

◆ THE DERBY CITY NSCIA NEWSLETTER ◆

OCTOBER 2008

The Derby City Chapter of the National Spinal Cord Injury Association Network- Serving Kentuckiana.

Message From the President

Dear Members & Friends-

October's meeting is canceled. November's meeting will be held at Frazier Rehab Institute; 220 Abraham Flexner Way; Louisville; 10th floor dining room.

- David Allgood

MS WHEELCHAIR KENTUCKY 12TH ANNUAL MS WHEELCHAIR KENTUCKY PAGEANT

JUDGING:

SAT. NOV 1, 2008

GALT HOUSE

PAGEANT EVENT

SUN. NOV 2, 2008

KY CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Ms. Wheelchair



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

MS. WHEELCHAIR KENTUCKY
PAGEANT

8610 GLENFIELD WAY

LOUISVILLE, KY 40241

(502) 394-9160 (PHONE)

(502) 394-9976 (FAX)

EMAIL: patobryant@bellsouth.net



SEE YA
THERE!



From NewMobility.com—ed.

PARKING PLACKARD GLUT

Supply and demand is a straightforward concept until it's applied to the use of disabled parking permits. That's when you step through the looking glass into a nightmare scenario where a demand for parking permits is rapidly increasing (mostly from people who don't really need them) while the supply of accessible spaces is quickly running out. When you factor in all the fakes, frauds who take advantage of a deeply flawed system, along with the aging baby boomer generation and the rising number of disabled Iraq-war veterans, you've got a genuine crisis that is rapidly approaching critical mass.



For those who genuinely qualify for disabled parking, the problem is guaranteed to get worse before it gets better. Fraudulent abuse of disabled parking will continue until sweeping, nationwide solutions are devised. The need for education, outreach, and cooperation between the disabled and nondisabled population has never been greater. Anyone who is skeptical about this looming crisis should consider the following:

- ◆ According to a recent report in The New York Times, at least 227 workers at Miami International airport were caught parking near airport terminals with illegally obtained disabled parking permits. Many were seen walking from their cars, unassisted, and frequently with heavy baggage in hand.
- ◆ In Boston, a recent crime spree involved a group of thieves who used sledge hammers to smash windows and steal disabled parking permits from their legitimate owners. (Continued On Page Two)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

President's Message/Ms. Wheelchair KY	1
Parking Permits	1
Calendar	3
For Sale	5

Derby City Area Chapter
of the
National Spinal Cord Injury Association

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

The Derby City Area Chapter of the N.S.C.I.A. is a membership organization for individuals with spinal cord injuries, their families, and health professionals. Founded in 1984 as a Charter Member of the N.S.C.I.A., it was incorporated under IRS Section 501 (c) 3 as a not for profit organization. The Board of Directors consists of the Officers, Past President and the Board Members At Large.

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

David Allgood - (502) 589-6620

VICE PRESIDENT

Adam Ford - (502) 425-2206

TREASURER

Tom Stokes- (502) 957-5865

LIAISON TO FRAZIER REHAB INSTITUTE

Jill Farmer , CTRS—(502) 582-7618

FUNDRAISING CHAIR

Betty Perry—(502) 647-0368

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY/WEB MASTER

Michael Feger- (502) 647-0368

PAST PRESIDENT

Adam Ford- (502) 425-2206

BOARD MEMBERS AT LARGE-

Mike Perry

Kelly Young

**NSCIA DERBY CITY CHAPTER
NEWSLETTER STAFF**

Editor- Barbara Davis

Contributor- David Allgood

Visit Our Website at

www.DerbyCitySpinalCord.org

**The Derby City Area Chapter Newsletter is brought
to you through the generous support of Frazier
Rehab Institute**

PARKING PLACARDS, CONT'D

When residents and commuters in Austin, TX, discovered that disabled parking permits allowed all-day free parking in the downtown area, fraudulent use of permits increased by 300 percent, costing the city an estimated \$1 million in annual parking revenues. The same scenario is playing out in most American cities.

- ◆ In California, where permit abuse is most rampant, one out of 16 drivers has a disabled parking permit—more than double the ratio of disabled drivers nationwide, according to ADA statistics.
- ◆ In South Carolina alone, nearly 137,000 permanent disabled parking permits were issued in 2007—24,000 more than was issued in 2003. Similar increases are occurring nationwide.
- ◆ In October 2006, disabled Charleston, S.C., resident Frank Rupp witnessed a scenario that has grown increasingly common among nondisabled drivers eager to avoid the daily parking expenses: A contractor handing out bogus parking permits to his construction crew so they could park their trucks all day for free in disabled parking spaces located near their construction sites.
- ◆ Disabled parking permits are bought, sold and traded on websites like eBay and Craigslist, and black market permits can be purchased, like drugs and guns, on the streets of major cities, typically costing around \$25. “Legitimate-looking” permanent and temporary permits can also be purchased—in bulk, no less—from various online retailers.

