

Low-tar brands' popularity is up

By Jane Johnson

If "kicking the habit" seems impossible, low-tar cigarettes may be an answer.

The market for low-tar cigarettes is rapidly growing with 60 brands of low-tar cigarettes available on the market today.

At UNL, cigarette brands carried have remained the same during the past year, but low-tar brands are growing in popularity.

Gene Meerkatz, vending systems manager, said Merit has become a big seller along with Marlboro Lights in the vending machines.

Frank Kuhn, assistant director of Nebraska Union operations said Kent Golden Lights and Marlboro seem to be the biggest seller at the union north desk.

The vending machines are stocked according to brand popularity at each location. The machine stock is rotated periodically with slow sellers being replaced by new brands or brands that sell.

Meerkatz said many brands may not be available at a certain location due to a small demand for them. Cigarette vending machines have slots for only 30 brands, some of which may be used for varieties such as menthol, 100 millimeter, or low-tar of one brand.

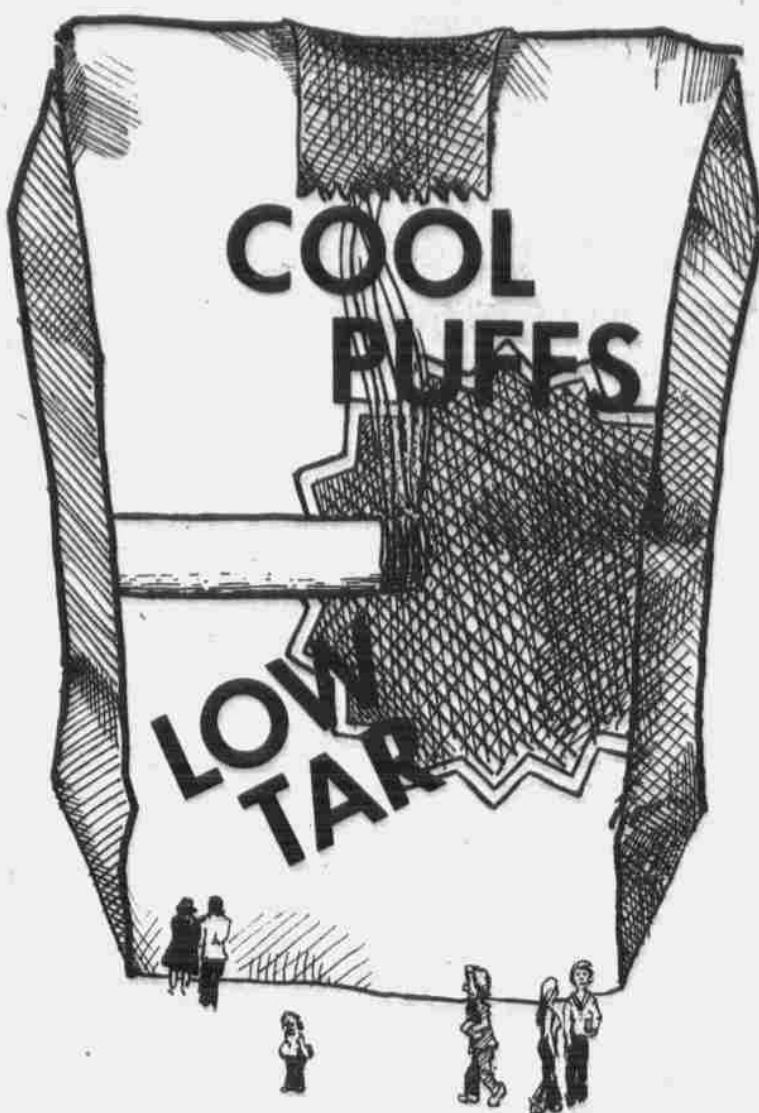
The machine on campus which sells the most is in the South Crib in the Union, Meerkatz said.

If there is a big demand for a certain brand, both Kuhn and Meerkatz agreed they would try stocking it, but the demand would have to be large.

"Products have changed considerably since several years ago. I can remember when brands like Marlboro, Old Gold, Winston and a couple others were the big sellers that had all the business," said Kuhn.

The latest figures of total vending sales show that low-tar cigarettes account for 16.6 percent of the sales, second to Marlboro, Winston, Old Gold and the like at 34.8 percent of the sales.

Kuhn and Meerkatz agreed that total cigarette sales have decreased 5 percent in the last few years. They believe it is because people smoke less.



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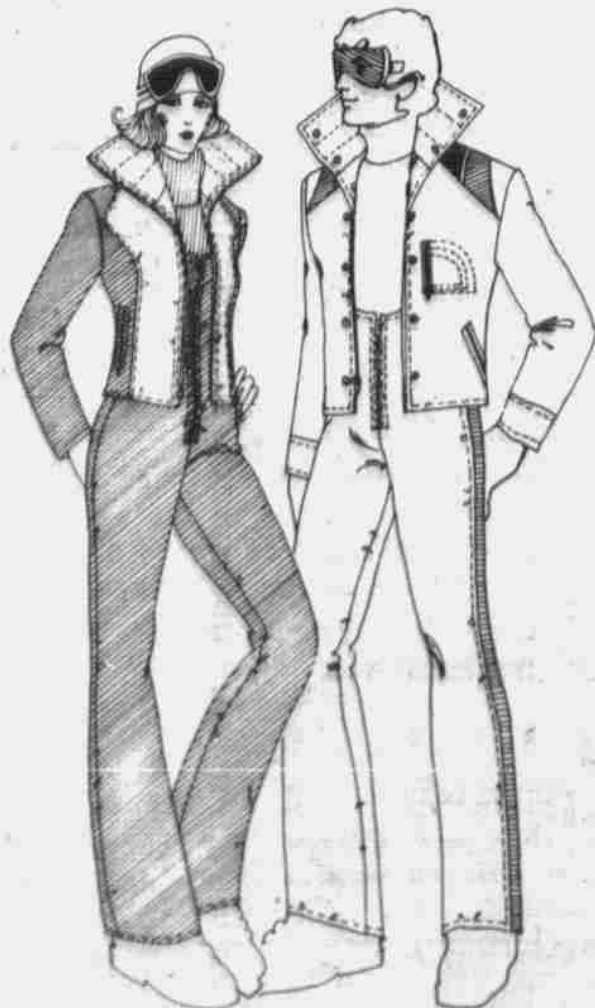
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Garland Bare, M.D., of the University Health Center, said the number of persons attending the stop-smoking clinics offered by the health center has decreased. There were no clinics this semester. Bare said most of those attending past clinics have been older students.

"I feel the smoking tendency is less and has gotten that way in the past three years. Smoking is less socially acceptable now than before," Bare said.

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