

Voices In My Head

By P.J. O'Leary

I deliver the mail in Vernonia, so I'm either walking or driving our streets pretty much all day long. When a vehicle goes by, I can generally tell you who's driving it and even give you a pretty good guess as to where they're headed. Small towns are like that.

Inevitably, those of us who live here spend a lot of time waving at each other. As an observer of the daily rhythm of the street, allow me to categorize and interpret some of the common waves of Vernonia for you.

The first is the basic high-handed wave. Both you and the other driver (with whom you have a friendly relationship) recognize one another before your vehicles pass and raise your hands in a collegial greeting.

Second, the "no look" wave. In this one the other person is either not sure that you know them or is not sure that you like them. They wave while simultaneously looking in another direction, thereby saving themselves the staggering humiliation they would feel if you should rebuff their friendly gesture. This is a very safe wave.

Next is the "sneaker wave." This is not to be confused with that massive wall of water which drags you and your Shitzu out into the briny deep when all you were doing was minding your own business and looking for sand dollars. No, this is when you and someone who is about to pass you are not entirely sure you know each other. At the very last second the light bulb comes on, and they hit you with a high-handed wave. Now it's too late for you to respond, so the best you can do is stick your hand out the window and hope that they're looking in their rear view mirror.

Finally, let's explore the "two finger" wave. I should mention that there is also a one fingered wave, but civility prevents me from explaining that one. The "two finger" wave is usually performed by a man. In fact, the manlier the man perceives himself to be, the more likely he is to give a two finger wave. As you are driving past him he will remain expressionless. Two fingers will subtly, grudgingly rise from the steering wheel. He sees the high-handed wave as an emotional connection that he is simply not comfortable with. It makes you want to say "Come on Brutus, I'm just waving here, not looking for a dinner date."

Does anyone remember the "Little Rascals"? They had a great wave. Spanky and Alfalfa had this secret group called the "He-man Woman Haters Club." I know that's not exactly politically correct, but hey, it was 1937. Anyway, they had a secret wave that they called the "hi sign ." You put the top side of your right hand underneath your chin and then wave your fingers up and down. Just thinking about it makes me laugh. Let's all do it for a week and see if we can't start a trend, shall we?

Safety Matters

By P.J. O'Leary

Well, another Jamboree has come and gone. This was my third Jamboree, and I don't remember as many people being in the downtown area the previous two years, especially on Friday and even Sunday. For the most part I believe people were able to enjoy themselves while also staying under control. Of course there were a few that need to be reminded to behave, but overall the event was fairly safe and enjoyable.

When driving our motor vehicles, there are many safety considerations that must be constantly evaluated. Is my speed too fast for conditions, what is the driver in the other lane going to do, am I following too closely, and what is the bicyclist or pedestrian going to do are just a few of the pieces of information we must process to drive safely. Other safety factors are more easily controllable such as vehicle maintenance, parts replacement, tire pressure, etc. and should be routinely inspected. Unfortunately, some factors are out of our control such as the safety notice I recently received from the Oregon Attorney General's office.

Oregon AG Hardy Myers warned consumers about potentially dangerous tires manufactured between 2002 to 2006 for light trucks, SUV's, and vans. The tires were made by Hangzhou Zhongce Rubber Co. Ltd. in China and distributed in the USA under the names Westlake, YKS, and Compass. Around 450,000 of these tires were imported into the USA and distributed to tire dealers nationwide, including over 11,000 tires to Oregon. Because of serious tread separation, AG Myers urged consumers to get their Westlake, YKS, and Compass tires checked out by dealers. In the interest of public safety, state AGs nationwide have asked tire dealers to waive charges for such inspections, but they are not required to do so. I have more detailed information at the police station that I would be happy to copy including tire models and a complete list of dealers in Oregon.

- Some general safety information to remember is as follows:
- At least once a month and before every long trip inspect tires for patterns of uneven wear.
 - Maintain proper tire inflation per manufacturer recommendations.
 - Do not overload your vehicle.
 - Consistently follow safe driving habits (speed limits, fast starts, etc.).
 - Maintain your vehicle routinely.
 - Use proper tires for your vehicle.
 - Be aware that temperatures do affect your tires' abilities.
 - Have your vehicle checked by professionals.

Given our curvy roadways, limited shoulders, deep ravines, and changing weather, it is extremely important that we make sure our vehicle and ourselves are in proper condition to drive.

Vernonia Night Out: Vernonians Take A Stand Against Crime and Violence

