

Urban American Indian Tobacco Prevention & Education Network

UAITPEN Newsletter

June 2007

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Exploitation in Advertising

In the May-June 2007 issue of Utne Reader, you can find an ad from Natural American Spirit cigarettes on page 25. When questioned why this magazine would accept advertising dollars from this product, Bryan Welch, Publisher and Editorial Director, wrote, "Natural Spirit's advertising does not misrepresent its product." I think we all know the fallacy in that statement, considering the use of an Indian chief with a peace pipe, and the sacred colors of red, yellow, white and black in their packaging. He also writes that they do not "explicitly or implicitly" endorse the products advertised in their magazine, which to me is also false; if you claim to provide "socially responsible shopping," does that

not indicate you are supporting the companies whose advertisements you accept?

It was also brought to my attention that Mother Earth News, another socially responsible, publication, has an ad for Natural American Spirit tobacco in their special issue on Homes, Summer 2007, page 78. Bummer.

The New Mexico Media Literacy Project (www.nmmlp.org) did some research around tobacco advertising through the exploitation of American Indian images. Natural American Spirit is the most well known brand that does this, because they are actually owned by R.J. Reynolds (makers of Camel), the second largest tobacco company in the US. Red Man chewing tobacco

is the top selling brand of chewing tobacco in the US, and it is produced by Pinkerton Tobacco Company, which is owned by Swedish Match AB, located in Sweden. Some other brands of cigarettes using Native images include Nobel, Geronimo, Seneca, Omaha and Smokin' Joes. The last three of those brands are actually owned by either Indian tribes or individual American Indian entrepreneurs. In a survey that



Smokefree Housing Update

Landlords now have access to a couple tools to help them create tobacco policy for their properties; a website, <http://www.smokefreehousingnw.com/>, and a how-to booklet, "A Landlords Guide to No-Smoking Policies." (Booklet can be downloaded from website, or call the American Lung Association of Oregon at 503-924-4094 ext 23 or Clark County Public Health at 360-397-8000 ext 7378). These resources include sample lease language, enforcement tips and handouts for tenants, and on

the website "no smoking" signs can be ordered.

These materials have been developed by the Smokefree Housing Project, a joint effort in the Portland Metro area and Vancouver, Washington to help advocate for smokefree rentals. A 2006 survey found that 75% of Portland-Vancouver metro renters would prefer to live in buildings with no-smoking rules. Also in that study it was found that over two-thirds of renters in multi-unit housing are regularly exposed to second-hand smoke. In comparison,

only 19% of renters smoke daily, and only 11% of renters smoke inside their home.

The same website mentioned above also has resources for renters, including a link to search for smokefree housing. And there is a new hotline to the Fair Housing Council of Oregon to deal with renters experiencing issues with their neighbor's secondhand smoke; call 1-800-424-3247 and ask for Jayme Radenburg.



Traditional Tobacco Story

The Origin of Tobacco According to Crow and Hidatsa Indians

A long time ago the Indians roamed the West like the buffalo, one family scattered and returned by change. There were no separate tribes.

One of the Indians was a woman of powerful beauty. She gave birth to twin sons, but she did not know who their father was. The beautiful woman sang her sons to sleep with a heartbreaking lullaby, and everyone who heard it took pity on her. Finally, the Earth agreed to claim the first son, and the stars took the second son as one of their own. From then on, the people called them Earthboy and Starboy.

When the boys were near manhood, they began to behave a little differently from their friends. Earthboy stopped following the buffalo everywhere and began to stay close beneath the willows of his home, searching for pretty rocks and carefully observing the slow growth of the plants. Starboy also grew lax in his hunting, but rather than staying at home he began to wander far beyond the buffalo. He slept during the days so that at night he could watch the travels of his star family.

One day Starboy's wanderings brought him to the foot of the highest mountain. No one had climbed it before, but Starboy started the slow climb upward without hesitating. Somewhere near the sky, Starboy fainted. A shining silver man appeared to him.

The man was a star. He told Starboy that he was his father but that he spent his life traveling far beyond the earth, and he said he would not pass near the mountain again in his son's lifetime.

"And so to show my love and concern for you, my son, I will give you a gift of great strength and colors of the sunset. Keep this plant with you wherever you wander, and in the springtime plant it everywhere you go. Tend the scarred beds, and harvest them when they are tall." With these words, the star plunged his hands into his own silver chest. When he pulled them out again, they were full of tobacco.

He told Starboy that tobacco would make everyone in their family strong and free. To share the tobacco and its power, people must be adopted into Starboy's family. Starboy listened carefully, but he was too overwhelmed to speak. He nodded his head gratefully, and his father burst away from him, back to the sky.

When Starboy came down from the mountains, he found his brother Earthboy, and offered to adopt him and share the tobacco.

