

August 14, 1986

Mr. Howard Paine
The Citizen's Stamp Advisory Committee
c/o Stamp Development Branch
U. S. Postal Service Headquarters
Washington, D. C. 20260-6352

Dear Mr. Paine:

I want to suggest for your consideration commemorating a health care problem, a facet of which was first recognized in a medical report fourteen years before the postal service came into being¹ and is now recognized as the number one preventable cause of premature death in the American population². In January, 1989, the 25th anniversary of the Surgeon General's report on smoking and health will be celebrated. Aside from the Surgeon General's efforts, this health care matter has received considerably less attention by our government than is appropriate.^{3,4} In spite of this, the Surgeon General looks forward to a smoke-free society by the year 2000.

Friedensreich Hundertwasser noted at the 35th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights, "Postage stamps are the measure to the cultural standing of a country". From Scott #329, "Founding of Jamestown", issue of 1907 where the tobacco plants wave luxuriously to Scott #1950, "Franklin D. Roosevelt" of 1982, where FDR is pictured clutching his cigarette, there appears to be no evidence of cultural standing change. A number of countries issued stamps in 1980 to commemorate the World Health Organization theme of that year, "Smoking or Health, The Choice is Yours"; America was not one of those. Now, we have a Postmaster General whose family has as one of its major assets Lorillard purveyor of tobacco since 1760, the company that has brought the American public Old Golds of "Not a cough in a carload" fame, Kent with the micronite filter, and, most recently, True cigarettes.

The question may be raised that 25 years is too early to recognize the Surgeon General's report with a stamp. However, it is to be noted that every 1,000 days another million Americans lose their lives to this scourge.

Sincerely yours,

James H. Lutschg, M.D.

JHL/rm

cc: Alan Blum, M.D.
Clay A. Waggenpack, Jr., M.D.
Alfred Soffer, M.D.
National Inter-Agency Council on Smoking & Health
Sharon Iverson

P.S. I chose to direct this letter to you personally, knowing your association with National Geographic. I collect old tobacco advertisements and have one for "Egyptian Deities" with the notation "Mention the Geographic - It Identifies You". I do not have an exact date on the advertisement, but it is pre-1911. Ironically, after that time, Egyptian Deities became the property of Lorillard & Co.