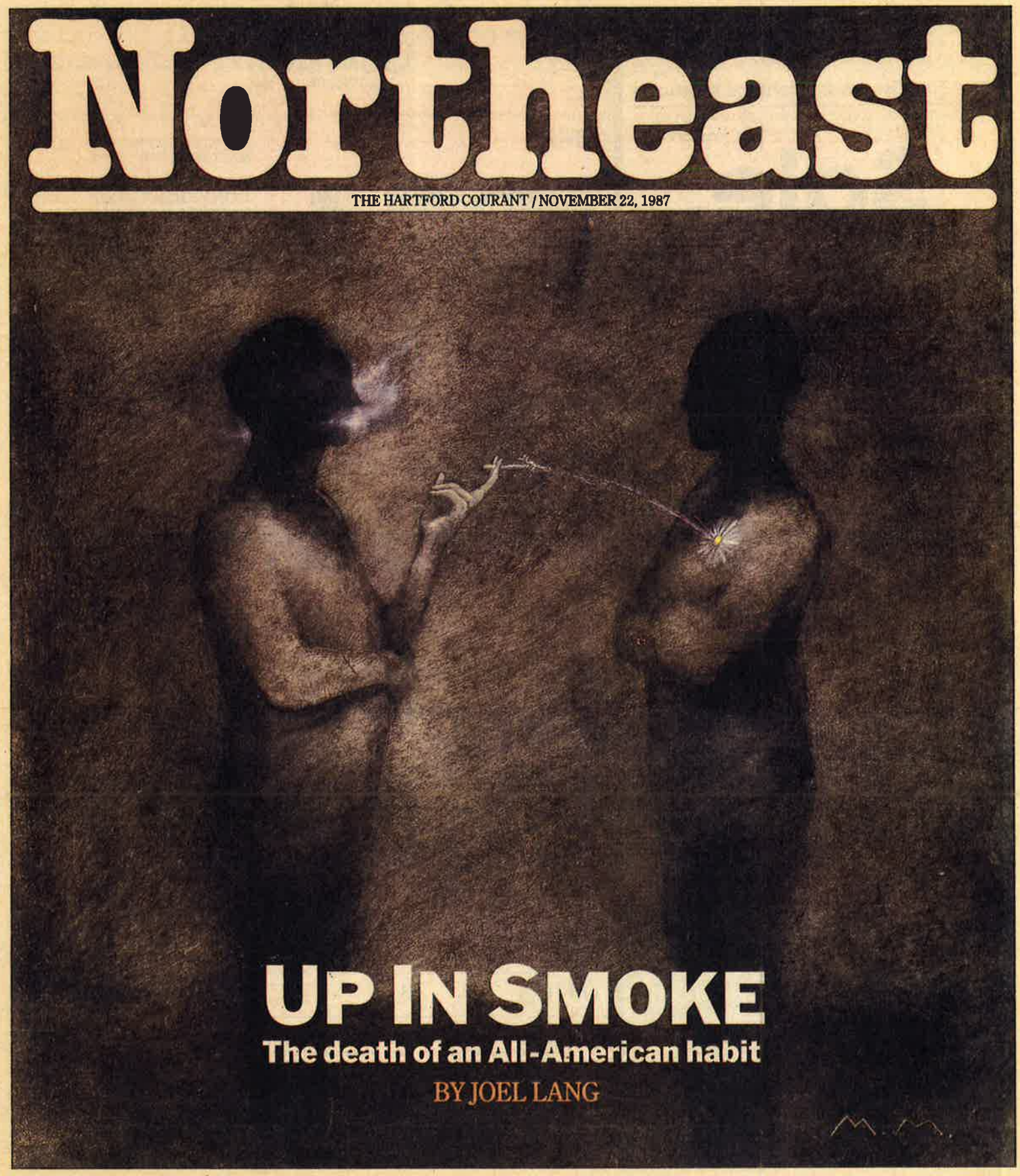
Northeast
THE HARTFORD COURANT / NOVEMBER 22, 1987



UP IN SMOKE

The death of an All-American habit

BY JOEL LANG

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UP IN SMOKE PHOTO BY PHOTOTEQUE

UP IN SMOKE

The death of an All-American habit

BY JOEL LANG

The smoking ban at The Hartford Insurance Group's lovely new building in Simsbury existed a year before Renée Beardsley, senior compensation specialist and 10-pack-a-week smoker, finally surrendered her habit last May. It was a tough fight — her cigarettes on one side, the rest of the world on the other.

