

# American Smoker's Journal

A UNITED SMOKERS ASSOCIATION PUBLICATION

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## Special Report

Conflict of interest at the EPA

## Plus

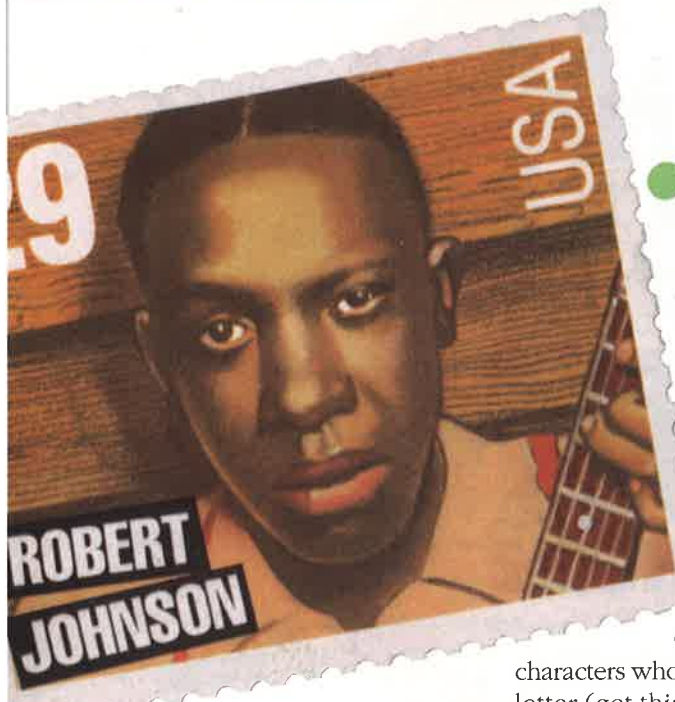
Peter Brimelow on smoking for your health

Ian Hindmarch on the science of pleasure

**U.S. Postal Service Stamps Out Smoking**



# NOTES FROM THE RABBIT HOLE



## STAMP OF DISAPPROVAL

**D**roving its never too late to quit smoking (even after you're dead), the U.S. Postal Service yanked the cigarette out of Robert Johnson's lips. The great blues guitarist, who died in the late '30s at the age of 27, was memorialized with one of those commemorative stamps, but not as the chain-smoking fellow he really was. After looking at the only two photographs of Johnson, both of which had him with a dangling cigarette, the Postal Service simply had it airbrushed away.

In a timely piece of outrage in USA Today, Joe Urschel took a stand against the whole silly mess and its Orwellian implications. "That such a brazen alteration of fact was not met with howls of protest from freedom-loving Americans is either a sad note of acquiescence to puritanical censorship, or a confirmation that we have in fact all turned into gumptionless Pollyannas..."

## NOT IN THE CARDS

**Y**ou'd really think a tough-guy like Nick Fury, the 30-plus-year-old comic book hero, could smoothly hold his own against a short, whiny kid. Wrong. Sammy Blum, age 7 and a whiz who can even count to five, counted five

(5) trading cards with characters who smoked, and wrote a letter (get this) to the New England Journal of Medicine. His father, a doctor, undoubtedly helped him spell. What he spelled was: the end of Nick Fury's fat cigar. Marvel Comics, brought to its knees, vowed that smoke-free trading cards were now the rule of the day.

## HOSPITAL HOSPITALITY

**A**t the up-to-date hospital in Hackensack, New Jersey (where the sign on the door reads "Welcome to Hackensack Medical Center and Smoke-Free Environment") the Designated Area for people to light up is outdoors, across the road. What it is is an overhang, open on three sides to all the worst of weather. And still, at any hour of the day (and maybe night) wan patients can be discovered in their johnny-coats and scuffs, some wheeling awkward-looking intravenous poles, some wrapped in body-casts, but all seeking respite while they possibly catch pneumonia in the interests of Public Health.

## THE SPY WHO WENT OUT IN THE COLD

**T**he CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia is a smoke-free building. Darn proud of it too. When Director James Woolsey was questioned about the doings of the spy, Aldrich Ames (oh sure, you remember Ames: he sold American secrets, blew countless operations) he was hard put to say exactly what Ames had sold. "We're still learning," he told Newsweek. "[We have to] track through what he legitimately had access to and what he might have been able to get access to...Ames was a smoker...so Ames would stand outside with fellow smokers and try to elicit things from them." So "one thing [we've] got to do is talk to the smokers."

The first thing they'll say is, "Let us smoke at our own desks."

## NON SMOKING GUNS

**A** Florida couple, who'd both tested positive for HIV, were allowed to adopt a child. The state agency that screened them (and knew what was in their blood) thought it wasn't polite to tell. They simply told the judge that the couple were "non-smokers," which was good enough for the judge.

## THE BAN WAGON

**N**ot to be topped in the contest as to which town can ban more of what, Raritan, New Jersey, a modest little enclave of 5,800, has just banned cursing. And not only cursing, but any kind of "rude" or "insulting remarks." The ordinance, which whizzed through the Raritan City Council (not a single vote against) seems to prove that hilarity and serious blows to liberty can easily be mixed.