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EDITORIAL Good Idea of the Week



Jeff Chiu / Associated Press

Batkid received a hero's welcome outside San Francisco City Hall on Friday.

Thanks, Batkid

The idea for the fantasy was to bring a day of joy for Miles Scott, a 5-year-old boy who had been battling acute lymphoblastic leukemia since he was 20 months old. But something remarkable happened Friday when he was transformed into the superhero Batkid for a day.

He united the city as only a superhero could.

San Franciscans not only played along with his dream of saving Gotham City, they relished his every step. They lined the streets to watch him rush off to his next adventure in a Lamborghini converted into a Batmobile for the day. Some brought signs, some dressed in costume and many were moved to tears as Batkid did his thing.

By the time he was rescuing the Giants mascot Lou Seal from the clutches of the Penguin, Batkid had become a national phenom-

non. Twitter was going wild with #SFBatkid, CNN was showing live shots of the kid and the crowds and President Obama weighed in from a Vine video: "Way to go, Miles, way to save Gotham."

This could be the start of something special. After all, when was the last time House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, were singing the same praises? When was the last time anything involving crowds happened in San Francisco without a peep of protest?

This was your day, Batkid. And you made ours.

EDITORIAL Bad Idea of the Week

Only in Berkeley: Snuffed at home?

It makes perfect sense to ban smoking in bars, restaurants, parks, offices, beaches, ballparks, apartment buildings and other places where people who care about their health could be exposed to secondhand smoke against their will.

It also makes sense to tax cigarettes at a level that discourages young people from smoking, and using that revenue for treatment and prevention programs to offset the taxpayer burden caused by smoking-related ailments.

But as long as cigarettes are legal, there is a limit to what government can reasonably do to suppress smoking.

Berkeley Councilman Jesse Arreguin just crossed the threshold into absurdity with his proposal to ban smoking in single-family residences where children, seniors or lodgers are present.

"That's a good question," Arreguin replied to Chronicle reporter Carolyn Jones when asked where it would still be legal to smoke in Berkeley under his proposal.

Another good question: How on Earth could the city hope to enforce such a law? Would it install posters with a toll-free line for children, housemates and grandma to snitch on smokers in their midst? Would a police officer knocking on a door for



Michael Short / The Chronicle

another reason be inclined to search the house if he smelled smoke or spotted a butt-filled ashtray on the coffee table?

Arreguin has proposed that his single-family home ban could be attached to legislation that would prohibit smoking in apartments and condos. Similar restrictions have been imposed in Belmont, Richmond and Walnut Creek. Assemblyman Marc Levine, D-San Rafael, proposed taking that multi-unit ban statewide, but his AB746 never made it out of its first committee.

Arreguin's over-the-top idea needs an equally swift and decisive rejection in Berkeley.

Why we need smoking ban

Thank you for Carolyn Jones' excellent article on secondhand smoke in multiunit housing ("Next ban on smoking may hit home," Nov. 15).

I am a cancer patient living next door to two chain-smokers whose smoke also affects a family with small children. Since our building owners don't care, and we can't afford to move, our only hope is a strong city law with city enforcement. No one has any right to destroy their neighbors' health.

Carol Denney, Berkeley

Ban? In Berkeley?

So Berkeley, home of the Free Speech Movement, is seeking to regulate what its citizens do in the privacy of their own homes? I guess Big Brother is alive and well — but in Berkeley? Someone should check and see if hell has frozen over.

Piers Labey, Daly City

Let's ban everything

Regarding Berkeley wanting to ban smoking in private homes: Why stop there? Why not set up an abandoned lot where you need to go to smoke, like those rooms at the airport, and ban it everywhere else?

And while they're at it, can they also ban smartphone usage while walking, eating pork within 10 feet of a Muslim and disclosing the plots of movies within hearing distance of a movie theater entrance?

In all seriousness, this proposal makes the city a joke, especially when they exempt marijuana from the regulation, proving this isn't about health or rights of nonsmokers but an imposition of values of those in power on others.

Marc Schoenfeld, Oakland



Joel Pett / Lexington Herald-Leader