are interested in growing customers. So

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did two Canadian companies with American affiliations: Imperial Tobacco Ltd. and RJR Macdonald Inc., which filed a constitutional challenge when Canada outlawed most forms of cigarette advertising and promotion in 1988. The court case led to the release of internal documents showing that, at least in Canada, the cigarette industry has an interest in the adolescent psyche rivaling that of Freud.

There was Imperial's "Project 16," for example, a 1977 effort in which company employees and those of two of its advertising agencies observed focus groups of 16- and 17-year-olds through closed-circuit television to find out "why do young people start smoking, and how do they feel about being smokers?"

They discovered that "serious efforts to learn to smoke occur between ages 12 and 13 in most cases." That's when "the adolescent seeks to display his new urge for independence with a symbol, and cigarettes are such a symbol."

More recently, Imperial's "Project Plus/Minus: Young People and Smoking, Behaviors and Attitudes, 1982" looked at 16- to 24-year-olds and concluded: "The desire to quit seems to come earlier now than before, even prior to the end of high school. In fact it often seems to take hold as soon as the recent starter admits to himself that he is hooked on smoking. However, the desire to quit and actually carrying it out are two quite different things, as the would-be quitter soon learns."

Imperial had plans for some of these young people. "If the last 10 years have taught us anything, it is that the industry is dominated by the companies who respond most effectively to the needs of young smokers," noted its marketing plan for fiscal year 1988, according to testimony of University of British Columbia marketing professor Richard Pollay, who reviewed the documents for the court. The company's entry into this competition was the Player's brand. A document called "Player's Trademark F'81 Advertising" describes how Player's marketing would "emphasize the under-20-year-old group in its imagery reflection of lifestyle (activity) tastes." Voluntary industry guidelines specifying that models be at least 25 years old would not be an impediment. "Models in Player's advertising must be 25 years or older, but should appear to be between 18 and 25 years of age."

The court documents reveal that RJR Macdonald also had a brand it hoped would go over with young smokers: Export A. The "Export Family Strategy Document" of 1982 stated: "... Very young starter smokers choose Export A because it provides them with an instant badge of masculinity, appeals to their re-

The Camel ad included a coupon for a free pack of cigarettes and urged National Lampoon readers to 'ask a kind-looking stranger to redeem it.'

bellious nature and establishes their position amongst their peers." In order to understand this kind of thinking, the company's ambitious "Youth Target Study '87" produced four volumes of results on research subjects ages 15 to 24, dividing them by personality and interest groups, and discussing their tastes in music and magazines.

In the United States, the Canadian documents provided some of the evidence for a Surgeon General's Report on youth and tobacco, due to be released at the end of this month by the Office on Smoking and Health, which is part of the Centers for Disease Control.

"We don't look at... the actual proof that advertising causes kids to start smoking," says Michael Eriksen, the office's director. "The studies haven't been done. It's a difficult thing to tease out. It's hard to have a non-exposed group of kids to compare." But he complains that the industry pretends "there is a magic curtain that drops down," keeping children from being influenced by images aimed at adults. "It's no longer as blatant as where you advertise in Teen magazine"; the bulging promotion budgets are more insidious, "tying the money into actual use of the products." And the more you smoke, of course, the bigger the prizes.

Eriksen argues that "advertising creates an environment that it can't be as bad as they say it is, when it's everywhere—on billboards, on the backs of magazines." Perhaps it's no surprise, then, that the brands most heavily smoked by underage smokers are also among the most heavily advertised. "Marlboro has the heaviest advertising and it's most heavily smoked by kids. Kids are three times more likely to smoke Marlboros than adults," Eriksen says. "I don't have any direct evidence that

they're targeting kids, but they're affecting kids."

PACK MENTALITY

If cigarette advertising affects kids, that, in part, is because it's put directly into their hands. A telephone survey of teenagers conducted by the George H. Gallup International Institute in the summer of 1992 found that half the smokers had received promotional items from tobacco companies. So had one-fourth of the non-smokers. One teenage smoker in four had been given tobacco samples, in spite of industry guidelines limiting samples to people 21 or older.

Those guidelines, announced by the Tobacco Institute in December 1990 as the issue became increasingly controversial, also included a prohibition on billboards advertising cigarettes within 500 feet of schools and playgrounds, and the formal elimination of paid product placements in movies. These voluntary restrictions were added to earlier ones stating that manufacturers wouldn't use sports celebrities or advertise in publications aimed primarily at persons under 21.

But nothing voluntary or otherwise prohibits tobacco companies from selecting magazines known by advertisers to reach large numbers of teens, and they do, including Spin, Sports Illustrated and TV Guide. An especially controversial four-page ad—featuring a sexy blonde and Old Joe's tips on how to impress someone at the beach ("Run into the water... and drag her back to shore as if you've saved her from drowning. The more she kicks and screams, the better")—ran in National Lampoon and Rolling Stone. The ad included a coupon for a free pack of cigarettes with the purchase of another pack, and urged readers to "ask a kind-looking stranger to redeem it." RJR, which apologized for the ad but ran it again, explained that the company wasn't appealing to children too young to legally buy cigarettes, but trying to entice men reluctant to use coupons.

