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## **BILLBOARDS**

As the motorist of the 1980's speeds down the highways, he hardly glances at the huge billboards that dot the landscape every few hundred yards. If someone were to ask you to list the messages on the signs on a ten mile strip that you might drive every day, you could probably draw almost a complete blank. Why is this so? The answer is that we become used to road signs and they become just a part of the landscape along with the trees, fields, and houses. However, this was not the case a century ago. In those days, signs or advertisements were few and far between. The road signs were usually small and placed by private individuals or small towns to let the driver of the horses know that there was a watering trough around the next bend or that Podunkville was about five miles away.

The first commercial signs were those found tacked or painted on the beams or the sides of covered bridges. They extolled the virtues of Dr. Hitchcock's Bitters, Fletcher's Castoria, Lydia Pinkham's Remedy, or Carter's Little Liver Pills. At wagon speed, these signs were hard to miss or ignore and in the state of Pennsylvania where I was born, there were over a thousand covered bridges and there are still more than four hundred of these still standing. The old signs are still there but their paint has faded or disappeared and they remain a mute reminder of a slower-paced life in our past.

The next location of outdoor signs was on barns and large sheds. At first they were located mostly on barns near railroad tracks to catch the eyes of the train passengers, but with the coming of the automobile, the barns facing the road told the motorist to "Chew Mail Pouch Tobacco", "Smoke Bull Durham", or "Use 666 for Colds and Fever."

As I rode with my family in the old Marmon Touring car through the mountains and valleys of the Lincoln Highway, I remember the signs which read, "Welcome to Marysville---Drive Slow and See Our Town---Drive Fast and See Our Jail." I also remember the series of signs along the road as it wound up the long curves ascending the mountains near the Poconos which told us, "Thirsty? Cheer Up, Only 15 Miles to Bill's Place."....."Check Your Gas Tank and Fill Up at Bill's Place...Just Five Miles Ahead." And finally, "You Made It! This is Bill's Place."

Yes, there was such a place as Bill's Place and they had all they promised plus a zoo which offered such attractions as Missouri Red Bats (they were a pile of red bricks), a monkey in a well (a mirror in which you saw your own face), and several other humorous attractions. I am sure that anyone over fifty, remembers the Burma-Shave signs. Each one was red with white letters and they were placed just far enough apart that the motorist or his non-shaving children could read the whole jingle. I remember

one that warned us to "Give the guy the toe of your boot who tries to offer a substitute for BURMA SHAVE." My sister and I also had fun reading the ones on the other side of the road backwards. Those were the days! The modern high speed highways spelled the doom of Burma-Shave signs because the signs had to be placed farther and farther apart and they were considered to be corny by a more sophisticated driver of the 40's and 50's.

Now, if we bother to look, we are bombarded with the virtues of chain saws, hamburger palaces, Honest George for the House of Delegates, and the new Belchfire 6 for 1987. When I lived in California, I remember the signs were used as hiding places for the motorcycle cops who sprang out in hot pursuit of the speeding motorist. Today, the only creatures who appreciate them are the cows and horses that enjoy the shade they make on a hot, summer day. But then, perhaps, they can read them just as their ancestors did when approaching a covered bridge. It looks as though we are back where we started.

## **FAMOUS OLD HIGHWAYS**

Libby and I recently returned from a trip to New York State via Interstate 81 to Binghamton and New York Route 88 to Schenectady, where my sister lives.

On our way we passed near many towns and cities that I associate with my youthful years...Wilkes-Barre, Scranton, Cooperstown, Chambersburg...We also came near Pennsylvania Route (U.S.) 30 which was known as the Lincoln Memorial Highway for over fifty years. To me this highway was the road to adventure and new things to see because Pittsburgh was one of the cities through which this first coast to coast highway passed.

When my family left for a summer trip in the old Marmon Model 34 touring car at sunrise, it was always reassuring to see a telephone pole with a red, white, and blue band encircling it just above eye level. They would lead us to and through small towns like Ligonier, Bedford, Stoyestown, and others that pointed the way to Philadelphia and New York. This was the eastern end of our first coast to coast highway which began as an idea of a few prominent men many years (correction—a few years) before I was born!

