

about 500 words

(Year end edition--Kornegay)

Webster defines opportunity as "a good chance for advancement or progress." In terms of the capabilities of the scientific community today, the answers to many questions about smoking and health should be well within reach. The opportunities to advance our scientific knowledge should be literally boundless.

But we are faced with never-ending obstructions. We see propaganda of all sorts; attempts constantly are made to mar the image of the tobacco industry, and to destroy its credibility. Through these oceans of dissent we remain staunchly unified. We maintain our commitment in the field of scientific research with determined objectivity and a willingness to cooperate.

In 1969, the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare pointed out the great need for cooperation when he said, "I believe the ((tobacco)) industry and government working together offers great promise of finding the answers we need. I am confident our joint effort will yield a cooperative research program which strongly promotes the public interest."

Said a late 1970 Advertising Age editorial:

"The consumer's legitimate need for information...is one of the major irritants operating between business and the public. If it is resolved only on the basis of lawsuits and legislation, the infection will persist. Fortunately, as in the case of the tobacco people, we

are beginning to see affirmative efforts by business which suggest that the outlook is changing."

The outlook is indeed changing. Avoiding what may very well have been years of unnecessary litigation, the industry volunteered to take cigarette commercials off the air. The industry volunteered to list the Federal Trade Commission's "tar"-nicotine test figures in cigarette advertising. And the industry voluntarily put more money into smoking-health research than any other individual agency, government or private.

There has been little cooperation. When the American Cancer Society announced the results of the "smoking-dog" experiment, The Tobacco Institute asked that the detailed underlying data be made available to an expert panel for impartial review, and was refused.

The Surgeon General of the U. S. Public Health Service, an "impartial" observer, stated in public that cigarette smoking is "a dirty, smelly, foul, chronic form of suicide."

The odds sometimes seem stacked against the industry, but, as many seem to agree, the industry is far from its way out. A research analyst for New York based Oppenheimer & Company recently projected that "the cigarette industry is on the eve of fresh growth."

The New Year may introduce many new problems; it may underline many of the old nemeses. But in the end, we believe scientific objectivity will prevail.

One of mankind's inherent instincts is self perpetuation. And if we persevere and continue to search for the facts, we will discover what Mark Twain once called "the most valuable thing we have:" Truth.

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