

Campus Opinion

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Opinion: Remember to keep open mind

JEANNE FLYNN
Guest Writer

If the mantra of the politically correct is tolerance, who can explain the firestorm over the nomination of John Ashcroft for Attorney General?

During the last eight years, we have been told that what matters is not one's personal life but one's job performance. Now that we have a nominee whose personal life some find offensive for constitutionally protected reasons instead of character weaknesses; however, it is apparent we need a new standard.

During Ashcroft's tenure in Missouri as attorney general, and later governor, he was never alleged to have allowed his personal beliefs to negatively affect his job performance. His constituents never had to foot the bill for his defense or prosecution on criminal, civil or ethics-based charges. He has been affirmed by Democrats as well as Republicans from his home state. The only thing his opponents could submit as evidence of his lack of fitness for office is a set of beliefs grounded in faith.

Until recently, I hoped that the last place I would see condemnation over a candidate's religious beliefs arise is a faith-

based institution such as Meredith College.

When we dismiss political views as extremist because they are grounded in religious faith we break ranks with other extremists like the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Sojourner Truth.

When we say that religious convictions make one ineligible to serve one's country, we deny the legitimacy of Jimmy Carter, Joseph Liebermann and Rev. David Price.

When we as women decide that only majority opinions are to be tolerated, then we deny our sisters who fought an uphill battle to gain suffrage, equal protection and equal standing with men under the law.

Issues are never so simple that we can allow the sound bite opinions of those making political agendas to substitute for thought. Those with deep convictions and deeper character on all points along the political spectrum are the ones who can challenge our thinking and make us question our prejudices.

We must never surrender our minds by giving up the difficult and sometimes painful process of probing, analyzing and exploring positions that differ from ours. If our opponents did that, we'd call them closed-minded. And we'd be right.

Parking hassles plague our once-serene school

LORA TILLMAN
Staff Writer

It's that time of year again. The time when students return to Meredith for another semester of classes, internships, extra-curricular activities and of course, parking issues.

Picture this: It is the day before classes start and you are faced with the daunting task of moving everything you own back into your dorm room. As you begin to unload, cursing yourself the whole time because you only used half of what you took, you decide to run up to your room, maybe to see if your roommate can help you out. You leave your car running with its flashers on, are gone for all of two minutes and when you return you find a \$50 Christmas present compliments of campus police for parking in the fire lane.

This happened to me. I was running errands the day before classes began and realized I had left some checks in my room that I needed to deposit. There were tons of cars in the circle, students all unloading from break, so I did not hesitate to pull up, throw on my flashers and run inside for the checks. In the 1.5 minutes I was not in my car, I had been

ticketed \$50 by campus police for parking in the fire lane.

Now there are a couple of points I would like to make about this issue. The first is the matter of permission. Being fairly active at Meredith, I attend all SGA Student Life Free Your Mind Forums. I DISTINCTLY remember Chief Frank Strickland saying at the very first forum this year, "I do not have a problem with students unloading their things in the circle as long as they are speedy about it."

Now, I don't know about you, but I believe 1.5 minutes is pretty darn fast. I can completely understand giving someone a ticket who has taken up the fire lane for five to ten minutes plus. But when I go up to my room for a brief period of time, come out and EVERY car in the circle has a ticket, something is definitely wrong.

Now, I would like to discuss my definition of "parking." My definition of parking is when a car is in a locked and stationary position and the engine is not running. I am not saying campus police should not ticket cars that are left running for an extended period of time in the circle, but let's face it. We are all college students here. Gas

costs money, money we don't have. So we are not going to be prone to leave our car running for extended periods of time.

Time is my last issue with parking. There are 15-minute spaces in front of Johnson. There are 15-minute places in front of Heilman and Barefoot. There are even 15-minute spaces in front of Gaddy-Hamrick. However, there are no 15-minute spaces in front of the Cate Center, one of the most frequently used buildings on campus. This is baffling to me.

Apparently we can have 15 minutes to carry art work in and out of a building, but we cannot have 15 minutes to check our mail, use the ATM or grab a bite to eat. Why is that? It makes no sense to me.

So be careful where you stop your car these days. Don't leave it running in the circle while you run to your room to grab your coat. Campus police are lurking in the shadows, roaming in the bushes, waiting to pounce your running vehicle.

And don't even think about running into Cate to check your mail unless you are handicapped or manage to steal a staff or commuter parking sticker.

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