

questions for consideration by members of the journalism community.

While I believe a ban on the advertising of tobacco products is both necessary and appropriate, I agree with the sentiment expressed by Harris Rayl, editor of *The Salina Journal*, that it should not be necessary for Congress to take such action.

The promotion of smoking is nothing short of a national — but largely unrecognized — scandal. The cigarette manufacturers and their customers in the advertising and publishing industry do not believe advertising has an effect upon demand for the same reason they deny that smoking is a cause of human disease. Economics!

Twenty years' experience has demonstrated the failure of voluntary regulation or control. The cigarette industry has an ethical code for advertising, but it is fraught with loopholes and is, by definition, unenforceable.

While the media could exercise independent controls, as Dr. Blum points out with respect to other consumer products, their conduct to date, with notable exceptions, confirms the maxim about the influence of the person who pays the piper.

If media companies are unwilling to act as *The Salina Journal* did by banning cigarette ads or as does *The Washington Post*, which continues to accept ads but does a vigorous job of reporting the smoking and health issue, it will fall to Congress to legislate.

Early in the 100th Congress, Representative Michael Synar and I will introduce legislation regarding the advertising and promotion of what the Surgeon General has called the most preventable cause of premature death and illness confronting our nation. Concern over public health demands the attention of and action by the Congress.

HENRY A. WAXMAN
Member of Congress
(D., California)
Washington, D.C.

Media info

As noted in Dr. Alan Blum's article, there are many publications that no longer carry controversial reports on the many aspects of the tobacco issue, fearing

a withdrawal of tobacco advertising if they do.

This, as Ken Warner points out in his new monograph, *Selling Smoke: Cigarette Advertising and Public Health*, has happened with alarming regularity since tobacco interests have assumed control of many of the major food producers in the United States. Now, many publishers are also worried about their food ads.

Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights and the American Nonsmokers' Rights Foundation provide media information on the rights of individuals to a smoke-free environment at work, in public places and in restaurants.

Our educational work, through the American Nonsmokers' Rights Foundation, has included the release of *Death in the West*, a Thames Broadcasting film about what has happened to real "Marlboro cowboys."

We can be reached at 2054 University Avenue, Suite 500, Berkeley, CA 94704, or by telephone at (415) 841-3032.

VIOLA WEINBERG

Executive Director
Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights
Berkeley, California

Prodding the president

Where there's so much smoke, it's apparently difficult for the media to keep their eyes on the ball. Dr. Alan Blum has helped clear the air.

While the media may be faulted for not fighting the good fight — by rejecting tobacco ads, for one thing — Blum's criticism of us was a bit heavy. It was a reporter for *The Washington Evening Star* who helped prod the federal government into undertaking its landmark study on the effects of smoking on health in the early 1960s. I know. I was that reporter.

I asked President Kennedy at a White House news conference what he was going to do about the problem of cigarette smoking and lung cancer. It was a question [press secretary] Pierre Salinger had not prepared him for. The president said he would give me his answer at his next news conference.

Before the next news conference, which was held about two weeks later, Kennedy announced that the surgeon general of the United States would begin a full-blown study of the effects of smoking on health. Later, at the press conference, I asked the president if the

announcement had been, in effect, a reply to my question. He said it was.

Now, I am certain that Kennedy or perhaps Lyndon Johnson would eventually have ordered such a study, but perhaps I may be permitted the belief that my question accelerated the process. In any event, I feel good about it.

And, I might add, Kennedy's decision to order the study, which did not go down well in the seven (then Democratic) tobacco-growing states, will come to be regarded as perhaps the most important one of his abbreviated presidency.

L. EDGAR PRINA
Syracuse, New York

Hotline addendum

My delight in seeing the story "LDF grants to start Wyoming FOI hotline, help student newspaper" in the January *QUILL* was somewhat tempered by a major omission in the Wyoming portion.

The Wyoming hotline project developed as a direct result of two or more years of work by Associate Professor Dal Herring of Northern Arizona University and attorney David Bodney of the Phoenix law firm of Brown and Bain.

The law firm received an SPJ,SDX First Amendment Award in 1983 for its work with the Arizona First Amendment Coalition. Herring has worked as a volunteer, one-man FOI task force in 10 western states, and he is a past president of the First Amendment Coalition.

With the cooperation of the Society's national FOI Committee chairman, Peter Prichard, Herring received funds from SPJ,SDX to attempt to get FOI hotlines established in western states, using the Arizona hotline as a model.

Establishment of a Wyoming hotline followed Herring's trips to the state to meet with members of the Wyoming Professional Chapter of SPJ,SDX and other Wyoming journalists. Herring and Bodney have also played a major role in working toward the establishment of a hotline in Montana, and they have initiated contacts in New Mexico, Colorado and Utah.

BERT N. BOSTROM
Professor
Department of Journalism
Northern Arizona University
Flagstaff, Arizona