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April 24, 2009

Charlie Smith
Editor

Georgia Straight
1701 W Broadway
Vancouver BC V6J 1Y3
email: letters@straight.com

Dear Charlie:

SUBJECT: Tobacco Advertisements in *Georgia Straight*

The Heart and Stroke Foundation of B.C. & Yukon and the BC Lung Association, which make up the Clean Air Coalition of B.C., want to bring to your attention our concerns regarding tobacco ads appearing in the *Georgia Straight*.

The health risks of cigarette smoking and exposure to second-hand smoke are extensive, well documented and irrefutable. Tobacco use is still the biggest public health problem in British Columbia. It is responsible for 6,000 deaths in British Columbia each year, an average of 16 people each day. Tobacco use continues to claim more years of life and generate more in health care costs than any other known behaviour or product, not only for those who use it, but also for those that are exposed to its deadly toxins.

Today, there are very few ways for the tobacco industry to advertise and promote their products in Canada. However, a loophole exists in federal tobacco control legislation that permits advertising in magazines with over 85% adult readership. So, the tobacco industry exploits this loophole by targeting magazines willing to accept their dirty money.

Does the *Georgia Straight* want to be known as a company that takes money from an industry that knowingly promotes products that when used as intended will lead to the death of half of its users? By printing these ads, the *Georgia Straight* is helping to normalize the use of a product - even encourage it – that has destructive health consequences.

We strongly encourage you to consider stop running these ads.

Sincerely,

Jack Boomer
Director, Clean Air Coalition of B.C.
www.cleanaircoalitionbc.com