

# Mistaken teen opinion of police leads to lack of communication

by Elaine Wolfe

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Teenagers have the mistaken idea that the police are out to get them. "We try to do what can best be done to help rehabilitate the young person. We don't want to do anything that will hit him in the face later in life," stated Lyle B. Mullin, juvenile traffic court referee, while speaking of the purpose of juvenile criminology.

Those teenagers who squirrel restaurants and drag Broadway may not believe that the police are looking out for them, not to hinder but to help. This basic lack of communication is the main source of troubling relationships between teenagers and police.

Mr. Mullin, who was appointed by a traffic court judge to serve in that position, believes that citizenship is one of the main objectives of his court. A student's previous record including his school grades, attendance and effort are taken into consideration.

It would be impossible to know a great deal about every one of the 1,000 odd violators which appear monthly in court, but "we do try to know something about each of them." This helps to provide a just penalty for the juvenile. "We try to see what's behind the figures," stated Mr. Mullin.

The penalties are much harder on juveniles than they are on adults. It is not so much the harshness of the judgement passed by the court, but more that of the pressures it brings to bear upon the individual.

In adult court a violator is fined for his traffic violations and his license is not suspended on either the first or second violation of the year.

Whereas the only penalty that can be served upon a juvenile is suspension of his license. Mr. Mullin feels that a teenager will become more aware and careful of his driving when he knows his license is at stake than when a fine is his only penalty.

License suspension means cutting the teenager off from his activities, social and otherwise. Far more important results of license suspension, however, is the higher insurance rates and the inability to achieve certain positions or appointments because of a disqualifying question on a form asking if your license

has ever been suspended.

Few juveniles seem to realize these far-reaching consequences, and a traffic violation still remains "no big deal." This apathetic view is taken by adult drivers also.

"If adults set the right example, juveniles will do the right thing," believes Mr. Mullin. Will these same apathetic drivers feel the same way when they accidentally run a stop sign and hit a pedestrian?

Each year the volume of accidents exceeds that of the previous year. Each year more of the blame seems to fall on the drivers under the age of 18. Actually during 1965, of the 46,215 traffic accidents taking place in Portland only 2,370 involved drivers under the age of 18, while 9,828 accidents involved drivers between the ages of 18 and 24.

Those people who pose the answer to this problem of increasing traffic accidents as raising the driving age from 16 to 18 should observe the above statistics taken from the Summary of Motor Vehicle Traffic Accidents Report published by the Department of Motor Vehicles. The solution to this problem lies deeper than legislation can dig up.

One very effective method of providing juvenile traffic violators with a law abiding incentive is an institution known as the traffic school. Of the 1,080 cases of juvenile traffic violations last month, 480 violators were sent to this school, which is conducted by policemen every Saturday in the basement of the police station.

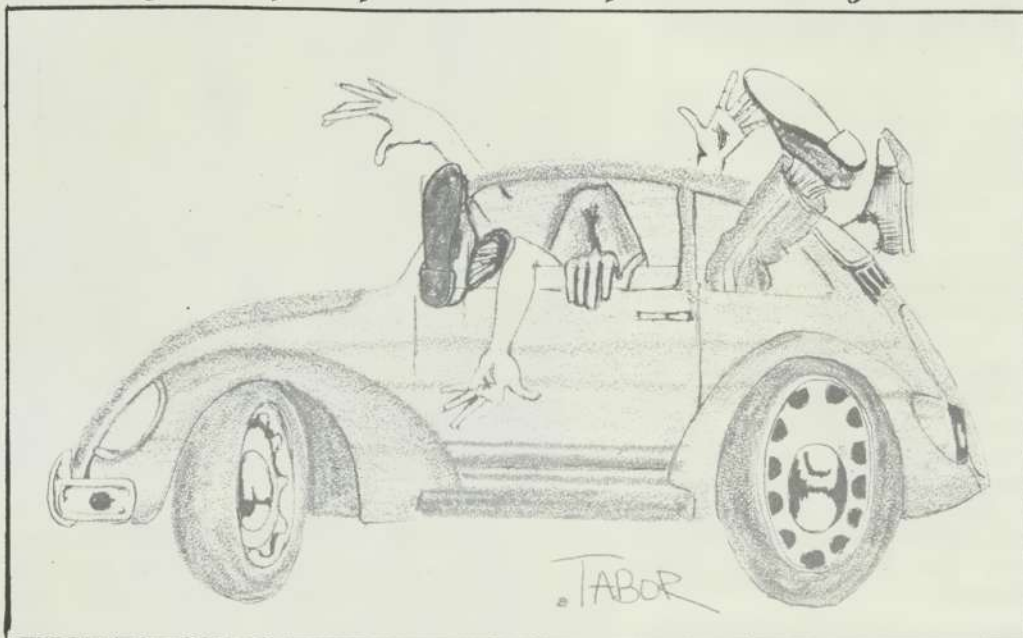
Successful as this school is no one has yet been willing to provide larger facilities for it. The small classroom in the police station will hold at the most 45 students.

The police are willing to further staff the school to meet its growing student enrollment, yet there is no more space to allow for either students or teachers. This situation provides the juvenile traffic court program with its most disturbing deficiency.

While speaking of major difficulties in the program, Mr. Mullin stated, "Citizens only want traffic enforcement for others, not for themselves."

People are ready and willing to be protected from other drivers, but not for others to be protected from themselves. Traffic law enforcement is for everyone without concentrating on either adult or juvenile offenders.

