

Daily Nebraskan University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Proceed carefully

Beware of Lincoln's unaware drivers

Lincoln, Neb. — Home of the Cornhuskers, the first female Republican governor and horrifying drivers. At least that's what the recent flood of letters to the Daily Nebraskan indicate. The letters have criticized the driving habits of both local and out-of-town drivers on Lincoln streets.

It's amazing how touchy people are about driving. The argument made by two letterwriters said 2-county (Lancaster) drivers threaten lives.

Lincoln drivers may indeed wear blinders, but it's doubtful. Rather, they're simply unaware that there are others on the road ahead of them, behind them or beside them.

In Lincoln, turn signals are only fancy accessories to the automobile. Its use is optional and more or less non-existent. The lack of use of the turn signal may explain why few people change lanes. Lincolnites simply don't recognize the meaning of the flashing tail light.

Lincoln is a health hazard in comparison to San Antonio, Texas, a city of one million-plus people. A driver using a turn signal on Loop 410 in San Antonio during rush-hour traffic will see parting traffic similar to the Red Sea. And the same goes for other metropolitan cities such as Washington D.C.

Apparently there is an unwritten understanding among drivers in larger cities. People seem to understand that, although they are in a hurry, others on the road also need to be somewhere soon. The drivers are more courteous in that sense, and obviously recognize the meaning of turn signals.

Here's another problem with Lincoln drivers: Stop lights are ignored when no traffic is coming. Out-of-towners who learned to go when the light is green and stop when it's red may not be aware of this Lincoln driving norm and should beware because of the blinder syndrome.

Speed-limit signs should be removed from Lincoln streets. They're generally disregarded. Lincolnites either drive 15 miles under the speed limit (possibly because they're admiring the scenery, like the Lied Center construction), or they drive over the speed limit and ride right behind another car's bumper.

There is no remedy for this. After all, no one recognizes the use of the turn signal, so they can't change lanes to pass or get out of the way. It's a vicious circle.

So the best advice the DN can offer out-of-town drivers is, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." Just put on your blinders, take to the streets of Lincoln and put those defensive driving skills to good use.

— Anne Mohr for the Daily Nebraskan



Reagan ignores Jefferson's words

Outgoing president got his jollies, but saddles nation with debt

"Then 19 years is the term beyond which neither the representatives of a nation, nor even the whole nation itself assembled, can validly extend a debt." — Thomas Jefferson, Sept. 6, 1789.

The debt Jefferson refers to is what we call the national debt, when the government spends more money than it has. What Jefferson was saying was that the government does not have the right to extend debt between generations. He used 19 years as a generation in this case.

Until 1980, most presidents had at least tried to keep their national debt to a minimum.

Then came the Reagan administration. In its first four years, the administration doubled the national debt of all the previous administrations. Since then, the administration has eased spending, but only at the insistence of both Congress and the people.

It's the responsibility of an administration to present its budget to Congress. If the budget submitted is not even close to balancing, there is not much that Congress can do. Looking back at those first budgets of the Reagan administration, one can see why we have the debt problem we do.

So what is the big deal of a national debt? Our generation is the one that will have to pay for it. I'm getting close to graduation and I'm not sure I want to. Face it, taxes will increase. Everyone knows it, but no one will say it. Somehow, the debt must be paid and increasing taxes is the most feasible way.

So next year, instead of basking in the land of real paychecks, I'll be in the land of taxes from hell. I'll be a middle-class American, and who do you think will bear the brunt of the tax increase? The middle-class American.

I guess I missed it. I should have been working these last five years instead of going to college. I sure would have liked to get in on some of those Reagan tax breaks. That assumes I would have been making big bucks, though. The middle class has been living in taxation hell for a long

time. One can attribute the incredible debt partly to defense spending. In 1980, Reagan told us how far we were behind the Soviet Union in defense. He told us that unless we embarked on a program of massive buildup, we faced annihilation.

