so children will be less likely to see them. The movie "Incredible Hulk" has been targeted recently as an egregious example of such a movie. While children are not likely to flock to see a rare Wagner opera, many would have seen the theatrical production, as there were educational performances for students. Should parents have been warned that there was a significant amount of smoking, portrayed as desirable? Should parents have been asked for permission to allow their children to see the play? Most children seem to put a lot of time and effort into being "cool."

Theaters routinely warn audiences when a strobe light is to be used since it may (extremely rarely) cause a seizure in some people prone to them. Movies are rated based on language or behavior that is deemed unacceptable for children. We seem to agree that explicit sexual content and graphic violence are valid criteria to use to restrict access by children. The portrayal of smoking as desirable is no less harmful to children. Smoking is dangerous, with no redeeming individual or social value. Smoking benefits only the tobacco industry.

Censorship of artistic expression is neither desirable nor acceptable and generally not legal in our society. Autonomy to control our lives and actions within the limits of the law is one of our core values. We have learned in many situations, often with difficulty, that autonomy cannot be wisely exercised without adequate facts upon which to base our decisions. There should be warnings to the audience that smoking will occur on stage. Perhaps theater productions should have ratings? Should an independent body monitor the availability of information available to the public about on-stage smoking?

In our "information age" the public should have easy access to information about on stage smoking during performances so that we may make informed decisions about whether we wish to partake or allow our children to partake in the artistic endeavor.

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The author has no financial interests to disclose.

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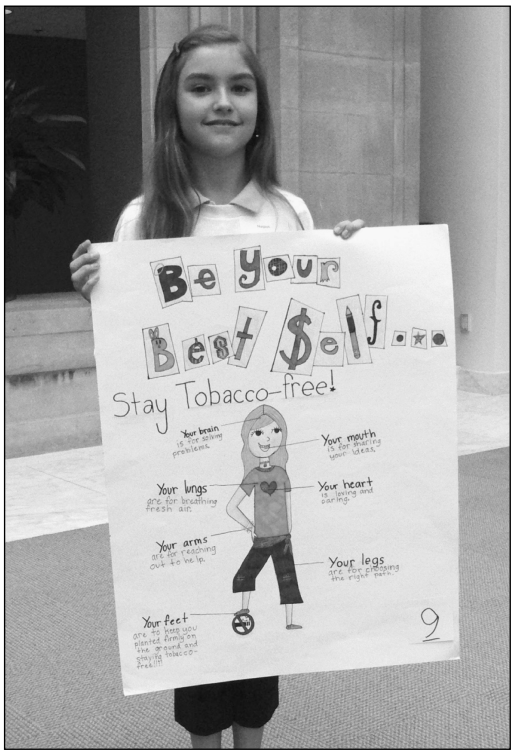
The views expressed are those of the author, not of the Medical Society.

2008 Tar Wars® Rhode Island Statewide Poster Contest

Held annually in Rhode Island since 1994, the Tar Wars® poster contest brings together fifth-grade students to compete for an all-expenses paid trip to Washington, DC to participate in the National Tar Wars® poster competition. Sponsors for this year's event were Newport Hospital, the Rhode Island Academy of Family Physicians, the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Rhode Island Medical Society.

Judges for the 2008 Tar Wars® Rhode Island Statewide Poster Contest included **Dr. Sarah Fessler**, President of the Rhode Island Academy of Family Physicians; **Dr. Patricia Flanagan**, Board Member of the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics; **Barbara Morse Silva**, Channel 10 News Health Reporter; **Dr. Nick Tsiongas**, President of the Rhode Island Medical Society; and **Dr. Terry McWilliams**, Vice President of Medical Affairs at Newport Hospital.

The winner of the 2008 Tar Wars® Rhode Island Statewide Poster Contest was Margaux Fontaine from The Community School in Cumberland, RI. Margaux, along with her mother, father, and sister, traveled to Washington, DC, in July to represent Rhode Island in the 20th Annual National Tar Wars™ Poster Contest. Margaux won 5th placed honors in the national event.

The second-place winner of the 2008 Tar Wars® Rhode Island poster contest was Robert J. Esposito, III, from R. C. LaPerche School in Smithfield. Anna Sroczynski, from St. Philomena School in Portsmouth, won third place.

Developed by the Academy of Family Physicians in 1988, Tar Wars® teaches critical thinking about tobacco advertising. Each year, roughly 70 RIMS member physicians volunteer their time to go into as many as 51 elementary schools throughout Rhode Island. Physician volunteers are needed for RIMS' 2009 Tar Wars® program. Please contact Catherine Norton at RIMS for more information. Phone: (401) 528-3286. e-mail: cnorton@rimed.org.