

Driving School: A Gift Your Teen Will Never Outgrow

By Genea Luck

Many parents have a hard time deciding on the perfect Christmas gift for their teenager. Underwear and new socks are too routine, and trying to keep up with the latest fashions is almost impossible. But if your teen is nearing the age to receive that all-important driver's license, a perfect present could be an enrollment certificate in a good commercial driving school.

Learning to drive is one of the most memorable experiences a teen will have at the crossroads between puberty, independence, and maturity. Unfortunately, many public schools don't offer "on-road" instruction in their driver's education programs, leaving the more difficult training to parents. And without proper behind-the-wheel skills, many teens fall victim to horrifying statistics. The National Safety Council reports that teenage traffic fatalities outnumber deaths by homicide, drugs, guns, suicide and AIDS.

In most states, a teen, 16 or older can get a 60-day learner's permit after passing a written exam on driving safety, skills and regulations. The learner's permit may become a permanent driver's license after the student passes a road test that emphasizes techniques used on city streets and highways. Usually, the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) will conduct this road test, however, some students may need further outside instruction and practice before taking the DMV exam.

A good driver is someone who is comfortable and responsible behind the wheel even in an emer-



Brenda Spears

gency. Many commercial driving schools have the "patience" to offer the quality instruction needed to ensure that your teenager becomes a top notch motorist. When searching for a driving school in which to enroll your teen this Christmas, consider the following check list to ensure that your gift of knowledge will really pay off.

•Is the driving school licensed by your state? Or is it a member of the Driving School Association of the Americas (DSAA)?

- Are the instructors certified? Do they have spotless driving and criminal records?
- Will your teen receive adequate personal driving time by himself, or will he or she be stuck in a car with four other students?
- Are the instruction cars fitted with the latest technologies?
- Will your child have a chance to drive in bad weather?

Make sure the instruction period is not less than five weeks. This gives them a chance to drive in all situations, as well as time to incorporate everything they've learned. If your teenager already knows how to drive, consider an advanced defensive driving course at a racing school like the Bob Bondurant School of High-Performance Driving.

For copies of brochures on how to choose a driving school and driver education classes, contact the American Automobile Association at (800) AAA-HELP. For information on special teen instruction, contact the Driving School Association of the Americas, (213) 728-2100.



Official Sponsor of the 1996 U.S. Olympic Team



STEP OUT IN STYLE.

If stepping in is easy, then stepping out is in a class by itself. The elegant, aerodynamic styling of the 1996 GMC Jimmy has the contemporary look of the 90's that'll get you anywhere you want to go—in style. You can forget luxury sedans. In the 1996 GMC Jimmy, you're coming in strong—and elegant. For more information or product literature, call us at 1-800-GMC-TRUCK.

Or Better yet, step into your nearest GMC dealer and take a test drive.

JIMMY

GMC THE STRENGTH OF EXPERIENCE
Coming On Strong

© 1995 GM Corp. All Rights Reserved. GM, GMC, GMC Truck, Jimmy and the GMC Truck logo are registered trademarks of General Motors Corporation. *Includes weight of passenger, cargo and equipment. Buckle up, America!