

Pssst...Here's How You Can Beat a Parking Ticket

By Lauchlin Mac Neil

If you own a car in Brooklyn, then you know life's three certainties -- death, taxes and parking tickets? Well, the latter needn't be your fate, according to Louis Camporeale, founder of Parking Pal, Inc.

Camporeale, the guest speaker at the Bay Improvement Group's (BIG) recent meeting held at the Golden Gate Inn, Knapp Street and the Belt Parkway Service Road, shared his tactics for beating parking tickets.

Parking summonses are big-time revenue for the city, he told the audience. According to his calculations, the various city agencies authorized to issue parking summonses (Traffic Enforcement Agents, NYPD, NYFD, and the Department of Sanitation) slipped \$10 million worth of tickets under the windshield wipers of motorists in 1996.

Breaking this figure down, he estimated that 19 percent of the tickets were issued for no standing, 18 percent for parking at expired meters, 17 percent for registration and inspection violations, 13 percent for violating street cleaning rules, 18 percent for no parking violations, and another 15 percent for assorted motor vehicle and driving-related infractions.

The How To's

In a nutshell, beating a ticket requires finding a fault in one of four categories: date and time accuracy, location accuracy, vehicle specifics, and ticket specifics. The writers of tickets can and do make mistakes. So, it is in your favor to contest every ticket, advised Camporeale.

First, read the parking signs on the street where you park before you leave your car. If even one side of a street sign is readable, then the parking regulations apply for that particular block. However, if all of the signs are missing or defaced entirely, then you have grounds to contest a parking ticket.

In this instance, photos are your best defense. You must provide the Parking and Violations Bureau, in addition to your letter explaining your defense, with photos showing the missing or defaced sign, the location with either a prominent address or landmark where your car was parked, and several views of the street from corner to corner showing the entire block, Camporeale said.

Remember, there is no defense for blocking a fire hydrant. You must leave 15 feet on either side of the plug. He warned the audience that the city's yellow curb lines by fire hydrants are notoriously inaccurate. So, use your judgment before you pocket your keys, he said.



Louis Camporeale, the Parking Pal, knows a thing or two about beating parking tickets.

When the city bestows one of its costly gifts on your windshield, don't

buckle under. In the portion of the ticket where it designates date and time, check to see if this data is correct and complete. The complete day, date, and time is required.

Likewise, the "location" of the violation must state a full address such as "in front 123 East 456th Street," or "opposite 123 East 456th Street." Tickets stating, "The corner of..." renders the summons defective, but how do you prove it? Well, with the help of the U.S. Post Office, you can demonstrate that the location cited on the ticket is fictitious.

Just mail a letter with your return address to the address on the ticket, in this case, "The corner of East 456th Street," and wait for

the U.S. Post Office to return your envelope bearing, "No Such Address" stamped on the outside. Return this letter with your ticket as proof that the non-existent address renders the ticket void.

Now, parking meters pose their own, unique defense strategies. You can legally park at a broken meter for one hour, said Camporeale. However, if you get a ticket, you must do several things. Immediately check to see if the box, "First Time Observed," is correct. Next, check to see if the meter's serial number is properly noted on your ticket. Every meter has a serial number and it can be found in the clock window of the meter.

It's up to you to call the

Department of Transportation at (718) 894-5920 and report the broken meter. The department will issue a work order to repair the meter. When the city checks the veracity of your claim of a broken meter, *viola*, the ticket's voided.

Of course, if all else fails, you can wait eight years for the statute of limitations to expire on your ticket.

From Rebel To Entrepreneur

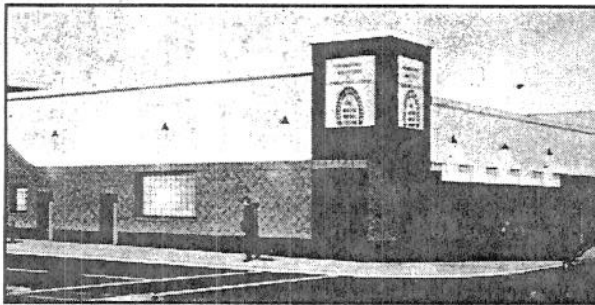
Beneath the mild-mannered guise of a legal researcher, Camporeale is really the *Scarlet Pimpernel* of motorists and nemesis of parking ticket authors. This Gravesend resident has turned his acumen of traffic regulations into his own cottage industry.

Today, Parking Pal Inc. (P.O. Box 350-003, Brooklyn, New York, 11235, 946-6736) publishes a series of motorist educational products, including laminated placards prominently displaying the law permitting cars to park at broken meters, commercial vehicle parking rules, and a placard stating the traffic law as it applies to the medical profession. In addition, a calendar noting the specific days parking rules are suspended city-wide, and a booklet, *How To Take A Photo For The PVB*, is also available.

Informative tips and changes in parking rules are also available at Camporeale's web site: <http://www.parkingpal.com>.

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