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DRIVING SCHOOL ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA INC.

ROAD-TO-EXCELLENCE

A NEWS LETTER FOR THE CALIFORNIA DRIVING SCHOOL INDUSTRY



DSAC/DSAA In San Diego

This November the Driving School Association of the Americas (DSAA) will join the DSAC in San Diego, California for a week long symposium for owners, operators and instructors. In conjunction with DSAC's normal continuing education seminar, to be held on Saturday, November 19th, DSAA will be holding events and seminars beginning on Tuesday, November 15th, 2005.

"We want to show what a national association has to offer," says Brad Huspeck, President of the DSAA. "We are the only association on a national level and there is a lot to be gained from this joint venture."

With both associations meeting at the same time the opportunity for a wide variety of information sharing allows all attendees to get a national perspective on the industry and gain insight on a much broader level than just with a state association gathering.

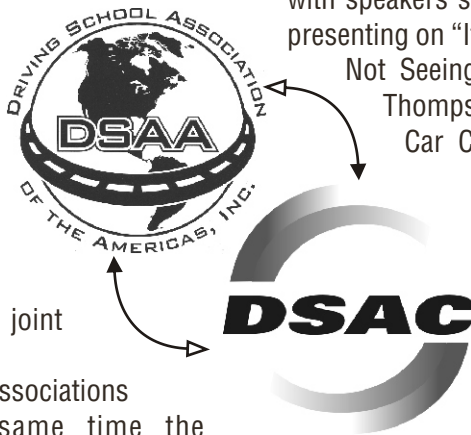
Starting off on Tuesday, November 15th, the DSAA will hold its traditional golf tournament at a local course and, for the non-golfers, a day-long outing at a destination yet to be determined.

On Wednesday, November 16th, the DSAA Board of Directors will hold their meeting at the Hilton, where all members are invited and encouraged to attend. Following the Board Meeting, Wednesday evening, a welcoming cocktail party will be held to allow everyone involved to get acquainted with the DSAA Board and its members, including the DSAC Board and others involved in the state association.

The DSAA seminars will begin on Thursday and continue through Saturday with speakers such as Dr. Steven Most presenting on "It's Not Easy Being Seen: Not Seeing What's There", David Thompson with The New Driver Car Control Clinic from The Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists (ADED) speaking on when should a driver rehab specialist be contracted, and other seminars including "How To Keep Teens Involved in the Classroom", "Teaching with Statistics" and "So I'm A Driving Instructor, Now What?"

The Saturday seminars will be held in conjunction with the DSAC, with topics to be announced in the near future and wrapping up Saturday evening with a final banquet at the Hilton.

"The DSAA and DSAC have been great friends since 1973," says Henning Mortensen, President of DSAC. "Our



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A Message From Your Association President

Dear Driving School Owners and Instructors,

The 2005 legislative session is in full swing at the capitol. AB 846 and AB 397 are being introduced and heard in the Transportation Committee as I write this. I will be testifying and am confident that we will succeed seeing these bills come to floor in the future.

The DSAC seminar in Van Nuys, CA was very successful, with more attendees than ever before. We had an incredible agenda that focused on crash avoidance training for all educators.

We would also like to welcome all of the new and educational vendors and speakers that we are proud to say, have joined us in our love for what we do. We are continuing this focus at our seminar on May 22, 2005 in Pleasanton, CA. We promise to outdo any other seminars with these new and exciting speakers both local and national.

Also, DSAC is pleased to announce that the DSAA President, Bradley Huspeck, will attend and speak at our May conference. Be sure to attend the national convention in November of 2005 to be held in San Diego, CA. We have put together a very informative and educational conference along with DSAA, that will allow DSAC members to attend and see how other driving schools from various states and countries operate. We feel very privileged to be the host state for this venture with DSAA.

Membership at DSAC is steadily increasing and we are being heard and watched both locally and nationally. We have a lot to be faced with in the next few years, so please encourage others to help us by joining together and making our voice stronger. We are the nation's strongest state organization and together we can achieve our goals, as leaders of the industry should.

Thank you for being a member and supporting your state organization. We work for you.



Henning Mortensen
DSAC President

- Gabe Roberson, Legislative Advocate

DSAC sponsored AB 397 will not be taken up by the Assembly Transportation Committee until January 2006. One reason given for delaying a hearing on the bill has to do with 8 other bills proposing changes to the Provisional Licensing law that have been introduced this year. Before the committee considers increasing behind-the-wheel training for teens, it wants to first determine the total changes to the law that pass both houses of the Legislature during 2005. AB 397 proposes to increase the existing six hours of behind-the-wheel training for teens to 10 hours. The original version of AB 397 also required teens to complete crash avoidance training. However, the members of the Assembly Transportation Committee feel this training will somehow financially benefit the developer of the TeenSMART crash avoidance training program that has proven to reduce teen crashes by 30 percent. Until this myth is dispelled, the committee will not take up that issue.

