

Parking and Pepsi: pennies from heaven

Michael Stone
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On Friday, Sept. 11, I was casually walking out to the Olmsted parking lot, thankful that my week of living hell was over. On the way to my car, I noticed a man placing pink sheets of paper under car wipers.

I went up to the gentleman, gave a hello, and looked inquisitively over his shoulder. The document was a pseudo-parking ticket, giving information that the automobile-driving students will most likely be hit with a parking fee in the near future. It went on to say that student attendance at parking forums would be appreciated.

After I read the document, I gave him a reassuring nod. I didn't know the man's name--he didn't know mine. I noticed his ID bracelet had the initials "D.S." I immediately thought of movie actor Daniel Stern (City Slickers, Home Alone), so I pointed to the bracelet and said, "Daniel?"

He replied with a mysterious look, "...Maybe."

"Dan" lit a cigarette and adjusted the backpack on his shoulder.

"It seems like a good idea," I said, noticing he had ticketed maybe 100 of the 600-odd cars. "Did you want some help?"

"Sure, the more the merrier," Dan replied.

We walked down the parking aisles, he ticketing the left side, I ticketing the right. Dan asked me, "You think it'll work?"

I told him if six of the 600 people ticketed went to one of the forums, that would be six that never would have gone to begin with. Dan gave me a nod, somehow realizing that maybe his efforts would indeed make a difference.

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We finished the job in about 30 minutes. Dan thanked me for the assistance, wished me well, and drove off.

I went back to my campus house, prepared for my trip out to U-Park, and had the feeling of achievement. I had never volunteered for anything of the sort, and I was actually proud of myself for saying to hell with my apathetic ways and getting involved.

On Saturday, I found myself roasting in the sun while watching the Lions pound Temple into the dirt. I had lousy seats, so when some people lost interest and left, I grabbed my friends (so-to-speak) and moved about 20 rows up in the senior section.

I took my new seat and turned to my left. Believe it or not, it was none other than the mysterious Dan. We were amazed at this occurrence and reminisced about our fine afternoon the day before.

As we talked, we grew parched, so I signalled to the stadium vender for some fine beverages. "Two diet Cokes, please," I told the vendor.

The vendor replied, "I'm sorry...we have only Pepsi now," as he pointed to the new sign on the scoreboard. I noticed

the vendor had "PSU" painted across his face, and "PEPSI" written on his forehead. Pepsi State U? John Belushi would've been proud ("cheeseburger-cheeseburger, no Coke--Pepsi, Pepsi").

Actually, I was pleased, because I prefer diet Pepsi over diet Coke. I took a sip of my frothing-cold beverage and noticed it tasted exactly like the old diet Cokes of Beaver Stadium past--like a saccharine, flat cup of slop.

"What is this place coming to, Dan?" I asked.

"Well, this is Penn State. Penn State is a corporation, not a school. It's all dollars and cents, not books and diplomas. This is just another in a series of financial investments. I bet you we won't see a penny of it in Harrisburg. In God we trust...all others, cash."

I thought about the equipment we have at the newspaper office, how we could use some newer TV studio and radio equipment, and about our excuse for a library. Pepsi and Penn State sold out. The worst part was that it probably wasn't going to involve me.

The game was a blow-out, I had finished my soda, and I was ready to leave. I gave a hearty good-bye to my new friend and left the stadium.

Monday rolled around and I went to the first of the two forums. Approximately ten persons attended the meeting. Dan, as you may have already guessed, was there. I grabbed the seat next to him and gave a wave.

"Did I miss anything, Dan?"

"Some people have made some good fund raising suggestions in place of the parking fee," Dan informed me. "But it's all bureaucratic-biased, intellectual masturbation, if you asked me."

I listened as they informed us about where the campus needed money. It was about as easy to listen to as a Bruce Willis album. The forum chairpersons said we had raised some good points, which would be passed to the powers-that-be. My cynical attitude mouthed a "yeah, right."

The forum let out around 5:30 p.m. I offered to buy Dan a drink before the six o'clock classes started.

