

You have been warned

Article and illustration by Bill Naylor



Most warning signs are helpful, such as 'Road Ahead Closed' or 'The person you are talking about is stood right behind you!' (Why aren't there more of those?). But most warning signs and labelling such as 'Do not attempt to iron clothes while you are wearing

them' or the advice on bottles of drain cleaner, 'Not for human consumption,' can only be of use to people who when they breathe in don't know what to do next.

In Canada, bears can be a nuisance hanging around campsites in the hope of finding food. Prominently displayed in my holiday cabin was the sign "Don't invite bears into your cabin." Even if the most friendly-looking bear knocked on your door, clutching a bottle of wine, a movie box set and a pizza, you'd still be reluctant to invite them to share a sofa.

Recently, I bought elastic bands. In order to protect these fragile items, they were encased in a dome of unbreakable plastic similar to that used for the window screen of the space shuttle. And of course, it was labelled "inedible" just in case anyone might confuse elastic bands with noodles or spaghetti.

How many road signs do we need? There's gridlock because everybody is going at a snail's pace trying to read them all. Once there were only sensible signs like the one depicting a guy

opening an umbrella, to warn drivers there were men at work in the rain trying to open their umbrellas.

The single signpost for turn off has now graduated into a painted line of curved arrows. This is to dispel any belief your car will automatically move sideways to take the turn off, emphasising that you must turn your steering wheel gradually when you want to leave the road you are travelling on.

There are so many road signs now they have additional signs requesting drivers to 'Please read the signs.' The advice elsewhere often conveys the wrong message due to incorrect punctuation. The lack of wildlife on view in a

Safari Park I visited recently, could perhaps be explained by the sign, 'Lions remain in your car.'

In the local bank, customers have always queued in front of the cashier's desk. Now there is a sign "Queue here," along with an arrow in case the location was in doubt. I suppose this prevents the possibility of new customers scrambling over the cashier's desks and queuing alongside them.

You never used to see the sign that is now regularly displayed in every car wash, "Do not get out of your car when the car wash

is operating." How many people when their car's having a wash and go service, suddenly get the urge to freshen up by being drenched with gallons of soapsuds, scrubbed from head to toe by a trio of ten-foot rotating brushes, before being sprayed with hot wax? Ok! But I think you'll find you're the only one.

