

RANDOM REFLECTIONS: Smile for the Camera!

By Vic A. Bodnar

Sometimes things in your life can be complicated, and sometimes they are obviously simple. I give you an example from the past that could apply to today.

I am seeing more articles on the internet lately (and we all know everything on the net is true), that indicate that some poor, dumb, sap was caught doing well over the posted speed limit on one of our highways. Sometimes this must involve a high-speed chase which no doubt could be dangerous for those involved, and even for innocent others. This brought up a memory from my younger days.

I remember a time, way back, when I used to travel the New York State Thruway many times over several years. At that time, you picked up a ticket at the entrance to the Thruway to be entered into their recording system. This was not as sophisticated a computer tracking system as we have today. Then you handed in the ticket wherever you exited, and you were then charged according to the distance you travelled. Sounds familiar to the automated systems we have for the 407 doesn't it?

It was also known that since they had a time stamp on your tickets, both indicating your incoming and

outgoing movements on the Thruway, they also knew how long your trip took over that known distance. Now assuming you have been travelling at the lawful speed posted, they could then calculate how long it would take you to travel the distance from your incoming and exiting excursions. So, if they checked your tickets and found that you somehow got to your destination much quicker than you should have, it meant obviously, that you were speeding. And, guess what? You were fined accordingly!

Now let us fast forward to today to our own 407 toll highway. Since the folks at the 407 highway here in Ontario have you electronically, either photo stamped or transponder activated (for both entering and leaving the highway), and since this also shows your license plate plus the time associated with your arrival and exit off the 407, they know exactly where and when you travelled.

Let us assume you believe you were doing the speed limit. They can in point-of-fact calculate exactly how fast you were travelling to exit at the time indicated. Would your argument that you were not speeding hold water with such calculated proof? It seems,

therefore, that they would know exactly who was doing 160 kph or at least averaged a speed well in excess of the posted limit.

So, I find myself asking, "Will they start ticketing those with calculated speeds over that limit or do they let the occasional Ontario Provincial Police handle those deemed to be 'racing'?" For some unknown reason to me at least, the New York Thruway no longer hands out tickets in this manner. I wonder if it was because of the time and energy that someone had to spend to collate the incriminating evidence? But as I mentioned previously, everything else is now computerized, so a short program could be set up to address the data. They do something similar with "red light camera" situations. Just a thought ... but I'll let you be the judge!

(Vic A. Bodnar belongs to White Pine Writers Inc., a local group of like-minded authors who encourage and support all facets of writing, editing and publishing literary efforts. Follow them on FaceBook or www.whitepinewriters.ca)