

Website here mourns passing of Highway 40's quirky 'charm'

Dan Cornwell is grief-stricken about Highway 40 reconstruction, for reasons that go beyond the shutdown.

He's attached to Highway 40's character — its oddball interchanges, crumbling bridges and tight-loop ramps. What about those interchanges with ramps on only one side? Cornwell, 23, of University City, considers them part of 40's soul. And most are headed for extinction.

"You might compare it to losing the old Busch Stadium or St. Louis Arena," he said.

He and his brother, Jon Cornwell, 29, have a website for people who want to mourn Highway 40's quirks. It's their way of celebrating a road that's as St. Louis as toasted ravioli. Consider it group therapy, but with a sense of humor.

The first rule: Never call it Interstate 64.



Jon Cornwell



Dan Cornwell

"Pour out a 40 for 40," the site says, at <http://www.40for40.com>. Translation: pouring a 40-ounce bottle of an alcoholic beverage is how some people commemorate a lost friend.

The brothers said it was a tongue-in-cheek way of saying they were sad about the rebuilding effort — but wouldn't be crying about it. They'll miss the roadside scenery, which will be blocked by soundwalls.

They considered waging a bumper sticker campaign out of protest, until friends said they'd never put stickers on their cars.

So, they came up with window stickers and T-shirts. The "Pour out a 40 for 40" shirts are being sold at Vintage Vinyl in the Loop. And both are for sale on the website.

When the 10 miles of rebuilt highway is completed in late

2009, "It's going to look like every other highway," Jon Cornwell said. "It's just going to be a maze of concrete. The progress is good. I just really like the older style."

Hills will be leveled out, bridges will have a uniform design, and interchanges will be built to handle today's traffic volumes and speeds. It will look brand new and feel brand new.

"It's going to be a lot less fun to drive," Dan Cornwell said. "It will be like driving on Highway 141. Driving downtown is going to be so dry and boring."

Q. On Manchester Avenue between Hampton and McCausland avenues, there are a number of times during the week that trucks and cars line up on the right side of westbound Manchester to turn in scrap metal. Will all parking and lining up be eliminated when Highway 40 shuts down in January? Even though Highway 40 will be open east of Brentwood Boulevard, the traffic on Manchester has already

increased quite a bit.

— **Amy Barrow Halbrook**

A. The city of St. Louis has restricted parking along some stretches of Manchester already — between Kingshighway and Vandeventer Avenue, for example — and will monitor parking to make sure westbound traffic keeps flowing after the shutdown, said Todd Waelterman, the city's streets director.

"It will be a complete balancing act," he said. "We're not going to allow traffic to back up."

When the price of aluminum goes up, traffic at the scrap metal center gets worse.

Q. I would like to express my concern about the eastbound exit ramp from Interstate 44 to Jefferson Avenue. As you exit down the ramp, the left lane seems to have some kind of tar on it. I have noticed that it is very uneven and slippery. I have used this for the past 10 years and it was never like that. What can be done about it or who can fix it?

— **Pamela Gundlach**

A. Well, you've done the first thing, in bringing it to someone's atten-

tion. Missouri Department of Transportation officials say they haven't heard of this tar but will send a crew out to investigate. Drew Gates, a MoDOT spokesman, said the state welcomes calls such as yours at 1-888-ASK MODOT (275-6636). Of course, we welcome them too.

Q. All this week, there have been extremely long backups in the mornings for people traveling north on Lindbergh Boulevard, caused by the Litzsinger Road traffic signal. After coming over the hill, there is plenty of time to see the cause as one waits through four or five (maybe more) light changes way ahead at Litzsinger. This makes that light a glorified stop sign. The man who answered the phone (at MoDOT) seemed surprised, as if I was the first person to call and complain. He said they would look into it. Well, it is Thursday and nothing has changed. My question is: Did they look into it? Is it unfixable?

— **John Moeller, St. Louis**

A. The Missouri Transportation Department sent a signal crew to the intersection and found no

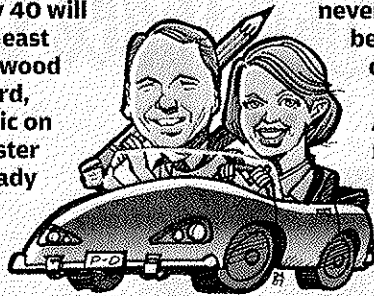
malfunctions. A traffic engineer was expected to check out the signal timing on Friday, said Karen Yeomans, the agency's engineer for west St. Louis County. Different signals follow different cycles depending on the time of day and direction. We'll keep you posted on what they find.

Q. The exit from northbound Interstate 170 to Forest Park Parkway (Exit 1E) has never been repaved since last year. What is the story, please?

— **Delora de Boer**

A. The state has no current plans to resurface that ramp, Gates of MoDOT said. Actually, maintenance crews had to rough up the surface of this particular ramp because some motorists had lost control and their cars slipped off, Gates said. Exit ramps such as this one were not part of the state's Smooth Road Initiative efforts, wrapped up last year. Meantime, the agency will continue to monitor the ramp.

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