

He's got a ticket to whine

Brampton senior bugged about being chased by collection agency over 1990 parking ticket

By CHRIS DOUCETTE, SUN MEDIA

BRAMPTON -- Herb Gallo knows he had a more hair and a slimmer waistline way back in 1990, but remembering exactly where and when he parked 17 years ago is a little trickier.

Unfortunately for the 69-year-old Brampton man, there's a collection agency out there that never forgets such things.

"I was opening my mail on Thursday and I said to myself, "What the heck is this?"" Gallo told the Sun, referring to a notice he received last week that claimed he had an outstanding fine for a ticket in the City of Toronto.

"Then I looked at the date and I couldn't believe it," he added.

The letter was from Canadian Bonded Credits Limited and it claimed Gallo owed its client, the City of Toronto, \$42.50 for an unpaid ticket he received on Nov. 15, 1990.



Brampton senior Herbert Gallo says he has no intention of paying a collection agency \$42.50 for a 17-year-old ticket. (Stan Behal/Sun Media)

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"I thought for sure it must be some sort of mistake," Gallo said, explaining he had not heard anything about the unpaid fine in the 17 years before receiving the notice.

Gallo immediately got on the phone to CBCL, hoping to straighten things out.

"But they treated me like a criminal," he said.

Gallo said the person he dealt with accused him of not paying his bills and refused to provide any details about the ticket other than that it was for a parking infraction.

He claims he was told to go through the courts if he wanted to know when, where, and why he was issued the fine.

"At this point, it's not about the money, it's about the principle," a frustrated Gallo said, adding he has no intention of paying the fine without knowing for sure it's not some sort of "scam."

Toronto Councillor Howard Moscoe, chairman of the city's licencing committee, was shocked to learn CBCL was collecting an alleged debt in the city's name.

"1990!" Moscoe said, unable to contain his laughter. "I really shouldn't be surprised because collection agencies are like termites, you just can't get rid of them."

The outstanding fine has never been an issue when Gallo has renewed his licence plate sticker, leading Moscoe to believe that it's not a legitimate City of Toronto parking ticket.

"This could never be a legitimate parking ticket because the City of Toronto has plate denial," Moscoe said. "If (Gallo) had a legitimate parking ticket that he didn't pay, he would not be able to get his licence renewed."

Moscoe suspects CBCL is collecting on behalf of a corporation that owns about 55 parking lots in Toronto and thousands more around the world.

"I've vowed to get rid of these phoney, look-alike tickets one way or the other," Moscoe said, adding he asked the city's legal department just last week to look into the matter to see what can be done.

A call to CBCL's North York office was directed to an office in Washington, DC. That call was not returned.

'FED UP'

Gallo said he's "fed up" and he wonders how many people pay up after receiving such notices without asking any questions.

Gallo claims CBCL told him they would call him "10 times a day" until he pays up. And he's concerned his credit rating may be affected if he doesn't.

"I doubt very much that they can spoil someone's credit rating over \$42.50," Moscoe said. "I think he needs to tell the company to go stick it in their ear."