



opinions

Lexington police shell out too many parking tickets

Now in his fourth year dealing with the daily frustrations of two hour parking, James Baird releases his frustration

By James Baird
COLUMNIST

Dear Lexington Police Department,

I am writing this letter to inform you of my absolute joy at receiving two parking citations over the span of five business days.

However, in my current state of ecstasy, I would like to bring to your attention a number of recommendations and, some might say, criticisms of the manner in which these lovely letters of happiness are issued.

I would like to preface this tirade by saying that I live off-campus in a house that is over a mile away from the university, and although I do own a bicycle and am a rabid environmentalist, I drive my Tahoe to class on a daily basis unless it's warm and the sun is shining.

The parking situation is grim. In the uncommon event there is an open spot in the Red Square lot near Beta (capacity: fewer than 30 vehicles), I park there and breathe a sigh of relief.

Otherwise, I am faced with an unfortunate dilemma. Do I drive around the block and look for a spot on the street, or do I park in the university's parking garage?

Should I choose the former, I run the risk of finding a cute neon green envelope stamped VIOLATION in sickeningly large and official font tucked neatly under my windshield wiper upon finishing class.

Should I choose the latter, I am forced to walk half a mile to get to the fraternity house, a walk I will have to make since I eat breakfast at the house every morning.

One hundred percent of the time I choose to risk the ticket in hopes it will outweigh the cost of the time it takes to walk to and from the parking garage.

When I do receive a ticket, I take issue for a specific reason. Every violation I have received has been issued while my car is parked in one of the spots around Red Square.

This includes and is limited to the tail end of Main Street (in front of PIKA) and West Henry Street (in front of Phi Delta). The signs are pretty clear: two hour parking Monday through Friday during peak business hours, but who on God's green earth is go-

around that area. There is Stop-In (with its own abnormally large parking lot that is never full), the Patisserie (also with its own lot) and that model shop (surprise! It has a lot, too). Have I ever seen any of those lots filled in over three years that I've attended this

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The people awarded those tickets are almost exclusively students, and guess what? Students have class! I, and others, don't try to leave our vehicles on the street for more than two hours, but I, and others, have at least two consecutive hours of class five days a week. Unfortunately I'm not the type to walk out of class and down the hill to move my car.

Dear Lexington police, here's a grand idea: how about you offer W&L students parking passes to park in areas around the fraternity houses and academic buildings for six or 12 hours at a time at a one-time rate.

Granted, you do offer a "Hunting Pass Parking Program" (random name, by the way), but oh wait, there is a waiting list,

among other things (see: www.ci.lexington.va.us/parkhunt.htm).

It will save you time and manpower, but you might be out a few thousand dollars a year (maybe you could sell one of your Chargers to fill that hole). Oh, and it will be good for public relations, something with which you usually struggle. I appreciate the job your department performs, but when I walk down the street and see green slips left and right, I can see why students get frustrated.

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ing to park there besides Washington and Lee students and/or fraternity employees? Answer: no one.

Let's examine the businesses

school? Nope. Have they ever been filled? Not likely. Therefore, customers of those businesses do not park on the street and do not need those spaces.

Jews are accepted and embraced at Washington and Lee

After hearing about alleged intolerance, a law student commends the religious outreach and support for his faith

By Jordan Rothman
COLUMNIST

I have wanted to attend Washington and Lee for a long time. I remember reading about Robert E. Lee and discovering that he was the president of a southern college after the Civil War.

I later researched this institution, and became increasingly enamored with W&L.

Yet, there was one problem. I am Jewish and come from a family that values a strong connection to the Jewish community. My parents did not think that W&L had a vibrant Jewish presence, and this perceived absence was one of the reasons why my folks pressured me to attend a different undergraduate institution.

Nevertheless, I have been extremely satisfied with my religious experiences here at W&L and through the great work of Hillel, I have become closer to my faith. Additionally, by being in the minority, the Jewish community on this campus is as vibrant and strong as anywhere else.

Last May, I graduated from Brandeis University. Brandeis is a Jewish-sponsored university in Waltham, Mass., and the institution purports to promote the principles of social justice and

progressivism.

Over 50 percent of the students at Brandeis are Jewish, the university closes for Jewish holidays, and the institution has close affiliations with many Jewish causes. At Brandeis, one can become really disillusioned with one's faith, as a Jewish presence is omnipresent, and it is easy to take this presence for granted.

are just fewer of us at W&L. This has led us to proactively seek out and spend time with other Jewish students, and Hillel helps facilitate this interaction.

The Hillel here is in a lot of ways more effective at connecting Jews with their religious traditions than Jewish organizations at other colleges. At Brandeis, for instance, Shabbat dinners are

up most of the participants, but many VMI cadets and local families are also in attendance. This has the effect of uniting the local Jewish community, and allowing all of us the opportunity to share our traditions with other Jews in the area.

I am so fond of this monthly event and other experiences, that I would advise any Jewish people I know to attend this institution. Enrolling at W&L can have the effect of drawing Jewish youth closer to their faith, and also allows one the opportunity to become part of a unique community.

Furthermore, the W&L administration greatly supports Jewish students. For instance, the university strongly contributed to the construction of a Hillel House, and this support is one of the reasons I felt comfortable coming to W&L in the first place.