Maybe the least of her foes was the hiccups. She developed a bad case when she tried chewing Nicorette gum. "I didn't think that was too cool," she says of the spasms suffered in pursuit of a smokeless jolt of nicotine. "I found out I was chewing the gum too earnestly. My throat felt like it was closing up on me."

She didn't like going to the smoking lounges at work either. "You felt like you were at a bus stop at first. You were in a strange room with a bunch of strange people where you wouldn't normally be."

Without ready access to a cigarette, she lost concentration. "I'd find myself in a conversation with my boss, and my mind would be drifting." Colleagues were no help. "I was very tired of people telling me to give it up. People would subtly drop notes on my desk from the medical department."

At home, her husband decreed she could no longer smoke in the bedroom. His brother had respiratory problems attributed to *his* wife's smoking. Beardsley retreated to the top of the stairs. "I sort of felt like a little girl expelled from class," she says.

Like many smokers, Beardsley gave up defending her habit. Her brand had been True blues. "A cigarette by the name of True blue is like a prostitute named Snow White," she says. Instead, she became guilt-ridden, and more than a little hostile.

"You're a minority now," she says. "You're not part of a majority. I don't think it was ever so noticeable to me as it was in the last year. I can't even say two years. Just in the last year, the pressure has been tremendous."

What is happening with smoking now in the United States needs a name. Calling it an anti-smoking movement doesn't separate it from *the* anti-smoking movement, which consists mostly of health and science professionals and has been around for decades. Neither does it distinguish the movement from the anti-drunk driving movement, the anti-nuclear movement, or any of the other reformist causes that percolate in American society without basically changing it. It needs its own name, like the Suffragist Movement, which led to women getting the vote, or the Temperance Movement, which led to Prohibition.

As matters stand in late 1987, the no smoking phenomenon appears to be on the verge of producing the kind of mass cultural change that seems unimaginable until it happens. Dr. John Patterson, a Canadian physician involved with the issue, was quoted recently as saying, "Looking back 20 years from now, this will probably be one of the biggest revolutions we have ever seen."

By the calendar, it was only 18 months ago, in May 1986, that the smoking ban was imposed at Beardsley's Simsbury office. But at the time it was one of the first corporate offices in the area to do what has since become a trend: to turn upside down the long tradition that accepted smoking as normal.

In most buildings, people can smoke anywhere it isn't specifically banned, such as elevators or lobbies. At The

AP PHOTO

CLEARING THE AIR: Surgeon General C. Everett Koop

Joel Lang is a *Northeast* staff writer.

Hartford's Simsbury building, those who want a cigarette must remove themselves to the smoking section of the cafeteria, to small smoking rooms on each floor, or out the door.

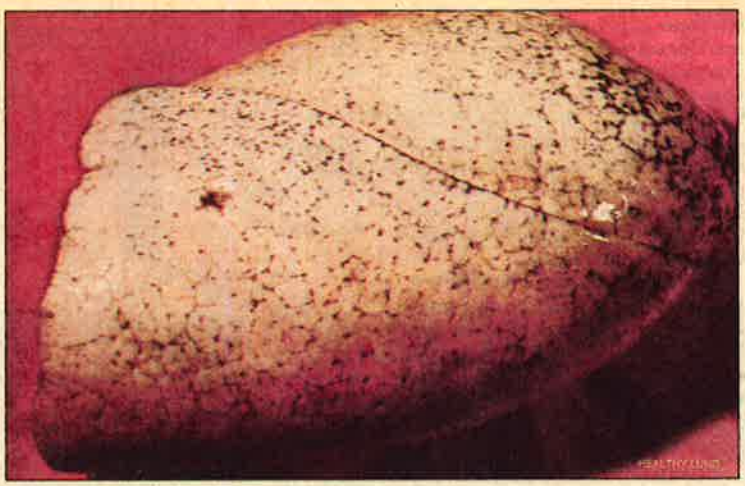
People who like to smoke while on the phone, people who like to smoke while working at a computer terminal, people who like to smoke while reading a report, people who like to smoke when the impulse seizes them — for heavy smokers that's 20 or more times during the workday — have to adjust. Everybody else, an estimated 70 percent of the workforce at the Simsbury office, gets sensory relief. No more stinky cigarette exhaust. No more disgusting butt-filled ashtrays.

