

If there is any rite of passage in our society, it is getting one's driver's license. Most Americans have gone through Driver Education classes in order to obtain that little piece of plastic ASAP. Have you considered those brave souls jeopardizing their lives so that we can get that license? What stories they could tell! Here are John Light's. He'll also share with you the real meanings behind those road signs. Buy it and see!

Do You Get Paid To Do This?

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Do You Get Paid To Do This?

**DRIVER EDUCATION
STUDENT DRIVER**

John Light

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ISBN 978-1-60910-601-0

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Printed in the United States of America.

BookLocker.com, Inc.
2010

First Edition

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Chapter 3

That First Year

Before I begin to tell tales, it needs to be said that every guy story will be done by Hubert and the girls are all Matilda. It is also true that I will mix them up, so no one will be the wiser.

I was to start the summer of 1985. There were a couple of other drivers already involved in teaching teens the finer points of handling a 1500 pound death machine. We drove three kids at a time for two hours a day. That came out to each student driving about 40 minutes a day and in nine days we were done. The second Friday was always a test day. On the backs of the permits we would record the grades, sign our names, and put the official school stamp on the back.

I was told to start them out in residential driving, move on to busy roads next, spend a day doing country roads, another downtown

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driving (heavy traffic was hoped for), and also take one day for highway driving. We then had to teach parallel parking, and I decided to have one of my days where the student would drive to their own home. The parents always appreciated not having to come to school to pick up their charges.

Some of my stories are from that first year and some from later years. As each chapter has its own stories relating to the chapter's topic, I have only one which has no real home, so I'll relate it here. It has to do with my vice principal who was the Driver Ed Head at the time.

After the summer session ended, we'd always turn the cars back in to the dealer, and then school would soon start (After Labor Day mind you!). I got a note to drop by my vice principal's office some time, and when I sat down he asked me if I drove on gravel roads that summer. I said of course and he asked, "Why?" His tone suggested that I had made a poor choice in road surfaces, so I told him that I wanted to give my students experience in gravel road driving, how it had much

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less traction than paved surfaces, etc. With a wry grin he told me that in theory that was a good idea, but our program was charged \$400 for cleaning out the nooks and crannies of the car and engine area after I had dirtied it up so much. I promised him that would never do that again.

Soon June rolled around and I got a note to drop by you-know-who's office. He reminded me to not drive on gravel roads. This went on for two more years. So the next year when I got a note to see him, I said immediately after sitting down, "Okay, I won't go on those stupid roads anymore." That settled it and he never again referred to it.

As I was a rookie instructor, I began to think that some kids were poor drivers due to the fact that I was not a very good teacher. Boy was I naive! Some just did not have the skill level yet and really didn't deserve to get the waiver test...but some just made poor choices. Like the time Matilda thought it'd be okay during driving week to go to a slumber party where they do everything else but slumber. After missing one yield sign, one stop sign, and weaving to the left side of

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the street all in ten minutes, I said she was done and had her switch with the second driver. As soon as she sat down, she was out like a light. Now days I rate the students in this way...if I feel safe when they drive, I ought to be able to go to sleep in the car and not wake up in heaven.

As was hinted before, some of my best stories come from that first year. There was this one young Hubert who bugged and bugged to drive on Coliseum Blvd., a very busy street in town, from the very first day. "Fine," I said on the second day, "We'll go there if you insist." So we drove from school to Parnell and turned right at the flashing red. (It was a flashing red at that time and now is a regular traffic light.) As we began to accelerate to the next light at Spy Run, which was less than two blocks away, a car roared up beside us and a girl stuck her upper torso out of the front passenger window. As she screamed her fool head off, both Hubert and I turned to look at the source of the ruckus. I remember thinking, "Oh, a moron, that's all." Turning my attention to the road in front of us, I saw that the light had just turned yellow, and we were still accelerating towards it. A swift glance at Hubert told me

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that he wasn't focused on what he ought to be, so I jammed on the brake. We stopped in time, the car of bozos shot through a red light, and Hubert said, "What?"

