

## MEMORANDUM



TO: Alcohol Control Advocate  
FROM: Alcohol Advocacy Resource Center

The Alcohol Advocacy Resource Center (AARC), funded in part by the S.H. Cowell Foundation, was established to complement ongoing national alcohol advocacy activities by providing specialized assistance on media advocacy and communications networking for the alcohol control movement. As part of that mission, we send out "Action Alerts" periodically that will keep you informed about how to translate important events and issues into newsworthy public education opportunities.

Each event provides its own opportunities for media advocacy (i.e., the strategic use of mass media as a resource for advancing a social or public policy initiative). Media advocacy has two major parts; gaining access to the media and framing the issue or seizing the symbols of the debate. The issues described in upcoming Alerts perform both those functions because each provides a fresh news "peg," "angle," or "hook." Where specific, substantive issue information has been made available from other organizations whose work we intend to support, we will attempt to expand on that information, rather than duplicate it.

Each Alert has a standard format that has been designed for ease and speed in familiarizing the reader with the issue, and using it for media advocacy. This format includes:

Issue: a short title or label of the event or action.

Summary: a brief history or explanation.

Objective: ways to use the Alert to further the goals of alcohol prevention.

Media Bites: brief (around 20 words, or what would take less than 15 seconds to broadcast) encapsulations of the issue as a whole or important aspects of it. Bites are ways of framing the issue to your advantage.

Useful Quotes: things said about the issue that may take on added meaning or credibility because of the speaker. These quotes are often also media bites.

Alcohol Industry Arguments and Suggested Responses: common contentions advanced by the industry to discredit or demean their opposition, and ways for the alcohol control advocate to respond.

Suggested Action: these may be activities for communities to use in piggy-backing on national events, ways to access the media for coverage of an issue, or individual elements of national campaigns that can achieve specific goals. Where pre-existing materials have been made available, they will be referenced rather than duplicated.

You may want to keep these Action Alerts in a notebook to reference for a press interview, talk show, or a visit to your local newspaper editorial board.

Michael Pertschuk  
David Cohen  
Co-Directors

Barry R. Rubin  
General Counsel

Frieda P. King  
Operations Manager

Zoe Mikva  
Director of Development

Phillip Wilbur  
Director  
Health Advocacy Resource Center

Judy Butler  
Associate Director  
Health Advocacy Resource Center

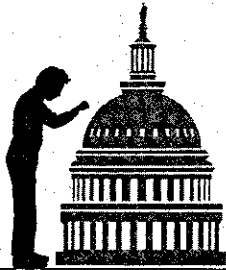
George A. Hacker  
Director  
Alcohol Advocacy Resource Center

Michele Bloch  
Program Officer  
Smoking Control Advocacy Resource Center

Nancy Stefanik  
SCARNet Manager

Administrative Assistants:  
Erla Konny O. Daly  
Laurel Harris  
Helen Lichtenstein  
Richard Lucas

Board of Directors  
Patricia Bauman  
Richard Bolling  
Richard Paisner  
Leroy Richie  
Jack Sheehan  
Joan Shorey  
Linda Tarr-Whelan  
Fred Wertheimer  
Kenneth Young



## ADVOCACY INSTITUTE

*"The evidence presented in this report indicates that beer companies spend approximately \$50 million a year in a sophisticated campaign to strengthen associations between beer, cars and speed in a demographic group at elevated risk of drinking and driving."*

*Beer and Fast Cars: How Brewers Target Blue-Collar Youth through Motor Sports Sponsorships*

Alcohol Advocacy Resource Center  
MEDIA ACTION ALERT  
May 18, 1990

Michael Pertschuk  
David Cohen  
Co-Directors

Barry R. Rubin  
General Counsel

Frieda P. King  
Operations Manager

Zoe Mikva  
Director of Development

Phillip Wilbur  
Director  
Health Advocacy  
Resource Center

Judy Butler  
Associate Director  
Health Advocacy  
Resource Center

George A. Hacker  
Director  
Alcohol Advocacy  
Resource Center

Michele Bloch  
Director  
Women vs. Smoking  
Network

Nancy Stefanik  
SCARCNet Manager

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### Issue: Beer Company Sponsorship of Motor Sports Events

#### Summary

American brewers spend up to \$50 million a year linking beer, cars and speed in the minds of consumers most likely to drink and drive, according to a report released by the Marin Institute for the Prevention of Alcohol and Other Drug Problems and the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety.