For better or worse, a common form of interaction between disabled and nondisabled Americans revolve around disabled parking spaces, and those encounters are often accompanied by simmering emotions of confrontation, resentment, accusation and open hostility.

Sometimes humor is the best way to acknowledge the problem. In a recent episode of ABC’s hit series, *Desperate Housewives*, the spoiled, self-indulgent Gabrielle used her husband’s blindness as a convenient excuse to abuse his disabled parking permit. When confronted by a disabled driver (played by paraplegic actor Mark Longley), she pushes him, wheelchair and all, down a sloped parking lot and says to herself, “Well, it’s official: I’m going to hell.”

Surprisingly, the writers of that episode actually got it right in terms of humorously dramatizing a hot-button issue: While poking fun at Gabrielle’s obvious guilt, *Desperate Housewives* highlighted the glaring contradiction behind most permit abuse: The violators know they’re guilty, yet they abuse the permits anyway.

What makes it so easy to violate the rights of the disabled, when similarly insulting another minority

(Continued On Page Four)

Refrigerator Calendar

*2008

OCTOBER

8th - Elderly & Disabled Advisory Council Meeting.

Mon 1:00 p.m.; TARC; 1000 W. Broadway; Board Room.

21st - Derby City Chapter meeting; 6:30 p.m; Frazier Rehab Institute.

Mon CANCELLED

20th - Metro disAbility Coalition Meeting; 3:15 p.m.

Sat Urban County Government Center; Barrett Avenue; Louisville

27th - Friends for Michael, Inc. Spinal Cord Injury Organization

Sat 5K Run/Walk and Wheel; Henry County High School; 9 a.m.

(Registration begins at 7:00 a.m.) Call Cindy at (502) 396-3214 or Kelley at (502) 532-7979.

NOVEMBER

3rd - Elderly & Disabled Advisory Council Meeting

Mon 1:00; TARC; 1000 W. Broadway; Board Room.

17th - Derby City Chapter meeting; 6:30 p.m. Frazier Rehab Institute

Mon 220 Abraham Flexnor Way; Louisville

15th - Metro disAbility Coalition Meeting; 3:15 p.m.

Sat Urban County Government Center; Barrett Avenue; Louisville

For More Information Call
David Allgood at 502-589-6620

PARKING PLACARDS, CONT'D

group would be considered unthinkable?

“People have a difficult time envisioning themselves as being disabled,” says Fred Shotz, a long-time disability rights and president of All Disabled Americans, Inc. in Hollywood, Fla. “You’re not going to wake up tomorrow and suddenly be African-American, but you could wake up and suddenly be disabled. People have a tough time with that, so they don’t develop any kind of ‘mental alliance’ or empathy with a population they would never want to identify with. It’s too scary and dangerous.”

So, while nondisabled people grapple with their fear of disability, the social disconnect that separates those with disabilities from the mainstream is further complicated by a flawed system that actually promotes the abuse of disabled parking. Owing to the broad definition of disability put forth by the Americans with Disabilities Act, doctors can indiscriminately approve permanent or temporary parking permits for people for almost any malady from “high stress” to a sprained ankle.

As a result, far too many permits are issued nationwide, with no concurrent increase in the number of disabled parking spaces as mandated by the ADA Accessibility Guidelines, which presently require at least one accessible parking space in every parking lot (if only one, it must be van accessible), or three accessible spaces for every hundred “normal” ones.

You needn’t be a math whiz to know we’re heading for a meltdown. And while the ADA is consistent in determining who qualifies for disabled parking nationwide, the issuance of permits and their subsequent enforcement (including fines for parking violations) varies from state to state, resulting in a veritable quagmire of confusing inconsistencies.

As if that weren’t enough, the disabled parking controversy is further complicated by a mind-numbing array of ancillary issues, such as the crucial difference between “normal” and “van-accessible” (and the ADA ratio of one to another); varying degrees of police enforcement (typically minimal, due to higher priorities, low fines and lack of revenue incentive); and state-by-state differences in the permits themselves, with some being permanent, others renewed every four to six years, some issued two per customer, and some with expiration dates that can easily be altered.

