



Eye on the Westside

By Herb Chase Jr.

Waxman is Winning **Crusade Over Tobacco Road Smells Blood**

In a recent newsletter to his



Westwood constituents, Congressman Henry Waxman wrote: "More children will die from

tobacco use than from AIDS, alcohol, car accidents, murders, suicides, illegal drugs and fires combined." Is it any wonder that Waxman felt compelled to play "David" to Tobacco's "Goliath" for more than two decades? When he was the health committee chairman, Waxman almost beat "Big Tobacco" single-handedly. Just when he was getting the upper hand, the Democrats became the minority party and Republicans replaced him with a "Friend of Big Tobacco." Almost everybody thought the battle had been lostexcept diminutive Henry Waxman. Operating relentlessly from his low profile minority position, Waxman quietly developed and nurtured extensive secret sources of damaging information.

Behind the scenes, he has been cheerleading as well as orchestrating some of the widely publicized exposes which many believe are about to bring the Tobacco lobby to its knees. Recent contradictory disclosures and the leaking of extremely damaging insider information have caused the campaign against the industry to come full circle. Soon the presidents of several major tobacco companies (who "testified" in "innocent unison" before Waxman's old Congressional committee) will again be called to answer Waxman's questions under oath. Did they lie about the dangers of nicotine, did they manipulate nicotine levels, and when did they know nicotine was addictive and dangerous? Others have been jumping on the bandwagon to take credit but when the victory is won, Henry Waxman, more than any other person, will have been responsible for turning defeat into victory.

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