These advertisements may not only influence kids, but also buy silence—especially as cigarette companies have become conglomerates. More and more, magazines willing to risk alienating tobacco accounts must also be willing to risk kissing off ad revenue for everything from cookies to coffee to beer. The Philip Morris conglomerate—which also owns, among other things, Kraft and General Foods—was the largest single advertiser in the country in the first half of 1993. In 1992, a study by the New England Journal of Medicine found that the magazines with the highest percentage of cigarette advertising revenues were the least likely to publish articles on the dangers of smoking.

Even so, magazine advertising is a shrinking portion of cigarette marketing. The hot action is in sponsorship of community festivals and sports.

GOOD CITIZENS, GOOD SPORTS

Vietnamese Tet festivals. Mexican Cinco de Mayo celebrations. Korean Day parades. African American Juneteenth gatherings. Even Inyo County, Calif., Mule Days. The tobacco industry is happy to help stage events for ethnic and rural communities—which often have difficulty drumming up alternative sources of funding.

The tobacco companies say this makes them good citizens. It also allows them to determine prizes for competitions (spit-toons in the case of Mule Days, sponsored by a smokeless tobacco company) and advertise their community spirit in local newspapers. Most importantly, it allows them to set up tents from which to hand out free samples (only to those over 21) or sell their promotional gear.

There have been complaints that samples are sometimes given away indiscriminately. Such allegations at the 1991 Tuolumne County Fair and at the 1992 Mother Lode Roundup Rodeo, also in Tuolumne County, Calif., spurred the local organizers to tell the United States

Tobacco Co. that it could not give away its Skoal smokeless tobacco at last year's rodeo. A county health official, Ross Payson, had complained that at the 1991 fair he saw samples handed out to teenagers. "I saw guys just carting boxes and handing them out to whoever was there. I personally witnessed this," Payson says.

Sponsorship also carries with it the privilege of determining what messages children see at events where the whole family comes along.

Three years ago, the San Jose Mercury News reported that R.J. Reynolds, a sponsor of San Jose's Fiestas Patrias, complained to the Mexican American veterans group that organized the event when a health clinic got a free booth across from the tent flying the company's "giant Camel cartoon balloon." The paper reported that the veterans group removed the clinic's anti-smoking posters at the company's request.

Local organizers fear the loss of funding. When the Lions Club put on camel races as a fund-raiser in 1992 in Calaveras County, Calif., RJR chipped in about \$10,000 and erected a promotion booth for people over 21, who could also turn in two empty packs of Camels and get free tickets for use with vendors. The local anti-smoking coalition sponsored a jockey, which gave it the right to hang a

banner at the arena. "We were asked to take it down because it was a protest banner," says Joyce Miller, coordinator of tobacco control programs for Calaveras County's health department. The coalition was forced to remove the sign, which had been painted by a high school art class, and which read, "Tobacco Free, Healthy for You and Me."

Most kids have never seen a camel race, but they're almost sure to have watched a sporting event made possible by a tobacco company.

The six major cigarette companies reported to the FTC that they spent \$108.7 million on sports and sporting events in 1990. More recently, the trade journal Special Events Reports described RJR alone as spending about \$30 million a year on marquee sports sponsorships. Virginia Slims tennis tournaments, Winston Cup stock car races, the Camel GT series, Marlboro Grand Prix—cigarette brands have become not just synonymous but eponymous with sports. In 1991, then-Health and Human Services Secretary Louis W. Sullivan asked sports fans to boycott events sponsored by tobacco companies, and urged promoters to refuse tobacco funding. It was characterized at the time as one of the strongest attacks a Cabinet member had ever made on an American product. It was also ignored.

Strategically placed billboards advertising Marlboro in major league stadiums appear in hundreds of shots a year on television screens, as do the logos on race cars and helmets and banners. The Justice Department, charged with enforcing the ban on televised cigarette advertising, does not view these shots as ads even though they total hours of television exposure worth millions of dollars.

Yet televised truck and tractor pulls promoting Red Man chewing tobacco and snuff looked exactly like advertising to the FTC, which under a 1986 law has authority to enforce a prohibition on television advertising for smokeless tobacco. The FTC took on Pinkerton Tobacco Co. over its "Red Man Pulling Series," charging that the logo prominently displayed on its "vehicles, sleds, signage, uniforms and other event-related equipment" violated the law. Pinkerton agreed in 1992 to cease using the events for televised advertising.

'TALKING TO THE YOUNGSTER'

If kids can't miss tobacco's connection to sports, the industry has not missed sports' connection to young people. Of course, young people, industry representatives are careful to state, means people over 18 who already smoke.

But executives of Philip Morris and its ad agency were not always so careful when they described how they use sports, and how they hope to reach youth, at least in other countries. You can hear them—on tape—at the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Advertising History, which dispatched an interviewer around the world in the late 1980s to gather an oral history of the Marlboro brand. On one of the tapes, Jean-Pierre Paschoud, Philip Morris's marketing director in Switzerland, complains that though Marlboro is still No. 1 in his country, "Camel is growing very fast. There are lots of young smokers who don't want to smoke their parents' brand. This means they don't want to smoke Marlboros and are looking for alternatives."

