

Editorial

# They paved paradise and put up a parking lot

## The fine art of parking at UPEI

By Marko Peric

In 1970 Joni Mitchell wrote a song complaining about too many parking lots. It's obvious she never went to UPEI, because most students here would applaud if the paving crews came out and put up a new parking lot.

Tell me, does this scenario sound familiar? It's 9:27 and John Doe has a test in three minutes. Instead of preparing for the exam, he is still seated behind the wheel of his Chevy.

"Why didn't I get up earlier?" he mutters as he races down the back road toward the parking lot. "I'll never find a spot."

He takes the corner on two wheels and squeals into the lot, but no parking spots can be found. He races down the first row, then down the next one. Nothing.

"Is there a space behind that van? No, there's a Firefly there, curse it. Maybe down by the Field House...no, I'll never make it to the Library in time. Should I risk the disability space? Does a hangnail count?"

Down the third row, and back to the first. It's 9:28, time is running out.

"Look, back-up lights! Oh joy, some one's leaving! Hurry up, will you! Forget the seatbelt! Just get out of my spot!"

The other car pulls out, and John Doe rips into the empty space. It's 9:29, and John makes a mad dash for Robertson, just in time.

If you commute to UPEI, this has probably happened to you. If you live on campus or close enough to walk, well, you can have pity on the rest of us. Every day we have to find a place to park, the closer the better. Sure, there's always a spot in the farthest corner of the back lot past MacAdam Field, but who wants to park in another time zone?

True, some days you get lucky. Some early-morning prof who parked in a great spot happens to leave just as you arrive. It can make your day. Other times, lady luck is against you. Up one row, down the next. Again and again, back and forth. No one wants to leave and relinquish their parking space.

So it becomes a battle of wits, a struggle to the death. (Or

perhaps to the pain, if you're a fan of *The Princess Bride*.) Every other driver is the enemy--if you don't get the space, the other guy does. It almost becomes an art; some people can magically guess when and where a spot will open up.

There are certain tricks you can use to find a parking spot. The most common is to follow a pedestrian to his or her car, then snatch the spot. This is not a fail-safe tactic, because

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sometimes the pedestrian merely goes to the car to drop off books and then returns to the campus. Occasionally one will be especially sadistic: he or she will pause next to a car for a second, just long enough to psych you out. Then they keep walking, laughing to themselves all the while. The worst ones don't

even have a car, they're just passing through the lot on their way to Blanchard or perhaps the pathway to Mount Edward Road. You have to resist the urge to run them over.

If you're wondering about the other secrets of finding a spot, I think I'll keep most of these to myself. If I dispense these to the general public, other people will beat me at my own game. One suggestion--be aggressive. Don't ram other cars, but don't let someone snatch a spot from under your nose. Be aware of the rules of this battle of wits, because there is a certain etiquette among drivers. The first person who finds a spot gets it. If someone is stopped with their signal light on, he or she is waiting for someone else to vacate a space. (This doesn't mean you should drive around with the signal light on. It makes you look like an idiot.) And NEVER cut someone off--that's not only obnoxious, it's dangerous.

By this point, I've probably offended almost everyone. I hope everyone out there realizes this is a tongue-in-cheek editorial. I have never had the desire to run down anyone, and sadistic pedestrians are very uncommon. However, if you would like to know some more secrets of finding a parking spot, hunt me down and ask in person. Until you do, have fun in your quest for a place to leave your car. But every time you park on campus, be thankful, for UPEI is one of the few universities in Canada where parking is free.

### TO THE EDITOR

#### Don't be so ignorant

To the Editor:

On Sunday, November 13, Duffy Science Building at UPEI caught fire. At approximately 6 pm, we were walking from Bernadine Hall to the parking lots behind the Robertson Library, when we heard the sound of a fire alarm emanating from the Duffy Building. As we turned and looked towards the building, we noticed smoke and flames seeping from the second floor of the far left hand side of the building. We immediately contacted Security, who assured us they knew of the fire alarm. We also informed Security that we had seen flames in the Biology Club area. When we returned outside, we noticed that Security had shut off the fire alarm, which worried us as flames were still visible and we could still see people inside the building. In our panic, we threw loose stones at the occupied window and warned the people inside that there was indeed a fire and that they should evacuate. As we cautiously approached the opposite side of the building, we saw the Security van and

assumed they were inside. After several more minutes, when no immediate action was visible, we called the Fire Department ourselves. They replied that they had already been informed of the fire.

We are concerned by the blatant ignorance shown not only by UPEI Security, but by the UPEI students themselves. Upon hearing the fire alarm the people inside the building should have evacuated immediately. Our second question: why was the fire alarm shut off before it was certain that the building was evacuated? And, our final question is why, knowing of the imminent danger that a fire was present in Duffy, did students continue to hover and walk in close proximity to the building and the danger? People continued to saunter under the archway when its roof was audibly creaking and bending under the heat of the flames!!

We feel that this should be brought to the attention of the public, as this is an example of ignorance in an emergency situation. And if the public is not to blame, then our protectors (ie. UPEI Security) should have made more of an effort to ensure the public safety.

Concerned Students,  
Hope Evans, 2nd year student  
Kirsten Huggins, 1st year student



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