I pointed to the now red light and said, "That's what."

This Hubert was driving at the time with his friend, Hubert. I do need to say that there is occasionally another perk to teaching Driver Ed. It involves food! The two Huberts were arguing over which pizza was best : deep dish or double stuffed crust. So they asked me what I would pick, and I replied that it was not fair of me to judge as I had never had the latter. They both looked at each other and declared, "Tomorrow we're taking you to lunch!" Well, as they were the group right before my lunch hour, I gave in. (Okay, so they twisted my arm...just a hair!) After lunch I was asked to rate the pizzas, and I told them that as they were two different classes of pizza, I couldn't rate one over the other. Both had their merits in differing categories. They just laughed and enjoyed taking me to lunch anyway.

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Okay, we're done with the intro stuff. On to the tales from the hood...neighborhood driving that is.

Chapter 8

The Times of the Signs

I'll start with signs which are not the usual traffic signs. These include billboards, on restaurants, or seen in neighborhoods. The official signs are at the end.

Think about it. A fast food place says, "Kids Eat \$.99", so each child of yours gets a plate with 99 pennies on it. I saw a sign on Taco Bell once advertising "Five Chicken Choices". I guess those are for people who have phobias about ordering. Another place to dine in said, "We have the best tasting menu in town!" Fine, but who eats the menu? Then there was an eatery announcing, "Chicken Barbecue". Isn't it amazing what they can train those birds to do now days?

Other businesses have other hard to understand signs as well. A hardware store told of gas trimmers on sale. How exactly does one trim

gas? Maybe it tackles bloating. Or how about a sign for a bank saying they make personal loans. The loan officer asks you the purpose for the loan and you lower your voice to reply, "It's personal." Some places advertise that, "We take others' coupons." Okay ladies, better watch your purses!

Hotels are not much better for communicating ideas. Days Inn...so one can't spend the nights there? How about Dollar Inn? Uh, pardon me, but the rooms start at \$36.95. So why the ninety five? And what can you get for just a dollar? Maybe they let you stand in the room for twenty minutes and then you have to leave.

Finally there are strange signs which strike me as really funny. There was this camera shop billboard which claimed to give "Memories In About An Hour!" I can see it all now. All the amnesiacs from Indiana come into the shop and ask for their memories back. I guess they'll have to just put up with it if they get some one else's memories by mistake. Oh well...on to the real signs.

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Isn't that a dear sign?

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Talk about oxymorons! How does one clean dirt to make it clean?

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It says to watch for horse drawn vehicles. I had no idea horses could draw. If they could, what cars would they draw? Pintos? Mustangs?

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You know that ice in July is really quite sneaky! Good thing you are warned about it all year long!

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So how can you find it?

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This does not mean what you think. It really means one cannot walk a dog there. No P!

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Well, this goes without saying. Ever notice when people say that they say something?

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Awrightch'a lugs! Outta da car 'for I hasta ventilates ya!

Do You Get Paid To Do This?



I always expect to see a masseuse at work on the side of the road. Perhaps he will repair the soft shoulder we keep hearing about.

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Got to love this one. Every time there is a crime in this neighborhood, they all come out and watch! “Oh look, Mabel, that man is carrying a flat screen all by himself!”

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One finds this sign on a corner with Amish homes.
(Think about it!)

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Okay, so we will. We will ask them their favorite desserts, movies, and political issues most important to them.

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These two are the same type. Ever wonder why the person never sells the yard or garage?

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This is the original favorite. These kids walk, talk, and even bounce balls in slo-mo so be extra careful!

Do You Get Paid To Do This?



The state expects you to have a head belt for your noggin!
(Like a seat belt, okay?)

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A least they warn you that an idiot is near
the roadway somewhere.

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