

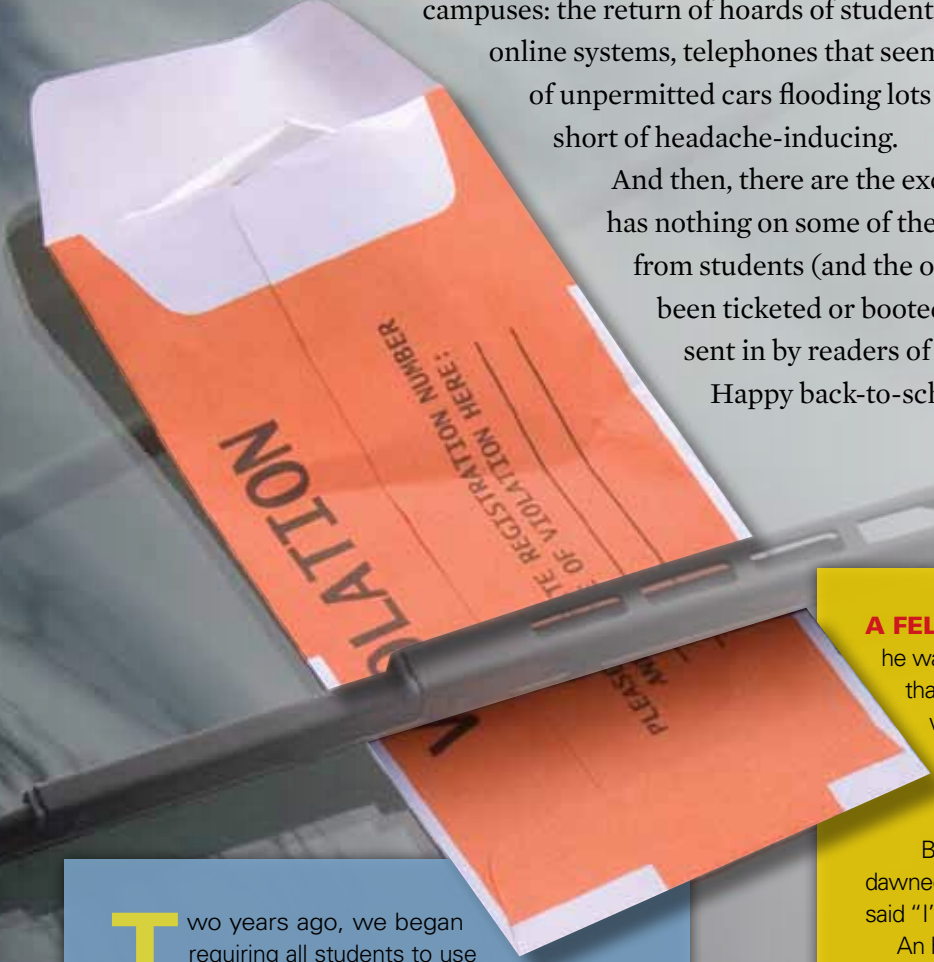
DEGREES OF HILA

THINK YOU'VE HEARD SOME GREAT STORIES from people trying to talk their way out of tickets and fines? (We're partial to those featured in the June issue of *The Parking Professional*.) Wait until you hear the best ones from higher education.

Late summer and early fall mean one big thing to parking professionals on college and university campuses: the return of hoards of students. Lines for permits, clogged online systems, telephones that seem to ring off the hook, and masses of unpermitted cars flooding lots on move-in day can be nothing short of headache-inducing.

And then, there are the excuses. "The dog ate my homework" has nothing on some of the stories parking professionals hear from students (and the occasional professor) whose cars have been ticketed or booted. Here, we present the best ones sent in by readers of *The Parking Professional*.

Happy back-to-school, and enjoy!



Two years ago, we began requiring all students to use our online college portal to order permits that would then be mailed out. In each of the last two years, I received a call from a senior citizen taking a non-credit class, asking for a waiver from this policy. She wanted to order her parking permit over the phone instead of online. Her reason: she could not see well enough to order it on the computer.

Mark Pace
Parking and
Transportation Manager
Montgomery College

A FELLOW CAME IN WITH A TICKET;

he was red with fury. His argument was that we shouldn't have caught him doing what he was doing, so he didn't get far with us. He loudly announced that he was going to pay, and slammed a \$10 bill on the counter.

But before he took his hand off of it, an idea dawned on him. He snatched the bill away and said "I'll be right back!"

An hour later, he returned with a bag. Dumping the contents on the table with a triumphant smile, he said "Here's your payment. Have fun counting it!"

Twenty rolls of pennies thundered onto the countertop. I lined up the rolls, counted to 20, and rolled them into my cash box. At that second, he realized his revenge should have involved taking the pennies out of the rolls.