In 1912 Carl F. Fisher of Presto-Lite Gas, Henry Joy of Packard, Frank Sieberling of Goodyear, and others decided that what this country needed was an ocean to ocean interstate highway. Soon a tremendous publicity campaign was begun and the whole country became excited about the idea. A caravan was organized which included cars from nearly all of the car makers of 1913, photographers, doctors, newspaper reporters, and mechanics. This large caravan of motor cars and a few primitive trucks rolled out of Indianapolis headed for San Francisco. It is interesting to note that hundreds of towns many mayors, and even Governors of states deluged the highway committee with requests to pass through their area. They wanted the caravan because it had been announced that the route would become the route of the finished Lincoln Memorial Highway.

A short time later the entire route was laid out. It ran from New York City to Jersey City, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne, South Bend, Chicago, Omaha, Denver, Salt Lake City, Sacramento, and San Francisco. I have omitted a few cities but all of them along the route joined in the dedication ceremony for the highway that existed only on paper. It was to take over a dozen years before the highway was completed. A lot of publicity made it possible to collect pennies from school children and money from car dealers along the route. A motorized unit from the U.S. Army made the trip accompanied by

movie cameramen and soon theatre goers knew all about the scenic wonders to be found along the Lincoln Highway which, incidentally, was not completed until 1927.

In 1936 I decided to drive to California to visit my western kinfolk and to enjoy some national parks along the way on good old Route 30. I remember that there were sections of Mr. Lincoln's highway that were still unpaved. They were, however, well graded and the gravel seemed to be well packed. I don't know how these roads would have reacted to a downpour because when my friend and I made our trip in the little 1933 Dodge coupe, the country was in the throes of a national drought and our main concerns were grasshoppers and gritty dust on the windshield and blast furnace heat. But then, the rest of the story of that trip, I have told before.

There is one other highway that is the grand-daddy of them all. It is the old National Road that started from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, passed south of Pittsburgh, crossed the Ohio River by ferry near Wheeling and passed through other towns that became cities and ended at Vandalia, Illinois. It was our first interstate highway and later was designated as National Route 40. It had many inns and hotels visited by such notables as Henry Clay, Lafayette, and several presidents of our country.

Today, alas, Route 40 carries mostly local traffic and the inns have dwindled in size. The old inns stand empty or have become convenience stores and most of the young people have followed the interstates to greener pastures. So here we have two famous old highways that helped the westward movement of America in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. I have traveled over both of them in my youth and if anyone enjoys "shun-piking" while on an unhurried vacation trip, I would heartily endorse both of them.

## **AMERICAN ROADS**

The following pages are full of rambling thoughts and the only thing that ties them together is the word ROAD. The Latin word for ROAD is VIA and the Romans were the first people to get fed up with the dust and mud so they constructed highways of crushed rock covered with large paving blocks. Perhaps, the carts and chariots that moved along them caused the riders' teeth to rattle but they enabled people to move about at a horse's speed in all kinds of weather. They constructed these fine roads in every country they conquered which accounts for the early good roads in such countries as England, France, and parts of Germany. These roads, in turn, had a great influence on the development of the early automobiles which were about ten or fifteen years ahead of anything being made in the US at the turn of the century.

Let us be frank about early American roads, there weren't any! Unfortunately, our early inhabitants were Indians instead of Romans. These early people did not have the wheel to help them from place to place so they walked along woodland trails or, in the western plains, used the two-poled travois pulled by a large dog, a strong Indian squaw, or later by a horse.

The first road builders in North America were the bison which numbered in the millions. Even in the eastern United States the woodland bison made trails through the forests, always seeking the lowest ground and finding the passes and gaps through the mountains. Out west, the pioneers and later the railroads followed the trails laid out by these huge animals. But by 1830, the last "buffalo" had been killed in Pennsylvania and nearby states so all new roads had to be hacked out of the wilderness by manpower.

The first real highway in the newly created United States was the Lancaster Turnpike which ran from Lancaster to Philadelphia and it was used commercially by the big Conestoga wagons. These large wagons with their red wheels and running gear, blue boat-shaped bodies and white canvas tops, could haul as much as ten tons. The driver did not ride in the wagon but on the left hand wheel horse which was part of a six-horse team. Each horse had a set of bells fastened to the harness of his collar. They were used to announce the presence of the wagon to other vehicles.

