

I was in the garden this forenoon and noticed every bit of traffic that went by on our dirt road. And it reminded me of the time I had been at someone else's house—by a blacktop well-traveled road—and when a car went by, she never looked up. That was a strange lack of interest to me, because we know nearly every vehicle that goes by, and though we live far from the road, we nearly always check on the traffic this same way.

It is true that there is more traffic on our road than there was years ago, but it has never increased enough to cause us to react with disinterest when someone drives past. It is not that we are any snoopier than the average rural resident. Rather, we want to be sure we wave at everybody we know and most that aren't acquaintances.

These days, though, traffic on our road has increased because of a metal roofing/siding factory a mile away. Many of the workers travel to their workplace on our dirt road. We have learned to identify most of the passersby that are heading for their jobs just as we have always done. Well, not exactly the same way. In the past, we recognized someone who drove past by the make or color of their car. We still do that, of course. We know who drives the blue pickup, who has the well-cared for car, who drives at a reasonable speed, who is in a big hurry, and who is making "doughnuts" on the corner.

Now, though, with the traffic to the metal plant, we have learned to recognize who is traveling the road by learning who has which horse. Although many of the workers sometimes ride bicycles to their jobs, mostly, it is carts or buggies pulled by single driving horses.

Our local Amish community that has grown up during the past decade has added richness and diversity to our neighborhood. We like that. School children drive or bike past during the academic year. Workers going to their jobs, friends visiting others, folks busy on errands—there is now as much horse traffic as that caused by automobiles. And we still look up, knowing that it is Daniel going by with the appaloosa horse, or Jim with the blue pickup.