

One does not simply park in Mordor.

by Erin Carey

I don't know why I volunteered for this," I mutter to myself as I make the trek out to the farthest reaches of Roger Rook's parking lot.

It's hot, for one. I'm suffering from a sunburn, and I can feel it throbbing through my black tanktop. My beat-up flip flops make empty smacks against the cracked pavement, and I look around with a scowl.

My mission is to find the farthest parking lot space in each parking lot and time the walk from the parking spot to the center of the campus: the community center.

Why would I do this? People at Clackamas Community College complain a lot about parking. There is no curse in Elvish, Entish, or the tongues of Men for this treachery.

We swears, to serve the master of the precious parking spot and help you, student.

This is probably the suckiest thing I've ever decided to do for the paper, but on a cloudless 77 degree Saturday at 11:24 a.m., it could be worse. I could be doing this in the rain. Or worse — the snow. I hate snow.

I start the walk from the corner spot, past the bus roundabout, and towards the community center. I even go so much as to walk around imaginary cars.

In the 3:21 minutes it took, I said four swear words, glared at three birds, and nearly got hit by an imaginary car twice.

For round two, my wimpy legs were sore. I'm a journalist, not a damn track runner.

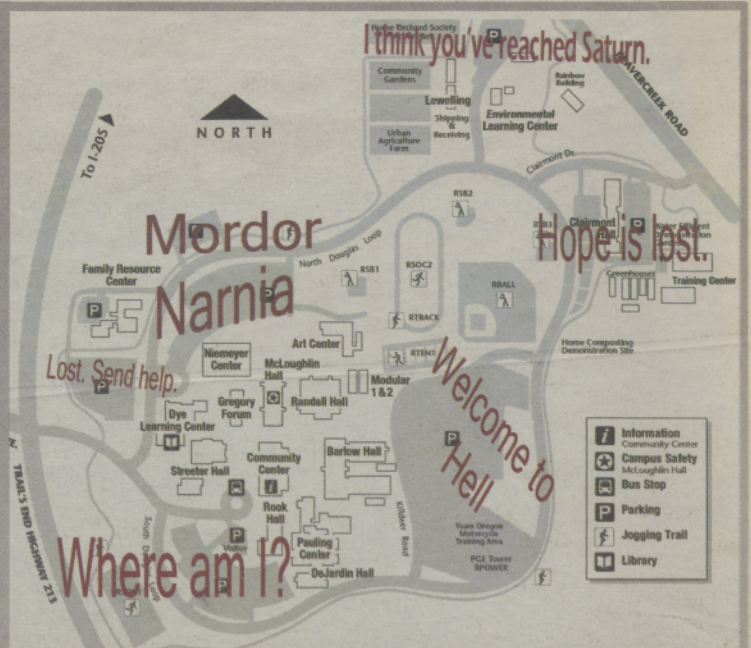
Next stop: Mordor. If you're not familiar with Mordor that would be one of the nastier parts of Middle Earth from J. R. R. Tolkien's "Lord of The Rings." Or the parking lot annex for the Art Center and Niemeyer Center buildings.

Gravel and dead grass surround you, and a sense that you won't make it out alive sinks right into your soul.

Getting stuck in Mordor, don't expect to get to class on time. Especially if you're me, who a) moves at a glacial pace, and b) is carrying a textbook (I'm all for realistic reenactments. Go with me here).

4:41 minutes and six swear words later, I finally make it to the finish line. I'm hot, and the textbook now weighs a whopping 30 lbs. I have a theory behind textbook weight: the later you are is multiplied by how far you have to walk, with a sum gain of about a pound for every 30 seconds of walking.

My last parking lot test is Barlow. I just call this one Hell.



The pavement is cracked, the last time the parking lot lines were painted on was around the same time that hammer pants were cool, and it's usually a plethora of obnoxiously large trucks with stickers like "honk if you married your sister like I did!"

If you're screwed into parking at Barlow, just throw in the towel.

I sent a text to my best friend telling her that if I didn't text back in 30 minutes, to send the Coast Guard.

4:10 minutes, 10 swear words and five muttered insults, I found myself at my finish line. No crowd cheered me on, nor was there any sight of salvation.

"That sucked," I mumble to no one but myself, with one hand on my hip. I have gained nothing from this exercise, save for another hour of my life cementing my hatred for CCC's parking.

Not with ten thousand men could you do this. It is folly.