What can be done to promote effective reform of the system? Given the shocking lack of common ethical courtesy among permit violators, should we consider a Big Brother/federal oversight, as opposed to

state-to-state confusion? Should all disabled parking spaces be van-accessible (with wide access for lifts, ramps, etc.)? With regard to parking, should the definition of disability be limited to obvious mobility impairments? Should different permits and privileges be assigned according to severity of disability? Should disabled drivers pay for parking like everyone else (thus eliminating the primary incentive to cheat) and if not, why not? Should photo IDs and other biometric data be added to permits, or would that allow criminals to easily target vulnerable victims? Are there better methods of matching permits to their users?

These are just a few of the many questions that must be answered if we are to move forward in a more efficient, tamper-proof method of issuing and enforcing permits. In the meantime—and it could be a decade or more before effective changes are made—more and more cities are finding encouraging results with civilian enforcement programs.

“Our chief of police is incredibly supportive,” says Kris Call, one of 42 people presently serving in the Citizens Helping in Police Services program, a volunteer association in Kennewick, Wash., started in 1994. In addition to disabled parking enforcement, the group performs other services like marking additional abandoned vehicles, placing speed-limit radar monitors, and doing maintenance checks on the city’s water-storage tanks, freeing the police to tackle higher priorities.

According to Call, applicants go through a six-week, two-nights per week “Citizens Academy” where they learn all facets of the police department, qualifying them to become CHIPS volunteers. When a violation is spotted and confirmed by the absence of a permit (suspected violators of a permit are mostly ignored), volunteers working in pairs take photos of the offending vehicle and write a citation. Copies of both are sent, along with an affidavit signed by the volunteers, to Kennewick’s city attorney, who co-signs the affidavit and sends it to the violator, who can pay the fine or contest it. “But it’s foolish to contest it,” says Call, “because the evidence is on record.” The CHIPS program filed 200 parking citations in 2007, providing a total of 12,350 hours of volunteer time with an estimated value of over \$230,000.

The Disabled Parking Enforcement Volunteers of Austin, TX, have a similarly successful track record, although their methods are simpler compared to the CHIPS program in Washington. “We don’t take photos,” says Nancy Crowther, who has muscular dystrophy and is one of the program’s founding members. “We just take down all the information that’s pertinent to the violation and turn it over to the police, who issue the citations.”

Crowther reports that one of Austin’s municipal court judges is so pleased with the program that she created a “Wall of Shame” in the municipal courthouse, displaying

(Continued On Page Five)

PARKING, CONT'D

all of the disabled parking permits that were confiscated as a result of volunteer enforcement. Revenues generated by parking citations go directly into Austin's ADA fund, which provides accessible library equipment and other ADA-related needs to the city.

A major factor in the success of volunteer enforcement programs is providing enough ADA-related training so volunteers can ensure that parking violators are, in fact, breaking the law. In most communities, the presence of a permit gets you off the hook, and volunteers focus on the most obvious abusers. But the issue of so-called "invisible" or not-readily-apparent disabilities is a sticky one, and both police and volunteers alike are legally restricted from challenging suspected violators about the nature of their disability. You can't ask, and they don't have to tell. But the "play nice" approach allows a lot of violators to fall through the cracks.

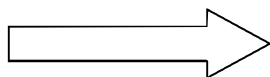
At least one website has been created as a globally visible "wall of shame" against parking violators, but one visit to HandicappedFraud.Org reveals a shocking lack of awareness or foresight in tackling the complexities of the disabled parking crisis. While it may be effective as a shaming tool against parking violators, this well-intentioned but poorly executed website has drawn heavy criticism from disability activists, not only for its politically incorrect name, but for promising what it simply cannot deliver under current rules and regulations.

Visitors to the website can post detailed reports with uploaded photos of parking violators across the nation. "HandicappedFraud.Org" merchandise, such as branded T-shirts and coffee mugs can be purchased at the site, and free supplies of post-it notes ("You have been reported to HandicappedFraud.Org") can be ordered to stick on parking violators' cars.

The web-site is one of several for-profit sites owned and operated by Maureen Birdsall of Birdsall Interactive in Lafayette, Calif. According to Birdsall, the website's fraud reports are compiled monthly, by state, and sent to the DMVs in each state. Apparently, Birdsall failed to consider the fact that not one single DMV in the U.S. is equipped to process the reports, issue fines, or pursue violators in any way whatsoever.