Earthboy laughed, and said, "Brother, you don't need to climb mountains to have visions. While you were gone, I met my father earth and he taught me some secrets of my own. Your family may become powerful wanderers, but mine is going to become a family of peaceful farmers. We will grow everything except tobacco and you will grow nothing more."

"I don't want to grow anything more," said Starboy, "I will follow the buffalo, and be strong as an eagle, and as free as wind."

Earthboy smiled. "I will be strong as rock, my brother," he said "and steady as sunrise. But no matter how different our families become, we will never quarrel. Your father has given you tobacco, and mine has given me the way of the Medicine Pipe. When we smoke together, your plant with my pipe, our fathers will give us peace and colors of the sunset."

Earthboy brought forward a beautiful pipe made from the rock and willow of his home. Starboy filled it with tobacco from the heart of the star, and the brothers smoked together.

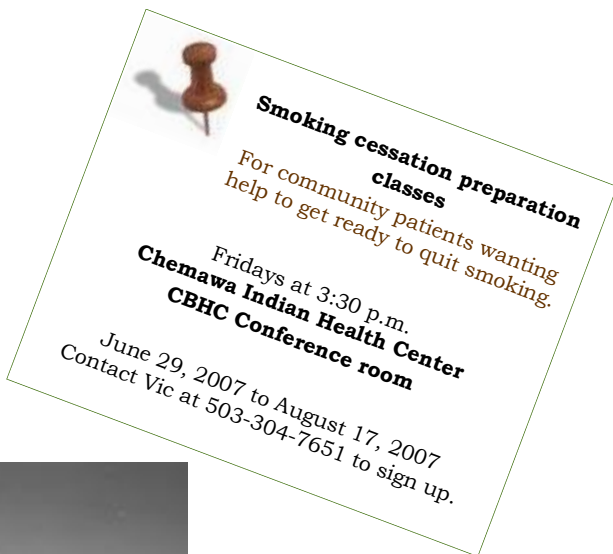
When Starboy left, some of the people went with him, hoping to be adopted into his family. Even before they learned the secrets of tobacco, the people who followed Starboy took a name, and called themselves the Crow.

The ones who stayed with Earthboy to learn to farm were called after the willows of their home, Hidatsa. And so the people were divided into tribes, but the power of tobacco and the pipe kept them from becoming enemies.



Upcoming Events– Powwow Season!

- June 15-17: Delta Park Powwow, Portland, OR.
 July 6-8: Wild Horse 13th Annual Powwow, Pendleton, OR.
 July 20-22: 22nd Annual Seafair Indian Days Powwow, Seattle, WA
 July 27-29: Julyamsh Powwow, Post Falls, ID
 August 10-12: Nesika Illahee Powwow, Siletz, OR
 August 17-19: Grand Ronde Powwow, Grand Ronde, OR
 August 24-26: Klamath Tribes Restoration Powwow, Chiloquin, OR
 September 8: MacLaren's 11th Annual Powwow, Woodburn, OR
 September 25-26: Oregon Tobacco Prevention & Education Program Annual Meeting, Eugene, OR.



Exploitation in Advertising, continued from page 1
 the NMMLP did in New Mexico, they found that 57% of the respondents identified Natural American Spirits as a product of a Native-owned company, and 38% identified Red Man as owned by a Native company.

Why are Native images used to sell tobacco? Two of the messages that are conveyed through the use of these images are: Tobacco is a Native American product, and this product is "natural." Why do these messages help sell the product? Since tobacco is known as a Native American product historically, the use of Native imagery on tobacco makes it appear to be "authentic" tobacco. A persistent stereotype in the US is that Indians are close to nature (have you seen Disney's Pocahontas's lately?), ignoring the existence of Native people today. Most consumers will prefer a natural product over a synthetic one, so the Native image connects the product in the mind of the consumer to the untouched natural state of tobacco.

Perhaps it is the use of Native American imagery that provides progressive, socially-conscious magazines such as Utne Reader and Mother Earth News with the justification for accepting their advertising. They are operating under the same assumptions that many tobacco consumers are; Natural American Spirit tobacco is authentic and natural, and therefore not "as bad" as other cigarettes. What they are missing is that so called natural cigarettes still produce tar and carbon monoxide that make

cigarettes deadly; as a matter of fact, one study found Natural American Spirit cigarettes to contain more than ten times the nicotine as a Camels. Does that sound like a safer cigarette? Unfortunately, this misperception is providing revenue to the second largest tobacco company in the US. And for these magazines who promote earth friendly living to support big tobacco in their marketing of a product that only causes addiction, disease and death is disheartening.

Both of these magazines, Utne Reader and Mother Earth News, are owned by Ogden Publications, Inc., out of Topeka, KS. Some of their other publications include: Natural Home, Herbs for Health, The Herb Companion, American Life and Traditions, and more. All of these publications have a health conscious, earth conscious emphasis to them.