Lancaster County can be proud that it is the birthplace of Daniel Boone, the Pennsylvania rifle, the Conestoga wagon, and our first turnpike. Sections of the highway were kept in good repair by various individuals who, in turn, were given the right to collect tolls. Travelers were stopped by a large pole or pike which was raised or turned, hence the name "Turnpike". A typical list of rates would show a herd of cattle or sheep;

one cent each. A horse and rider; three cents, a horse and wagon; four cents, and a six-horse Conestoga wagon; five or six cents. Some toll roads of this sort lasted into the first quarter of this century in Virginia and neighboring states. The early automobiles were classified as buggies and therefore, the toll was five cents. Later, the states became aware that the automobile was here to stay and in growing numbers, so they took over the roads from the various counties and the toll road disappeared. It came back in 1940 with the completion of the Pennsylvania Turnpike that eventually stretched from Pittsburgh to Philadelphia and was later joined together with the Ohio Turnpike, the New Jersey Turnpike, and many others. These turnpikes are in turn threatened by the great network of Interstate Highways which have been built in the past three decades.

What were early roads composed of besides earth? Some of the early roads were made of charcoal. Thousands of cords of wood were heaped in piles and allowed to burn into charcoal which was raked into the earth making a fairly hard surface. This was a rather good surface, but it was expensive to make and was only possible in wooded areas.

In Virginia a popular wagon road connecting some of the large towns was built of rough-hewn or sawed planks. These plank roads were an answer to Virginia's red clay quagmire, but they were also expensive and required almost year around maintenance. In swampy areas large logs were split and laid flat side down creating a passable but bumpy---hence corduroy road. I remember as a boy bumping over some of these roads in some of the isolated areas of Pennsylvania's Pocono Mountains, in search of blueberries. My father referred to them as "Pinchot Roads" in reference to Gifford Pinchot who was appointed Chief Forester of the United States by Teddy Roosevelt, and who, when elected Governor of Pennsylvania, advocated the building of log roads in some rural areas of the state.

So, when we look at some of the early models of American automobiles, we realize that they were built to travel on unpaved roads....the high, narrow wheels gave them road clearance, the fenders were called mudguards for obvious reason, and the extremely low gears were necessary for climbing steep hills and pulling the chain covered wheels through axle-deep mud. Aren't we glad we have the old cars but not the old highways? I know that I am.

## **GASOLINE THROUGH THE YEARS**

Today I'm going down the road with a grab bag of thoughts and facts that I have picked up through the many years of my interest in the automobile.

In the past few years, the motorists of the entire world are concerned about the high cost of gasoline and the equally high price of the vehicles that use it. If we turn back in time to the beginning of the twentieth century, we find that the early "horseless carriages" were expensive, unreliable, uncomfortable, and were powered by gasoline, steam, or electricity. The roads were not paved; tires were very expensive and poorly made with blowouts and punctures a certainty every time a trip was planned. The only thing that was cheap in those early days was gasoline. Yes, gasoline was "dirt cheap" and was often dirty too!

Since there were no gas stations, it could be found only at country stores, drugstores, or at a dealer who sold kerosene and then, each gallon was strained through chamois skin to remove dirt particles and water which were always present. In 1900 the most used fuel next to coal was kerosene. The refineries which produced it were closely inspected to make sure that it contained none of the volatile liquid which would cause kerosene to explode---namely gasolene. Until about 1923 that is the way it was spelled—with an E. The gasoline that was removed from kerosene was a waste product and was usually pumped into creeks or ditches and set on fire. When the owners of the new-fangled gas buggies demanded this new fuel, the oil companies were delighted that they could sell this waste by-product for 2 or 3 cents a gallon.

As the automobile grew in number, the demand for gasolene began to rise and before World War I, it took over the number one spot from kerosene and has remained there ever since as we all know. Of course, there were no taxes on gas at the turn of the century—that came later. So did driver's licenses, license plates, and traffic cops. State Police forces created to control strikes and riots began to chase motorists on bicycles. Finding themselves left behind in the dust, they graduated to motorcycles and hid behind bushes and signboards. Becoming more sophisticated in the late "twenties", they began using Model A Fords which were considered to be quick getaway cars at the time. After that, came faster police vehicles, road blocks, speed traps, and, finally, radar. First, it was fun to out-distance the bicycles, then fool the motorcycle cops, then out-distance the Model A's, and now, it's "watch out for the fuzz photographers." Driving isn't much fun anymore.