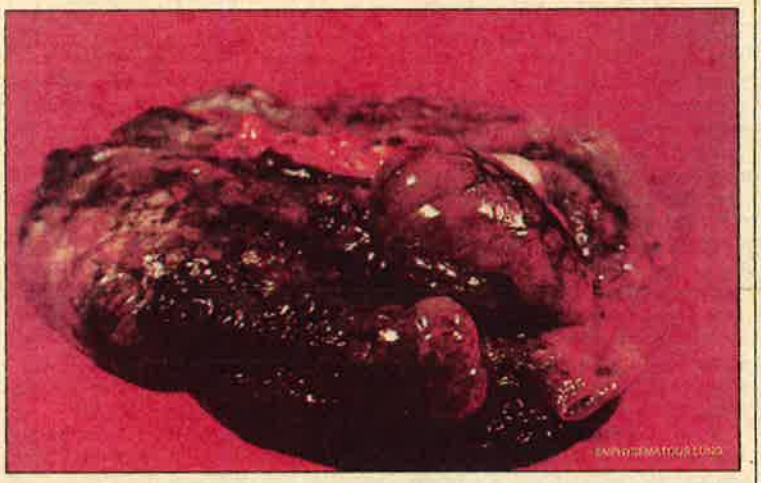
According to company spokesmen and some smokers themselves, the transition from an open-smoking to a closed-smoking shop has gone more smoothly than anyone expected. No smoker went berserk. No fistfights broke out. No one was disciplined under the company's smoking regulations. (Repeated violations may result in dismissal.) There were, however, what might be called smoking incidents.

- When Martha Pivnick's telephone rang in life production services, she reached for a cigarette and lit up — in full public view. "I took a puff and then it clicked," she says. She reacted simply. She panicked. "I screamed into the phone. I felt like the entire company saw me do it, and God was going to come down and strike me dead." The violation was overlooked, by mortals anyway.
- Secretaries didn't exactly lie when they told callers their bosses were unavailable because they were in meetings. But the bosses, who smoked, weren't in their offices near their phones, either. They were in the cafeteria, where they made tables in the smoking section their satellite offices.
- Workers probably exaggerated when they said they were tripping over mice in the first-floor smoking lounge. But there was a confirmed sighting on a recessed lighting track. And once a mouse jumped or fell onto a table in the lounge. Smokers stampeded out. Apparently, the mice invaded from a colony just outside the lounge's exterior door, which opens into the woods at the base of Talcott Mountain.

In Connecticut, the trend toward building-wide smoking bans will almost certainly accelerate under a law passed this year that requires companies employing 50 or more people to provide smoke-free work areas for employees who request them. Strict smoking rules already exist at other area companies, including Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance, Blue Cross & Blue Shield headquarters in North Haven, and The Hartford Courant (where Mike Waller, the paper's executive editor and a heavy smoker, took to holding meetings on an outdoor patio). In July, the Hartford Insurance Group extended Simsbury-like restrictions to all its offices. They belong to the one-third of the nation's workplaces that now restrict smoking.

Workplace smoking bans, however, are just one aspect of the smoking revolution. A sampling of national media reports shows the revolution is occurring, like all revolutions, on both a grand public scale and a very private one.





Last Gasps

The American Lung Association hopes two pictures are worth 2,000 words — and a strong incentive for the smoker to quit.

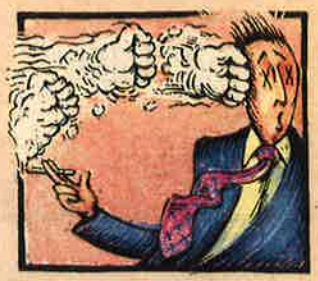
"For thy sake, tobacco, I would do anything but die."
— **Charles Lamb**

It is the growing pressure to ban all forms of cigarette advertising, and it is an advertising copywriter furtively exhaling into a desk drawer when someone walked into the no-smoking conference room where he had been left alone for hours.

