

Editorial

The Great Parking Fiasco

UNLV is embarking upon what will no doubt go down as The Great Parking Fiasco of 1995.

Criticism should not be leveled at former Interim President Kenny Guinn for implementing a parking fee policy. On the contrary, university campuses across the nation have been clued in to the fiscal benefits of parking fees for a long time, and it's long overdue here.

The real culprits of this fiasco are the administration of former President Robert Maxson and the new Carol Harter administration.

During his tenure as president, Maxson vowed never to charge for parking at UNLV. As wonderful a gesture as it seemed at the time, it was a foolish policy. Maxson led this campus during a period of tremendous growth, and should have had the foresight to plan for the increased need for parking spaces. But he didn't.

Guinn did. He took action on a problem he knew would only get worse.

However, a bit more thought and planning should have gone into the policy before it was instituted this semester.

Business owners know ground rules must be established before making sweeping changes in policy. You don't just decide one morning to make major operating changes, announce them when you get to work, expect everyone to conform, and then worry later about how to institute the changes.

Which is exactly how it appears things are happening in regards to the public parking fee on campus.

In theory, people in the general public now have to either pay \$2 every time they park on campus, or purchase a semester or yearly parking permit just like faculty and students.

We emphasize *in theory*.

When, and where, are the public supposed to purchase these permits? They mostly attend evening events on the campus, after parking permit purchase outlets are closed. Do the powers-that-be honestly expect people to take time out of their busy day and purchase a parking permit in advance of the event they attend on campus? Doesn't that completely negate the convenience of purchasing season tickets to events such as the Charles Vanda Master Series?

How much good will in the community will be promoted when people find a \$10 parking ticket on their cars after attending an event on campus they didn't know they had to buy a parking permit for?

And what about non-faculty and -student volunteer DJs at KUNV? Or the guests they bring to the station for in-studio interviews? Free parking permits have been denied to the very people that keep KUNV on the air.

The same goes for guest speakers recruited to speak on campus. Does it make sense to ask them essentially to pay for the privilege of speaking to a UNLV class or audience? Or are faculty expected to pay for these speaker's parking permits out of their own pockets? Again, gratis parking permits for these volunteers have been denied.

President Harter is an intelligent leader. Let's hope she sees the ridiculousness of this folly and rescinds the public parking policy until all the bugs are worked out of the system. Once a sensible enforcement system is in place, then it should be re-instituted.

As Linda McCollum, publicist for theater and arts, said, "This is a public relations nightmare."

Pet Peeves: no care required

How many times have you heard someone say, "God, I hate it when..." and then follow it with something from a list of petty annoyances, like being cut off in traffic, messy roommates or having others read over their shoulder?

I hate those things too, but don't we all have better things to worry about?

What about getting good grades? Or making sure the person next to us at the stop light doesn't see us picking our nose? What about having enough money left after paying for tuition, books, and all those special fees, to go out to a favorite club on a Friday?

Welcome to the wonderful world of Pet Peeves.

I had lunch with an old friend the other day at a well-known local restaurant which will remain nameless, since they wouldn't comp my meal in exchange for critical mention in my column. It seems I can't compromise my objectivity, even if I want to. (Oh, the thanklessness of this job.)

Anyway, this nameless but otherwise excellent eatery had pepper shakers on the table that doled out the most miserly sprinkle of my favorite spice, that I had to unscrew the top to delicately season my pasta jambalaya. But the shaker was so full that a huge dollop plopped onto my plate, making the whole dish a peppery mess. Possibly my fault? Maybe. I noticed that the shaker was filled with coarse-grind, but equipped with a fine-grind top. I hate it when they do that!

This deliberate stinginess came from an establishment that pours free refills of your beverage o' choice till it comes out your ears. It makes no sense when businesses are chintzy with the little things. That's my pet peeve. Well, one of them, anyway.

I spent some time this morning asking people around *The Rebel Yell* office about their minor irritations. As creative as this group appears, one and all had some very mundane peeves. "Waiting for elevators," one said. "The person ahead of me in traffic talking on their cell-phone," quipped another. One more came up with the all-too-original "...long lines at the registrar's office."

Thanks loads for your help, gang! I was hoping to at least hear, "When the toilet paper comes from the bottom of the roll, instead of over the top," or something similar lending personal insight into the commonality of human experience.

When I asked Editor Teresa Hinds her peeves, she leveled her gaze at me over imaginary bifocals and dryly intoned, "My pet peeve is when section editors miss deadlines." I just knew I could count on Teresa.