I have another fact about gasoline. I learned that the very first gas station was built in Pittsburgh, my hometown, in 1913, and in later years my Uncle George Wedd operated this station for several years. It was located at the intersection of three city streets and looked a lot like some of the present hamburger places with a red tile roof and white glazed tile walls. The gas was hand pumped into the glass tanks and gravity fed to the customer's car. I remember my two cousins always checking the tires, the battery, the water, and cleaning the windshield---without being asked.

Ah, well! Time marches on---and so does OPEC.

## MAPS

When we hear the term "navigator" we think of a person who is instructed to steer or chart a true course. In history we might think of Columbus or Magellan or perhaps those brave young men who guided our planes to specific targets in World War II. With their instruments they sighted on the stars or the sun and plotted the course to be taken. When I think of a navigator, I am reminded of a lady in her forties who guided an automobile during the 1920's; a lady who nursed people with contagious diseases; a lady who taught her husband the art of paddling a canoe so that they could traverse the Allegheny River on their honeymoon, a lady who guided my first steps and shaped my life---a lady I called "mother".

We took many trips in the summers of my early childhood. Our ship had four wheels and a leatherette top. It was a 1923 Model 34 Marmon that was my father's pride and joy and we had many exciting journeys to most of the middle Atlantic states, where I was first introduced to places like Gettysburg, Niagara Falls, Boston, and New York City.

Now in those long ago days, the roads were poorly marked and detours were as expected as flat tires. There were hay wagons on the road and Burma Shave signs that competed with "Chew Mail Pouch-Treat Yourself to the Best" painted on hundreds of barns along the way.

Before we took any trip, my father would stop at the AAA headquarters and get maps of our intended route. The AAA man would mark all detours with a red pencil so we always knew what to expect. When the day for our trip arrived, we always rose before sunrise and made our final preparations which consisted of putting our five special suitcases into the customized trunk at the rear of the big Marmon; eating a hasty breakfast, locking up the house, checking to see whether we had all the maps, and that the thermos bottles were full of coffee and cocoa. Also checked was the hamper full of sandwiches, fruit, first aid supplies, and amber colored celluloid sunglasses for my sister Adele and me. Mother and Dad never wore or owned a pair of sunglasses as well as I can remember.

The sun was usually just rising as we left home but I recall that even in midsummer the air was chilly, especially in a touring car. Dad knew all the streets leading out of

Pittsburgh and we would take either the William Penn or the Lincoln Highway, but once on our way, Dad relied on Mother to read the map and chart our course.

She might say, "Now, Alton, there is a six mile detour just before we get to Lignoier. The road is just a thin black line so it is probably dirt and it will be dusty."

My sister and I often became excited at the prospect of being the last in line and having the "honor" of carrying the red flag to the man at the detour's end. We knew that the cars going in the opposite direction would not be waved on until we arrived with the flag. Or, perhaps, we might meet a loaded hay wagon from which we might snatch a handful of hay and then make a wish as we passed. I'll never know why, but I wished that I would find a five dollar gold piece in a haystack. In case anyone is wondering—I never did.

When it was near lunchtime Mother would study the map and announce that there was a small country church about ten miles ahead and that we might stop and have our picnic in the Church yard. In those days there were no state-maintained picnic tables or rest stops. Sometimes we sat on the porch of a little country store so that we could take advantage of a drink of cool water or the use of the little "convenience building" out back. I might add at this point that we always carried a roll of bathroom tissue in the side pocket on one of the car doors.

As the day wore on, my father would ask my mother how many miles we needed to drive before we reached the hotel at which we intended to stay for the night. I often asked Dad when we would arrive at our destination and he would usually reply, "We HOPE to be there in about half an hour." I didn't realize that he was thinking of a possible blow-out, radiator trouble, or another unmarked detour.

Before we hugged each other and retired for the night, my parents would check the map to determine how far we might go on the morrow. We children would soon drift into an unworried, peaceful sleep knowing that Dad would drive us safely and Mother would "navigate" us to our next destination.

## TIRES

One of the most important parts of our automobiles are the tires. Yet, we almost take them for granted, unless they become flat or just about worn out. It is interesting to note that at the turn of the century, the few autos on the road had either solid rubber tires or modified bicycle tires with no tread whatsoever. It took almost a decade for auto makers to realize that smooth tires would not grip the road or stop the vehicle when the brakes were applied on a rain soaked city street. They were using carriage or bicycle tires on vehicles that needed tremendous thrust from the rear wheels to propel them at speeds impossible from horses or human legs.

