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Stop in the name of art, just don't crash

By Sally Vaughan
Opinion

If you've ever lived abroad for any length of time, you may have had a similar experience. For one reason or another, people back home seem to think you're a safe bet when it comes to holding precious secrets.

Now, I'm not one to betray a confidence, and this is certainly no gossip column, but it seems to me that a shift in time and space can do wonders for loosening tongues.

On The Net:

www.michaelpinsky.com

Whilst driving round Amarillo one evening I was reminded of this. After passing a number of standard road signs, "Give Way," "4-way Stop," "Pavement Ends," "Don't Mess With Texas," I was no more surprised to see

a sign displaying the phrase "We Have Our Secrets." Sure we do. We all do. And did that sign divert me from the job in hand - driving? Well, no.

British artist Michael Pinsky was this week criticized for an art installation that appeared on a round-about (traffic circle) in a busy town center in England. It consisted of a group of 10 regular road signs that were grouped together, all contradicting each other. Apparently confused motorists had no less than a dozen accidents this month as a result of the "sculpture," and it has since been moved to a safer place.

A spokesman for the British Automobile Association reportedly said, "Anything that diverts motorists' attention from the road is not helpful ... Maybe art should be left to the art galleries and not our road network."

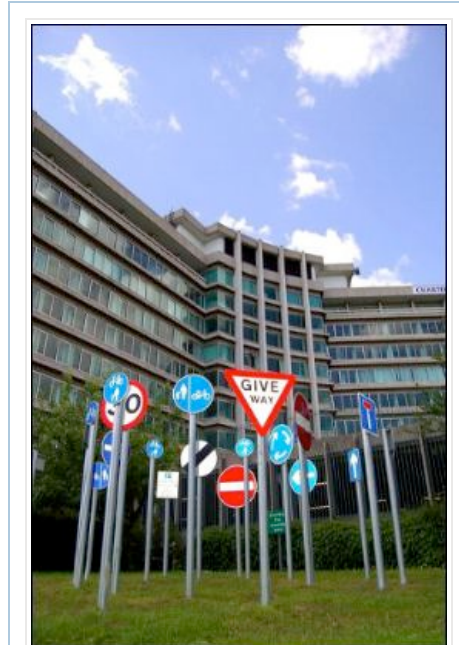
Amarilloans, so far as I've heard, are no more distracted by the signs of Stanley Marsh 3 and the Dynamite Museum than I was. In fact, I'm often told that most locals don't notice them at all anymore. Although there may have been a time when "Big and Ready" caught a motorist off guard, I don't think anyone is particularly swayed when passing "Remember You Promised Yourself This Would Be a Good Day." That one always makes me smile.

I hope that Michael Pinsky's work is allowed to remain now that it has found a safe location, and I hope that the signs of Stanley Marsh 3 are a secret that won't always be kept here in the U.S.A.

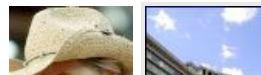
Sally Vaughan is an Englishwoman who is living in Amarillo for the next few months while writing a book on her experiences and impressions in the Panhandle. Look for more of her musings in the Sunday Amarillo Globe-News.

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Michael Pinsky / Provided Photo
Sculpture caused problems for motorists in England.



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