

23rd January 2012

Letters to The Editor,
P.O Box 85,
PORT MORESBY

Dear Sir,

SUBJECT: NIGHT DRIVING HAZARDS ON PNG,s HIGHWAY.

As a regular driver on the Okuk highway, I would like to enlighten other travelers about the hazards that one encounters on the road. Let me say that these are just hints for survival and the further up the highway you travel, your safety is no longer guaranteed.

Firstly, Papua New Guinea's road rules have been non existent for almost a decade now and the traffic regulations are only available for people with learner's permits and any traffic rule book is discarded after obtaining your class 1 license. After obtaining ones license, you can drive as you please and also try to go up the license grades as quickly as possible regardless of whether you are qualified or not. Always try to obtain a PMV license at breakneck speed because that is the only speed that PMV's are supposed to be driven at.

When driving on the highway, it is normal to park on the middle of the road and tell stories with the driver of the other vehicle regardless of other high speed travelers hurtling towards you, even if it is a 150 ton fully loaded semi trailer. Reincarnation is probably your tribal belief when you stare death in the face and think it is normal. The big truck blowing his horn is not a sign of protest but an expression of joy at seeing you block the road unnecessarily.

When you travel at night you will occasionally see what looks like a UFO with blinking lights and weird sounds hurtling towards you. This is an illuminated bus full of happily intoxicated travelers and crew all trying to outdo the vehicles stereo system whilst traveling at breakneck speed and often successfully meeting with the Almighty. There will be busses with one light that is focused somewhere except the road, others with two lights but pointing everywhere than the intended direction of travel and others that are intended to blind you. What looks like premature dawn on the horizon turns out to be a fully laden bus attempting a speed record and wanting to speed into the afterlife, and always being successful. The best practice is to pull over to the side and await this phenomenon's passing.

The further one goes up the highway; one will encounter pedestrians who are instructed to cross the road so as to earn some monetary return for the tribe in the form of compensation. The road rules change and it is now pedestrians first, even where there are no legal pedestrian crossings. I shall go no further but leave you to your imagination.

The thing to remember is that we make our own traffic rules to suit us and night driving on our roads can be an exhilarating experience for those with mental make up of 5 year olds. You never know who amongst the on coming drivers are fully loaded

with SP. Very often you try to dim your lights and expect reciprocation but the only dim thing in the bus is the driver and he has a license to kill so it is advisable that one does not try to find out but pull over to the side of the road and wait until it passes by. Other times you will encounter a single powerful beam of light about 6 feet above the ground. This is not a hovering helicopter but a truck approaching you with a single light on, usually the left one, but never get too close to investigate. You may prove me right posthumously.

I thank you, editor and would be glad if you could print this in one of your editions please,

Yours faithfully,