

Oregon GDL laws cracking down on teen drivers?

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Staff Reporter

Newly licensed drivers are fidgeting in their seats as rumors run rampant that there may be new restrictions on teen drivers.

The law currently states that teens under 18 may not drive with anyone outside of their immediate family for the first six months of issuance.

But that law is rumored to be changed to a full year. This law is heard to not be released until after the beginning of the New Year. For the second six months, one cannot drive with more than three passengers under 20 that are not in their immediate family.

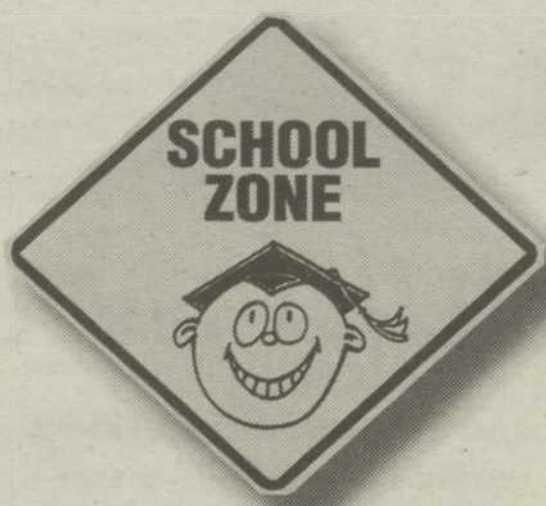
Restrictions then continue through the first year regarding curfew, and all other safety laws apply.

The rumored new restriction would require any drivers born in or after 1992, once issued their license, to wait a full 12 months before having anyone outside of their immediate family in the car.

There is much uproar from the younger drivers that will feel the full impact of this possible new restriction. However, older drivers may be basking in the glory of being born before 1992.

According to the Department of Motor Vehicles, this rumor is FALSE. Workers at DMV receive calls about this rumor every year, and "there are not going to be any changes regarding the Graduating Driving License (GDL) restrictions whatsoever."

If there are more questions to be answered, the DMV recommends a call to the public affairs hot line at (503)



945-5270.

The GDL programs that are currently in place have been shown to improve the

safety and support value of driver education according to national study, and that there seems no need to jump to the drastic.

The first six months after obtaining a drivers license tend to be the most dangerous, and these GDL laws have shown to improve the safety since they were put in place in 2000.

GDL in Oregon, as in most other states, places a variety of restrictions on drivers younger

than 18, a time when novice drivers are gaining experience behind the wheel. The program also offers a drivers education class.

These classes don't just educate the students about driving, but also educate them about how to identify possible distractions in the environment around them and be aware of possible causes of accidents in order to prevent them.

Statistics have improved

enough since the laws were enacted, that there is no need to intensify the restrictions.

Young, inexperienced drivers are taking a turn for the better with the help of the GDL program. Due to the improvement in these drivers, there doesn't seem to be a need to change any of these laws. According to DMV, Oregon will continue with the program, as is in hope of insuring the safety of drivers.

Kenyan exchange students visit WLHS

Kenyan Visitors

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"I would like to identify the value of education and be an inspiration to others in my country. Kenya has a lack of medication and treatments for diseases like AIDS. I want to help my country, and hopefully bring medication and affordable treatment," he said.

Simiyu has taught English literature for 13 years and spent 11 of those at Namwela. She has three children and outside of school enjoys cooking, going to church and Shakespeare.

There was a long selection process to decide which of the 450 students would represent Namwela. First, applications were accepted. Many students were afraid of travelling, especially by plane, because bad weather had caused deadly plane crashes in Kenya in September.

Many did not let weather worry stand in their way. Several hundred students applied, and 90 of them were chosen to be interviewed. Twelve were selected, and

then more interviews took place. The number was narrowed down to six, and then they realized it needed to be reduced to four. Finally, the top four on the list were chosen, according to Madame Irene.

Each of the visitors worried that students would not accept them or would think of them as strange or different. "We thought Americans do not see animals like monkeys, and maybe you'd think that's what we were," Amunga said.

