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A king-sized gain for non-smokers

By ROSEMARY RUIZ

The non-smoker is scaling the hill in his battle for deep breaths and dry eyes.

His newest victory over smoke-filled public places came last week when the United States General Services Administration issued orders to GSA buildings around the country to ban smoking in conference rooms, auditoriums, elevators and shuttle vehicles.

GSA also asked for no-smoking sections in cafeterias, work areas and medical care facilities.

According to a GSA news release, the new restrictions are in response to "numerous letters from non-smokers."

IN NEW ORLEANS, the directive affects the U.S. Customs House, 125 Decatur St., the Federal Courts of Appeals Building, 609 Camp St., the Federal Building, 609 South St., and — when it's completed in late 1975 — the new Hale Boggs Federal Building, 503 block of Camp St.

It also will affect Louisiana buildings in Baton Rouge, Shreveport, Alexandria, Monroe, Opelousas, Ruston and Jonesboro, says GSA Area Manager Louis B. Gay.

Not that the changes are drastic. Smoking in courtrooms and elevators wasn't allowed in local GSA buildings even before the new direc-

tive, says Gay. Signs and partitions dividing a small Appeals Court lunchroom — these went up Friday — are unobtrusive. And cooperation is on a voluntary basis.

But the changes reflect a country-wide trend, according to Emile Corwin, information officer for the National Clearinghouse for Smoking and Health.

CORWIN SAYS the first federal agency to ban smoking in parts of its buildings was, appropriately enough, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare in 1972.

The HEW ban followed the clearinghouse's 1972 annual report to Congress, "Health Consequences of Smoking," which for the first time included a chapter on air pollution from cigarette smoke.

The report found that "An atmosphere contaminated with cigarette smoke can contribute to the discomfort of many individuals," especially those with allergies, cardiac and respiratory problems.

THE EXTENT of damage done through breathing air contaminated by other people's cigarette smoke is not known, according to the report, but experiments showed carbon monoxide levels at times to equal or even exceed legal limits for permis-

sible air pollution set in various parts of the country.

Smoke levels sometimes also exceeded the occupational Threshold Limit Value for a normal work period presently in effect for the United States as a whole.

Corwin says a number of states, counties and cities are passing bills and bans similar to the HEW and GSA directives.

A bill passed by the Arizona Legislature last spring is regarded as the milestone legislation of this kind, he says. Towns like Davis, Calif., have recently banned smoking from many public places. Jacksonville, Fla., has set aside smoking areas in libraries.

U.S. REP. C.W. "Bill" Young, R-Fla., is among legislators on the federal level introducing anti-smoking bills. Young's would require separate smoking areas in interstate passenger carriers.

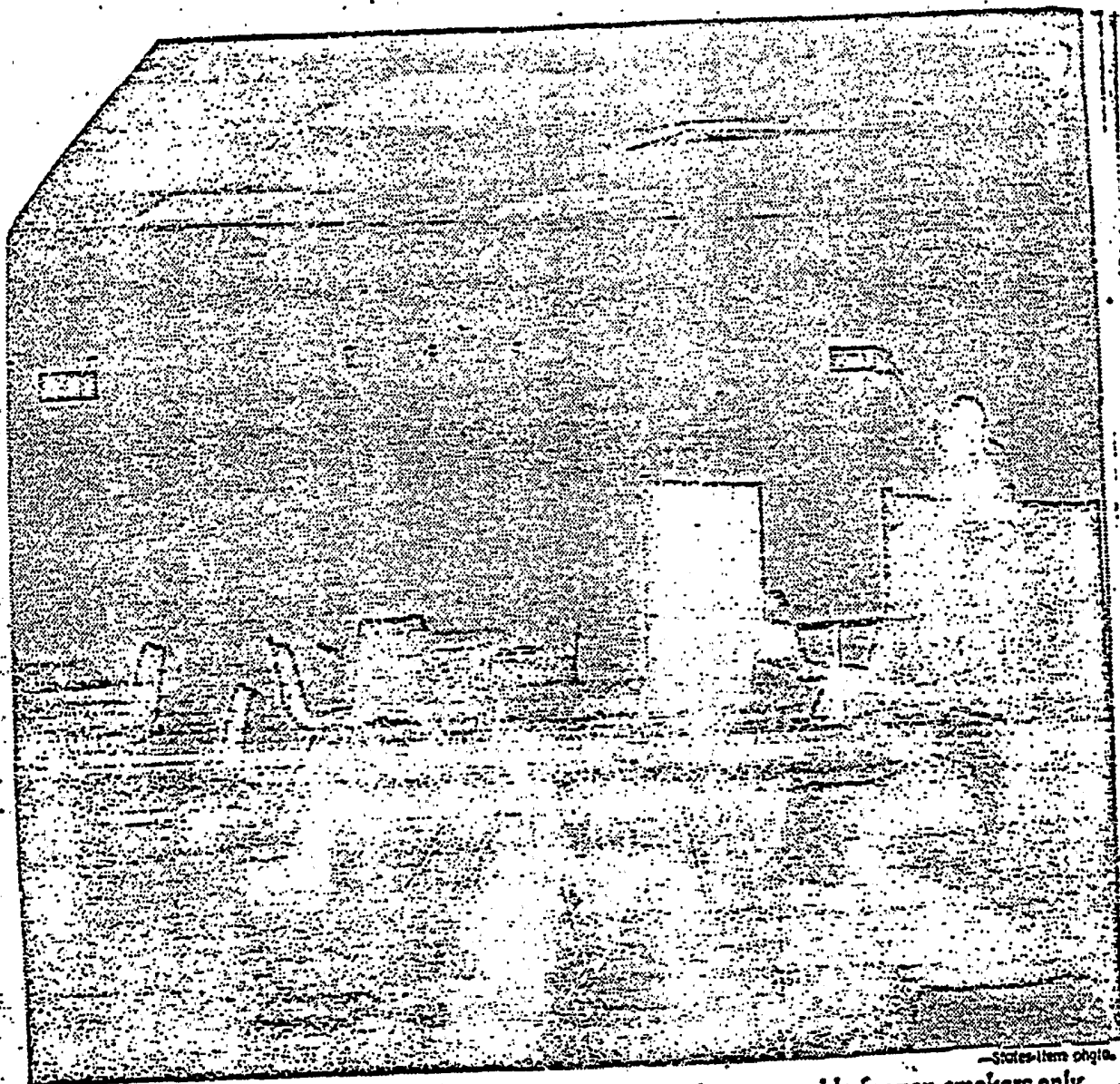
The fall-winter issue of "Cancer News" carries an article titled "Non-Smokers Revolt Accelerates."

"I'd agree this movement is picking up momentum all over the country," says Corwin.

All this may be bad news to smokers, but, to paraphrase the old saying, one man's miff is another man's progress.

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Appeals Court lunchroom is now partitioned into two sections—one side for non-smokers only.

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