

LocalOpinion

Another View

Today's drivers do it all — almost

Pat Nagorka



Drivers. They can drive with a cell phone glued to their ear. They can drive with a cell phone in one hand and a cigarette in the other hand. They can drive while reading the paper or a book. They can drive while putting on make-up. They can drive while writing who-knows-what on a flimsy piece of paper that is hard to hold. They can drive while searching for that french fry that dropped in their lap. Now they can drive while texting.

But they can't flip on the turn signal.

Some of us can remember the days when we had to stick our hand out the window, in rain, snow or hail, to signal our intentions. If the hand pointed skyward, that was a right hand turn. If the hand extended straight out, that was, you guessed it, a left turn.

Who knows how many people lost their hand that was sticking out the window. Yes, it was sometimes hard to make that signal depending on the weather. Then miracles of all miracles, one could just push a button, or turn a lever or flip a lever and, voila, a light blinked.

It was almost as good as sliced bread or indoor toilets. No more worry about losing a hand, getting frostbite, or not getting the window closed. It was a godsend.

So why is it so hard for people to use this "modern" convenience? It is just really handy to know whether that car in front of you is going to turn or not. Or why is that car stopped at the intersection, what is he/she going to do, go straight, turn, sit and have a cup of coffee?

It seems some intersections are more prone to non-signalers than others. Fortunately, the busier the intersection, it seems as if more people use their signals. But at some of the out-of-the-way crossroads, people don't think it is necessary to let people around them know what they plan to do.

It does take a bit of thought to turn on the signal, and a minuscule bit of time, and you might have to put the cell

phone conversation on hold for two seconds. You might have to stop texting, but isn't it worth it to not end up in someone's trunk, or engine compartment? Be glad you have a inside way to signal and use it.

And speaking of transportation, concrete roads are really the worst. They are potential accidents waiting to happen, as well as hard on the tires. Why have they become the road surface of choice? They break, they crack, they are noisy, and bumpy. Lincoln Avenue is a perfect example of a lousy, concrete road. Everyone has seen all the holes that have broken out along the seam between the two lanes heading toward Interstate 25.

It is like someone went along with a pogo stick punching holes every 20 feet. The edge of a concrete hole is sharp and jagged, very hard on tires hitting them. The accident waiting to happen is when people swerve to avoid the hole and hit another car going by.

Finally, those on Lincoln got filled, but new ones open up and it takes weeks before they are filled. Even when filled the asphalt compacts down still leaving a sharp edge, just not the deep hole. When one is driving straight ahead, the holes can be avoided, but it is much more difficult when changing lanes.

With all the mountains of old used tires, why don't they incorporate the pulverized rubber tires into the concrete? It is mixed in asphalt by some companies. It could create some flexibility to the concrete, as well as a "glue" that might keep the concrete from breaking. A layer of asphalt on top of concrete soon separates and leaves soft-sided dimples, nothing like the jagged, deep holes, but still not good either.

Thinking this way, makes me want to do some research, to talk to a paving company and get some answers to some of these questions. Don't hold your breath, but tune in to the future for some answers. They may not be the ones I want to hear, but hopefully there will be some explanations or excuses.

Pat Nagorka is a 35-year resident of Douglas County and a longtime Democrat.