

## **DID YOU KNOW???**

### **PARALLEL PARKING – IMPOSSIBLE OR PIECE OF CAKE?**

Parallel parking takes practice and skill, and is a part of every road test. As a result of these weekly articles, as you might expect, I receive a lot of emails from readers. I recently had an interesting one from a reader in Saranac Lake that asked if I ever did an article on parallel parking. It seems that he parallel parks frequently on one of the main streets in that village and finds that other drivers don't seem to recognize that he is about to park, pulling up too close to him as he stops alongside the vehicle in front of the parking space he is about to back into. Making matters worse, when they realize he is about to back up, they too often give him an unfriendly honk of the horn, or worse.

Unfortunately there is no way to definitively inform drivers following you that you are about to parallel park. However, here are a couple of tips that just might help. First, as you brake prior to positioning your vehicle, put your right turn signal on. As you pull alongside of the vehicle parked in front of the space you will back into, change from your right turn signal to your hazard lights – 4-way flashers. This, along with your back-up lights as you put the car in reverse, will confirm to drivers behind you that you are not just going to make a right turn, but are going to parallel park. Most will give you the necessary room. If they are too close for you to back up safely, open your window and wave them past if it's safe to do so. They may have to wait for oncoming traffic, and thus so will you, but they eventually will get around and allow you the chance to complete your park.

Remember also that NYS vehicle and traffic law requires your right-side wheels to be no more than one foot from the curb. And, after parking, it is also illegal to open your door into traffic. You must wait until there are no vehicles coming from behind you.

When you are ready to leave your parking space, you must make sure it is safe to do so. You must make certain there are no pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists and other vehicles that may become a hazard. You must also signal with your turn signal that you are about to leave your parking space and pull into the drive lane.

Parallel parking as stated before takes practice and skill. The better you become at it the less time it takes to complete the maneuver and thus the less likely you are to irritate drivers behind that have to wait for you to get out of the drive lane. If you take four or five back and forth movements, it will surely aggravate other drivers. Just like anything else, parallel parking skills can be learned, and with practice, you'll be in your space in no time.