Additionally, a menorah was displayed in the Commons living room during the holidays, and none of the greetings issued by our university during that season excluded Jews.

Furthermore, the institution doesn't seem to exclusively support any one faith, even though

the university has some deep religious roots.

I would also like to note that the W&L community (in my case, more like the W&L Law community) has really helped me feel welcome here despite my different religious beliefs.

Many of my colleagues at the law school share Yiddish expressions with me, while others come to Hillel-sponsored events. Yet others seem genuinely interested in Jewish traditions, and one of my non-Jewish friends even had a festive Chanukah party complete with latkes and donuts in order to celebrate the holiday.

Furthermore, I have never been discriminated against at W&L, and have never felt different because of my religion. I laugh now when I recall that some of my friends and family members told me before I came to W&L that I should not wear a Star of David on campus, or do anything to attract attention to my religious beliefs.

This advice seems almost comical to me now, as my experience here has perhaps had the effect of making me more proud of my ethnic and religious background.

I therefore express my Jewish

identity more at W&L than I have at any other point in my life, as the community here seems entirely supportive and welcoming of my religious beliefs.

Overall, I have had a fantastic religious experience so far here at W&L. Primarily, this is due to the hardworking people at W&L Hillel, who have created a wide range of programs which bond Jewish students together and draw us all closer to our faith.

But also, I have had such a great experience thus far due to the nature of W&L's welcoming community. People here have been wonderful, and due to this support, I have had a fantastic religious experience as a student here at W&L.

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One can become overwhelmed by the Jewish atmosphere on campus.

At W&L, Jews are in the minority, and this has positive effects on one's Jewish experience. The Jews here seem much more closely bonded than those at Brandeis, because frankly there

massive events that include hundreds of people. Here, it is much smaller affair, but this leads to a generally much more personal experience.

Shabbat dinner at W&L is one of the most beautiful events I have ever been to. Students and faculty from W&L make

Corporations should not swing elections

Supreme Court decision to allow unlimited political donations is wrong

By Summer Lollie
COLUMNIST

I'm afraid of what American democracy will look like after the dust settles on Supreme Court's ruling last Thursday allowing corporations the right to spend an infinite amount of money to influence the outcome of elections.

Five of the nine Supreme Court Justices ruled that corporations were "persons" with the right to free speech. Further, the court cited the equally reprehensible 1976 Supreme Court Case Buckley v. Valeo decision that equated money with speech.

This decision means that corporations, as "persons," can pump an infinite amount of money into our political system that is already strangled by corporate interests.

The glaring irrationality behind the Supreme Court's decision leaves me breathless. If money equals speech, and more money equals more speech, then "persons" with more money have more speech. And doesn't that undermine the very principle of free speech?

Due to the absurd cost of me-

dia exposure for campaigns, we already have a representative government beholden to corporate interests. Enabling corporations to spend an infinite amount

Court ruled, a corporation can and never will be a person. Corporations cannot breathe air, laugh, cry, raise children, fight in wars, empathize or have a

days? The ones where we used to worry about the NRA, trade unions, and trial lawyers that got involved in politics? At least all of these groups were backed by people—American citizens. Now, investment groups owned by foreign banks, arms dealers, terrorist sympathizers and people interested in the downfall of America have unrestrained influence on the American political system through corporate money.

Don't get me wrong: I am a strong supporter of entrepreneurship and responsible capitalism. It is the unrestrained power of global corporations that scares me. Why aren't more Americans outraged?

Remember the good ol' days? The ones where we used to worry about the NRA, trade unions and trial lawyers that got involved in politics? At least all of these groups were backed by people—American citizens.

of money for political ads leaves elected officials imprisoned to the interests of big business.

The Supreme Court decision has delivered American democracy to CEOs, corporate lobbyists and global powerbrokers. No serving politician can survive now standing against them.

Despite what the Supreme

conscience. Corporations are not beholden to any flag, religion, or moral ethic to keep them in check.

Let us not forget that with the recent economic downturn, a lot of these corporations are owned in large part by China, Russia, oil barons and foreign banks. Remember the good ol'

Profiles in Leadership: Katie Harris

Activities: W&L Student Consulting, co-Executive Director; Women's Tennis Team, ODK, Student Athlete Advisory Committee, Volunteer Venture Trip Coordinator, Kappa Alpha Theta Philanthropy Chair

What energizes you about taking on leadership responsibilities?

People—teammates, classmates, group members, faculty. It is the people with whom I work who motivate me to set goals, who push me to achieve success; and who excite me about new opportunities.

What has been one of your most rewarding aspects of leadership at W&L?

Seeing the success of collaborative hard work translated into tangible accomplishments is always rewarding. Publishing a chapter with a student consulting team or cheering a teammate on to victory each represents the culmination of much prior effort and hard work. Perhaps even more worthwhile is seeing and motivating others to get involved in organizations and activities.

What legacy of leadership do you hope to leave for others who follow you here?

I primarily hope to motivate others and cultivate the next sequence of leaders on campus.

I will continue to strive for improvement in each team, organization, or project group in order to leave that group just a little bit better than it was before.

I hope to set an example for taking advantage of the opportunities awarded at W&L and for using these opportunities to make a difference on campus, no matter how small.

Any words of advice for them? Pursue activities or groups that you're passionate about and that you enjoy being a part of. These will be the most memorable, the most rewarding, and the most fun.