"I just would like to thank everyone who made this possible, West Linn High School, GATA and the students. In a million years we never thought this would happen when we joined with West Linn and it's been a great experience," Madame Irene said.

Keya agreed. "I would also like to thank everybody, the parents, students, teachers. We hope and look forward to seeing you all someday in our beautiful country," Keya said.

The group had planned to leave on Jan. 5, but their stay was extended. Kenya broke

into what could be called a "civil war," after the December presidential elections sparked outrage between the government and its citizens.

As of Jan. 14, over 700 people had been killed and 250,000 people had been displaced. Namwela is located near Nairobi, where fighting has been the worst. There is little communication, so the

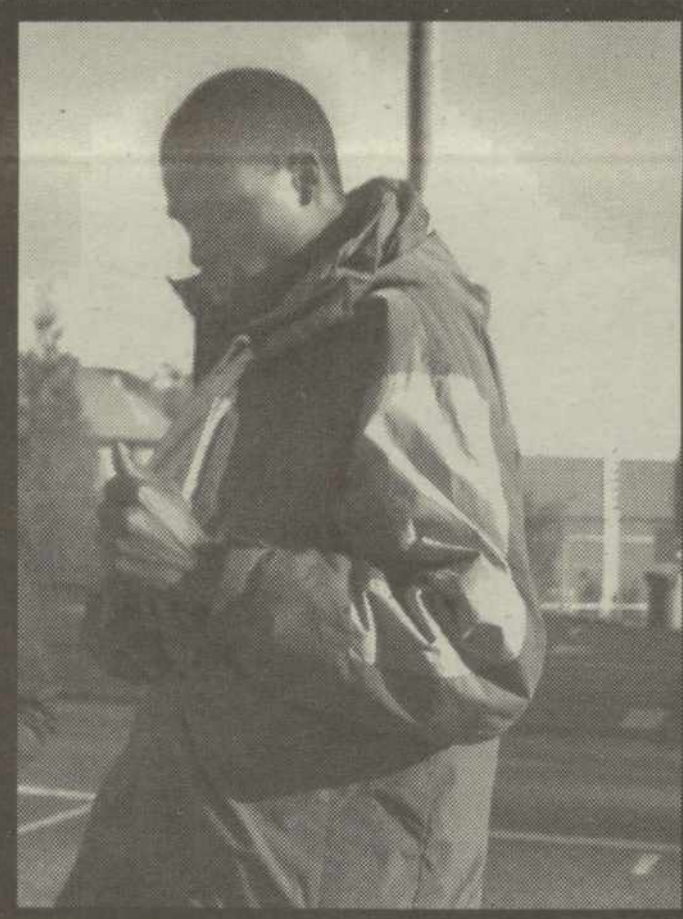
visitors do not know the state of their families. Phones are ringing with no answer. Kemei knows his father was forced into hiding.

Since the partnership, WLHS has donated textbooks, money for a well, athletic uniforms and a computer for Namwela. The visiting students' high school fees will also be paid.

CAPITAL CITY:
Nairobi

Kenya is located in eastern Africa, and is about twice the size of Nevada.

GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE:
Republic



CLIMATE:
Tropical around the coastline, fairly mild everywhere else.

Geoffrey Amunga, junior, zips up his coat before a walk through Camassia Natural Area. In Kenya it is warm and moderate most of the year and the visitors remarked about West Linn's cold weather.

Photo by Calley Lathrop



"Metamorphoses" cast members Avery Breynne-Cartwright, sophomore, Dylan Stark, Rosie Dickson, Connor McGuire, seniors, and Catherine d'Autremont, junior, perform the final scene in their final performance. The scenes were written, directed and acted by students in Acting/Directing Seminar, an honors level class. Two evening weekend and an in-school performance played to full houses.

Photo by Malia Chong

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE:
The country's official language is Swahili, but English, the national language, is more widely spoken.

POPULATION:
36,913,721

POPULAR SPORTS:
Cricket, track and field, football (soccer), volleyball and rugby.