If you are interested in taking action to try to remove tobacco ads from these (and other) magazines, please contact the UAITPEN, bwright@naranorthwest.org, 503-224-1044 ex 238. I have created a sample letter to send to the editors of magazines that accept tobacco advertising from Natural American Spirits that I can provide. Also, in the fall I hope to start some media literacy workshops so as a community we can come together and really look at how this advertising is done and what we can do about it!

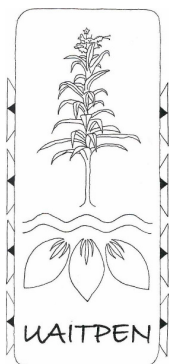
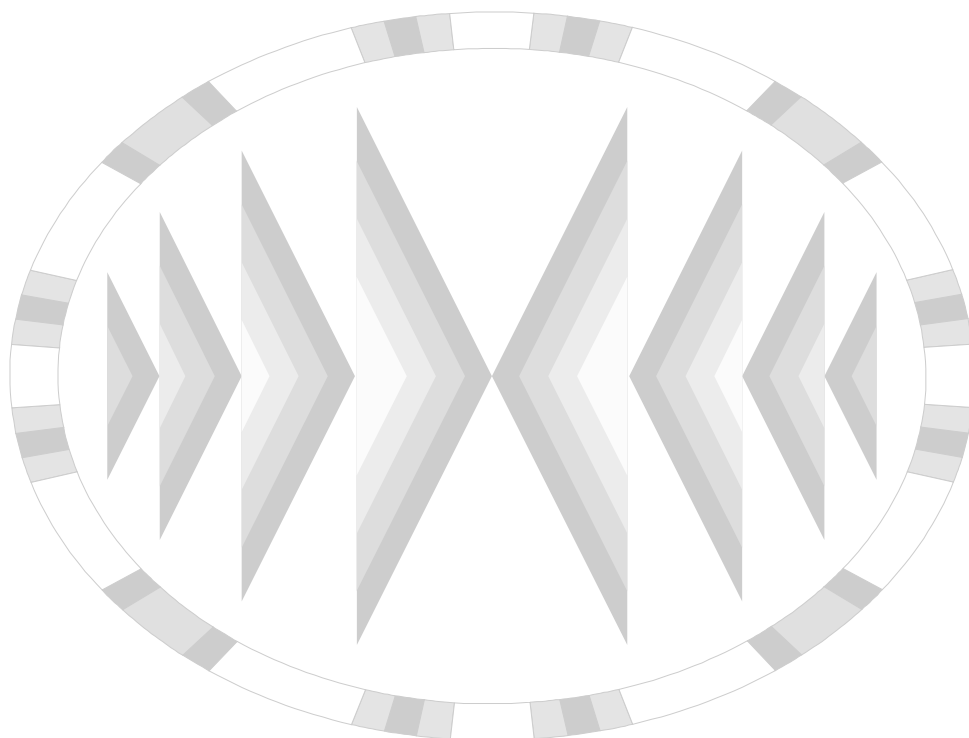




**NATIVE AMERICAN
REHABILITATION
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Program update

Whew! I feel like suddenly everything is coming together. I have been really busy lately. I have been involved in a lot of technical assistance with multiple organizations, including the American Lung Association, the Smokefree Housing Project, The Smokefree Community College Project, The Portland State University Tobacco Task Force, The Portland Public Schools Tobacco Task Force, Multnomah County Tobacco Prevention & Education Program, Oregon TPEP Training Task Force, and more! The primary concern I have been dealing with is making sure that smokefree and tobacco free policies do not allow American Indian people to be seen as in violation of those policies due to sacred or ceremonial use of tobacco. I have had to correct incorrect assumptions as to what

ceremonial use is, and discuss the implications of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act in tobacco policy. It has been extremely rewarding, however, at how receptive all parties have been to this discussion. There is an honest desire to do the right thing. The problem is that mainstream tobacco control advocates have focused on abstinence only policy, so conceptually it is difficult to understand the need for at least the recognition that traditional tobacco use at times does include tobacco smoke, and that it is ok.

Another exciting project I've embarked on is working with Karen McGowan at Chemawa Health Clinic to evaluate the tobacco policy currently in place, and see how we can support tobacco users in quitting.

And of course I am still engaged in the long process of evaluating the policy here at NARA and figuring out how we can strengthen our cessation services.

Happy Powwow Season! I will be at some of our powwows in the state, providing information and hopefully surveying powwow attendees on tobacco use and attitudes towards tobacco prevention policy. Hopefully I will see many Network members as I hit the powwow highway. I am scheduled to be at Delta Park Powwow, Nesika Illahee Powwow, Grand Ronde Powwow and Klamath Restoration Powwow. Have a great summer!

-Becky

