

The Language of Commuting

by Michelle Sutton

Approximately 1200 full-time students at Capital are commuters, meaning they must drive every day to get to classes. Driving every day on interstates, highways, and rural roads means speeding, beeping, and flashing.

Okay, you are wondering what is she talking about, right? Speeding, beeping, and flashing are all common automobile language for commuters and frequent drivers.

Speeding is common to everyone, but when you are running late for that eight o'clock class and it is already 7:45, it becomes essential, yet still illegal. On interstate 83, the troopers hide in the most discrete places or they are driving as fast as you are and they are in unmarked cars (resembling your family car).

If you do get caught, and many will, just hope you get a trooper that already has their weekly quota or someone who likes blue eyes (it worked for me the other day). If not, good luck trying to talk him/her out of citing you that ticket of anywhere from \$50 to \$100. If you do attempt to talk him/her out of it, use an original excuse, and be creative. I'm sure they've heard them all.

Along the same lines as speeding, there is flashing. No, I don't mean someone standing along side the road just wearing socks and an overcoat. Flashing is part of the international automobile language used by drivers from Texas to Maine, even Pennsylvania. To warn an oncoming driver that a radar trap is ahead, a driver may flash his/her lights on and off. Although this is very helpful to that driver who may be flying around that curve at 90 m.p.h., it can land that friendly driver a nice \$60 to \$80 ticket. Take it from one who has already lied her way out of getting that ticket for being a courteous driver. (Believe me,

lying your way out of that ticket is not very easy -- I had to think long and hard for my excuse, and he still didn't believe me and he said so.)

Truckers also blink their headlights at other trucks and cars to tell them they are far enough ahead to pass in front of them. It took me awhile to learn what this message meant, but once I did it made a lot of sense and is very helpful to the speeding driver.

Flashing your lights could also simply mean, "Hello," if you know the car in front of you.

Along with flashing, another non-verbal message used by drivers is beeping (if friendly) or honking (if not so friendly, this one is often followed by verbal messages and we all know what they may be). Beeping is common among friends traveling together in different cars on their way to Ocean City, or if you want to get to know someone.

But honking is a different story. Honkers are usually perturbed drivers who do not wish you a good day. Either you have done something to upset them, like pulling out in front of them, or going slow when they are in a hurry. Honking may appear non-verbal, but inside that car it is definitely very verbal. Only sailors use the kind of language that honkers use while honking.

Speeding, flashing, and beeping (honking) are everyday occurrences for commuters who travel the open roads. Take it from a commuter who drives 45 minutes each way every day, commuting can be educational and frustrating so be nice to commuters--they could have been honked at or pulled over in those wee hours of morning (it is enough to ruin a whole day). Also, a word to the professors of early morning and late evening classes, be patient with those who straggle in late, they could be commuters.

College Means Growing Up

By Judy L. Hricak

College, it is supposed to be the best time of one's life. It is a time filled with a lot of memories, papers, deadlines, pressure, and satisfaction.

Many students get satisfaction from a job well done. Once a student has put a lot of time and effort into a project or paper, there is a good feeling of having accomplished something worthwhile.

However, it is distressing to know that some students at Capital College do not experience such a feeling. Sure, they get their papers done and turned in on time, but the way that they accomplish the end result should be questioned.

Some students find it impossible to do anything on their own. Instead they seek the "easy way out" and constantly lean on friends to help them along. They are chronically dependent on others.

Consequently, they are not only creating tension among other students, they are also hurting themselves. The chronic dependents, though, do not see it this way. They are only concerned with getting an "A" any way that they can. What they do not realize is that people can only be used for so long before they become wise to what is happening.

Usually by this time it is too late to do anything. The chronic dependent has earned his or her grade, but he or she has also lost some friends in the process. One has to weigh which is more important.

It is hard to believe that there can be a worse situation than this, but one does exist.

In every college, no matter how big or small, there are students who have absolutely no confidence in themselves. Thus, to get a good grade they purchase papers--either from another student or from a "paper catalog."

It is hard to believe that once students have reached college they still cannot stand on their own feet and do things for themselves. Why spend all of the money for tuition and books if you are not going to get anything out of it? This is a question many students should be asking themselves.

It is time for some students to grow up. Maybe by being a chronic dependent, or by buying papers one can achieve his or her short-term goals, but it is almost guaranteed that when these students hit the real world, they will fall flat on their faces. If this does happen they will have no one to blame but themselves.

Let's Not Repeat Mistakes of Past

by Laura Karinch

As we say goodbye to Women's History Month, let's remember for a moment a significant part of women's history, and our country's history--the Salem Witch Hunts. This mania was the culmination of several decades of witch trials and hangings in New England in the 17th Century following immigration of our founding citizens from England. The Puritans came to America at a time when Charles I ruled England and persecution for witchcraft there was nearing its high point.

For several decades in New England sporadic accusations of witchcraft occurred. These outbreaks culminated in the Salem Witch Trials.

From the first accusation of the Salem tragedy in March, 1692, to the last accusation six months later in September, 1692, 20 persons were hanged (no witch was ever burned in

New England) and 55 persons were tortured. Hundreds were imprisoned or exiled from their homes.

Most of these people, the majority of which were women, were completely innocent of witchcraft. They were unpopular or considered peculiar in their strict Puritan community.

"It was an epidemic of mad superstitious fear, bitterly to be regretted, and a stain upon the high civilization of the Bay Colony." (Historical Towns of New England, Salem, p. 148, Latimer.)

These men and women were persecuted without consideration for due process of law in a frenzy of fear and hatred which was thought at the time to serve God. That was three centuries ago. Today we must rid ourselves of fear and hatred to promote equality and stop this type of history from repeating itself in perhaps better forms of guise.

Where Were They?

Dear Editor,

I want to start out on a positive note. On Friday, March 25th I attended the Semi-Formal at the Villa Leo. My husband and I had a good time. There were complaints by some (there always are) but overall I think the event was a success. My hat goes off to those who worked so hard to put it together.

It was good to see that a few faculty and staff were able to attend the Semi-Formal. I hope they enjoyed themselves.

This brings me to my next point. On Monday, March 28th, Lt. Gov. Mark Singel came to Penn State Harrisburg. A typical small group of people gathered in the Gallery Lounge. (Again I want to thank all of you who attended.)

I have been involved in the arrangements of a few activities on campus and have become accustomed to

the lack of student participation.

However, this time I was more upset with the faculty of this campus. Where were they?

DTK, the group sponsoring the Lt. Gov., sent letters to all faculty members. Didn't the letters get to them? Didn't any of the Public Policy faculty and staff feel this particular speaker would be of any interest? Just the other day an instructor of mine was discussing how difficult it is to get students involved in extra activities. Just for the record, this instructor did attend the lecture and I see him at many events.

We do seem to have a problem with motivating students beyond class work but what excuse does the faculty have?

Carol Kilko
Member of DTK

Don't Forget the last edition of the Capital Times will be April 27. Deadline for submissions is April 20.