

IT'S DRIVING SEASON and you are the navigator Now what?

By Bob Ellis

Have you been on an Arrive and Drive or a day tour and watched a car ahead of you suddenly make a U turn followed by three or four cars and you realize that they all missed a turn.

The navigators in those cars should have been doing more than just keeping the right seat warm to avoid having this happen.

If you are typically the navigator do you know what your job is?

Maybe we can offer a few suggestions or ideas.

Be prepared before starting out. Get a good clipboard to hold the route instruction so that you can make notes as you go. Get two or three pencils to write with. You may ask why not a ball point pen? From experience I can tell you how hard it is to remove ink from your nice leather door panel not to mention from your shirt or pants. When your driver gets a little enthusiastic in corners there is no telling what a pen point might connect with.

When the drive starts, read the first couple of instructions out loud and remind your driver to zero the odometer at the appropriate place according to the instructions. Part of your job is to help look for the street signs where you will need to turn. As the drive progresses, continue reading the next couple of instructions aloud and the indicated mileage at which they should be executed. Keep track of where you are on the instruction sheet by checking off or crossing out each turn as it is completed. Adding this step will help you find your place quickly when you return to the instructions from watching for road signs and helps to avoid skipping a line of the instructions which might be critical to staying on the route.

Paying extremely close attention to the mileage indicated for some actions such as a turn can be one of the most important factors in staying on the correct course. Note: Your mileage may vary, so sometimes things come up a bit earlier or later than expected, so pay attention. Sometimes the signs are hard to read, or on the left side of the road, or a road may have more than one name and by knowing what mileage the turn should be taken at you can avoid that dreaded "off course" U-turn.

Write down your car's odometer reading next to the mileage shown in the instructions.

Sometimes your odometer may match the directions exactly. Sometimes you will note that the two are 1-2 tenths of a mile different part of the time and right on the rest of the time. This can be due to the odometers only registering to the nearest tenth of a mile and your reading is half a tenth out of sync with the tourmeister. Quite often you will notice that there is more than a tenth difference between the instructions and your cars odometer, especially after going five or ten miles. If you observe that this is happening you should calculate how much the difference is, on average, and make adjustments to the written instructions so that you can give your driver the correct odometer reading at which the next turns should be executed. If you see that your cars odometer reading is three tenths of a mile off the instructions then for the next unexecuted instruction add or subtract that amount from the mileage shown. This will help you give your driver the correct odometer reading when the next turn should occur.

Since you are actively navigating, your driver does not need to chance running a red light or speeding in order to keep the car ahead in sight. Whatever you do, don't just follow the car ahead like lemmings. There might not be a navigator in the car or if there is, they might not be giving their driver good directions, or they might miss a turn that you are prepared for. Trust yourself if you think that the instructions say to turn at a certain place and the car ahead doesn't make that turn.

After doing all of these things remember to appreciate the scenery that you are passing and enjoy the ride in your Porsche.