Wrong. Look at the numbers. We were not behind the Soviets at all. We were even with them with about 20,000 nuclear warheads each. Does anyone really know just what 40,000 nuclear warheads can do? I'd hate to see it.

Well, we spent billions of dollars to "catch up" with the Soviets. We give money to every contractor with an idea, no matter how lame.



We make our North Atlantic Treaty Organization neighbors very angry by placing missiles in Europe. We spend ourselves into debt. To what end? Eight years later we find ourselves still about even with the Soviets and in major economic trouble due to the debt.

Funny thing about the missiles in Europe. When we placed them in 1983, the Soviet Union offered to make an arms deal concerning intermediate-range nuclear missiles or INF. The Reagan administration flat-out refused to deal with that "evil empire." Then, four years later, Reagan pats himself on the back for signing such a dramatic treaty. My question is why didn't he do it in 1983 and save a lot of money and maybe have better relations with our NATO allies.

Other things bother me about the Reagan administration. What does he plan to do when the oil from the Middle East runs out? Former President Carter had a fairly comprehensive energy plan. He included alternative sources of energy, other sources of oil and conservation. He was

forced somewhat by the oil situation in the Middle East. Once it was resolved, he kept the programs intact.

Reagan has ignored the upcoming energy problem. In his eight years as president, there have been almost no advances in alternative energy. The advances that have been made have been done with private money. The problem is that private industry is not known for its ability to plan for the future, that has been left to the government.

I could go on. I could talk about the environment. Acid rain has finally been recognized by the Reagan administration as a problem. Governments in other countries, like Canada, have recognized the problem for years.

And what could prove to have the most long-reaching consequences of the Reagan legacy is the Supreme Court. He has appointed three judges during his term, each in his ideological mode. This could have disastrous effects on many civil rights issues. I fear that we could see intrusions into our private lives in the years ahead as a direct consequence of this.

Fortunately, Reagan's term is almost over. I admit the choice we face on Nov. 8 is not great, but it is better than what we have. If Michael Dukakis is elected, which doesn't look too likely, our country would definitely turn around. If George Bush is elected, it shouldn't be as bad as it is now.

Remember 1980, when Bush ran against Reagan and differed on many issues? Hopefully, not too much has worn off.

What angers me most about Reagan is that he didn't look to the future. I wish he would have given me the same chance to make it as my parents had.

Instead, we face the almost impossible task of fixing eight years of fun times. Too bad we didn't get to share in them. I hope we make something work so my children will have a chance to live in a strong, just and fair America.

An America like Jefferson envisioned 200 years ago. Heckman is a senior international affairs major and a DN editorial columnist.

opinion READER

Reader says to analyze your options and vote for the best

Pretty soon there is going to be a new president of this country. He is also going to have the title of "Commander-in-chief" of all the armed forces guarding this plot of land. Now I'm not going to advertise one older man over the other right now. Although I do have a preference of one over the other, I would like for you, the voters of the future, to theorize on this term "one over the other."

There are a bunch of fellow citizens of these United States running around trying to convince enough people to vote for him over another. . . just another American who thinks he's better than everyone else. You know, I've had delusions of grandeur before but some older man out there in incorporation-land is trying to get a hold of all this country's defenses for four whole years, or until the job gets the better of him. I mentioned earlier that I'm not

going to promote my choice come voting day, not even my wife is going to know what will go on inside those curtains that day. You, the future of this planet, need to get out there and, of your own free will, clearly choose who is going to be over you in the amount of toys he has. Remember his will be much deadlier!

This great soil that we call our home is steadily getting infected by far too many chemicals. We are spending more money than we have. We are sticking our noses into business left alone. We are sweating the little stuff while we're missing the boat. So November 8 is coming, it's not very far away. Analyze your options closely because it only happens every four years. Just do it! OK?

Anthony T. Motto junior English

editorial

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