John Thomas
Parking & Transportation
Services
University of Iowa

RiTY!



One day, one of our parking enforcement officers (PEOs) was out writing citations when he saw a student jump out of her car and start pounding on the roof of the vehicle. He slowly walked over to her and asked if everything was alright or if he could help her with anything. She said, "I can't get my car alarm to turn off, and I didn't even do anything to make it turn on in the first place!"

The PEO did not hear a car alarm so he asked what alarm she was talking about. She said, "The one going off right now! That loud alarm, can't you hear it!?" He told her, that no, he did not hear a car alarm. A minute later, the noise stopped and the student said, "There! See it stopped now!"

Our PEO said, "You mean that siren?" You see, in our city they always test the emergency sirens at noon on the first Wednesday of every month." She looked at him again and said, "No! That was my car alarm! I swear it goes off every month for no reason!"

Elena Morten
Parking Enforcement Supervisor
The University of Texas at Dallas

Several years ago, a student's vehicle was booted for receiving a specified number of parking tickets. Upon discovering the boot that evening, the student deflated his tire and was able to slip the claw-style boot off his rim. He ditched the boot in the woods behind the lot in which he was parked, and then called our police department (which provides motorist assistance) to fill up his tire. An unsuspecting officer showed up, filled the tire, and the student drove off. We still give the student credit for his ingenuity, but the police officer has yet to live that one down.

Bart Neu
Manager of Parking and
Transportation Services University
of North Carolina Wilmington



The most outrageous excuse I heard while working at Rutgers University came from a student who wanted handicap parking. His disability was acne. He actually had a physician write a note that said he was being treated for acne and therefore needed handicap parking. Luckily my office personnel questioned the note and contacted the university physician because she could not read what the young man's doctor had written. Needless to say the student did not get handicap parking, and we formed a mobility review committee, led by the university physician, for all handicap parking requests.

Kim Jackson, CAPP
Director, Parking and Transportation Services
Princeton University

DAN SEVERN, OUR ASSISTANT MANAGER OF PARKING SERVICES,

received the following note from a student who was issued a citation for not having a permit:

"Hi there. My truck was recently broken into by thieves who tried to steal my stereo. In the process of their feeble attempt, the thief failed to notice my pet ferret, Abraham Stinkin, was in the car. Upon entry via a smashed window, the thief was attacked by my loyal companion, Abraham. Somehow amidst the broken glass, ferret fur, blood, and stupidity, my rearview mirror was broken. But my ferret and stereo remained safe and unharmed. My rearview mirror remains broken so upon arrival of my spankin' new night permit, I could only place it on my dash. On my way to the rec center that unfortunate day, I had to swerve to dodge a stray flock of house cats. When dodging those poor creatures I guess my permit must've slid off the dash and onto my passenger floorboards where I and your wonderful employee failed to notice it."

June A. Broughton
Marketing Manager, Transportation Services
Texas A&M University



I'VE BEEN COLLECTING APPEALS STORIES

for years. My favorites:

- I fail to see how my illegal parking, which is proved by the pictures enclosed, warrants a parking ticket.
- The time on the ticket is very iffy. I know it says 3:52 but the 4:00 bell had already rung in my head.
- I had lost my new decal, so I decided to use my old decal just in case it would work.
- I parked in somebody's reserved space because I did not want to park in a \$250 handicapped space. I should really be commended for making the better choice, shouldn't I?
- I guess I just wasn't thinking when I parked in that reserved lot in front of the Brain Institute.
- The ticket says I was parked on the grass, but I most definitely was not on the grass. I was on the dirt that used to be grass before all of the illegally parked cars parked there and wore out the grass.
- I work at the Center for Exercise Science, and I parked in the service drive because it is too far to walk from the parking lot.
- I couldn't find any place to park legally, so I decided to follow the example set by other illegally parked cars.
- I temporarily parked briefly outside my dorm momentarily for just a few minutes really quickly, and I wasn't even there very long.
- I know I put three quarters into the meter but only got \$.75 worth of parking. What a rip!
- This ticket is unfair because I was at the parking office paying \$360 for other parking tickets when I received this one. What else could I have done?
- The suction cups on my decal were pretty dirty, so my decal fell off. In fact, my whole truck is pretty dirty. Anyway, now the only things clean on my truck are the suction cups, so it won't happen again.
- My car was parked in front of my dorm because it was having a bathroom emergency.
- I am a physician in the College of Medicine and will gladly pay your fine when you pay me my billing rate of \$200 an hour. Since I drove around for 25 minutes looking for a place to park, you owe me \$83. Subtract what I owe you from what you owe me, and send me a check for the difference.
- I was rotated to night shift. I plead sleep deprivation and night blindness, as I was too tired to read and truly did not notice the sign that restricted use of that space.
- My ex-wife is the sole owner of this car now. Impound it, please. Personally, I would find it amusing if you did. She has a university permit, you know where she works, and it would be easy enough to find.

