

# TOWN SQUARE

A PLACE TO BE HEARD

## YOUR VIEW

# Please keep your 'I's' off the road



**Ed Sokalski**

Let's talk about the five "I's" relating to driving attitude and safety — Impatience, Impoliteness, Ignorance, Idiocy, and Illegality. They come under the general heading of the big "I"

— the "It's all about me!" attitude. For example, the double yellow line in the middle of the highway is not for motorcycles to drive on, but to indicate a no-passing zone. Crossing over anyhow could be ignorance, but more likely it's just pure idiocy.

Another one I see regularly is a car behind me just a few feet off my bumper, swerving left and then right as if to see around me as to why I might be driving so slowly, but of course I am driving properly at the speed limit. As the trinkets dangle from his rear view mirror swaying back and forth, I wonder if the driver is maybe just intoxicated, but then after he has passed me illegally, he pulls into a convenience store presumably to buy cigarettes to beat the next price increase. When he goes to fill up, assuming he has any money left, I wonder if he puts out his cigarette while pumping and talking on his cell phone? If not, this would be idiocy, ignorance and illegality. A hat trick.

If you think parking lots are a safe harbor, you would be mistaken. Some drivers cut diagonally through wide open spaces, presumably to save precious time and fuel. After all, the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. So let's give the driver some credit as maybe he did pass geometry class. Still, this is impoliteness at best, idiocy at worst.

Even some car commercials encourage bad behavior. A man crossing a street drops an armful of papers which blow all over. The man driving the new fancy car is forced to slow down, costing him a few precious seconds, shows his frustration by throwing up his hands gesturing "what an idiot" to the poor man in the street. I guess the message is our cars are for arrogant people who have no time to help someone. This is "It's all about me!" on



Traffic moves slowly Jan. 16, 2024, on Interstate 78 in Upper Saucon Township during a snowstorm. **RICH ROLEN/SPECIAL TO THE MORNING CALL**

steroids.

Is it possible to do all five "I's" at the same time? Surely (hopefully) this is very rare. It would be like a baseball player hitting five home runs in one game. Although 21 players accomplished four home runs in a single game in all of major league history (most recently by Philadelphia Phillies Kyle Schwarber), nobody has ever done five. But by a driver on the road? Maybe it's possible. If you think you might be this person, you are probably right.

Sometimes a driver will switch back and forth between three lanes on Interstate 78, without turn signals of course, and sometimes two lanes at a time, all

to gain a few precious seconds. Giving him the benefit of the doubt, maybe he was running late to a funeral.

Many drivers do not realize how dangerous speed is. Many years ago, an insurance company dropped a car off the roof of a school building to impress upon students how dangerous speed can be. Dropping a car from six stories (9 feet per story) results in an impact velocity of 40 mph, a common highway speed. Somehow looking over the roof edge downward, vertical feels more scary than horizontal. Today this commercial may not work as a TikTok challenge to see who can survive jumping off the

school roof is inevitable. There is a four-second rule for following distance. Speed limit signs are the maximum speed, not the minimum speed. If you're tempted to go faster maybe you should ask yourself what's your hurry? Think about this. A car traveling 55 mph over 20 miles is going to arrive in about 21 minutes. The same car going 65 mph is going to get there in 18 minutes. Are three minutes really worth your life or someone else's? Is ignoring speed limits ignorance or idiocy? Tough call.

Some people drive as if the only criteria is controlling their vehicle, but don't consider the possibility of a child chasing a ball

into the street or a deer jumping in front of them. Always be able to stop within the distance you can see. Don't drive where you cannot see. Always expect the unexpected. And most importantly, cut the other driver a break. If he makes a mistake, cover for him and prevent an accident. Someone may do the same for you someday.

*This is a contributed opinion column. Ed Sokalski a Salisbury Township resident, is a retired mechanical engineer. Do you have a perspective to share? Learn more about how we handle guest opinion submissions at themorningcall.com/opinions.*