

AN ECHO PRESS EDITORIAL

It's time brush up on 4-way stops

Four-way stops have long been a problem in Alexandria. Drivers don't seem to know what to do. They get confused. They're often "too nice" and let other cars go through the intersection even when it's not their turn. Or worse yet, they blow right through the signs, expecting other drivers to yield to them.

An Echo Press reader, frustrated with drivers in Alexandria who don't have a clue about what to do at a four-way stop, sent us information from the Stop and Go Driving School in Arizona, which has been serving drivers for more than 25 years.

With the busy Memorial Day weekend ahead now is a good time for drivers to brush up on the basics of four-way stops. Here are some tips and information from Stop and Go Driving.

What is a four-way stop? This is an intersection that requires all vehicles to come to a stop before proceeding. It's typically marked with a stop sign for each approach, rather than a traffic light. It's also known as an all-way stop.

One of the reasons this road situation can be confusing and frustrating is that, even though there are rules governing right of way, it can seem like many drivers either don't know what the rules are or aggressively disregard them. At the same time, other drivers can approach timidly, "losing" their turn, impacting drivers around them.

Even though the "how to" of approaching this kind of intersection is one of the first things you learn in driving school, it can be easy to forget who goes when. It can be especially tricky when it's a relatively high traffic area, with a lot of drivers entering and exiting the intersection from all directions.

The four rules of four-way stops:

Rule #1: First to arrive, first to drive. If you arrive at the intersection first, come to a complete stop, then proceed. If another vehicle arrives before you, then they have the right of way.

Rule #2: Right of way goes to the right. If two vehicles arrive at the same time and stop at the same time, it's the car on the right that has the right of way. This is also the rule to follow if there's some confusion about who got there first.

Rule #3: Straight doesn't have to wait. If you and another vehicle arrive at the intersection at the same time and you're across from each other (rather than one to the right and one to the left), pay attention to the traveling direction of the other car. If they are going straight and you are also proceeding straight, you can both travel forward because you won't cross each other's path. If the other vehicle is turning, and you are going straight (or vice versa), then it's the car going straight that has the right of way.

This rule shows one reason that using your turn signals is so important. Always proceed with caution, especially when the other driver is not using a turn signal.

Rule #4: Left turn yields to right

If two cars arrive directly across from each other at the same time, and both are making turns, then the car turning left yields to the one turning right. This makes sense, because the car turning right is closer to the road.

Four more tips
Communicate: If turning, use your turn signal to indicate your intention to other drivers. If there's some doubt about who arrived first, wave people on to let them know you're yielding to them.

Proceed with caution: Occasionally, four cars might arrive at the intersection at the exact same time. When this happens, there isn't a rule about who goes first. Wait for the most assertive driver to make the first move, then proceed using the rules above.

Don't be aggressive: Take your turn when it's time and be patient.

Give people the benefit of the doubt: If another driver doesn't follow the above rules at a four-way stop, assume it was unintentional and just move on with your day.

7 brand-new things I've learned

Each year when the calendar hits mid-September, it's time to add another candle to the birthday cake for this middle-aged man. One thing I challenge myself to do each year is learn a few things that (hopefully) make me a more well-rounded, better-educated, calmer, funnier, and nicer person.

Here is a snapshot of seven new things I've learned since my last birthday that have really stood out to me in a (mostly...not #6) positive manner.

1. Citizens Police Academy: There aren't enough words to share how incredible my experience was in the eight week "Citizens Police Academy" presented by the Alexandria Police Department. I have always had a ton of respect for the men and women of law enforcement, and that has only grown through this experience.

From learning about our police department and its budget, collaborations and traffic stops, to our legal system, drug use in the area, and so much more, I am now an even bigger cheerleader for the professional manner in which all 24 police officers, three administrative staff, and one building maintenance worker serve our community!

2 Venmo: Using Venmo to transfer money is easier than I expected.

3. Mountaineers: When you grow up the son of a head football coach, the only sport that matters in the fall is football! Or at least that's what I thought as a child. Mention the word soccer around home and you'd get your mouth washed out for cussing! And now the thought of mountain biking?!?!? But wow, my son, Christian, was a part of the Alexandria Mountaineer Bike Club last fall and had a blast!

Students in grades 6-12 have the chance to practice their biking skills at either Brophy Park or Kensington Runestone Park, and then



Contributed

The 2022 class participants in the Citizens Police Academy, along with Chief Scott Kent, back row, far left, Sergeant Chad Schroeder, kneeling, front left, and Captain Kevin Guenther, kneeling, far right, after the opening session in March.

if interested, can compete at five weekend races around the state, which typically take place on ski hills. While learning some biking skills and techniques that he can use throughout his life is great, the even better part is the friendships Christian has made with his teammates and coaches in a very positive and "you can do it" spirit.

Never tried mountain biking before? You belong! Kind of know how to mountain bike? You belong! Experienced rider with some sweet bike gear? You belong!

