

Rough Pavement on the Highway of Life

Whoever poured the concrete for Washington Street East of City High School should be flogged.

Unless that's not harsh enough punishment. Say what you want about flogging, but from what I understand the recipients of such attitude adjustment seldom reoffend, assuming they survive.

You may be aware of other similar stretches of pavement that are also horribly uneven, for example Hawkins Drive between the Coralville strip and Carver Hawkeye Sports Arena. If you don't have your seatbelt fastened, you risk bumping your head on the roof of your car.

I had to have a filling replaced last week, and I'm going to send my dental bill to the City – I'm pretty sure it shook loose along one of those roads. If you own a car or take a bus, you know what I mean; imagine a roller coaster with speed bumps. And these streets are not all that old – they pretty much started out this way.

I have a car which has suspension settings I can change on the fly via the driver's console. When I turn onto one of these roads, I'll change the setting from "Sport" to "Comfort," and I can still put a container of cream into one of the cupholders and let it churn itself into butter.

I can hear you saying, "Well, if you don't like those streets don't drive on them," but even though I despise them I illogically persist. These are the shortest routes to where I want to go - dang it - and I'm not going to let "The Man" get me down by forcing me to take a detour just because he can't build a proper road.

In my more paranoid moments, I imagine that the pavement was laid exactly to the specifications of disgruntled and malevolent city engineers who get a perverse charge from inflicting repetitive discomfort upon us innocent citizens who are technically their employers.

It's also possible that the engineers and pavement contractors are in cahoots with the automobile suspension repair and tire companies, or maybe they just own stock in businesses that provide anger management counseling.

Speaking of which, even if we decide we're all "mad as hell and not going to take it anymore," what are we to do? Sadly, nothing can be done about the existing roads – we'll need to wait until the dumb things degrade even further and need to be replaced by (hopefully) competent contractors. Of course, the roughest roads are always the most durable – we all are probably doomed to driving them for the rest of our natural lives.

Looking down the road (so to speak), we should probably be concentrating our efforts on making sure this sort of thing doesn't happen again. It wouldn't be difficult to write future paving contracts that include language requiring the job foreman to travel his product twice daily for the rest of his life; that would put a stop to this kind of abuse.

I haven't completely given up on the flogging idea, though. I normally disfavor physical beatings except in the most extremes cases and for the most heinous of crimes, which this most certainly is.

Writers Group member Dave Parsons currently spends much of his time attempting to purchase a cat-o'-nine-tails online instead of actually working at the business he co-owns on the Coralville Strip.