DSAC sponsored AB 846 has been the subject of numerous meetings with the DMV, representatives of private secondary schools and so called "internet driver education course" representatives. These meetings have produced amendments to AB 846 that require private secondary schools that offer an Internet-based, correspondence, or other distance-learning course in driver education to minors to use the model driver education curriculum developed by the DMV or a curriculum certified to be "educationally equivalent" to the model curriculum.

AB 846 also exempts private schools from offering driver education if a school chooses not to offer the course. This provision was requested by four major private school organizations that teach approximately 80 percent of the 600,000 students that attend private schools in California. These same organizations support AB 846.

Other provisions of AB 846 require private schools to certify to the DMV that students are required to take course examinations by proctor or that other reliable methods are used to ensure test integrity.

The bill gives the DMV the authority to refuse to issue course completion certificates to private schools if the DMV has credible evidence that the private school is not in compliance with the provisions of AB 846.

AB 846 is scheduled for a hearing in the Assembly Transportation Committee on April 25, 2005, and has considerable support.

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George R.Hensel, Ph.D
President - California Driving School, Inc.

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A Note From The Editor

- Damon Lavrinc

The vast majority of Californians can't drive. It is an obvious fact to anyone teaching on a daily basis or even those of us that drive around our local area. Never was this fact clearer to me than while driving back from our southern seminar in Van Nuys.

Traveling up Interstate 5, just north of the Grapevine, a lady in a black Chevy is merging onto the freeway, at what could only be described as a glacial pace. Talking on her mobile phone, oblivious to the vehicles backing up behind her, let alone the tractor trailer in the right lane, she begins to merge over. The tractor trailer driver, recognizing the basic law of physics that states two objects cannot occupy the same space at the same time, begins to slow down and puts on his left turn signal to move into the left lane. A Hummer driver, riding directly to the left of the tractor trailer, at the same speed, sees the turn signal and attempts to pull in front of the truck. However, with a curb weight exceeding 6000 pounds, the Hummer can't move fast enough, but is still intent on not giving up the 20 feet of road which he has deemed his property. The tractor trailer driver, realizing he won't be able to get over in time, honks his horn, startling the lady in the Chevy. She swerves to the right toward the shoulder (by the way, never losing grip from her phone), drops two wheels off the pavement, slams on the brakes and comes to a screeching halt at a 45-degree angle on the side of the road. Her left front bumper protrudes into traffic, causing drivers to swerve around her at the typical clip of I-5.

Now we can break down this event and blame the mobile phone, the Hummer driver who doesn't understand that the left lane is reserved for passing, the obliviousness of the lady in the Chevy or her subsequent lack of knowledge about the physics of off road recovery. But we all know that this centers around one specific problem. People in the United States don't have proper training in visual search, car control, accident avoidance and a litany of other skills needed to drive safely on our roads.

Most experts in our field recognize that experience is a fundamental factor in driver's safety. The obvious problem behind that logic is that while gaining that experience people are more apt to making the common and sometimes deadly mistakes we see regularly on the road.

So, if the first few years of driving are rife with mistakes, how can we give students that experience in a condensed form? We can't. There is NO WAY to teach them ALL the skills they need. It only comes after time.

With that said, we can make an attempt to provide them with some of these skills before they take their place on the roads. AB397, being proposed by DSAC and garnering the support of many in the safety education field, including the national association DSAA, aims to provide students with that critical training.

In the meantime there are other ways to educate our students beyond the required six hours of behind the wheel training. It starts with furthering our knowledge as instructors. DSAC seminars are a great place to start, by learning a variety of teaching techniques and systems that are proven to work behind the wheel and in the classroom. Beyond that, many advanced driver training programs are available throughout the state providing both an education in a controlled environment, as well as on public roads.

In Northern California, Jim Russell Racing School provides a "Highway Survival Course" that gets into vehicle dynamics, braking and skid control and is an incredibly fun time in a controlled environment.

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DSAA/DSAC In San Diego (continued)

Continued from cover

group is the leading state association and this will give us recognition across the U.S., Canada, Great Britain and beyond. It's the perfect opportunity to share information and see how the rest of the country, and the world, operates."

The DSAA 2005 International Conference will be held November 17th through the 19th, 2005. Reservations at the Hilton San Diego Resort are available at 1-800-HILTONS. Please request the DSAA's special room rate of \$135.00 per night. Room cutoff date is October 15th, 2005 so be sure to make reservations ahead of time. The registration form for the DSAA conference is printed elsewhere in this issue.

