

# Honked off by Illinois drivers? He's sorry

By CHRISTOPHER THOMAS

On behalf of my fellow drivers from the great state to your south, Illinois, I wish to apologize to you, the residents of Wisconsin, for the way we charge onto your roads and drive.

You might be thinking, "This is weird? Why is this one person apologizing for an entire state?" Well, truth be

For the most part, Illinois drivers are good people, just like you. . . . The difference is we tend to drive fast.

told, I am honestly only apologizing for the few drivers with Land of Lincoln plates that mess things up for the rest of us.

For the most part, Illinois drivers are good people, just like you.

We have jobs, families and dreams. We get up each morning and go to work. We take care of our automobiles, get our oil changed and tune up our engines for weekend road trips. We live our lives much like you.

The difference is we tend to drive fast.

This isn't to say that some Wisconsin drivers aren't a little lead-footed either, but for the most part, it seems that if you are driving north toward Green Bay on I-43 and a car cruises by you as if you were parked, it probably has Illinois plates.

So why have I taken it upon myself to apologize for an entire state of drivers? It is because of one blue Nissan.

Over Memorial Day weekend, I packed up my truck and got away to Birchwood, a small community about 40 minutes south of Hayward. Besides enjoying the nature and beauty that the North Woods has to offer, I shopped, dined and visited several different towns. It was easily the most enjoyable and relaxing weekend I have had in a long time. No job to worry about, no bills to pay, no stress.

But as all good things do, the weekend came to an end, and it was time to return back to my hometown of Brookfield (yes, we have one, too). So, after packing up and saying goodbye to friends, I hit the road.

Everything was going smooth until just outside of Madison. It was here that I met the blue Nissan.

This car — with Illinois plates, of course — was coming up behind me as I rode in the right lane. Then before I knew it, he zoomed by me. He looked to be about 21 years old or so, maybe older, and his car was full of people. As he drove by, I could hear music from his car blaring out the windows as everyone in the car danced and sang along. This was the first time I shook my head, though it would not be the last.

As traffic started to pick up at this point, I came back up upon this blue Nissan. He was weaving, darting and moving from lane to lane, looking for somewhere, anywhere to go.

Please see **THOMAS, 3J**

# Driving is such sweet sorrow

THOMAS, From 1J

He got nowhere. And as I drove patiently in the center lane, I passed him. Again, I shook my head.

Then he found an opening, if you could call it that. He cut off a semi-truck and sped down the right lane, passing me once again. However this was, as you might have figured, not the fast lane to gridlock freedom. As he almost slammed into the back of another car, I again passed him. And, again, shook my head.

This continued for the next 15 minutes or so. I would pass him; he would pass me. I stayed in the center lane the entire time; he constantly went from left to right to left again. I wasn't getting anywhere fast; he wasn't getting anywhere fast.

As I was now constantly shaking my head, I wondered: Where does he think he is going?

Just past the Beltline merger in Madison, traffic cleared up and my friend in the blue Nissan took off. Truthfully, I was happy to see him go, as was everyone around me.

And as I continued my drive toward home, I couldn't help

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but think of the bitter taste this driver had left with me.

I did not want him (or any other driver we have all seen like him) to represent me, as an Illinois driver. We do not all drive like this. We are not all crazy speed demons who weave, cut and swerve our way down America's interstates. The majority of the 7.9 million licensed drivers in Illinois do not drive this way, and this is why I want to apologize.

For the driver of the blue Nissan and all drivers like him: I am sorry.

Not as sorry as he probably was when his car was pulled over by a Wisconsin state trooper about 10 miles down the road (as his friend stood on the shoulder relieving himself), but nonetheless, I am sorry.

Christopher Thomas lives in Brookfield, Ill.

# Crossroads

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