It is sports announcer Joe Garagiola feeling free to comment from his press-box pulpit that he likes everything about a young baseball player except his taste for tobacco, and it is a Johnson & Johnson manager gargling mouthwash and daubing his hands with skin cream to hide the odor of his habit from his bosses.

It is a government study proclaiming passive smoke, the smoke that pollutes the air around a smoker, hazardous to health, and it is sophisticated municipalities like Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Beverly Hills, California, imposing anti-smoking ordinances. A *Time* magazine article on the situation cleverly spoke of a "pulmonary consciousness" spreading across the nation. The

Puff Pieces



- Number of 'hits' of nicotine the average smoker needs a year: 70,000

- In the Middle East during the 17th century, people had their heads and hands chopped off for smoking forbidden tobacco.
- The 134-room Non-Smokers Inn in Dallas, Texas, is the only entirely smoke-free hostelry in the country, according to the 1986 Surgeon General's report. If management detects occupants smoking, a $250 cleaning fee is charged.

- Workplace smoking restrictions are almost 100 years old. In 1892, Vermont permitted businesses to ban smoking, mainly to reduce fire hazards. The first state to permit smoking restrictions because of health concerns was Minnesota, in 1975.

Bed Habit

"When I was a youth, I used to take all kinds of pledges and do my best to keep them, but I never could, because I didn't strike at the root of the habit — the *desire;* I generally broke down within a month. Once I tried limiting a habit. That worked tolerably well for a while. I pledged myself to smoke but one cigar a day. I kept the cigar waiting until bedtime, then I had a luxurious time with it. But desire persecuted me every day and all day long; so, within a week I found myself hunting for larger cigars than I had been used to smoke; then larger ones still, and still larger ones. Within the fortnight I was getting cigars made for me — on yet a larger pattern. They still grew and grew in size. Within the month my cigar had grown to such proportions that I could have used it as a crutch. It now seemed to me that a one-cigar limit was no real protection to a person, so I knocked my pledge on the head and resumed my liberty."

— Mark Twain
from *Following the Equator*

involvement of one Beverly Hills anti-smoking activist, Patrick Reynolds, was of special significance. Reynolds' father died of emphysema; his grandfather, R.J. Reynolds, founded the tobacco company that still operates under his name and which two months ago announced the invention of a smokeless cigarette. Patrick Reynolds predicted the Beverly Hills ban would ultimately be found ahead of its time.

The most recent major survey by the U.S. government, released in September, found only 26.5 percent of the population still smokes cigarettes. It is the lowest level in the past 40 years. Smoking peaked in 1949, when more than half of all men and a third of all women smoked.

Though cigarette company revenues are increasing, it is partly because the industry has been raising prices to offset lower sales. According to Agriculture Department figures, Americans spent $31.8 billion on cigarettes in 1986 compared to $23.5 billion in 1982. Cigarettes remain perhaps the single most profitable product ever invented.

"There's just nothing more lucrative than those little white tubes," said one Wall Street analyst in a July cover story in *Business Week* magazine which saw hard times ahead for the tobacco industry. In the same article, another analyst had a gloomy interpretation of the record cigarette revenues. "The handwriting is on the wall," he said. "The idea is getting it while the getting is good."

At *The Courant,* cigarette advertising, much of which has appeared in

Northeast, is declining steadily, according to national advertising manager Bill Richardson. In the first seven months of this year, *The Courant's* cigarette ad sales of $161,000 were almost $100,000 behind those for the same period in 1986. Total revenue for the 1986 calendar year was $345,000. In 1985, it was $359,000. As recently as five years ago cigarette ads were one of the paper's biggest national accounts. Richardson thinks cigarette companies now regard the Hartford area as being in "the forefront of the non-smoking movement."

It is too soon, however, to proclaim that the cigarette is about to follow chewing tobacco and cigars into their status as pungent curiosities. American tobacco companies are compensating for lost sales here by selling more in foreign countries. Camels are a chic smoke in Japan. In the U.S., there are some who think the decline in smoking may have bottomed out, that all the smokers who wanted to quit have, and that those still smoking intend to keep doing so.