## Just for fun — not for driving



On The Shelf  
by Cynthia Barrett

## Nader probes auto safety deficiency

"The Designed-In Dangers of the American Automobile" is the subtitle and the subject Ralph Nader's shocking book *Unsafe At Any Speed*. It reveals how and why manufacturers have been stalling safe automobile designing, and gives examples of bad design in all models and makes of cars.

Most injuries occur when the passenger slams against the interior of the car during a collision. By elimination of certain features of car design, many injuries can be avoided.

"For years," Mr. Nader writes, "the most common feature of crumpled automobiles has been a rearward displaced or arched steering column with broken spokes..." He mentions impalement and broken necks as some of its effects.

Another common car danger is the glove compartment. In a collision it can fall open and severely cut the forward-falling passenger. Mr. Nader believes complete elimination of the dashboard in front of the right forward seat would solve this difficulty and allow the passenger freedom from the "dash-smashed face."

"Newness" in automobiles is "almost

completely stylistic in content," and this relegates safety considerations to a secondary role, Mr. Nader maintains. "Stylists can even be credited with overall concepts that result in a whole new variety of hazards," he continues, referring to hardtop convertibles that crumple inward in roll-over accidents, crushing occupants.

Traditional safety traffic emphasis has been placed on the driver. Readers who are taking drivers' education realize this. Mr. Nader calls the emphasis "a political strategy" defending "special interests," notably the automotive manufacturers of America.

They subordinate safety to profit, he asserts, and offers documentation to support his accusation. He especially lambasts existing traffic safety organizations, who form an "establishment" dominated by auto manufacturers.

The car should be designed to protect the man in accidents that are inevitable. Existing cars put unnecessary dangers in the passengers' way. An uninformed public once accepted safety concentration on the driver.

Since the advent of *Unsafe At Any Speed*, coupled with well publicized Senate hearings on traffic safety, public knowledge has been broadened and its interest quickened. Two important breakthroughs in the field of vehicle safety design have been made this year.

The Federal government has been given control of car safety standards and is able to require states to include their standards in the state safety program. Mr. Nader predicted this in advocating "greater federal authority extending to the establishment and enforcement of safety standards."

Ralph Nader is a 32-year-old Connecticut attorney who has been described as a "crusader" and "loner." As an adviser to a Senate subcommittee investigating traffic safety, and as a Congressional witness, he has been agitating for vehicle safety laws.

## Students' insurance rates depend on individual

by Lorna Viken

Participating in school and how one's time is spent are plus-factors for automobile insurance rate discounts. Factors determining insurance rates for younger drivers were learned in interviews with representatives of Farmers Insurance

Group, Safeco, and State Farm insurance companies.

**Why does today's generation of youthful drivers pay two to three times more for their insurance premium than older drivers?**

"Insurance companies do not make rates. Rates are made by drivers of automobiles," stated Gordon Dunsire of Safeco Insurance company.

**But youthful drivers are healthy, alert, willing, eager, trained, and have faster reflexes. In all fairness, shouldn't it be concluded that younger drivers are better drivers?**

A nationally conducted survey for 1965 shows that drivers under 25, 18 per cent of all drivers, were involved in more than 30 per cent of the fatal accidents and more than 28 per cent of the nonfatal accidents.

**How is it possible that one age group spanning nine years, about one-fifth of all drivers, is involved in almost one-third of all fatal accidents?**

Young drivers have tendencies to take chances. Failure to observe traffic rules takes a toll of youthful drivers. They lack experience and judgment, according to information provided by Duane Peterson, of State Farm Insurance.

**"They might not realize that chances for an accident almost double after a speed increase from 60 to 70 m.p.h. At this increase rate, only four minutes would be saved in a 30 mile trip," explained Mr. Peterson.**

Also determining a driver's insurance

rates are the number and cost of accidents he has had. According to Mr. Peterson, it has been found that accident damage involving drivers under 25 is three and one-half times more costly.

**Men are involved in more than six times as many fatal accidents as women. Doesn't this mean that women are the better drivers?**

"No one knows how many miles are driven each year by the average male or female driver nor under what conditions the driving is done," pointed out Mr. Dunsire.

Anyway, aren't girls better insurance risks?

"Although boys do have more accidents, an increase in accidents involving girl drivers has raised their premium rates 30 per cent in the last one and one-half years," observed Terry Rude representative of Farmers Insurance Group.

"In determining rates for individuals, where you drive, how much you drive, when you drive, how you use the car, and how much coverage you want are considered," stated Mr. Dunsire.

Rates may increase with traffic citations. A pattern recognized by the 1964 California Driver Record Study shows that drivers with three convictions in the last three years are three times as likely to have an accident as a driver with no convictions.

"If everybody would be just a little more careful when driving, insurance rates would be reduced for all of us," assured Mr. Rude.

"Good driving is no accident," added Mr. Peterson.

## Letters to the Editor

Mr. Read  
Grant High School  
Art Department  
2245 N. E. 36 Avenue  
Portland, Oregon 97212

Dear Mr. Read:

The active participation of the Grant High School Art Department in promoting National Zip Code Week was a major factor in making this program a local success.

The cooperation shown is deeply appreciated, and we wish to thank you and the students for your contribution to this worthy program.

Sincerely yours,  
H. W. Morgan  
for Albert Hodler,  
Postmaster

## Generalities

Junior Steve Tyrer won the national Amateur Athletic Union walking championships in the 19 and under division last weekend at Berkeley, California.

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