

Hair-raising quest for medical permit exposes shortcomings in parking

By DAVID BUNDAS

I recently found myself in a compromising position that put me at the University's mercy. Having fractured my ankle and torn the adjoining ligaments, I was in dire need of a medical permit for parking. What I went through, for three hair-raising days, was something that I hope no one else will ever have to experience.

The first mistake I made was heading to the parking department having been told over the phone that medical permits were available there. After hobbling over on my crutches from the Ross building, I was informed that I would first have to go to Health Services at Vanier to receive a certificate of disability.

With the certificate I drove to the East Office Building roadway at McLaughlin and presented it to the attendant. I told her I would have to present the certificate to Parking Services to get a medical permit, and asked if she would allow me to pass through. She informed me that there were no available spots, and that if there had been, I would have to pay a two dollar deposit. At this point a person in a car behind me yelled that there were plenty of open spots (he, having been in the Ross Building earlier). I grudgingly paid after the attendant told me that if I was less than ten minutes I would have my money refunded. Unfortunately this was quite impossible because of my disability, and after driving through I was alarmed that she could be so misinformed after discovering at least a dozen open parking spots.

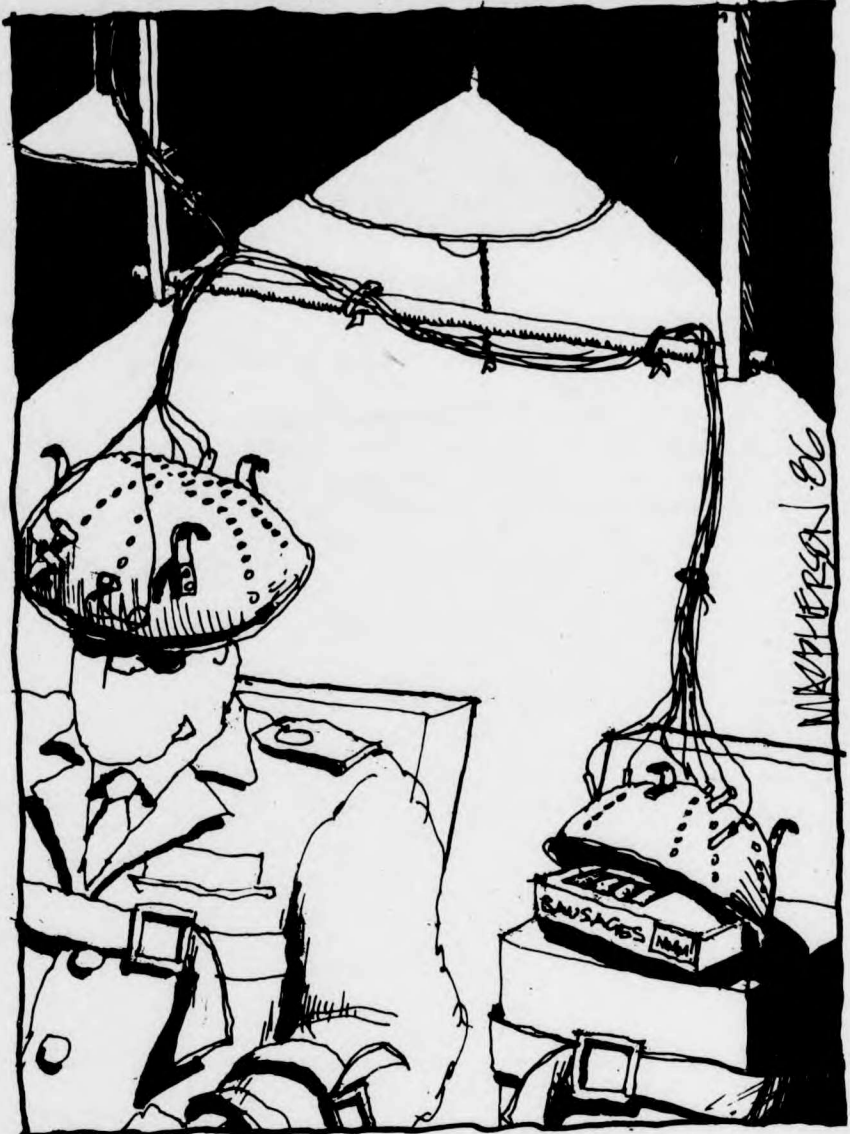
At Parking Services I was informed that I would have to pay \$30.75 for a parking decal before they would give me a medical permit, at the same time being told that it was a courtesy. Being short of fund, I was provided with a temporary medical pass and told to return to the office to pay.

The next day, I pulled in front of the Ross Building and found no spots around the medical parking circle, and no attendant in the booth to instruct me to a spot. Using my discretion I parked parallel to the Behavioral Science Building behind a York University van. An hour later I returned to discover a \$25.00 ticket for parking in a fire route. Apparently the closest attendant had seen my pass and assumed that I was unable to park in the designated medical areas because no spots were available. The ticket was placed on my windshield by another officer who apparently had not spoken to the closest attendant. At this point I was quite annoyed, having realized that disputing the ticket would mean having to persuade the attendant at the EOB roadway to allow me to pass her long wooden arm to get to the Parking Services Department.

After showing her my temporary medical parking permit, (the only thing necessary for me to get through), I told her that I wanted to get to the Parking Department. Again she refused to allow me to pass. Only after a doctor from Health Services pulled in behind me and offered moral support did she allow me to go through. The process

proved futile as the Parking Department was closed from 1:00 to 2:00 o'clock. Later in the day I made an appointment to meet with the Parking Office supervisor Kim Bertrand, and the manager of Parking Operations Don Whitty.

My beef was centered around the fact that I had been continuously misinformed and as a result, forced to cover long distances on my crutches. I was confident I could dispute the tickets I received, but the insensitivity and harassment during a time I was feeling quite weak left me with a bitter taste in my mouth. The question I kept asking myself was, "aren't these people trained to use their personal discretion?" Especially when they see someone with a cast on his leg and crutches under his arms. After meeting with the mentioned parking officials I must say I felt gratified that my position was quite clear. They informed me that the person behind the desk at the parking department and the attendant at the EOB roadway were at new positions. Mr. Whitty spoke to me about his responsibility to ensure that all fire routes were left clear and the ticket I received when I parked by the BSB was because I parked in a fire route. I agreed that this was something that should be handled in the strictest law abiding manner, but had there been an attendant in the booth when I arrived I certainly wouldn't have parked there. With respect to all the travelling I had to go to get the medical parking permit,



this was primarily a result of the inexperience of the people at new positions. Only this doesn't excuse the conduct of the attendant at the EOB roadway who's attitude has left me far from sympathetic.

Special thanks must be directed to the Director of Security and Safety

Services, Jack Santarelli, whose cooperation and open-mindedness persuaded me to omit the names of the afore-mentioned individuals. His ability to handle the situation and prompt service left me with assurance that this situation should never occur again.

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