Dr. Alan Blum, now at the Baylor Medical Center in Houston, Texas, is one of the most militant members of the medical community's anti-smoking movement. Blum claims to be unimpressed by what others are calling the smoking revolution.

He agrees there's been a change in attitude in the last couple of years, but he said it's confined to the white middle class. "So the in-crowd doesn't smoke. They're more concerned about what happens in restaurants." He worries that the highly noticeable change in middle-class smoking habits will cause the anti-smoking movement to relax its efforts.

"I've always been a pessimist," Blum said. "The industry can gain again." He views it as an insidious enemy whose main tactic is advertising and whose objective is selling poison. People who compare the no-smoking movement to Prohibition miss a crucial difference between alcohol and tobacco, he said. Alcohol consumed in moderation can be safe. But there is no safe way to smoke. Blum said tobacco is the only product sold which is dangerous when used as intended.

Blum regrets that people who smoke have been set off against people who don't. But he said the banning of smoking in workplaces and elsewhere merely represents a return to normalcy. "There's no such thing as the right to smoke on the job. That's the one thing I respect the tobacco industry for, for not

A Dying Industry

- Percentage of deaths in the U.S. in 1984 attributable to smoking: 17.2
  To alcohol abuse: 4.9
  To motor-vehicle accidents: 2.8
  To illicit drugs: 0.2
- Number of lung-cancer deaths in 1986: 130,000
  Percentage attributable to smoking: 85
  Percentage of smokers who do not know that smoking causes most lung cancer: 40
  Who don't know smoking causes cancer at all: 20

SOURCE: The American Lung Association and The American Cancer Society, courtesy of the Sierra Club

Hollywood
Smoke Screens

I'm Crazy For You

"Soon after giving up smoking, there were tolerable days . . . Then there came suddenly a severe affection of the heart, worse than I ever had when smoking. The maddest racing and irregularity, constant cardiac tension, oppression, burning, hot pain down the left arm, some dyspnea (labored breathing) of a suspiciously organic degree — all that in two or three attacks a day and continuing. And with it an oppression of mood in which images of dying and farewell scenes replaced more usual fantasies . . . The organic disturbances have lessened in the last couple of days; the hypomanic mood continues . . . It is annoying for a doctor who has to be concerned all day long with neurosis not to know whether he is suffering from a justifiable or a hypochondriacal depression."

— Sigmund Freud

POSTSCRIPT: Within a week of writing this letter, Freud was smoking again. His addiction to cigars — he smoked as many as 20 a day — continued until his death at 83 from cancer. He had endured more than 30 operations and the removal of most of his jaw.

Who Still Smokes?

Income	Male	Female
Under $5,000	39.4%	32.9%
$5,000-9,999	36.7	32.0
$10,000-14,999	37.1	27.6
$15,000-24,999	35.7	30.1
$25,000 plus	32.1	27.1
Marital Status		
Never married	29.5%	30.2%
Married	33.6	27.5
Widowed	27.9	19.6
Separated or divorced	51.9	45.4
Education		
Less than high school	36.6%	21.5%
Some high school	46.4	39.2
High school graduate	37.1	32.3
Some college	31.0	26.4
Race		
White	33.4%	28.7%
Black	39.1	32.0
Other	33.3	15.3
Occupation		
White collar	27.9%	29.9%
Blue colar	42.7	37.8
Farm	35.6	22.2
Not in the labor force	28.3	25.5

SOURCE: 1983 figures for persons 18 years and older, National Center for Health Statistics

arguing that there is."

It is true that cigarettes have a shorter history than the Marlboro Man would lead us to believe. According to *They Satisfy: The Cigarette in American Life* by historian Robert Sobel, cigarette smoking did not gain wide acceptance in the United States until after World War I when doughboys, generously supplied with free smokes by the tobacco companies, brought the habit home from Europe. Cigarettes originally were a cheap alternative to cigars, used mostly by the poor. In the urban upper class, a few smoked cigarettes as a sophisticated affectation. In polite society, men smoked cigars and women did not smoke at all.

