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A new Web site helps people get their parking tickets dismissed. (PhotoDisc)

A Web Site for Parking Ticket Help

Plus: Cranking Up Power for Your Cell Phone



Aug. 26 — This week's *Cybershake* notes a Web site that can help motorists fight local parking tickets. Plus, we take a look at an old idea made new again: A crank-powered phone.

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

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A Web Site for Parking Ticket Help

Ever feel like you've been unfairly issued an illegal parking ticket? Rather than just blindly pay the fine, Glenn Bolofsky says his Internet company may be able to help you get the ticket dismissed outright.

At Bolofsky's ParkingTicket.com Web site, drivers can sign up to create an online account that will act as a central help desk for parking violations.

Members pick the city in which they received the parking ticket and provide all of the relevant information.

"Plus we have a list of compelling questions to ask you," says Bolofsky. "Were you dropping off a passenger? Was your vehicle disabled? Was there a medical emergency?"

Bolofsky's staff — which includes a retired New York City police officer and a former New York City parking violations judge — will review the information to judge if the ticket is legally valid and determine the best course of action.

If the staff comes up with a valid legal defense, it's sent back to the member via e-mail. Members print out the letter and send it via ordinary postal mail to the appropriate city judge to have the ticket dismissed.

Members will have to pay to use ParkingTickets.com's letter, however. But Bolofsky says the cost — about half of whatever the original ticket's fine would have been — is

fully refunded if the company's letter fails to get the summons dismissed.

For now, the site can only evaluate parking summonses issued in New York,

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Washington D.C., and San Francisco. But Bolofsky says the company hopes to add other cities soon.

And of course, not every parking ticket will have a valid defense or legal loophole. If ParkingTickets.com can't find a good defense, it will charge the member a "modest fee" and advise to pay the ticket's original fine.

Sometimes you just can't fight City Hall.

— Larry Jacobs, ABCNEWS

Cranking Up Cell Phone Talk Time

If you wait long enough, sometimes even the old becomes "new" again.

The latest example? The hand-cranked phone.

The Freeplay Energy Company, in conjunction with Motorola, has designed a contraption to ensure that mobile phone users never run out of juice.

Called the Motorola FreeCharge system, the device is a portable generator that produces electricity when users turn a tiny hand crank. The system uses similar crank-based technology featured in a wind-up radio introduced about six years ago to electricity-challenged parts of Africa.

But Rory Stears, chairman and chief executive officer of Freeplay, says there are slightly new twists to the FreeCharge system.

"There is a base set [on the FreeCharge] with the crank handle on the back," says Stears. "But it also has a rechargeable battery inside."

Turn the hand crank and all the generated electricity is stored within the internal battery. When the user's cell phone battery goes dead, they merely plug in the FreeCharge system to recharge the phone.

Although the FreeCharge unit isn't designed to power the phone directly, Stears says that in pinch it can be used to make quick emergency calls. Thirty seconds of cranking will produce enough power for five minutes of talk time, he says.

The \$80 FreeCharge is available only at the Motorola Web site and will work with most major models of Motorola cell phones. But the company hopes to have versions compatible with most major brand cellular phones within the year as well as distribution through retail stores soon.

Stears says the company plans to develop FreeCharge units for other devices — handheld computers such as the Palm Pilot, for example. Stears even envisions a foot-cranked FreeCharge system that could one day revitalize dead car batteries.

— Tim Scheld, ABCNEWS

Cybershake is produced for ABCNEWS Radio by [Andrea J. Smith](#).

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