The year-long study investigated what brewers spend on and how they view motor sports events. Researchers visited fourteen events in Northern California and conducted interviews and focus groups with more than sixty high school students at nearby high schools. Among the report's findings:

- o Of all sports sponsors, brewers are second only to the tobacco industry in amount of money spent.
- o Three of the four top sports sponsors are beer companies.
- o Motor sports receives the most sponsorship money of all types of sports.
- o The annual growth of sponsorship is expected to be triple that of advertising.
- o Brewing company executives and professional race car drivers alike are candid about the purpose of motor sports sponsorships: to sell beer.
- o The highest rates of arrest for drinking-driving in 1988 were among 18 to 24 year olds. The majority were men in traditional blue-collar occupations.
- o The typical drag racing fan is a young, single, male, working class consumer.
- o Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death of teenagers, taking more than 4,000 lives annually.

Acting on the report, the National Coalition to Prevent Impaired Driving (NCPID), a broad coalition of public health and traffic safety organizations, is calling for an end to brewery sponsorships of motor sports as part of its Summer Safe-Driving Campaign, the slogan for which is "Drive Alcohol-Free." The Coalition held a press conference in Washington, D.C. on Monday, May 21 to launch its summer campaign and announce its symbolic sponsorship of motor sport participants who refuse alcohol industry funding. Coalition Chairman Alexander C. Wagenaar of the University of Minnesota School of Public Health echoed former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop's call a year ago for the elimination of official sponsorship of sporting events by the alcohol beverage industry, and of alcohol advertising and promotion that portray activities that can be dangerous when combined with alcohol use.

### Objectives

1. To expose the beer industry's cynical targeting of populations already at high risk of drinking and driving.
2. To associate beer industry targeting with recent tobacco industry marketing embarrassments such as Dakota and Uptown cigarettes.
3. To encourage greater government regulation of beer industry marketing practices, particularly warning messages in alcoholic beverage advertising.
4. To raise awareness of the role drinking environments play in conditioning people to use alcohol in high-risk situations, and thus the need for greater regulation of industry marketing and advertising practices.

### Media Bites

- o Fast cars and beer are a losing combination, not a racing formula.
- o Beer contributes as little to auto racing as cigarettes to tennis.
- o Are the brewers using DUI death statistics to target their best market?
- o Do we really need two and a half hour beer commercials?
- o Here's the message from a 200 mile per hour race car billboard: drinking and driving mix; they don't.
- o Beer and fast cars don't mix, on or off the track; it's time the brewers knew "when to say when."
- o We want freedom from drug-sponsored sports.
- o Every one of us pays for brewery sponsorship of motor sports -- on the highways, in hospital emergency rooms, and so on.

## Useful Quotes

"If we are sincerely concerned about the health of the participants and the health of those who watch a sporting event, then our messages should consistently underline a healthy lifestyle."

Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Louis Sullivan, talking about tobacco company sponsorship of sporting events at a press conference in Washington, DC, 2/23/90

"The beer industry is employing highly questionable marketing practices that exploit working class youth. To sell more beer, the industry is actively strengthening associations between drinking and driving. Targeting a group at pre-existing risk for the intersection of dangerous driving and drinking can only be called irresponsible."

David Buchanan, Dr. P.H., Univ. of Mass. School of Public Health (at Amherst), author of the study, Beer and Fast Cars: How Brewers Target Blue-Collar Youth through Motor Sports Sponsorships.