Paschoud describes how Philip Morris in Switzerland is dealing with this problem among "the youngest smoker groups, below 25": "What we're trying to do is to associate Marlboro with activities which are favored by younger people. This means sports and music, rock music et cetera, and try to show them through promotional activities that Marlboro is still 'in' in spite of being an older brand."

This problem of preventing young people from dismissing Marlboro as their parents' brand arose in the United States too, according to a Smithsonian interview with

Philip Morris executive Ross Millhiser, who explains why he decided to allow Marlboro Lights to be packaged in gold rather than in the brand's trademark red and white box: "The young people, they'll look at it and say, 'This is new.'"

Marlboro's approach extended to Hong Kong, where the Smithsonian interviewer talked with Karen C.H. Kwok and Johnny Lo about the account they headed for the international ad agency Leo Burnett Ltd. In her taped interview, Kwok enthuses about how Indy-style Formula One racing reinforces the Marlboro brand image. "The driver is like the modern cowboy in the car. He has full control of the car, he knows exactly what he's doing. He's cool, he's the hero, he's glorified." With pride, Kwok lists the other sports Marlboro sponsors around the world: soccer in South America, skiing in Canada, horse racing in Australia and America, tennis in China, mountain climbing, aerobatics, parachuting . . . The list goes on. Unlike its competitors, Philip Morris doesn't just sponsor an event, she boasts, but develops sports as a property. In the case of Formula One racing, for example, it has its own team, banners and cars in brand colors. "So it's actually participating in the sport."

Then, with equal enthusiasm, Johnny Lo talks about Marlboro's prime pro-

pects in Hong Kong: "We are still advertised to young adults, and whenever they start to smoke they'll choose Marlboro as their brand." Lo explains what makes him think Winston, Kent and Viceroy have followed suit: "You can recognize from their commercials" that they've started "talking to the youngster like what we have done."

THE NEW PARADIGM?

Back at the STAT conference, Congressman Mike Synar (D-Okla.) follows Joe Tye onto the podium. Synar gets a hero's ovation even before he opens his mouth. He's the author of an amendment, passed in 1992, giving states until October of this year to come up with ways to enforce minimum-age laws for tobacco sales or else lose their federal drug and alcohol abuse grants.

The congressman tells the story of Sean Marsee, the Oklahoma youth whose death from oral cancer helped spur Congress to pass the 1986 Smokeless Tobacco Health Education Act. Sean, Synar says, "had given up cigarettes at age 12 and taken up smokeless tobacco" after receiving his first free sample at a rodeo. At 16 he developed lip cancer. At 18 surgery removed half his face. "And he was dead by the age of 19."

"The facts are so overwhelming," the congressman says. The tobacco industry is "targeting our children as the replacement smokers of the future."

Synar has a bill before Congress to place tobacco under the jurisdiction of the Food and Drug Administration, prohibit tobacco company sponsorship of sports and other events that attract youth, and ban discount coupons and free samples. Congressman Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) has authored a bill that would require cigarette promotional items to carry health warnings, just as promos for smokeless tobacco now must in the wake of a court ruling ordering the FTC to take action.

Similar bills have bumped into the tobacco lobby before. But Synar advises the anti-smoking forces to use their best weapon: Bring the kids to the offices of Congress. "Members of Congress are simply becoming uncomfortable supporting tobacco interests anymore."

Indeed, there is a giddiness in these hallways as participants swarm to workshops on tobacco-free sports, guerrilla countermarketing tactics and beating the tobacco lobbyists. Rumors of industry spies are everywhere, and when a man who refuses to identify his affiliation turns out to be an attorney for the United States Tobacco Co., he is escorted out of the hotel. This fuels the sense of growing power. Not only has an organization that started in Joe Tye's garage put together a

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conference that fills a ballroom, it's put together a coalition of sponsors that includes virtually every tobacco control organization plus the Child Welfare League of America.

There is a president in the White House who has proposed a hefty hike in the federal tax on cigarettes. And two federal agencies, the National Cancer Institute and the Office on Smoking and Health, are launching programs that would, between them, fund anti-tobacco coalitions in every state.

Robert Robinson, the assistant director for program development at the Office on Smoking and Health, has come to the conference to explain how to apply for his department's funds. There's been a "paradigm shift," he tells me, sitting on a couch in the hotel lobby. "The solution to the problem needs to rely less on targeting individuals in cessation programs than targeting legislatures."

The solution is "no longer seeing the smoker as the problem but rather seeing the tobacco industry as the problem. Instead of how to get the smoker to change behavior, the focus now is how can we get the tobacco industry to change its behavior."

Outside the halls of the Key Bridge Marriott, however, the facts can seem less overwhelming, the new paradigm less clear. And the industry that is the target of this optimistic activism sees no need to change its behavior—any more than it admits to peddling cigarettes to teens.

"I think we've responded very well to public concern about tobacco marketing practices," says the Tobacco Institute's Walker Merryman. "There are many more voluntary restraints than regulatory or legislative ones. I think they work very well." ■

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