

Parking

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another small riot, and several small groups of students chanting and vandalizing buildings across City Campus.

Community and university leaders expressed disapproval of the students' methods to bring more attention to the Parking Problem.

But this battle — certainly one of the most memorable — did result in an investigation of the Parking Problem and the beginnings of our current parking permit system.

There was even talk during the investigation of pooling parking fines for the campus into a scholarship fund that would be available for eligible UNL students.

However, Tad McDowell, manager of UNL Parking Services, said although a scholarship fund from parking fees sounded like an interesting idea, it was not currently being considered as an option.

McDowell explained that financing scholarships would mean price increases to make up the difference.

"Parking Services receives all its revenue from permit sales, citations and special-event parking," McDowell said.

The money collected is then used for maintenance of shuttle busses, parking lots and lights and for landscaping, he said.

"We (Parking Services) are here to maintain the parking lots," he said, "and to maintain some control and some planning as to where people are going to park."

Students who fail to pay fines will not receive parking permits, he said, and may also have a block placed on their registration until the fine is paid.

However, McDowell said the main goal of the department was to provide a service for both East and City Campuses.

"If we weren't here, there would be cars every place you could imagine," McDowell said.

Parking Services has often been blamed as the true culprit of all that is wrong with City Campus parking. During each semester, curses can be heard in the same breath as complaints about Parking Service regulations.

However, few students ever notice remote parking areas are devoid of cars.

McDowell tried to explain this coincidence.

"The students all want to park near the core academic areas," he said. "It's a convenience issue and it will never go away completely."

In fact, a 1992 UNL parking/traffic study conducted by an outside agency reached a similar conclusion.

Although the study stated that City Campus had a shortage of parking spaces, it conceded that "a substantial number of students would prefer to pay for the convenience of city parking rather than use the remote campus lots."

McDowell agreed. With so many students, faculty, staff and visitors on the City Campus, he said, it is not reasonable to expect to park a car by the front door of a class.

Parking Services has not entirely abandoned the quest to cage the Parking Problem beast.

According to McDowell, a total lot survey and sign inventory will be conducted by Parking Services this summer to examine lot conditions and availability issues.

He also said the addition of a 600-space parking structure west of Memorial Stadium will help ease frustration — if only slightly.

"UNL students make up approximately 60 percent of the parking demand in the surrounding city parking lots," McDowell said.

If any of those lots are destroyed and buildings constructed on the site — for which there are plans being developed — it will mean a rise in university parking demands by students now parking on city lots, he said.

Complaints persist, and have persisted, sometimes without facts behind them.

According to McDowell, overselling of student parking permits is a myth.

Students come to class during different hours and on different days, McDowell said, so many different students may use the same parking space during any given week.

"Unless we are going to sell permits on a one-on-one basis," he said, "you will always have some empty spaces."

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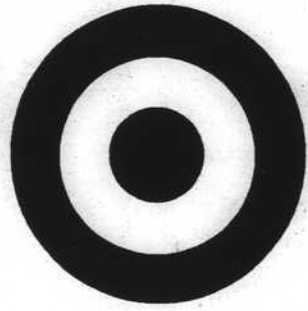
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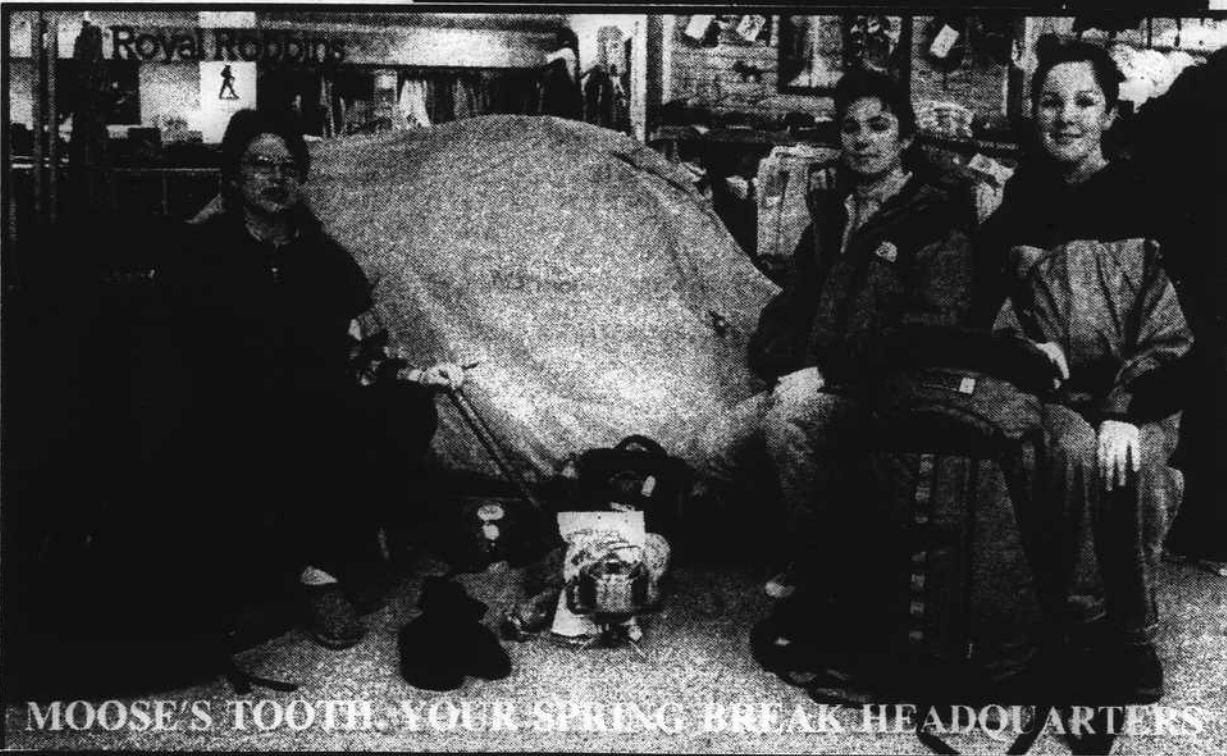
 

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