"Put simply, alcohol and driving do not mix; nor do beer and fast cars. Beer sponsorship of sport racing and other motor sport events, drivers, teams, broadcasts, and race tracks, added to the mix of the heaviest driving and drinking season, summertime, is a sure recipe for disaster."

Alexander C. Wagenaar, PhD, chair of the National Coalition to Prevent Impaired Driving, press conference statement, 5/21/90."

"Coors is sold on sports because sports sells Coors. We hum that on our way to work..."

Steve Shafer, Sport and Special Events Manager for Coors, "Banking on Leisure" transcripts, published by the International Events Group, Chicago, 1985, quoted in Beer and Fast Cars: How Brewers Target Blue-Collar Youth through Motor Sports Sponsorships.

"Events as a marketing and media vehicle are one of the most involving and intimate of all vehicles. They reach and touch people like no other media can because they allow a company and its products to spend quality time with its customers..."

"Integrating Sponsorship into the Advertising and Marketing Mix," Special Events Report, 4/17/89, quoted in Beer and Fast Cars: How Brewers Target Blue-Collar Youth through Motor Sports Sponsorships.

"The workshop recommendations are not meant to punish the alcohol-impaired driver or harm the alcoholic beverage industry. They are designed to separate the act of drinking from the act of driving."

Surgeon General Dr. C. Everett Koop, testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, 6/15/89.

"The car is a major icon of youth culture. Given the number of deaths caused by drunken driving, it's frightening that the beer industry is sending the message that alcohol and fast driving mix."

David Jernigan, Associate Director, the Marin Institute, San Francisco Examiner, 5/15/90.

"...brewers are responsible corporate citizens, sensitive to the problems of the society in which they exist, and their advertising should reflect that fact...Beer advertisements should not associate or portray beer drinking before or during activities in situations which require a high degree of alertness."

Brewing Industry Advertising Guidelines, United States Brewers Association, Inc.

"You got to know how to control it [drinking and driving]. Like last time, I had eight beers and I wasn't even messed up."

A teenager interviewed for the study, *Beer and Fast Cars: How Brewers Target Blue-Collar Youth through Motor Sports Sponsorships.*

### Industry Arguments and Responses

**Argument:** Marketing does not cause people to drink and drive a car. It does one thing only: create brand preference among folks who have already made a choice to drink.

**Response:** The four fundamental objectives of all advertising are: 1) to ensure repeat sales among an existing consumer base; 2) to create brand switching among extant consumers; 3) to promote increased sales among an existing consumer base; and 4) to create new sales or convert nonconsumers into consumers. There are only two industries in the world that deny their intentions to increase the amount of sales to current consumers and to bring in new customers: the alcohol and tobacco industries.

**Argument:** Beer is no different from any other product. We are marketing a legal product, and have the same rights to free speech and to advertise as any other producer.

**Response:** Beer is not like bread that you can eat safely whenever you are hungry. It is a drug that creates dependence and intoxication. There is nothing in the United States Constitution that protects the right to advertise a dangerous product in dangerous ways.

**Argument:** This study is from a bunch of neo-prohibitionists who simply want to bash the beer industry.

**Response:** The study is not anti-alcohol but pro-health. It says nothing against beer itself; it only challenges questionable marketing practices of beer producers.

**Argument:** Public health advocates are patronizing working class people. Working class people have just as much ability to choose when to drink as anyone else, and need no special protection.

**Response:** On the contrary, it is the industry that demeans working class people by exposing them to far more messages to drink than they need in order to "get the message."

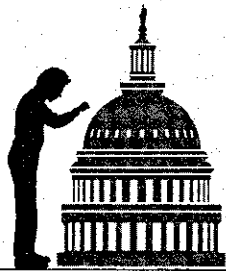
**Argument:** If you remove alcohol and tobacco sponsorship from professional sports, we will all have to pay to watch sports on television.

**Response:** We are already paying, on the nation's highways, in its emergency rooms, and so on. We need to encourage other sponsors to move in when the beer and tobacco companies move out.

