

Sign Twirling Even In The Rain



interesting site that made the traffic delay almost worthwhile if not even a reason to have been at the intersection in the first place.

One rainy Saturday afternoon a couple of weeks ago, I was sitting in traffic that was going nowhere due to an intersection designed by an engineer with a real sense of humor and given a project that never should have been placed where it was built. Cars were backed up to the next town and with the added dimension of the thunderstorm we were in, there was no way anyone would make their appointments on this day.

Trying to see through the rapid passing of the windshield wipers unable to keep up with the deluge of monsoon rainfall, I saw an

one side of the roadway in a bright yellow poncho and wearing a red cap was a sign twirler busy at his job. The rain was coming sideways and in sheets, but this young man was still attempting to spin a giant yellow arrow advertising some motel where you could sell your gold jewelry for a fortune.

His ability to move the large cardboard sign around his back and over his head during the repeat of Noah's flood was simply amazing. Just to see the sign remain rigid in all that rainwater was truly a feat of major carpentry not to mention

the abuse it took from the hands of evidently a master sign twirler. He never gave up and if the light at the intersection had not finally changed, I may have still been there watching this kid turn cardboard juggling into an art.

The thing that also caught my attention that day was the fact that spinning a cardboard arrow was a way of advertising that dates all the way back to the old country. Men wishing to be paid in products would wear wooden signs containing information about local pubs and walk the streets to gain attention for their employer.

However, many of today's sign carriers have turned the practice into almost a sport and have even developed special moves in causing the pointed signs to get your attention. I do wonder if people really drive from an encounter with a spinning sign directly to a motel

to sell their class rings. I just get a kick out of watching the more talented send their signs into the air and catch them in somewhat of an acrobatic manner or watch in amazement at a guy spinning a sign during a storm rather than actually read where they wanted me to go. But, I guess if some folks didn't go to where the signs pointed, the days of sign twirling would soon spin out.

Just like the sign pointers showing you the way to cash in for cash, with the arrival of fall, Tennessee's Division of Forestry is also trying to get your attention about the need for using burn permits when you plan to do some unconfined outdoor burning for the next few months.

Burning permits are required in most of the state between October 15 and May 15. They are free of charge and may be obtained in advance for weekends

and holidays. Permit holders should also check for other restrictions in their locale. Citizens can apply for burning permits by calling their local Division of Forestry office between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

You can also visit www.burnsafetn.org for a directory of state Forestry Division offices by county and fire safety tips.

I have been getting the permits for years and it is really simple. And, I have heard from those who think it is a waste of time to do so and have made some very disparaging remarks about my ability to burn a brush pile. But, if you are one of the 16 who lost your house last year across the state or one of more than 500 that were threatened due to wildland fire from someone letting their open burning spin out of control like the aforementioned sign

twirler, you just might appreciate someone checking on a permit and finding out if they can burn or not. It really gets my goat to see folks on a dry windy day light a fire and expect it to stay where they put it. Escaped debris burns are the leading cause of wildfires. Burning without a permit is a Class C misdemeanor punishable by up to 30 days in jail and/or a fine not to exceed \$50.

I sure would hate to see someone have to look up a sign twirler to have to sell their gold just to pay off a fine; or worst yet, to have to find new housing due to someone's inability to act responsibly.

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