

Toll booth blues

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By Deon Roberts, Online Editor

I'm not the type of person who gets ticketed weekly or monthly for anything.

Maybe once a year or every two years I'll get one of those orange tickets from the city for an expired meter. I play by the rules.

I tip my waiters. I only take one newspaper from coin-operated newsstands. I don't sample grapes at the grocery store, like some people I know.

So, imagine my surprise this week when I opened my mail and found a list of 22 violations from the Crescent City Connection, which claims I owe them \$47 in nes, including a \$25 fee, for not paying tolls. The violations date from 2004 to this past June.

They even sent me a picture of my license plate, apparently to prove they got the right guy.

I was stunned, because I have been pre-purchasing tolls for years, and I always use my toll tag when I pass through the booths.

The only time I can recall not using the tag or paying for tolls was during that period after Katrina when they suspended tolls for everyone. Boy was that nice while it lasted.

Anyway, I don't know why I'm being cited for so many violations. When I have passed through the toll booths, the sign has always flashed either "paid" in green lights or "below balance" in red. When my balance is low, I give the CCC a check. Always have. Always will.

Is the toll tag reader too weak to read my tag? Is my tag broken?

I drive through the booths slowly to make sure my tag is read, even though impatient drivers behind me honk in disapproval at my sluggish speed.

The CCC allows appeals, but I'm not going to fight it. I've already sent in my next payment. How can I possibly appeal a violation from three years ago, anyway?

So, I'm at a loss. Has this happened to anybody else?