Websites can evolve and improve with time, but HandicappedFraud.Org is presently little more than a worldwide bulletin board for parking-fraud exposure. Birdsall claims to be receiving favorable feedback from city and state governments across the country. However, her website fails to promote any practical solutions to the disabled parking crisis.

(Continued Under For Sale)

**FOR SALE *****

93" E150; EZ Lock WC System Elec. w/Quantum 600 wc/swivel captain's chairs/3-way power driver's seat/remote start burglar alarm/front-rear air/power wc lift/new upholstery. \$11,000, negotiable. (502) 543-5948/(502) 773-2337. WC Lift; \$1,000; Invacare Storm TDX 3 Power WC; full reclining; less than 1 year old; \$1000; Call David 589-6620. NC topper; used; 3 E&J Manual chairs; used; 1 Quicksilver Action manual chair; Monarch hand controls. 93,000 miles. Price negotiable. Call Ruth @ 239-9754 after 5 p.m.

***Cookbooks for Sale:** Recipes compiled by Chapter members; \$10:00. Call David @ 589-6620.

***Video tapes for sale.** Various topics related to spinal cord injuries. Call David Allgood or Buddy Lawson.

***SCI -Shirts for sale.** S, M, L, XL. David—589-6620.

****If assistance is needed to pay for any of the above items, contact Kentucky Assistive Technology Loan Corporation at 1-800-327-5287 for information on loans at 5% interest to qualified individuals.*

PARKING, CONT'D

"That website is worthless," says Fred Shotz, who tried, with little success, to alert Birdsall to the misleading promises of her website. "She seems to think she's accomplishing something by reporting parking violators to agencies that have no jurisdictional authority. She needs to be more candid on her website about the ultimate goal, which is not simply to report violators but to establish a system in which action can be taken. If legislators will support the cause of endorsement, a website like this could be very valuable. For now, the website can't do what it claims because it's not in a position to do it yet."

To be fair, Handicapped.Org shines a bright, glaring light on the disabled parking crisis, luring an increasing number of bloggers and journalists who then draw attention to the complicated issues involved. It's only a matter of time before the crisis boils over, at which point the need for sweeping change will be utterly unavoidable.

SOME SIDEBAR QUOTES

"It all starts with doctors being too lenient with signing permit applications." - David Allgood, C5 quad, Louisville, Kentucky

"If you don't have a mobility impairment, you shouldn't get a permit. The deaf don't see themselves as disabled, so they shouldn't qualify." - Larry Henderson, unspecified disability, Claymont, Delaware.

You are cordially invited to join us!

The Derby City Chapter of the National Spinal Cord Injury Association consists of people with spinal cord injuries and similar physical conditions, their family members, friends, and professionals or other interested parties.

We meet:

WHEN- Third Monday of every month from 6:30 to 9:00 PM

WHERE- Frazier Rehab Institute, 10th floor Dining Room
220 Abraham Flexner Way, Louisville, KY 40202

If you wish to be a member, donor, and/or be on the mailing list of the Derby City Chapter of the National Spinal Cord Injury Association please complete and mail the following form to the address below

National Spinal Cord Injury Association
Derby City Chapter

Membership & Organization Sponsorship Form

Name: Mr./Mrs./Ms./Dr. _____ Date _____
 Address: _____ Apt.# _____
 City/State/Zip: _____
 Business (if any): _____
 Home Phone: () _____ Work Phone: () _____
 Date of Birth _____
 Para: _____ Quad _____ Hemiplegic: _____
 Level of Disability _____ Other Disability _____
 Able-Bodied(yes/no): _____
 New Member: _____ Renewal _____ Newsletter Subscription
 (only \$12): _____
 Special Interests /Hobbies/Sports: _____

Membership is open to all individuals and sponsorship to all organizations interested in spinal cord injury.

Mark Type of TAX DEDUCTIBLE Individual Membership or Organization Donor Category Desired***

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| _____ Regular-\$12 | _____ Bronze Organization-\$100-249 |
| _____ Sponsor-\$25 | _____ Silver Organization-\$250-499 |
| _____ Patron \$50 | _____ Gold Organization- \$500-999 |
| _____ Benefactor-\$100 | _____ Platinum Organization-\$1000-2499 |
| _____ Permanent- \$1000/lifetime** | _____ Diamond Organization-\$2500 Or Over. |

Please make checks payable to: **NSCIA Derby City Chapter**

David Allgood
6703 Triangle Drive
Louisville, KY. 40214