So I moved my search outside, randomly asking students about their petty annoyances. "Long lines at the registrar's..." Yeah. "The person ahead of me in traffic talk-

A Closer Look

S.T. SUTHERLAND

ing on their cell..." Okay, thanks for your input. Not a fermenting furball coughed up on new pillow cases in the whole bunch!

Red tape and bureaucracy for their own sake annoy me no end. That would include long lines at the registrar's office. Wanton abuse of discretionary power or authority should be criminalized.

I have a professor whose syllabus includes the admonition, "Gentlemen will remove their caps from their heads." Presumably she intends that to mean only while in her class, but where does it stop?

Though Madame Hilgar seems reasonably good-natured and well-versed in her subject, where does she come off imposing this kind of etiquette and antiquated morality on young adults who not only pay to sit in her class, but by extension, pay her salary as well?

If I were visiting her home — fat chance of that now — I would very happily abide by her personal customs. As it stands, however, I think I'm old enough and mature enough to decide whether or not I need to wear a cap on a particular bad-hair day. Even if the chapeau in question were a mere fashion statement this instructor has no beans meddling in my freedom of expression.

She certainly has no right messing with my religious freedom, so I'm announcing the formation of a new religion: The Church of Five Day Haberdashists. High holy days are henceforth Tuesdays and Thursdays between the hours of 10 and 11:15 a.m. The CFDH requires the covering of heads on holy days, and members of my French culture 321 class who care to observe them with me can do so for a meager, tax-deductible contribution of \$5, for which they will receive an official membership card. Would-be disciples may contact me at the *Yell*.

Bureaucratic peeves usually masquerade as sound business decisions. I'll give you an example from among the many found on campus.

Remember the Copy Center that used to be so conveniently located on the ground floor of the Flora Dungan Humanities building? Some rocket scientist decided that since copies were the name of the game, the Copy Center should be relocated behind Reprographics, which does a good deal of printing and publishing on campus. They're somewhere out in B.F. Egypt between the Thomas & Mack and the EPA buildings. Look for the pyramid, it's out there past what's left of free student parking.

On the surface, moving the Copy Center makes some kind of sense, (I'll not say what kind) but let's look at the larger picture: the major departments in the Humanities Building all use lots of copies; students and teachers alike. English students use copies galore. So do those involved in foreign

language, communication and broadcast studies.

The main reason the Copy Center folks got most of their business wasn't that they charged a couple of pennies less than Kinko's or Alphagraphics, but because they were more convenient than the competition. Now they're not.

When weighing the few penny savings against the heat and hassle involved in crossing the Nile to B.F. Egypt, I'll take my chances crossing Maryland Parkway, and my business to Alphagraphics or Kinko's.

If I worked at the new Copy Center, I'd give that same rocket scientist about one semester to cipher that this location wasn't generating enough revenue to justify my job. I can just hear the administrative protest now: "But it was such a sound business decision!" I hate it when they do that!

High on the list of other common pet peeves we find surly service personnel. The convenience store clerk who throws your change at you. Secretaries or receptionists who answer every question with, "I don't know, it's not my job."

I worked one time with a young woman in a store who would not come out from behind her counter to save her soul. Customers requesting assistance were first met with sour grimaces, then a complicated series of directions and hand signals intended to self-guide them through the store to the merchandise they were seeking.

Another favorite trick of Ann's was to avoid any and all eye contact with customers in the hope they would eventually wander off and assist themselves. If she found a very determined customer trying to place themselves in her line of sight, a comic ritual dance inevitably ensued in which Ann would do 360s and hand-springs, all the while dabbling at mysterious objects lodged in the corners of her eyes. As a last resort, she would often dial a friend on the phone, to convey the impression she was taking a phone order. "Thanks for that order, Mrs. Smith. By the way, where do you think our boyfriends should take us tonight?"

Haven't we all been "served" by the Ann's of this world? Don't we hate it when they do that?

I can't imagine life without pet peeves. As old as humanity, they may have their roots in overcooked antelope meat following a grass fire.

Though peeves themselves usually seem nothing more than infringements on our personal ease or taste, expressing them rather than repressing them probably promotes better mental health.

At least as long as people don't make a pain of themselves by taking that expression to an extreme. I hate it when they do that.

—S. T. Sutherland is the Opinion Editor for *The Rebel Yell*.

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