

JANET S. HUGHES  
WEEKLY REPORT  
March 13, 1991

SOUTH CAROLINA GROUPS

**UPDATE ON \$.05 TAX INCREASE:** In last weekly report I reported Rep. Marion Carnell proposed a \$.05 increase in state cigarette excise taxes (H3660). This week he has offered an amendment to the Appropriations bill which would increase the tax to \$.025 cents per pack. Sounds like he may be serious in trying to get an increase in excise taxes.

**UPDATE ON RESTRICTIONS:** H3677 sponsored by Rep. Cromer, Richland County, has offered an amendment to the Clean Indoor Air Bill. This bill would include the food-consumption or dining areas of restaurants and cafeterias among places where it is unlawful to smoke, except in designated smoking areas.

**MEETING WITH RJR LOBBYIST:** Today I met with the real RJR lobbyist, Jim Fields. My main contact previously has been with Sterling Smith, who represents TI. Mr. Fields told me that Rep. Carnell pulled him to the yesterday and stated that he is being overwhelmed with letters and calls to his office from smokers regarding the proposed increase in state excise taxes. Mr. Fields stated he said "Oh, is that right" to Rep. Carnell but inside that he was laughing and saying great! So, the letter writing from the Laurens/Clinton meetings are working. The meeting was mainly to introduce myself and to inform him of what groups are doing in SC. I am assuming he was interested in hearing what I had to say; however, he kept one eye on me while I was talking and one eye on what was going on outside his office. Perhaps he's just a person that can do two things at once.... Needless to say it took me approximately 5 minutes to meet with him.

**Columbia:** Sent out 66 letters to Columbia active and associate members to attend the 3/26 meeting.

**Greenville:** Group met on 3/5, twelve folks attended. Minutes from Feb. meeting were read. Susan Netherton won the matchbook calculator for bringing in the most signatures, 2 and 1/2 pages. Collected \$12.00 in dues. Voted and agreed to set-up a fund for needy families called the "Hardship Fund". Donations will be taken at each meeting and they can be in the form of money, food, furniture, or services. Group member offered to store furniture in her garage. Joe and Linda Smith were elected as the Coordinators for the USDBA Boat Races on June 2.

Pat & Lori Childs reported to the group about the Greenville County Council's proposal for a smoking ban "goes down in flames" (article in local newspaper. Greenville County Administrator last month proposed a smoking ban in county owned buildings, which is contrary to the Clean Indoor Air Act. However, the county administrator wrote the attorney general for an opinion anyway. The attorney

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general's opinion was "under state law local governments can't ban smoking in their buildings". Pat & Lori reported to the members that they had spoken and written to the county administrator when they learned that he was proposing a smoking ban and told him that it was against state law, provided him with information about ETS and invited him to attend one of their meeting to witness how serious smokers are about protecting their rights. Pat and Lori also reported that they wrote the attorney general's office introduced themselves, quoted specific sections out of the Clean Indoor Air bill, provided his office with information on the ETS and asked that he consider smokers and maintain his stance on the bill. Therefore, they felt they had a hand in maintaining the spirit of the bill and educating the county administrator and the attorney general's office on smokers' rights and their knowledge of state law.

Pat & Lori also reported that there was not a lot of opposition (from vendors or smokers) to ban cigarettes in vending machines so they decided not to attend the meeting on 3/12. Lori reported that she polled approximately 10 vendors in their area and only 2 would have been willing to go to the meeting to opposed this proposed ordinance. Next meeting is scheduled for 4/2/91, 7:30 pm, Shoney's in Greer, SC.

Spartanburg: Group met 3/5, five persons attended. Group discussed methods for recruiting new members. Discussed placing public service announcements in the local newspaper. Discussed signing up people to vote, bringing a new member to next meeting and a toy or food drive. Also encouraged members to call and write the house member regarding the possible increase in excise tax. Next meeting scheduled for 4/2/91.

Florence: No activity this week.

Anderson: Group met on 2/14/91. Next meeting scheduled for 3/14/91.

Laurens/Clinton: Follow-up meeting scheduled for 4/9.

Greenwood/Abbeville: Carol again did her own thing on 3/12. Seventeen persons attended. Carol reported that this was also going to be a good enthusiastic group. She also recruited two new members for her Anderson group from this meeting and that she has now become a real "celebrity" in the Greenwood, Abbeville, Laurens and Anderson area since CHOICE magazine. Carol reported that she has had 5 folks from these areas walk up to her and tell her that they read about her in CHOICE. She stated that the group was mainly retired folks and that one of the attenders was the brother of a former congressman in SC (William Jennings Bryan Dorn). Carol reported this person George Dorn to be a veteran of WWII (pilot) and an avid smoker and spokes person for smokers' rights. Carol said he spoke for 30 minutes on his right to smoke and she didn't have the nerve to stop him he was so eloquent in his speech. During meeting group also wrote 17 letters to Rep. Carnell.

