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No ifs, ands or butts: WL goes smoke free

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July 1, 2007

Purdue alumnus Jon Fromm on Saturday night smoked his first and last cigarette in Harry's Chocolate Shop Inc.

Fromm, who was celebrating a friend's wedding at the West Lafayette bar, said this was the first cigarette he has smoked in his life.

Even though he didn't inhale, he said "it felt good to stick it to the man."

Fromm was one of many bar patrons who smoked one last time in West Lafayette establishments before the city's workplace/public place smoking ban went into effect at midnight Saturday.

Those in Harry's counted down the minutes, and later seconds, until the bar would be smoke-free.

With a Marlboro Red cigarette tucked behind his right ear, Purdue senior Joel Langenhop prepared to take his last drag in the establishment.

"I think you should be free to do what you want to do," Langenhop said. "If you don't like smoke in bars, don't go to bars."

But Langenhop said he would comply with the city's ordinance, even though he doesn't agree with it.

"At 11:59, I'm going to smoke the fastest cigarette I've ever had to smoke," he said.

Ben Boutwell, a Purdue graduate, is allergic to cigarette smoke and said he couldn't wait for the stroke of midnight.

He's happy that West Lafayette is joining other smoke-free Indiana areas, such as Indiana University in Bloomington.

"It's awesome," he said. "You go out and you don't come back smelling like smoke after a wild night of partying."

But Brandy Brooks, also a Purdue graduate, said she would leave Harry's after smoking her last cigarette at midnight.

"I probably won't come over to West Lafayette as much," she said. "I'll probably spend more time at Lafayette establishments."

Mary Cook, Harry's owner, at midnight taped signs to the windows and the doors of the bar that read "No butts, no asses" while bartenders and servers sold Harry's ash trays for \$5 a piece. The money, Cook said, will go to the bar's legal fund.

Cook has opposed the ordinance from the beginning and filed a lawsuit in Tippecanoe Superior Court 2 against the city of West Lafayette seeking a declaratory judgment and court order prohibiting the city from enforcing the smoking ban. The lawsuit was not successful.

"It's a sad day when the government tells a small businessman how to run their business," said Joel Horstman, Purdue graduate and former employee of Harry's. He stood in the doorway after midnight as doormen told each incoming patron that the establishment is now smoke-free.

"This is really going to make our jobs suck," said Rob Gomez, a doorman at Harry's. "People will be walking in and out while we're checking IDs, there will be more garbage on the street, there are going to be fights all the time and unnecessary confrontations.

"It doesn't make sense."