Caution: Humorist On Board

by Erik_Deckers

One of the dumbest fads I ever suffered through was the 'Baby On Board' signs people used to put in their car windows during the 1980s. This originally started out as a friendly warning to other motorists, urging them to drive cautiously, as there was a small infant in the car.The people who used these signs needed to read them a little more closely though. These were the drivers who would tailgate you on residential streets, whip past you at 30 miles over the speed limit, and then flip the bird before swerving back over to avoid smashing into the oncoming school bus.And like most dumb fads, this one was made dumber by all the "humorous" parodies that followed: 'Grandmother On Board,' 'Cubs Fan on Board,' or my personal favorite, 'Mother-In-Law In Trunk.' I even remember seeing a 'Lawyer On Board' sign once. Sadly, that's the one that launched road rage in the '90s.These were soon followed by the 'No Radio In Car' signs that were supposed to discourage would-be thieves from smashing your car window and stealing your stereo. They were pretty effective, assuming your basic stereo thief could read. But I knew I would need some when I got a cool stereo, so I stole as many signs as I could.Even today, I still see the occasional On Board signs as they struggle to make a comeback, like '70s rock band .38 Special on yet another summer tour of the county fairs. But for the most part, the entire fad is dead.At least I thought so until this past week. We were driving on the freeway when a customized van breezed past us. On the back was a sign I had never seen before: 'Caution Show Dogs.'"Show them what?" I asked my wife. "And how can I do it cautiously if I don't even know what I'm showing them. I mean, are they going to bite?"She just rolled her eyes at me. We've been married for over 12 years, so she's used to this kind of thing."Not show DOGS," she said. "SHOW dogs.""Oh." I pondered that for a moment. "Caution them about what?"*SIGH* "It's like the 'Baby On Board' signs.""So we're supposed to be cautious just because some blue-blood is hauling fancy dogs in their van? Or is the dog is driving? Everyone knows they drive like maniacs." I was on a roll now.I began to get a mental image of what a van would look like if the dog were actually driving: shag carpet on the floor and walls, fuzzy dice hanging from the mirror, and a little Lynrd Skynrd on the stereo. They'll drive to a secluded spot, crank up "Freebird," drink some cheap wine, and soon the van becomes a breeding ground of immorality and sin. And puppies.I shook my head to clear the vision. "Since when do special passengers in someone else's car constitute extra care and safety on my part?""You should be driving with care and safety anyway."I ignored her. "Do they really want us to be cautious, or are they just showing off the fact they've got a canine Paris Hilton stashed in the back?""How the heck should I know?" she said, as if this would somehow stop the rant I could feel building up. Not a chance."And if we're supposed to be cautious, then why did she speed past us doing 80?""Why? How fast are you going?""70." (I forgot Rule #37 of Guy Driving: lie about your speed.)"70?! The speed limit is 55!""We need to focus on what's important here. Why someone would deliberately drive around with a 'Caution Show Dogs' sign on their van. Did they lose a bet?""No, what's important is that we don't get a speeding ticket." Sometimes my wife has misplaced priorities.I slowed down and pondered my next move."Besides, why would you automatically assume it's a woman?" she continued."Because a Guy would never use a gilttery faux gold plaque to advertise the fact that he's got a long-haired Pekingese daintily perched in his dogmobile.""No, a Guy would have Yosemite Sam and a silhouette of a naked woman on the mud flaps!"That brought the conversation to a screeching halt. I was pained by the slander she had just made against my fellow Guys. None of us would be so crass as to mix both a naked woman AND Yosemite Sam on our mud flaps.They clash with our 'Get On Board, Baby' bumper stickers. Laughing Stalk SyndicateCopyright 2006