

The Trentonian

Columns L.A. Parker:

New Jersey should get rid of smoking on all beaches

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Generally, pleasure-filled visits to the Jersey Shore require information about wind direction. Air flow from the water toward sunbathers means that nasty, flesh-eating flies keep their fangs out of our blood flow.

Those bugs stay inland during such conditions, feasting on die-hard Phillies fans on backyard decks.

Nothing is better when beach goers can lather on sun block or some tropical lotion that promises tans darker than Yaphet Kotto instead of rubbing, or spritzing on some backwoods concoction that pose serious health risks for human beings.

While Gov. Chris Christie contemplates a decision on signing a bill that limits smoking on New Jersey beaches, let's make his job easier. Sign the bill.

Smoking stinks. Period. This final decision on limiting smoking to designated areas on beaches does not require the wisdom of Solomon. It's not rocket science, brain surgery, or offering a final opinion about a presidential bid.

State legislators considered a total ban on smoking at public beaches then wimped out a provision that permits smoking areas on 15 percent of a municipality's beaches.

If that's the best they can stomach then fine but a more thorough mandate would drive home the dangers of smoking and second-hand smoke.

Smoking is either bad or not bad. Plus, tobacco smoke has a way of finding those people who detest that terrible smell. Non-smokers share that traveling experience when they are stopped in traffic and cigarette odor drifts into their car from some person a half-mile up the road.

Government leaders should have gone all the way with this bill with a complete ban of smoking on New Jersey beaches. Belmar, Seaside Heights, Long Branch, Ocean Grove, and Spring Lake are just several towns that kicked butts off beaches.

Second-hand smoke sucks. Remember those horrible days or nights when we allowed smokers to ruin restaurants, bars, and even air flights. What were we thinking?

Our clothes, hair, even skin reeked of tobacco smoke to the point that we were forced to undress in another part of the house before even thinking about climbing into bed.

Two decades back overseas flights permitted smoking in the last eight rows of planes. We were headed home from Paris seated in the ninth row. They might as well have stuck a pack of Camels down my throat and up my nostrils. Not Kool.

Tobacco users represent addiction. Smokers were removed from the workplace then settled for a spot just outside the entrance. They crowded under umbrellas or any cover before being removed from entrances. Now, they huddle a block or two away in some designated smoking area in all kinds of weather.

“It’s outside. I think people should be allowed to smoke outdoors. But then again, I’m a smoker,” a co-worker said.

She added a connector with an admission that a certain loathing occurs when smokers toss their cigarette butts on New Jersey’s beautiful sandlots. At least we shared that sentiment.

The co-worker does not engage in reefer madness but her next thought warranted a drug test.

“Well, if people on the beach don’t like me smoking then they should get up and move,” she blurted.

One can only imagine a family of four continually packing up the umbrella, ice chest, blankets, and towels, to find a non-smoking area.

Sure, Uncle Sam has his fingers in everybody’s pie, what with rules about every thing from same-sex marriage to seat belt wearing requirements, etc. Big Government, at least in New Jersey, needs an across-the-board, totalitarian movement on tobacco use on beaches.

When it comes to smoking at the Jersey Shore, all butts should be out.

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