

DID YOU KNOW???

SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING

In over 10 years of writing weekly traffic articles on vehicle and traffic law (VTL), I have come to the conclusion that most drivers are not aware of many of the newer laws governing driving and may have gotten into some bad driving habits that they don't realize. And, no wonder, as New York State does not require any periodic refresher training. With this in mind, when I speak to the students of Driver Ed classes at Franklin Academy, I always encourage them to say something to the driver if they are riding with someone, even their parents. Since, as new drivers, they have just studied the NYS Driver's Manual, they likely know more about current VTL than do their parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles etc.

So now, I am going full blast with this request of everyone – if you **SEE SOMETHING** that you know is wrong, **SAY SOMETHING!** You may know something that the driver isn't aware of or you may think the driver is making a mistake with the possibility that you may be wrong and the driver may be right. Either way, some kind of a dialog is likely to ensue. If you cannot agree, you will most likely seek advice from a third source and resolve the discrepancy. When this takes place, you will both be better off for it, as one of you will come to the conclusion that the other was correct, and the other person will learn the correct compliance with the law. After all, most all drivers really want to obey the law and will usually do so, but if they are not aware of the correct response, they may continue to make the same mistakes repeatedly and not even realize they are doing something wrong.

Here are a couple of examples. You are riding with a driver that enters a two way left turn (TWLT) lane 1/4 mile before the left turn (like at MacDonald's in Malone to turn into the Aldi Shopping plaza). You should not enter a TWLT lane more than 2-3 car lengths prior. Saying something to the driver might give him/her some vital information they were not aware of.

In the second example, you are riding with someone that wants to turn left at an intersection where the traffic signal is showing a green light but there is a string of oncoming traffic. The driver does not enter the intersection but stays behind the stop bar; meanwhile, the light changes to red, and now you must wait for the next green signal, where the same problem of the left turn may still exist. If you are up on your VTL knowledge, you can inform the driver that it is proper to enter the intersection (one car only) and turn after a break in traffic or after the signal has changed.

Last example – the driver you are riding with moves from the right lane to the left lane on either an interstate highway or a four-lane road like we have in Malone but fails to signal the lane change. Say something, because it could be that they aren't aware that lane changes also require signaling.

Communication between drivers in separate vehicles is impossible, but between two drivers in the same vehicle is as simple as anything. So, please, if you are riding with a driver that violates VTL, say something. They just might appreciate it.

To everyone, please learn the laws of the road and drive accordingly.