But more than attitudes had to change to allow the lowly cigarette to become a national smoke. Mass marketing cigarettes was impossible before the invention of the cigarette rolling machine in the 1880s. Casual cigarette smoking, lighting up anywhere, anytime, had to wait for the twin inventions of the matchbook and the modern safety match. (The matchbook inventor, a Pennsylvania lawyer named John Pusey, made the mistake of putting the striking surface inside, and sold his idea to the Diamond Match Company in 1895. A few years later, Diamond chemists devised a safer igniting mixture for matches. The earlier mixtures gave off poisonous gases.) Finally, there had to be a cigarette with mass appeal. It was the Camel. Introduced in Cleveland, Ohio, in the fall of 1913, the Camel accounted for 40 percent of all American cigarette sales six years later.

Ironically, according to Sobel, the creator of the Camel was R.J. Reynolds, a confirmed chewer of plug tobacco who believed cigarettes were decadent, appealing to the worst elements of society. He was a businessman, too, however, and in the Camel he managed to put a mixture of American tobaccos that duplicated the taste of more expensive Turkish tobaccos. It was marketed as a premium cigarette, but sold for no more (and cost no more to make) than cheap American blend cigarettes.

By the 1920s, Camels had strong competition from Lucky Strikes and Chesterfields. All that remained to make cigarettes a truly mass product was to convert women. Sobel gives the credit to a Lucky Strike advertising campaign which appealed to women's vanity. "Reach for a Lucky instead of a sweet" was the persuasive slogan. Soon cigarettes had penetrated all segments of American culture. Instead of indicating poor breeding, they were a signature of maturity and sophistication. American icons smoked cigarettes. The image of Franklin Delano Roosevelt engraved in memory has him jauntily clenching a cigarette holder in his teeth. All the movie stars smoked. Marlene Dietrich hardly ever appeared *without* a cigarette. Smoke permeates the classic film *Casablanca*. A shot of an ashtray introduces Humphrey Bogart's Rick.

The highlights of the cigarette's more recent past, of course, have nothing to do with entrepreneurial genius, or presidents, or movie stars. They have to do with a defensive industry and cancer's withering death. The first studies linking cigarette smoking with lung cancer were done in the 1920s. Lung cancer had been a relatively rare disease until the cigarette became popular. The famous Surgeon General's report of 1964 merely certified what hundreds of studies had found over the years: that men who smoked ran a much greater risk of contracting lung cancer. Heart disease and respiratory illness were also mentioned. (The data was less conclusive for women, mainly because women had begun smoking later than men and the cancer took years to develop.) The next year cigarette packages began carrying health warnings. In 1971, the tobacco companies ended television and radio advertising after the government ruled the "fairness doctrine" required the stations to give time to anti-smoking messages.

The medical evidence explains why smokers ought to give up cigarettes. What it doesn't explain is why, after decades of warnings, society suddenly decided that the mere act of smoking was bad. Sometime, somehow, in the last few years, it became impossible for the smoker fitting a cigarette to his lips and striking a match to imagine himself as Bogart. Now he is a junkie, Bogart down and out. The biggest change is one of attitude and mood, things impossible to measure.

Dr. Nancy Rigotti, associate director of the Institute for the Study of Smok-

"A custom loathesome to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain and dangerous to the lungs."

— King James I

ing Behavior at Harvard and author of the chapter on smoking policies in last year's Surgeon's General report on passive smoking, said a combination of factors explains the status of smoking in 1987.

First, the anti-smoking movement that consists of people like Alan Blum and organizations like the American Cancer Society is more vigorous than ever. Second, as more city governments and state legislatures adopt smoking rules, even if they are only mildly restrictive, it makes it easier for other government bodies to do so. And even the weakest no-smoking law implicitly says that smoking is wrong. Similarly, as more businesses impose smoking restrictions, others become less hesitant to follow suit. The businesses also may prefer to restrict smoking in the belief that workers will become more productive and lose less time to illness. Also, Americans in general have become more concerned about health and fitness.

Home Grown

■ Of the major cigarette companies, one has headquarters in Connecticut. It is American Brands of Old Greenwich. In 1986, it had net sales of $8.47 billion and a net income of $365 million.

Domestic cigarettes, including Pall Mall, Lucky Strike, Tareyton, and Carlton, accounted for about 17 percent of sales and 42 percent of profits.

