

Redundant Indiana traffic signs border on ridiculous

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Making a U-turn on Interstate 74 through Indiana is illegal. So is stopping, standing or parking on the shoulder. If you forget these simple traffic laws while passing through Indiana, you'll be reminded . . . again.

I was going to Cincinnati to cover the Nebraska-Connecticut NCAA Basketball Tournament game with Shaun, one of the Daily Nebraskan photographers. It was the middle of the night, so all we could see was the pavement in front of us and the glare of the signs.

Shaun and I were continually confronted with these little traffic reminders.

And it wasn't just traffic laws. Every three miles for the first 15 miles into Indiana, we saw a sign that told us how far it was to Indianapolis. Being only college seniors, this was a big help to us. (Everyone knows how tricky sub-

traction by three can get.)

At first we found the repetition humorous, then almost ridiculous. Maybe the friendly people of Indiana would tell us that the speed limit was 65.

"Why the barrage of signs?" we asked each other.

No simple answer was obvious for the frequent reminders, but we finally came to three conclusions:

1. The Indiana State Patrol is lazy. By putting up several hundred signs, the patrol must figure motorists will realize these are traffic offenses and obey the rules of the road. This leaves more time for officers to sit in doughnut shops

instead of ticketing drivers for U-turns.

2. Indiana drivers are stupid, needing several reminders of the simplest of traffic laws to get the point through their thick skulls.

3. Indiana citizens think other drivers are stupid and they need to remind out-of-state drivers of the traffic laws, even if the same laws exist elsewhere.

We figured that the Indiana State Department must be rich. How else could they afford to put an average of 10 signs every mile? Think I'm kidding? Consider the following:

● I'm not kidding when I say that No U-turn and No Standing,

Stopping or Parking on the Shoulder signs appear every three miles.

● Any exit from I-74 is preceded by four signs placed so close together that little grass grows between the signs because the ground is usually shaded.

● If you're approaching a state park, believe me, you'll know about it well in advance. You'll also be reminded that you're getting closer and closer.

Maybe it's just Indiana's way of being kind and helpful. After all, Indiana is the land of "Hoosier Hospitality."

The sign at the Indiana-Illinois border even says so.

Big Apple

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bus system isn't as friendly as a Dodge. I don't know how to work the rear-window wiper on a Newark bus. I'm not sure the bus has one.

During our time in the city, we would often see graffiti-smothered

minivans and wistfully feel for our Dodge. Many thoughts ran through my mind as I trekked down Broadway:

Is the Newark Airport Authority protecting our beloved? Where is the nearest Dodge dealership? Why do so many people talk to themselves in this town? Are they interesting conversations? How can I get in on one?

Our hardy band chose different courses for our experience in New York. Some wandered about the Village. Others visited relatives.

Everywhere we went, we saw real, live New Yorkers in their native element. We saw taxicabs and subways, limos and buses, skyscrapers and trash, bums and millionaires. And from the top of the Empire State Building, I thought I

saw, far to the southeast, a little glimmer I knew to be a certain Dodge.

After waking up early one morning and drinking steaming coffee in Herald Square not far from our hotel, I took a deep breath of Manhattan air. Watching the crowds of people bustle through each other on their ways to 10 million places, I reflected on how much this place

was like the Dodge. Crammed, but somehow comfortable. And Ram tough.

We left the City one rainy evening. We slipped through the barrier of myriad buses to the Dodge in Newark. It was happy to see us, and we it.

The Dodge had made friends, as we had, but the time had come to return to our native land.

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