

Chain Letters Buckton News Tabbed Illegal By Post Office

An upsurge of college campus chain letter schemes involving United States Savings Bonds, Postal Money Orders and cash has prompted Chief Postal Inspector Henry B. Montague to order a nationwide crackdown on violators of the postal lottery and fraud laws.

The Chief Inspector noted a step-up in chain letter activity in college towns across the country. The participants, he said, appear for the most part to be college students.

He cited reports of chain letter schemes at colleges in Mississippi, Wisconsin, Indiana, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and New York, among others.

Montague warned that even though some of the chain letters involved are transferred hand-to-hand, and state "Do Not Mail," the schemes still may be violations of the postal lottery and fraud laws, in that the proceeds from the chain letters are usually mailed.

The terms of 18 U.S.C. 1302 are broad enough to encompass anything concerning the conduct of a lottery, including bonds sent pursuant to an endless chain scheme, even though the letters may be distributed by hand.

Montague noted that the U. S. Treasury Department also disapproves of the use of these schemes as a means of selling savings bonds. As early as February 1955, the Secretary of the Treasury asked all Federal Reserve Banks to advise all issuing agents to reject applications for savings bond purchases when the applicant states or where the agent has reason to believe the applications were made in connection with a chain letter scheme.

A reminder of this ruling has recently been sent by the Treasury Department to all of

Mrs. Gladys Dunbar spent the week end with Mr. and Mrs. Orville Dunbar and family.

Mrs. Raymond Montgomery spent the week end with her children in Syracuse.

Two plants donated by the WSCS were given at the morning worship service, one to Mrs. John Hunter, the mother with the most children in church; and the other to the oldest grandmother present, Mrs. Gayle Kent.

its state directors.

The typical chain letter provides for a monetary item to be sent to the name on the top of an enclosed list, after which that name is removed and the new participant's name is added to the bottom of the list. Copies of the chain letter are then sent to two more people.

Generally, when savings bonds are used, the letter is purchased with a bond and another bond is sent to the person at the top of the list, whose name is then removed. The new participant adds his name to the bottom and tries to sell the letter to two additional participants in order to continue the chain and recover his investment.

Montague noted that efforts to avoid prosecution under the lottery laws by eliminating the element of chance are evident in some of the recent chain letter schemes. This gimmick involves having the potential participant place his own name on the bond used to purchase the letter, as a co-owner. This enables him to cash the bond, if he is unable to sell two letters, thereby incurring no loss to himself.

However, Montague noted, the General Counsel for the U. S. Post Office Department has ruled that despite this dodge, the scheme remains a violation of the postal lottery and fraud laws.

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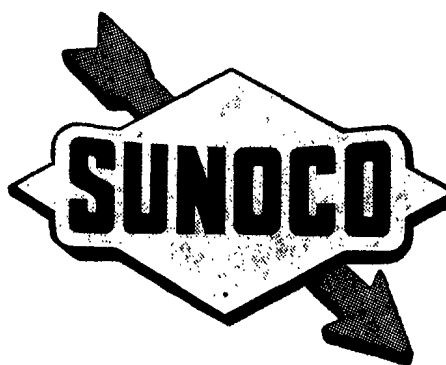
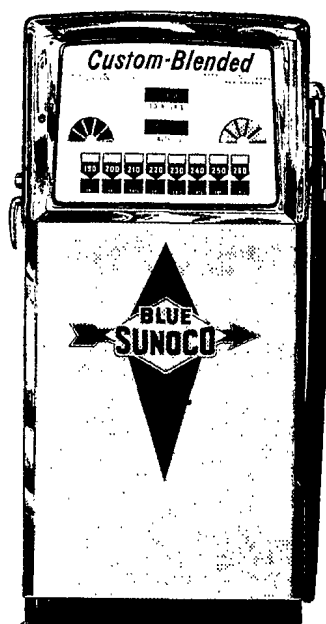
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