I have ads in my collection showing Firestone carriage tires and at the bottom a reference that the company also made tires for automobiles. In a word, automobile tires were expensive, poorly designed, and highly un-reliable.

In England and particularly France, where they had been building automobiles since the late 1880's, the tires were of much better design and construction. The Dunlop Company was founded by a man who built the first pneumatic tires for a wheel chair for his invalid son. Over in France, Edward Michelin was building fine tires and created the company's famous trademark when he saw a stack of tires at the Lyons Exhibition in 1898. This stack of tires looked like a human form and he hired an artist to make some sketches. One of the drawings depicted a rotund beer drinker who, lifting his glass, shouted, "NUNC EST BIBENDUM", which translated in Latin meant, "now is the time to drink." Thus, a famous trademark---Mr. Bib was born.

I remember Bib on road signs wearing a cap and motorists goggles with a sign on top telling how far it was to the next town. In those days, his body was made up of about 16 thin tires. Today, he still wears goggles, but his torso consists of three fat, white tires and, of course, since he has become a television star, Michelin tires are well known and well-liked by still another generation.

Once in a while, we may still see a long time American tire ad...the little boy with his candlestick, his yawn, and a Fisk tire over his shoulder. The tire is a lot fatter, but the boy in his Denton pajamas and the slogan, "It's time to retire." will still bring a smile to a grandfather's face.

The only other tire commercials that made an impression on me as a youngster were those of Kelly-Springfield. These were sketches that showed well-heeled young men and women stopping their Stutzes, Cadillacs, or Rolls Royce's to remark to some unfortunate motorist that they should have bought Kelly-Springfield's. I don't remember any of them helping the other fellow change his tire or fixing his flat. They just stopped long enough to brag about their tires and to make the other fellow feel stupid. I don't know whether this type of advertising would be accepted today but the public must have liked them because they are still buying Kellys.

## **WEATHER AND OLD CARS**

The year is 1912 and it is winter. There are four inches of snow on the ground and the temperature is in the lower twenties. In the rural areas of the United States, the countryside is almost silent. The silence is broken occasionally by the sound of sleigh bells or large sleds filled with sacks of grain heading for the local mills. These sleds are pulled by a team of huge Belgians, Percherons, Clydesdales, or perhaps, Morgans glad to be outside the barn for a few hours in the snow.

In the city these same breed of horses will be pulling wagons filled with bread, department store packages, or coal. These wagons are eagerly awaited by hundreds of anxious people who are unable to shop for groceries or other goods, unless they live near the railroad or a streetcar line which leads to the heart of the city. When the snow comes to the city or farm, the prime mover of goods is still the horse.

Where are those big, noisy, exciting automobiles that filled the streets and the dirty roads last summer? They are in the horse barns or what are now being called "garages"---sharing some of the space with Old Dubbin; their wheels up on jacks, and covered with sheets or tarpaulins. Their radiators have been drained and their cylinders filled with kerosene awaiting the return of spring. When the tulips are once again in bloom, then their radiators will be filled with fresh water, their tanks with fresh gasoline, and the fragile tires will be filled with air from a foot pump. The dry cell batteries will be re-installed and checked for power. Then, and only then, will these family treasurers be ready to once more take to the streets and country roads for a picnic, a visit, or perhaps, a trip to another city. In those days everyone faced the facts. The automobile was a warm weather vehicle to be enjoyed for a few months and then to be carefully preserved for three, four, or even six months depending on the latitude of the owner. In the late fall, winter, and early spring, the horse was still the king who shared his throne with the railroads and their steam locomotives. And why not? After all, a trip to another city on a train was exciting and often luxurious.

The passenger cars were warm and comfortable. Then when meal time arrived, one could walk down the aisles of the swaying coaches to the dining car, which displayed white linen and gleaming silverware with waiters anxious to meet your every need. As you read your menu, you could glance out the window at small towns passing by at a comfortable pace or, at night, a blur of lights accented by swirls of steam and coal

smoke. This was railroading at its best and the memories of summer trips in the family automobile faded away as you hurtled along in the darkness to see friends or loved ones in some distant town or city.

