Public smoking bill ok'd

By Greg Wees

If you board an elevator in Oidfather Hall while puffing away on your favorite brand and a fellow rider asks you to douse that cigaret, do it. It may save you \$10 to \$100.

The Legislature passed a bill last week, sponsored by State Sen. Shirley Marsh, that snuffs out smoking in public "hospital rooms, elevators, indoor theaters, libraries, art museums, concert halls and buses." Designated smoking areas, where the ban would not apply, may be set aside.

Fines for violating the new law range from \$10 to \$100.

Gov. J.J. Exon already has said he would sign the bill when it reaches his deak sometime this week. It will take effect 90 days after the Legislature adjourns.

One of the purposes of the bill, Marsh said, is to make rules uniform throughout the state. They now vary from city to city.

Another reason for the ban is to protect nonsmokers, she said.

"I'm not trying to tell people they can't smoke," she said, "but they should not smoke in public if it infringes on the rights of nonsmokers."

A Reader's Digest article and a legislative aide's study convinced her that smoking is harmful and should be banned where possible, she said.

While the bill was under consideration, state Sen. Terry Carpenter of Scottsbluff proposed two amendments.

The first would have fined any senator caught smoking in the legislative chamber \$10 per violation.

The second would have increased the fine for violation to \$100 to \$500.

The first amendment was withdrawn and the second was defeated. One senator accused Carpenter of trying to kill the bill by adding such stringent amendments.

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Nebraska Union

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Crossword Puzzle

26. Hobble (dial.) 27. Supple

ments 28. Opiate

pottery

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Merrill

30. English

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31. Miss

35. Sullies

38. Animal

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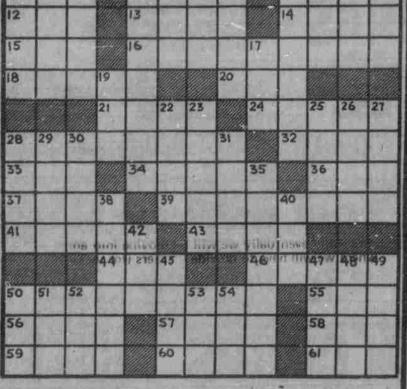
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