### Suggested Activities

1. Localize the report by going to a nearby racing event. Take pictures of the patrons, the bunting and concession stands, the bottles in the parking lot afterwards, and so on. Include these pictures with copies of the report in press packets distributed to local media outlets, along with figures about local DUI deaths among teens, and over summer holiday weekends.
2. Organize local youth response to the report, including testimonials from recovering teenage alcoholics about the effects of beer-sponsored events, and the theme that youth have the right to enjoy sports without being asked to drink.
3. Write an op-ed piece/meet with local editorial boards regarding the irresponsible marketing practices of the brewers and the need for responsible beverage service at the events (e.g. cut-off of service in the last hour of the event, monitoring of parking lots, service in cups no larger than 12 oz., use of trained servers age 25 or over, etc.)
4. Find local motor sport drivers who refuse to accept alcohol (and tobacco) sponsorship. Ask if they'll accept NCPID symbolic sponsorship, and offer a "Drive Alcohol-Free" decal for their vehicle. Call a reporter to cover the driver's next race/event.
5. Join the National Coalition to Prevent Impaired Driving, and promote its summer campaign, "Drive Alcohol-Free." Call (202) 659-0054 for details.

The Marin Institute for the Prevention of Alcohol and Other Drug Problems contributed major portions of this Action Alert.



**ADVOCACY INSTITUTE**

*"What is a drunken man like? Like a drown'd man, a fool, and a madman: one draught above heat makes him a fool; the second mads him; and a third drowns him."*

*William Shakespeare, Twelfth Night*

Alcohol Advocacy Resource Center (AARC)  
**ACTION ALERT**

May 15, 1990

**Issue: Anheuser-Busch Launches Summer Swimming Pool Promotion**

**Background**

Anheuser-Busch is beginning a summer promotion for its Budweiser, Bud Light and Bud Dry beers. According to Advertising Age, Anheuser-Busch will give away 100 built-in swimming pools with a giant Budweiser label at the bottom of each pool, similar to those seen in some Budweiser television commercials. This promotion will cost over 30 million dollars and will rank as the "biggest single-theme promotion in Anheuser-Busch history." There will be point-of-purchase activities based on the pool theme for Memorial Day, July Fourth and Labor Day. Image ads will appear throughout the summer utilizing the "Budpools" theme.

Current research shows that a person under the influence of alcohol is much more susceptible to drowning than a person who is sober because of disorientation, exacerbation of thermal responses to water temperature, and impairment of psychomotor skills and breath-holding time.

Approximately 6,171 people drowned in the United States in 1985. Drowning rates are highest among very young children aged 0-4 (4 per 100,000) and among young adolescents and young adults aged 15-24 (4 per 100,000). According to an ongoing study of Maryland drownings at the Johns Hopkins Injury Prevention Center (funded by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), the involvement of alcohol in drowning deaths is highest among 20 to 34 year-old men. Between one-half and two-thirds of the victims were intoxicated. This age group is also a prime target of beer marketers.

Drowning is the third leading cause of accidental death in the United States. Unlike motor vehicle crashes, where the percentage of alcohol-related involvement, in fatal crashes, particularly, has declined during the 1980's, alcohol-involved drowning has not abated. In fact, the incidence of alcohol involvement in young adult drownings appears to be significantly in excess of alcohol's involvement in motor vehicle crash fatalities.

Drownings among adolescents and young adults occur most often during swimming or boating activities. Boating accounts for about 17% of drowning deaths; NIAAA-reported research concludes that at least 60% of all boating deaths are alcohol-related. Alcohol was detected in the majority of adults who drown while swimming or boating.

Michael Pertschuk  
David Cohen  
Co-Directors

Barry R. Rubin  
General Counsel

Frieda P. King  
Operations Manager

Zoe Mikva  
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Evidence suggests a number of ways in which alcohol is involved in drowning deaths. It impairs judgment and allows persons to put themselves in inherently dangerous situations they might otherwise avoid. Exposure to alcohol induces clumsiness. Alcohol may heighten depression or anxiety in some individuals, thereby contributing to suicides by drowning. Additionally, sober persons may drown as the result of the actions of others who have been exposed to alcohol, as, for example, when an inebriated boat operator causes an accident leading to fatalities among passengers, swimmers, or other boaters.