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Letters were mailed this morning. Follow-up meeting scheduled for 4/16.

Charleston: Group met on 2/25/91, next meeting scheduled for 3/25/91.

Beaufort: Group met on 2/28, eight persons attended. More about meeting later.

Sumter: Follow-up meeting held on 2/19/91. Group searching for meeting place this week. Thought they had a place at the American Legion previously, but still need to finalize.

#### GEORGIA GROUPS

Macon/Milledgeville: Group met on 3/12, six persons attended a luncheon meeting. I also attended this meeting. Gave a mini LTS during this meeting. Provided members with ETS information; a batch of petitions; thank you and regret cards; updated active member list; talked about broadening their group & visibility by meeting with local VFW, American Legion groups; gave an update on SB251 and gave information about the LTS in the fall. After the meeting group appeared to have some "renewed energy" and wants to organize ahead of time this year so they can set-up a booth at the Macon County Fair. Last year, group wanted to do this; however, plans were made to late in the year. Group also reported to me that Rep. David Lucas, from Macon, was instrumental in pushing the anti-discrimination law through the house committee last week. I encouraged this group to write him thank you letters and invite him to one of their meetings. Max Montgomery, Leader, reported that he works at GEIGO insurance and that 100-150 smokers from GEIGO made phone calls to the Lt. Governor's office in favor of SB251. Max stated that the person he talked with at the Lt. Governor's office was quite "rude" but other folks that called reported that the person they spoke with was not "rude" or "friendly" but just took down the information.

Jonesboro: Group met on 2/5/91. Group's next meeting is scheduled for 3/4/91. More about meeting later.

Savannah: Group met on 3/4/91 and seven persons attended. Barbara Jacobs reported that she will no longer be able to serve as Leader for the group. She has moved to Tybee Island to restore a 100 year old home; however, she will try to continue to attend meetings. However, Barbara has also organized a group of 17 smokers who bowl every other Sunday. Three of the 17 folks attended monthly meetings. The others do not attend the meetings; however, write letters and make calls when necessary. Barbara will try to recruit a leader at the next meeting scheduled for 4/1; however, if she is unable to do this the 17 folks will still bowl every other Sunday and could combine smokers' rights business with fun. Barbara also reported as a result of the 14 public service announcements regarding the smokers' rights meeting a reporter, John Young, from WTOG Channel 11 showed up at this meeting.

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Barbara said it was obvious he was an anti-smoker; however, he did interview some folks. I'll pursue getting a copy of the video.

Gainesville: A public hearing was held on 3/12 to discuss the Chamber of Commerce's proposal to ban smoking in the city. Have been unable to reach one of the group members that was to appear and speak out for smokers at this meeting. More later.

Columbus: Group scheduled to meet 3/19, 7:00 pm at VFW.

Valdosta: Follow-up held on 2/26/91. Next meeting scheduled for 3/25.

Albany: Follow-up held on 2/27. Next meeting scheduled for 3/20.

#### FLORIDA

Orlando: Presently group in-active.

Lakeland: Will merge the 3 or 4 Lakeland active members with the Bradenton group once they get organized.

Ocala: Group met on 2/21. Group's next meeting scheduled for 3/21.

Jacksonville: SRM held on 3/6. Follow-up meeting scheduled for 3/20 at Marina Hotel at St. John's Place. Sent out 104 letters to former Jacksonville group members (Walton's), 3ZIP, 5ZIP's and my attenders. Hopefully, this will encourage more attendance at the follow-up.

Lake City: SRM held 3/7, thirty eight persons attended. An angry group, especially since six of them were employed by a large company that they feel are trying to pressure smokers to quit their jobs. A union company that makes rechargeable batteries and employs 1400 persons will go smoke free 7/1/91. Company also is testing pre-hires for nicotine levels. During meeting group wrote 30 letters to Senator Walker encouraging her to not support a more restrictive Clean Indoor Air bill and to support an anti-discrimination clause. Follow-up meeting scheduled for 3/21.

Gainesville: Group's next meeting scheduled for 3/17.

#### SCHEDULE FOR THE NEXT TWO WEEKS

March 13	Office
March 14 - 15	Office
March 18 - 19	Office
March 20	Jacksonville FU
March 21	Lake City FU
March 22	1/2 day travel; 1/2 office
March 25	Office
March 26	attend Columbia Meeting
March 27 - 29	Office

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