Now the year is 1922. The automobile has become longer and has added front doors, all controls are inside, an electric self-starter, and a lighted instrument panel, which makes night driving more pleasant. Also, the auto companies were offering more models with enclosed bodies, although the open-bodied touring car was still preferred by the buying public at a ratio of two to one. Also, the highways were being macadamized and some were even being covered with concrete as an experiment in some states. This was the decade of highway building.

The Blue Books with their detailed mileage directions about "cross the inter-urban streetcar tracks at mile 34.2 and then look for a fork in the road beside the white Methodist Church" were being referred to less and less. There were now state highway signs with route numbers on them and if a family planned a trip from the East to the Pacific, they could follow the Lincoln Highway (Rt. 30), and look for the red, white, and blue bands painted on the telephone poles every mile. How could anyone get lost now? But, just to make sure, the wise motorist visited the nearest AAA office and got maps of the area he planned to pass through and the friendly AAA man would mark with a red pencil all the detours that were in effect because of the new road building. If you didn't follow those red lines on the map, you could still get lost.

Yes, your new Maxwell, Dodge, Buick, or (if you were wealthy) Packard was quite reliable, but gas stations were still far apart and your tires would still have punctures and blow out. Then what about a thundershower? The car had to be stopped, a mad scramble to get out the rain curtains, and then put the rods in the holes in the doors, and then fasten all the snappers. If the rain wasn't coming down too hard, Dad could drive with one hand and work the windshield wiper with the other hand. If the rain was a real "frog-choker" or a "gully-washer", the car had to be driven off the road to await the end of the storm because if you elected to keep going, the rain would come through the radiator and short out the spark plug wires and you would still have to pull over to wait until you could dry off the plugs and wires. The smart motorist stopped quickly and threw a tarpaulin or a blanket over the hood of the car to prevent this common driving hazard.

When summer and fall had again come and gone, the family car could still be used if the rain curtains were kept on and blankets were provided for the passengers. You could rely on good old Weed chains when the snow came. And with denatured alcohol in the radiator and "IVFS Winterfront" or cardboard fastened to the radiator front, everyone felt secure. Of course the milk, bread, and groceries might be delivered by a horse-drawn sleigh when the snow was really deep-----but who cares about these small difficulties, folks? Automobile driving in the winter was here to stay!

## **WILDLIFE & AUTOMOBILES**

I'm glad that I live out of sight of any of my neighbors because they might wonder about my sanity when I open my garage door about six a.m. and then don't back the car out. The reason for this daily ritual is a small brown Carolina wren who built a nest on a shelf in my garage between the case of car polish and some paint thinner. She is raising three little ones in a nest about the size of a soccer ball which is constructed of leaves, twigs, paper, and string.

It set me to thinking about how the automobile has changed and endangered the lives of all non-human creatures since the turn of the century.

First it was the runaway teams pulling wagons and buggies. Soon chickens and other poultry began to become victims of the ever faster running "devil wagons" and then, of course, family pets such as dogs and cats. The deaths of skunks, opossums, rabbits, and squirrels have soared into the millions. Some people have complained when their cars were damaged or wrecked because of a deer or occasional bear running across in front of them. But let's be fair folks, we are running across THEIR road or trails—not the other way around.

Then, of course, we have the big tired high rise pickups that join the trail motorcycles and ravage our woodlands. Let's not overlook the noisy, destructive snowmobiles that tear up the woods in the winter and leave scars on the land that show up when the snow melts and we have "spot-lighters" who keep our game wardens overworked and often in peril with their lives. They are joined by the kooks who shoot game from their pick-ups and hope they won't get caught.

I won't expound on the oil spills and the pitiful sight of dying sea otters, seabirds, and salmon, but we should all pause to think of all the living things auto drivers kill besides each other. Then, there is the constant battle of the bugs and our windshields. I use the term "bugs" loosely because most of the creatures that exterminate themselves are beetles, butterflies, grasshoppers, and moths. True bugs are aphids, stinkbugs, and cicadas that rarely venture near our roads and turnpikes.

I must admit that I don't feel bad about squashed insects but it does cause us to buy extra windshield washer fluid in warm weather. But I think we should slow down when we see deer crossing signs, stray dogs, free running livestock and some of the "varmint" that venture out unexpectedly. Of course, when we are driving our beloved antique iron, we can usually see them in plenty of time and on the rare occasions I venture out in my old Wayne all I need is a little spit and a tissue for my sunglasses.