The issue here is a failure to tell the whole story. Anheuser-Busch's promotion, as well as its many advertisements that link beer drinking with boating, beach recreation, and even swimming (a Bud Dry ad shows diving women becoming beer bottles!) assume that anytime is an acceptable time to drink. The public health consequences are purposely ignored.

### Objectives

1. To raise public awareness of the dangers of combining drinking alcoholic beverages with water activities, especially swimming.
2. To note inappropriate alcoholic beverage advertising associations (such as the one between drinking and swimming) and strengthen efforts to place warnings in advertising.

### Media Bites

- \* Each "Budpool" label should come with a warning: "Don't drink and dive."
- \* Anheuser-Busch's combination of swimming and beer is a potentially dangerous brew.
- \* Drinking like a fish doesn't make you one.
- \* This promotion for Bud Dry is all wet.
- \* Don't drain the Bud unless you drain the pool.
- \* This Bud is light on common sense and safety.
- \* How about bud labels in airline cockpits? On a circus tight rope? In a day care center? Next to the President's hot line?

### Useful Quotes

"I am also not afraid to say the "A" word and that word is advertising...Certain advertising and marketing practices for alcoholic beverages clearly send the wrong messages about alcohol consumption to the wrong audiences. These practices include the following: Using advertising that portrays activities ... which are dangerous to do in combination with alcohol use."

Former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, Press Statement, 5/31/89

"Beer advertisements should not associate or portray beer drinking before or during activities in situations which require a high degree of alertness."

Brewing Industry Advertising Guidelines, United States Brewers Association, Inc.

"The societal attention focused on drinking and driving has been effective to reduce alcohol involvement in fatal traffic crashes. We need that same kind of attention turned toward the major public health problem of drinking and drowning. Today, there is near unanimity that beer promotions that feature driving are incongruous and inappropriate. Alcohol promotions that connect intoxicating beverages with water environments should be similarly taboo."

Gordon Smith, Johns Hopkins Injury Prevention Center, School of Hygiene and Public Health

"Full-size, built in swimming pools, complete with a giant underwater, billboard Bud label senselessly obscure the fact that drowning is the 3rd leading cause of accidental death in the United States. And, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, most of those deaths involve alcohol."

George Hacker, Director, Alcohol Programs, Advocacy Institute, Washington, DC

"...alcohol is a widespread concomitant of adult drownings."

"...[S]wimming and boating courses should emphasize the increased hazard of aquatic sports for people who have been drinking."

"...alcohol increases the hazard of water sports just as it adds to the hazard of driving. The words 'or drinking' must be added to the well known dictum, 'never swim after eating.'"

Susan P. Baker, MPH, "Drowning, Epidemiology and Prevention," AJPH, 4/74

#### Suggested Actions

1. Pick up contest entry blanks wherever available and send to Budweiser/Anheuser-Busch with criticisms of this summer pool promotion for the above reasons.
2. Write letters to the editor or op-ed pieces protesting this incongruous connection of beer and water sports.
3. Write your Senators and Representative to point out your concern about this promotional campaign and tie to current proposed legislation to require warnings in alcohol advertising. (see previous Action Alert)
4. Contact local water safety organizations and child safety groups (life guards, coast guard, local search and rescue organizations) and ask them to write to Anheuser-Busch, newspapers, and their Senators and Representatives to protest this promotion.
4. Ask local TV stations that run ads for this promotion (or ads with "Budpools," swimming, boating, or aquatic environments) for time to do a guest editorial on drinking and drowning. This can be done in connection with a summertime theme, and need not singularly attack beer advertising.
5. Where you see point-of-sale promotions for this contest, ask the store manager to post a sign warning of the risks of drinking and swimming. Bring a reporter; invite television cameras.