Major subsidiaries make such products as Jim Beam whiskey, Sunshine biscuits, Acushnet golf balls, Foot-Joy athletic shoes, Dexter locks, and Jergens hand lotion. Other subsidiaries are Pinkerton's Inc. security and Franklin Life Insurance. American Brands employs 51,700 in the United States.

■ A second corporation, UST Inc., the holding company for U.S. Tobacco, is a major manufacturer of snuff and chewing tobaccos. Headquartered in Greenwich, UST sells such brands as Copenhagen, Skoal, Bruton, and Rooster. It also sells Dr. Grabow pipes and Zig-Zag cigarette papers.

In 1986, tobacco accounted for 85.6 percent of the company's net sales of $517,996,000. It employs 3,456.

SOURCE: Standard & Poor's stock index.

At Harvard's medical school, Dr. Alan Brandt is writing a book about the social and cultural history of smoking in the United States. He thinks the new, disapproving attitude toward cigarettes reflects a basic change in how Americans view health and the individual. Once the most dread diseases were infectious, ones like tuberculosis, and were seen as a visitation of fate. Then systemic illnesses like heart disease and cancer became the most common killers. For a while, people trusted their fates to doctors and medical technology. Now, Brandt said, "we are a society that places a heavy emphasis on individual responsibility for disease. If someone gets lung cancer, the first question we ask is, 'Did they smoke? Well, what did they expect?' "

This blame-affixing attitude is not limited to cigarette smokers. It also applies to an overweight person who has heart disease or a homosexual who has AIDS. But the shift regarding smokers has been a radical one. Not too long ago, smoking a cigarette signaled independence, sexual competency, and maturity. Now it signals self-indulgence and foolish risk-taking. As more middle-class smokers quit, cigarettes will be more closely associated with the poor and it will acquire further stigma, Brandt said. The change in attitudes toward smoking is definitely cultural. Brandt recently was in Europe. "It's amazing to me," he said, "in France, everybody smokes.

The question remains, however, which came first: no-smoking laws and workplace restrictions or changes in the social norm? At this point, each is feeding the other. There seems to be no resistance at all from smokers, and no organization outside the tobacco industry defending them. The right to smoke in a public place is not on the American Civil Liberties Union position list. The best that smokers have managed in defense of their habit is a few retreating shots fired over the shoulder about the self-righteousness of the no-smoking forces. But they miss their target. It is not the scolding about a bad habit that is objectionable. What is objectionable is the subtler attempt to sanitize people, to sweep strong human appetites out of sight. The middle class, which has declared it bad form to smoke cigarettes, also has declared it bad form to drink too much or eat too much.

The sanitizing impulse is nowhere more evident than at The Hartford Insurance Group's new building in Simsbury. It is a monument to the serene benefits of corporate culture. Pink stone and dark glass, streamlined under the protective shoulder of Talcott Mountain, the building mutely proclaims: Here is wealth. Here is security. Here is cleanliness. Here is order.

Such is the perfect tranquility of the architecture and the setting, that approaching the building on its park-like

drive, one is almost surprised to see small human forms standing in the shady recesses of its entrance plaza. The people — three or four of them on a warm, drizzly weekday morning — look out of place. This is the sort of building that somehow vacuums visitors quickly and invisibly from the spacious lots where they park their transportation capsules to its unseen and giant interior. The people outside must be something the vacuum missed. Their splintered, ungeometric forms — legs splayed, shoulders slouched, arms bent — clash. They are so small and ragged; the building so huge and smooth. They could be scraps of litter. And, in one real sense, they are.

They smoke cigarettes. They have stepped outside for a butt.

But the smokers know there are mice burrowing around the beautiful new building, which reputedly stands on the site of a former pig farm. And the smokers do what people always do when rules run counter to nature. They cheat.

"I do it all the time," said Mark Kowaleske, who bravely confessed in front of a company public relations person while chain-smoking in the first-floor lounge — the one with the mice. "I don't do it during the day, but if I work late I do. I figure if you're here overtime, it's your time."

Martha Pivnick, who overheard, said she too had cheated. But she swore, "I have never cheated on my own. Only with my boss."

The public relations representative said weekend security crews do occasionally find evidence that people were smoking in non-designated areas. Butts and ashes. Mice droppings. ■