Smoking Restrictions Placed On Campus

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To most students it is no surprise that a series of small gazebos have been erected around a few main campus wings, but they are not just for decoration or for taking a load off after class. The college has just recently launched a Tobacco Madness campaign, prohibiting any kind of smoking of tobacco products anywhere on campus except for the designated smoking gazebos which can be found outside L wing, I wing, E wing, the Arts and Sciences building, near the dorms and in the middle of housing 4.

The campaign is aimed at reducing the serious health risks caused by smoking as well as helping to keep the campus clean and cigarette-butt free. Smoking is a preventable disease that also harms non-smokers who may accidentally inhale the second hand smoke. Second hand smoke is very dangerous because more than 4,000 chemicals have been identified in it, with 250 of them known to be harmful to the human body and 50 of them known to cause cancer. On average, 3,000 non-smoking adults die every year due to second-hand smoke. Other health problems caused by second hand smoke include heart disease, stroke, ear infections, pneumonia, bronchitis, and asthma.

“I’m glad that people can’t smoke anymore near the buildings, it’s disgusting and I’m sick of walking through smoke and then smelling like it,” stated Kelly Maury, a senior college student.

Some students remain skeptical, however, that putting a few smoking gazebos around will help the tobacco problem, especially when 1 out of 3 college kids use tobacco products according to a Harvard School of Public Health survey. Included in the survey are cigars and chewing tobacco, as well as cigarettes. If that study is correct, that means around 2,500 students at Stockton use tobacco products. In that case, Stockton may need to build a few more gazebos.

“I don’t like smoking in the gazebos because they are usually crowded and I prefer to meet up with my friends than being around complete strangers,” stated Chris Clarke, a junior college student.

Those who do not comply with new tobacco policy can face administrative disciplinary procedures, such as a campus hearing board or criminal charges that can result in a $200 dollar fine.

The tobacco madness campaign is sponsored by the Risk Management and Environment Health and Safety department at Stockton. To help out with the cigarette litter prevention program or enter the cig butt contest, stop by their table in G wing for more information.

Open Mic Night at the UUCSJS “Greenlight Coffeehouse”

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Jersey Shore hosts an open mic night featuring live entertainment, free light refreshments and free Wi-Fi access on the fourth Friday of every month from 7 to 9 p.m. at the UU Center, 75 S. Pomona Road.

The Greenlight Coffeehouse is open to the public. Performers are invited to sing, play acoustic music, read poetry and more. To register to perform, contact Steve Fiedler at 609-464-0413. For directions, visit www.uucsjs.org.
Tobacco Madness Throughout Stockton’s Campus

Ciggy Butts
For the Argo

What in the heck is Tobacco Madness? Posters with edgy script and images plastered across the campus, banners hanging from ceilings and stairwells, gazebos dotted along Lakeside Lane, videos floating across the TV monitors and message boards—all attributed to this thing called Tobacco Madness.

Oh yeah, and let’s not forget yours truly, the walking, talking campaign mascot! Is there more to come? You betcha! A little song and dance never hurt anybody! And by all accounts, this all out media blast with a singular message is a first time experience for the Stockton community.

Is Tobacco Madness a new twist on an old subject, litter prevention? Yes, it is kind of retro...long before being “green” was fashionable, the Keep America Beautiful campaign formed in 1953 when a group of corporate and civic leaders met in New York City to discuss a revolutionary idea of bringing the public and private sectors together to develop and promote a national cleanliness ethic.

In the ’70s, the United States Forest Service introduced the now iconic Woodsey Owl who is most famous for the motto “Give a hoot — don’t pollute!” So why now, why at Stockton? Why just cigarette butt litter?

Since the enactment of “smoke-free” laws banning smoking in workplaces and indoor public spaces, cigarette butts have become the most littered items in America and the world; Stockton is no exception. The littered butts are a constant eyesore, tiny and strategically wedged into the cracks and crevices of the pavement as a reminder that someone just didn’t care or perhaps even realize the detrimental effect of cigarette butts on the environment.

Following the melt of a beautiful wintry snowfall, our daily building occupants are often greeted by mounds of soggy butts deposited at entrances and doorways, a reminder that someone was smoking in a place where they should not have been. Unfortunately, this is not a sight that has been lost upon visitors, who have been repulsed and dismayed to the point of offering verbal comment.

For years, the College has tried to stay one step ahead of the litter. Surely more receptacles would address the problem. Well, maybe more than that...okay then, maybe more than that! Sweetleaf 100 receptacles burning and smoking in unison! Who says we don’t have a fountain on campus?

The bottom line is, no matter how many receptacles are installed around campus, they continue to be ignored for some reason, requiring the Office of Admissions to have the custodial crew on speed-dial for last minute cleanups in preparation for recruitment and orientation weeks.

The custodial department diligently responds to the calls and has an on-going schedule to deal just with the cigarette litter. With plans underway for the renovation and beautification of College Walk, the excitement and anticipation of a beautiful walkway is met with equal dread of how it may be marred and destroyed by cigarette litter.

So, rather than add yet more receptacles and another cleanup detail, wouldn’t it be a better and longer term solution if the individuals littering were simply made aware of the impact of the litter on our environment and aesthetics of our campus? Hence, the birth of Tobacco Madness.

With the College being located in one of the most environmentally sensitive areas in the nation, the Pinelands National Reserve, and known as “New Jersey’s Green College” for our innovative curriculum in sustainability, environmental studies and environmental policy, we knew something had to be done to stop cigarette butt litter.

The college had two choices, immediately join the growing national trend of becoming a “smoke free” higher education institution, or, start an educational campaign to significantly reduce the amount of cigarette litter.

Acknowledging that tobacco addiction is a chronic disease that often requires multiple attempts to quit and that approximately 70% of smokers want to quit completely, the college decided on the educational approach.

Most people who litter their cigarettes don’t fully understand that the consequences of their actions result in pollution of the environment (a cigarette butt is not biodegradable and contains the residue of approximately 4,000 chemicals that easily leach out into the soil and surface water).

In addition to the chemical pollution, cigarette litter also detracts from the visual aesthetics of our beautiful campus.

Over the next few weeks, the educational campaign will unveil and get the facts out about cigarette litter to both smokers and non-smokers. You will notice a display table located across from the G wing cafeteria entrance, messages on the gallery monitors, new campus maps identifying the location of the gazebos that will be the only permitted smoking areas on campus, sidewalk type performances, a six-foot tall cigarette butt walking the campus, guest speakers, and more.

We welcome your participation, comments and suggestions. Already there has been overwhelming support for Tobacco Madness. We are also taking to heart the concerns expressed thus far and will be looking at ways to improve the program. In the meantime, visit us at the booth in G-Wing or visit our website by typing Tobacco Madness in the Search Box on the Stockton homepage.