We went down to the Lion's Den and got in line. In front of my face was the soda jet machine, with the Pepsi seal. Wanting something else, we went to the vending machines--Pepsi was there, too. We took a quick hike to the bookstore. Pepsi was in their fridge, except it was \$1.50 a can there.

Frustrated, we walked back to the Olmsted Building.

"What's the meaning of life, Dan?" I lamented.

"I don't know," Dan replied. "All I can say is that you should try your best. But it seems at Penn State, no matter how hard you try, it doesn't make a difference anyway."

"Oh, by the way, my name's not Dan, it's Dave," he added. "What's yours?"

"Oh, it doesn't really matter, Dave," I said. "To Penn State, I'm just a social security number that pays tuition and is forced to drink Pepsi."

Animal rights: the fur flies

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I'm appalled. I've had enough of self-righteous, radical animal rights activists. Don't get me wrong. I don't dislike animals. In fact, I think cats and dogs are cute and cuddly. I don't approve of the so-called macho act of pulling the wings off of flies, but I do believe that hunters were within their rights at the Sept. 7 Pigeon Shoot in Hegins, Pa.

By law, the hunters were within their rights. Although pigeons have been known to carry diseases, I don't feel the hunters' actions were humane, but this is America. Police arrested 111 adults who could not contain themselves. Picketing is fine, but disorderly conduct and throwing smoke bombs is not.

I wonder if these peace-loving people who were arrested are the same people who have been dousing others with animal blood. Yes, these sweet, calm people who have so much compassion for animals and so little for people, have--for years-- been perpetrating violence against anyone

wearing animal fur.

In more metropolitan cities such as New York and Philadelphia, animal rights activists have been pouring blood, and sometimes red paint, on anyone (and I do

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mean perfect strangers) walking down the street wearing fur. These are not the actions of sane, well-adjusted, non-violent people.

I can't help but wonder how many of these people eat at McDonalds and sport Reeboks. Oh yes, there have been many times when I've been in the company of do-gooders who claim to be in favor of animal rights. Guess what they were doing as they verbalized their dismay at the treatment of animals? They were eating hamburgers and wearing leather high-tops...HYPOCRITES!

Don't preach to me! Why don't you go live in the woods with your furry friends? Obviously, you turn to animals because you can't deal with people. Sure, embrace the animals, and bombard the people with

smoke bombs and blood. You have no merit; you're a bunch of mental cases.

By now you're probably saying that I'm ruthless and demented. Well, I'm not. I'm just practical. I can't imagine our society without leather, lean meat and medication, which are vital to all of our lives.

Leather and fur keep us warm. It is also quite fashionable. Lean meat provides us with protein (I'm not referring to globs of lard that are filled with cholesterol). More significantly, we need animals for laboratory testing. This is a progressive society. We believe in surgeries, medications and other life-saving means. Without experimental rats, do you really think medical technology would be as advanced as it is today? Would you rather watch a loved one perish from cancer than kill a rat? (Remember, rats carried the plague.)

I don't believe in the senseless removal of musk glands from rabbits in order to make musk perfumes, but I do believe in taking medication when I'm ill. And without animal experimentation, we

might not have the privilege of using FDA approved drugs.

I will agree that sometimes the best medication for the elderly is a pet. Many elderly are lonely (because their children and other relatives don't want to be bothered) and need pets for company and comfort.

But as the populace grows, it is feasible that we could become like Third World countries...overpopulated and hungry. We need to take advantage of the use of animal skins and meat. What if we were suddenly unable to make synthetics. Should we freeze?

If you're a radical, extremist, animal rights activists, go ahead and suffer with AIDS, cancer, heart problems and the common cold. If not, you're a hypocrite. After all, animal experimentation has made medical attention possible.

Next time you reach for an aspirin, keep in mind that some lab rats may have died in order to get rid of your headache. Perhaps you angelic, moral, blameless people would prefer that drug testing be done on prisoners. After all, kill a mortal...save an animal.

