

Last week I wrote about the proposed parking garage on Candle Street and about just how terrible an idea it would be to sink millions into a site we don't even own to build a huge, ugly parking garage in the Old Historic District. I didn't even mention the plan to surround the structure with new, Disney-esque retail buildings in a district where the vast majority of the structures are old and historic. Talk about out of place. It turns my stomach.

Grant Sanders
YACK on:
Parking

This week, however, in an effort to offer a positive solution instead of just being the Negative Nelly that I can sometimes be, I will impart some of my legendary tips for finding a parking space on Nantucket in the middle of the summer time. These tips really work, so get out your scissors and Scotch® Brand Magic® tape and stick this list of tips to the dashboard of your offensively large SUV. You'll thank me later.

The first thing you need to do is step outside the "herd mindset." One problem with parking is that if you have a thought in your head about driving downtown and parking in the Grand Union parking lot, chances are 150 other people had that exact same thought. I was there the other day and I saw about 17 cars moving slowly through the three lanes of parking. This is the herd mentality at its worst. And I have to ask myself, what kind of person is that 17th driver, anyway? I mean, you approach the parking lot, and you see 16 other cars plodding along through the lot vying for two spaces at the most. What kind of backward impulse leads you to believe that joining those other 16 spot-seekers is going to result in some kind of instant empty-space bonanza for you?

Wake the heck up, people. Get out of that lemming-like rut. The best way to stay clear of the herd mentality is to alter your brain patterns by doing something original every single day. It doesn't have to be a big

thing. Walk backwards up Main Street. Give all the bricks cute names. Write an epic poem about one woman's seemingly heroic efforts to thwart the plot by the town to take control of our wastewater system from the commonwealth. Or wear a cat or marmoset on your head like a hat for an hour. Any of these things will kick-start your brain and get you thinking like a true individual and not like a sheep, a cow or a water buffalo.

Once you've got a truly singular mind, get behind the wheel and drive into town. But don't drive the way everyone else drives. Try to think of the strangest route possible into town. Leaving Madaket, drive to 'Sconset and then approach town via Pleasant, then Main, then Pine Street, then Judith Chase Lane, then Fair Street then up Main again and so on. I guarantee you if you take a route you've never taken before, you will start to see open parking spaces all over the place.

Another tip is to stop in the middle of a street, like Centre Street that has lots of parking on it, and get out of your car to investigate a problem that you have with your rear axle. It does not matter if you actually have a real problem, just get out, block traffic with your vehicle, lie down on the pavement with your legs sticking out so no one can drive around you and check under your car for 2-3 minutes. When the frequency of honking reaches 23 honks per minute, get up and get back in your car and resume space hunting. In this time, with no traffic ahead of you, several spaces should have opened up and you can easily take your pick.

Here's a tip for those times when nothing seems to work. Drive to the center of town. After finding no spaces at all, resolve to give up and go home and eat cheese curls. Don't just say it to yourself — believe it. Fully. Really, truly give up, in your heart, any hope of finding space. And then make your way out of town. Once you have truly given up, there will be a spot on the road out of town, only a five-minute stroll from your intended destination. Guaranteed.

Finally, here's a tip for finding a space that works every single time for me. Meet a wonderful girl. Fall

in love. Date for a year. Give her an engagement ring. Get married. Have kids and move to Nantucket where the girl's father owns property downtown with several off-street parking spaces, one of which you can pretty much use any time you desire. Yes, it's a somewhat involved and time-consuming procedure for finding a space, but it works like a charm.

Of course, no list of tips for finding a parking space downtown would be complete without the following very real advice. Leave your car at home. Ride your bike. Get on the NRTA bus. Take a taxi. And stop being part of the problem, folks. It's amazingly inexpensive when compared to the gas you'll burn looking for a parking space downtown. Or when compared to building a silly and unnecessary parking garage that will be empty for ten months out of the year.

YACK on. ■

Grant Sanders is the host of YACK, The Nantucket Online Community at www.yackon.com and his offensively large SUV squeaks so badly that getting out of it and looking underneath at the axle is a risky proposition. His views are his alone and do not necessarily reflect the editorial stance of The Nantucket Independent. Or his wife.

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