

Heather
LAMPE

Driving me crazy

Behind the wheel, life takes turn for worse

Recent brushes with death and my insurance agent have convinced me that I really need to move to a city with a subway system.



Right now there is someone driving around Lincoln with a dent in their car matching the one in mine. This lovely human being was shopping at the mall this weekend and decided to side swipe my vehicle without telling me.

(Your car is red and you know who you are.)

Every time I get in my car I feel like I'm going to war. I despise driving. You could call me a defensive driver, but a freaked-out driver would be more appropriate. If the law would allow me to drive heavily sedated, I would. For my own personal comfort, I just want to know, does anyone in this town know what a turn signal is? Can we all spell STOP? Lately, if I spend any extended amount of time behind a steering wheel, I become bipolar. I have manic fits of panic and speak in tongues.

It wasn't just the incident this weekend that makes me yearn for a pocket full of New York Transit Authority tokens. Seven years ago I managed to total my father's brand new car, and

“For my own personal comfort, I just want to know, does anyone in this town know what a turn signal is? Can we all spell STOP?”

I've yet to live it down. This is not a good way to start a driving career. I might have managed to forget calculus, but this moment I will never forget.

I suppose one plus of the whole experience is that I'm the most careful driver ever. I can quote the Nebraska Driver's Manual from beginning to end. My ideal career would be to become a driving instructor for the DMV. I wouldn't have to drive. I could just ride around and torment 16-year-olds who can't parallel park.

I can't blame all of my trauma on my \$15,000 mishap. A lot of my traumatic driving experiences have happened in restaurant drive-thrus. I could teach a class of the rules of the road, but I have no coordination behind the wheel. I've learned to back out of my driveway without hitting the mailbox, so why can't I maneuver my way through Taco John's?

If the driver's side door of my car could talk, it would tell you stories about how many brick walls it has kissed. My side mirror could tell you of its intimate meetings with parking garage ticket machines.

And when I haven't driven too close to an establishment, I haven't gotten close enough. Do you know how embarrassing it is to have to unbuckle your seatbelt, get out of the car and walk to the window? The people in the cars behind me point and laugh as I grab my nachos in shame.

I avoid the drive-thru for many reasons. A cheeseburger and fries will never make it home without me attempting to eat it. Sadly enough, I don't excel at this either. I marvel at people who can feed themselves and shift gears at the same time. When I try to eat and drive, I end up hitting a speed bump and getting the special sauce in my hair. There are ketchup stains that

form a map of Asia on the front seat of the car.

I have my greatest manic fits though when I am stuck behind a minivan. I commonly refer to the drivers as minivan moms. These frazzled women are the scourge of the streets, the plague of the parking lots.

You can distinguish them from regular minivan drivers because they usually have two to three car seats in the vehicle. You might also note the tiny hand and drool prints that adorn the side windows.

At stoplights these women wipe mouths and butts and pick Cheerios out of children's hair. It takes them five to 10 minutes longer than the average driver to notice that the light has turned green.

When they're driving, they swerve and weave as they try to break up fights and pick gum off the seats. Their driving becomes especially hazardous in mall parking lots where they must calm the Toys-R-Us tantrums that come from being Barbie deprived.

I have this sneaking suspicion that I might have been a victim of a minivan mom this weekend. And to that person I just want to say... May your Aerostar be recalled and may your children wet the bed until they're 15.

Lampe is a senior news-editorial and English major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Brent
POPE

Stuff happens

Hygiene's of utmost importance in a hand-shaking world

Two guys are using the bathroom. When they're done, one man starts washing his hands as the other starts walking out the door. The first guy says, "Hey, didn't your mom teach you to wash your hands after you take a piss?" The other guy responds, "No, my mom taught me not to piss on my hands."



Let's not kid ourselves: everyone has done it at least once and probably several times. Maybe it was late at night and you were thinking "Hey! Why should I wash my hands? There's noooooobody around." Maybe you were really in a hurry to get to class. Or maybe you just don't care about hygiene. For whatever reason, we've all done it.

The problem is, it seems like every time you don't wash your hands, you run into a friend who wants a handshake or a hug. You don't want to not return their sign of friendship. How do you explain it? You can't possibly tell him the truth, so you shake your friend's hand anyway. The guilt consumes you, and your poor friend has absolutely no idea what hit him.

The easiest way to make sure this never happens is to just wash your hands every time, right? Wrong. It's not that simple. Let's follow a realistic chain of events and see if you can really keep your hands "peepee free":

Step 1. Use the bathroom in the Union.

2. When done, turn on sink and soap hands.

“Tell people that you work as a specimen collector at the sperm bank. (No one will ever want to shake your hand.)”

3. Wash hands.
4. Turn off sink.

BUZZZ! These sink handles are the same ones you touched before you washed your hands, so your well-intentioned efforts accomplished nothing. Maybe you should wash the sink handles before you wash your hands. That should take care of it, right? Nope, because step 5 is opening the bathroom door so

you can reenter the outside world, and the door handle you need to grab was used by a lot of people who didn't wash their hands.

Is this puzzle impossible to solve? Of course not. Here are a few things you can do to keep your hands minty fresh:

1. Wear surgeon's gloves like Michael Jackson. Nothing will ever get on your hands. (But don't be surprised if little boys run in fright when they see you.)
2. Tell people that you work as a specimen collector at the sperm bank. (No one will ever want to shake your hand.)
3. Cut off your hands. (Painful, but also foolproof.)
4. Run around downtown Lincoln wearing nothing but a Colorado Buffaloes football helmet. (Bad hygiene will be the least of your worries.)
5. Tar and feather yourself. (OK, this won't really work, but I thought you deserved more than four choices.)

It could be that this is going to happen no matter what we do. But don't give in. Give that non-handwasher a disappointed look. Don't just let them walk away. And be very suspicious of anyone about to shake your hand who has that special sparkle in their eye that says "Man, if you only knew."

Pope is a senior broadcasting major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

CARTOONIST'S VIEW

