



Louis Camporeale, '84; M.S., '87, was working as a legal assistant in 1994, when, researching a transportation-related issue, he discovered how many people had sued New York City over tickets they received for parking at broken meters.

Broken meters he knew well. As a Brooklyn College student, he had routinely scoured Bedford Avenue, Campus Road, and all the streets surrounding the campus for a spot that might save him a little money. He also knew about getting tickets on broken meters, which he always disputed—successfully—because the \$20 fines amounted to a full day's pay from his jobs at the campus book store and the pool. "That was my

weekend going-out money," he says now. "I wasn't going to hand that over to the city."

But when he realized years later that people were suing over the issue, he had an epiphany. "It dawned on me that the city wasn't informing people of their rights," he says, "because it was to their advantage not to. Most people either didn't care to fight the system or didn't know how to."

A little research turned up another striking statistic—"New York, the city with the greatest public transportation system in the country, issued \$10 million in tickets annually," he says, whereas, Los Angeles—the capital of America's car culture—wrote only \$3 million in tickets. "How do you come to terms with that?"

Camporeale couldn't. So he came up with an idea to help uninformed motorists in the five boroughs: A windshield placard, brightly hued and with bold lettering that reminds traffic agents that they aren't about to ticket just any passive parker. This one knows that in section 4-08, subsection (h), subsection (3), of the NYC Department of Traffic Rules, (which Camporeale obtained only

after he filed a Freedom of Information Act request) there are clauses stipulating that motorists are allowed to park at broken and missing meters.

The Parking Pal was born.

Camporeale knew he was on to something when he was eating at a restaurant on Avenue U and saw a traffic agent about to issue him a ticket. She noticed the placard in his windshield and simply walked away. "It was one of the greatest moments of my life," he says.

He caught a break when fellow Brooklyn College alumnus and *New York Post* columnist Neil Graves wrote a story about the Parking Pal and his products, leading to a surge of interest.

He went on to make placards for commercial vehicles, medical professionals, and residents with legal driveways. By 1998, he had written his first book, *The New York City Parking Survival Guide: How to Deal with Parking Tickets Effectively*, which the website About.com selected as the No. 2 reference book in New York City, right behind the *Zagat* restaurant guide.

Camporeale became a regular contributor to *New York Now*, a

## Brother Acts

This past season, the Brooklyn College men's basketball team posted its best record in a quarter-century, making it to the ECAC Metro semifinals. The team's top two players—possibly the two best players in the City University of New York Athletic Conference (CUNYAC)—are the younger brothers of two former members of the team.

Richard Jean-Baptiste, a sophomore forward who ranked fourteenth nationally in scoring in Division III with 22.8 points per game, was the first men's basketball All-American at the College since the return of intercollegiate athletics to the school in 1994. He was also named Division III player of the year by the Metropolitan Basketball Writers Association. Jean-



All-American Richard Jean-Baptiste with his brother Jeffrey, a Bridges' assistant coach.



program of the PBS-affiliated WMHT-TV, and made a name for himself as the New York media's point person on all things parking, appearing on *Good Day New York* and in *Newsday* and the *New York Times*.

He earned his badge of honor during an interview with a reporter outside the city's Department of Transportation offices: A DOT official, realizing Camporeale was the infamous Parking Pal, lamented, "Oh, you're the guy who's trying to put us

out of business." (Camporeale says he has never been contacted by city officials about his manual or products though he jokes that he was "a little concerned during the Giuliani administration.")

Humor aside, he sees a bigger point in all of this, one about the power of an informed citizenry in a democracy and individuals claiming their rights and taking on the system.

"The entire world disinvested in South Africa and look at what

happened," he says, sounding a bit frustrated with submissive citizens. "If everyone who got a ticket in New York City fought it, it would crush the system. They'd have to dismiss the tickets because they wouldn't be able to respond to them all in time. And all it would take is for all of us to write a letter."

Meanwhile, Camporeale is writing his next book, which he hopes will be out sometime next year. If his first could be considered NYC Parking 101, then think of the second as an intermediate text, with examples of how to prepare different types of letters of defense and how to find good parking spots in the first place, something at which Camporeale has become quite adept. To this day, he still looks for broken meters.

"Now, that's laundry money," he says.

Baptiste's older brother, Jeffrey, averaged better than 20 points per game playing point guard under coach Steve Podias from 2002 through 2006. He ranks as the third leading scorer in Brooklyn College's history and currently serves as assistant coach for the team.

Sean Weismuller, a center and power forward, was selected as the CUNYAC preseason player of the year. He didn't disappoint, scoring 16.4 points per game and 6.4 rebounds. The 6' 8" Weismuller's older brother, Danny, was a member of the Bridges from 1999 to 2003, and is currently working on a graduate degree in physical education at the College.

Both sets of brothers grew up playing a variety of sports, though not always against each other because of their age differences. But there's still a healthy competitive jostle between them.

"He mimics a lot of my moves," says the older Jean-Baptiste, Jeffrey, of his celebrated younger brother. "Make sure you put that in the story."

"I stole maybe one or two of his moves," concedes Richard, who is on pace to surpass Jeffrey's scoring record.

The Weismullers are from a sports-saturated family. Their father played basketball at the University of Iowa and their sister, Kelly, also currently plays basketball for Brooklyn College, and led the team in field-goal percentage this past season.

"There was always a basketball hoop around the Weismullers growing up," says Danny, who played small forward and never missed a game in his four years. "We've always been in leagues. We played every sport you can think of." Sean also runs cross-country at Brooklyn College. Podias says all four players were easy to coach. Of the Weismullers, he says "Danny was like a coach on the court

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