Scott Fox
Director, Transportation
& Parking Services
University of Florida



Several years ago, we discovered that a booted vehicle was gone. Somehow the driver got the boot off and left our campus. Several weeks later, we found the same vehicle on campus again and put two boots on it to keep it in place.

Our police department found the driver and brought him to the station. During the investigation, the driver vehemently denied removing the boot. His only explanation was that his friends must have removed the boot to mess with him.

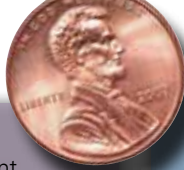
The police officer checked his friends out, and they denied removing the boot. The driver kept insisting that he did not remove the boot. When the police officer asked for another explanation on how the boot was removed, he responded, **"An angel must have removed it!"**

As farfetched as this explanation seemed, two weeks later the boot was found on campus, thrown up on the grass near one of our parking garages. The lock was still in place, the clamp was still tight and the extra cable we install with the boot was still in place. So I think, "An angel must have done it."

Charles O. Smith, MABS
Parking Enforcement Manager
The University of Texas at Austin

Our school colors here at Arkansas State University are red and black. It was my first day on the job as the operations manager for parking services. I wanted to get a feel for how the officers perform their duties, so I tagged along. One of the officers wrote a citation for a truck parked in a fire lane. As we were working an area just a short distance from where this citation was written, a young man walked up to us and asked why he received that citation. We explained to the young man that he was parked in a fire lane and gave him his options. As he started to walk away, he turned back to us and said he thought that all those red curbs were just for school spirit. During the past six years, I have never heard this again.

Kirk Hicks
Parking Services Operations Manager
Arkansas State University



You can always tell what year a law student is by their reaction to a parking ticket. First-year law students think parking tickets are unconstitutional; second-year law students argue that parking tickets violate state law; and third-year law students realize they're about to make a lot of money and just pay the fine.

John Thomas
Parking & Transportation Services
University of Iowa

WHEN I WORKED AT THE FRONT COUNTER,

I received a small box full of pennies in the mail as payment for a \$25 parking citation. After laughing at what it cost in postage for the customer to mail the box, I took the entire thing and dumped it into the coin counting machine. After a few seconds it read \$24.99. After re-counting a few times, I posted payment of \$24.99 and sent the customer a bill for \$0.01.

Jim Sayre, CAPP
Parking & Transportation Services
University of Iowa



I WAS DIRECTOR of parking and transit services at the University of Nebraska, and my son was a student there. He called me one day toward the end of the semester and said, "Dad, I have a lot of tickets. Can you help me out with them?"

I said, "No son—because of my position, you are probably the last person I could help out."

Two weeks later I received another call from my son and he said, "Dad, my truck just got towed. Can you help me out and get me my truck back?" Again I said, "No son. As I have told you, I can't just up and do favors for you."

A few days later he called to tell me he was tired of hassling with parking and sold his truck. He purchased a bicycle so he wouldn't get into trouble and get tickets. Because he was a resident student I thought that sounded reasonable.

The very next day I received another call from him. "Dad, do you have \$50 I can borrow?"

"Sure," I said, "What do you need it for?"

"Well" he said, "I have to pay a ticket that I just received for riding my bicycle on the sidewalk." The poor kid couldn't catch a break.

The story doesn't end there though. He finally called me when classes got out for the summer a few weeks later and said, "Dad, I am really tired of people telling me what I can and cannot do, and especially bossing me around." I asked him what he intended on doing about that. He said, "I've already done it. I've joined the Navy."

Tad McDowell, CAPP
Director, Parking and
Transportation Services
University of Nevada Las Vegas

A contractor was on campus working on a building project. He arrived to work as usual and parked within the project construction fencing. At the end of the workday, he arrived back at his vehicle to discover a \$70 parking ticket for parking on the landscaping. During the day, the fencing around the project had been removed and his vehicle was left sitting in front of the building on the lawn. He appealed the ticket and, frankly, we thought it was such a good story, his ticket was waived!

Susan Austen
Director, Parking & Transportation Services
University of Calgary

Once while I was working at the counter, a dad who happened to be a high school principal came in and asked for a copy of all of the tickets his daughter accrued during the fall semester. I complied. It took awhile—she had nearly \$300 in tickets. When I asked what he was thinking of doing with all of those tickets, he replied "I am wrapping them up and putting them under the Christmas tree." That got a big smile out of me.

Carol Leinhauser
Parking & Transportation Services
University of Iowa

Have a great parking story of your own?

Send it to us and we may publish it in a future issue of *The Parking Professional*. Email your funniest tale to fernandez@parking.org.