4. Old man sleep habits: I now sleep like a baby while on my side with a pillow between my boney knees.

5. Lower Antelope Canyon: This last March my family had the opportunity to spend a few days with Carrie's parents in Sedona, AZ. We had a great trip that included hiking, new foods, and relaxation! The highlight for all seven of us was when we took a day trip three hours north to Page, Arizona. While in Page we saw Horseshoe Bend, the Glen Canyon Dam on Lake Powell, and the best spot was for sure Lower Antelope Canyon. If you have been there for a tour, you know what I am talking about. If you haven't, my entire family gives it a solid two thumbs up recommendation to add to your "must see" list.

6. What is taking you so long? Sixth grade daughters need LOTS of time getting ready for school. And the one at my house is teaching me to be more patient - daily.

7. Yoga Borealis: I never thought the word "yoga" would come out

of my mouth or be typed by these fingers, but here it is! Yoga! In November, while on a visit as a Chamber Ambassador, I had the opportunity to tour a new yoga studio in town and meet its owner and instructor, Jen Frohne. Yoga Borealis has a very welcoming environment on Broadway (right above Kvale Real Estate) and is a great place for a newbie to get started.

I aim to show up weekly for class and love the ability to slow down my brain, shut off my mouth, and focus on my breathing. (Don't tell anyone, but I enjoy attending the class geared toward elderly and pregnant women - seems to fit my physique right now!). I don't know all the fancy names for the poses, and I'm nowhere near as flexible as I never was, but to take the intentional time to breathe and simply be still has been awesome.

This is a small glimpse into what I have learned since turning 44, and there are still a few months to go until 45. So how are you different this year compared to last year? Have you gained some positive relationships, learned some cool facts? Traveled to a place on your bucket list? Gotten involved in your community with an organization you knew little about? There are many opportunities in our area to learn, grow and get involved. I encourage and challenge you to find a new way to take care of you!

Tim Urness is actively involved in service groups in the Alexandria area. "In the Know" is a rotating column written by community leaders from the Douglas County area.



TIM URNESS
In the Know

1972: First National Bank of Alexandria elects 1st female officer

This Week in 1972 - 50 years ago: June 1 will mark the first time in the 72-year history of First National Bank of Alexandria that a woman has held an officer's position.

Miss Irene Halstead, an employee of the bank, was elected assistant cashier. She has been employed by the bank for 44 years. In 1928, upon graduation from the Alexandria High School, she was interviewed for employment by Dr. J.J. Volker, who was then president of the bank. She began her banking career as a stenographer, then became a teller, and later into the bookkeeping department.

1972, 50 years ago: Plywood Minnesota's Alexandria Drive-In Warehouse will open on June 9. A new building, which will house the outlet, is now under construction and is located near the junction of I-94 and Highway 29 South near Hustad Implement.

Fire destroyed the Hoffman



RACHEL BARDUSON
Observations from the Archives

(Farmers') Co-op Grain Association elevator that has been standing at least 60 years. Fire departments from Kensington and Barrett helped the Hoffman department contain the fire to the elevator, despite high winds during the first hour that threatened petroleum storage areas and buildings of the Hoffman Co-op Oil Association.

1997, 25 years ago: The possibility of building a new National Guard Armory in Alexandria is back in the news. Discussions have been going on since 1984, although the topic has kept a low profile since it was last officially discussed at an Alexandria City Council meeting three years ago. Jim Clayton, chair of the

National Guard Citizens Committee, told the council that Alexandria now ranks as one of the three top places in the state where the National Guard is considering the construction a new armory. One of the main reasons for this consideration is because of the recruitment success of the National Guard unit in Alexandria.

The Douglas County Hospital will begin a building project that will include two new operating rooms, a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) unit, and a radiation oncology unit. Under the two-hospital partnership, the St. Cloud Hospital will only operate the radiation unit. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$5.5 million. About \$3.8 million of that cost will be borne by the St. Cloud Hospital. Douglas County Hospital will share the remaining cost - \$2 million.

2012, 10 years ago: The United Way of Douglas and Pope Counties will debut the

Traveling Tree House this summer. It will be staffed by Early Childhood Education professionals who will be taking the bus to outlying communities, offering games, opportunities for learning and reading times. There will also be meals on board to share with the children. The Traveling Tree House is a summer enrichment program developed for pre-kindergarten through third grade to enhance educational opportunities for young people.

Just for fun, 1972 - 50 years ago: In her 44 years of service at First National Bank, Irene Halstead has worked with many bank presidents, including Dr. Volker, Phil J. Noonan, R.W. Putnam, Teg Aal, A.C. Schneiderhan, and presently Les Gaugert.

1962 - 60 years ago: The Alexandria Land O' Lakes plant produces about 85,000 pounds of powdered milk a day from about 1 million

pounds of fluid milk. This week they shipped eight boxcars totaling 560,000 pounds to government storage for use in the school milk program.

Sports Trivia, 1997 - 25 years ago: Wyck (Rocky) Linder, a 1966 Alexandria graduate, is making waves in the fishing industry. Linder is the founder of Linder Sports, which has developed an electromagnetic field generating fishing lure. Patented in 1993, the lure is run by two button batteries that work to produce a regulated electrical field around the bait when it is immersed in water with the water completing the electrical circuit. Linder's is the only lure of its kind patterned to induce a fish's electro-sensitivity. Linder currently works as director of corporate facilities at SCIMED Life Systems, Inc. in Minneapolis.

Rachel Barduson of Alexandria is a regular contributing columnist to the Echo Press Opinion page.