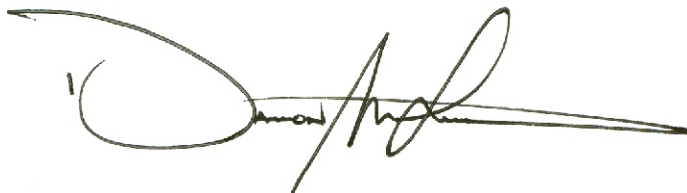
For More Information please contact the Driving School Association of the Americas (DSAA) national office at: (800) 270-DSAA E-Mail: DSAA@Charter.net Fax: 985-649-9877

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In San Jose, DriveTrain Inc., operated by Gordon Booth, has an 8 hour program that is strictly on public roads, in your own vehicle. The myriad of topics covered in detail is tremendous. Everything from advanced car control, extensive visual search and hazard detection, automotive physics and a host of other topics I've found to be of great benefit to me as a driver and educator.

Having taken both of these programs I can say that the knowledge is invaluable, especially when teaching students on a regular basis. The cost of the programs, normally ranging from \$200 to \$500, is nominal when you consider the degree to which you can further your knowledge and, in turn, that of your students. Additionally, to effectively cover some of these topics the student may need to take more than the required 6 hours of on the road instruction, which will benefit both your income as well as your peace of mind.

In all, we can do more to better serve our students and the public at large. Will there always be drivers that make poor choices or exhibit complete ignorance on the road? Absolutely. But these changes in attitude and education won't come overnight. Now is the time to begin this paradigm shift with the populace and as safety educators we are at the forefront of these changes.



Here are a few schools covering the topics discussed in the above text, in both Northern California and Southern California:

DriveTrain USA - Gordon Booth - (408) 832-3566 - www.drivetrainusa.com

Jim Russell Racing Drivers School - (819) 425-5700 - www.jimrussell.com

Bob Bondurant School of High Performance Driving - (800) 842-RACE - www.bondurant.com

Fast Lane Driving School - (888) 948-4888 - www.raceschool.com

Hooked On Driving - (925) 552-8112 - www.hookedondriving.com

Community Involvement Increases

Your Bottom Line

By Jon Pecaut - Northern Vice President of DSAC and President of Shasta Driving School, Inc.

I've been in the driving school industry for over 28 years and I believe in diversity in my business. I also value my reputation and have worked very hard to maintain a professional image in my community. I do a great deal of volunteer work not only to give back to a community that has supported my business for many years, but also to help provide programs and services to those who need assistance.

I've been co-chair of the Injury Prevention Coalition of Shasta County since 1996 and have the wonderful opportunity to partner with Shasta County Public Health, CHP, Redding Police Department, Sheriffs' Department, Cal Trans, DMV, CA Office of Traffic Safety, and various other community based organizations. The coalition operates mostly through grants from the CA Office of Traffic Safety. Our coalition provides free child safety seat classes, car seat checks, free bicycle safety/helmet fitting courses, free bike helmets, public awareness campaigns regarding DUI, safety belts, and teen safety issues, and this year a new driver training scholarship program for income eligible teens. The coalition paid the training costs and expenses for me to become a federally certified Child Passenger Safety Technician. In return I offer my classroom for our free monthly car seat classes, provide storage for our income eligible car seat purchase program, co-teach the classes, and assist coalition members and the CHP at car seat checks. I also host coalition meetings, subcommittee meetings, member trainings and provide an excellent venue for the local media when we have a media event.

Since 1995 I have been a member of the City of Redding's Citizens Traffic Advisory Committee on partnership with the Redding Police Department. This is another opportunity to work with local government to help shape the future of our community. City traffic engineers also attend these meetings and often act on our recommendations for street improvements, traffic sign/signal placement, etc.

The Greater Redding Chamber of Commerce is another area of interest to me and I volunteer at least once a year for some type of committee. This year I'm in charge of putting together a small car show for an evening mixer during the week of our very popular Kool April Nites, an event that brings to our town over 2500 hot rods, customs, show cars, etc. One popular function of the Chamber is a weekly gathering of about 75-100 business owners to "Greeters". This morning event showcases a local business, provides networking opportunities for members, and allows "member announcements." This is a very inexpensive way to acquire new customers.

Since 1991 I have been certified by AAA in San Francisco as a Driver Improvement Program Instructor. This education made me a much more knowledgeable and effective instructor. I already taught driver education, driver training and traffic violator school, however, this certification allowed a tremendous increase in the scope of my work; I currently am 1 of 7 instructors for the State of California Office of Risk and Insurance Management's Defensive Driver Training Program. I also contract with several government agencies in Northern California to provide their employees with OSHA required safety training.

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Owners & Operators (continued)

So what does all this mean to you? Well, a lot. It means there is much more to this business than just driver education and driver training. We need to be experts in our industry and these opportunities are out there, waiting for someone to fill a seat or to speak up or to help out. Get involved. Learn more. Volunteer. Be an expert, or at least someone with an educated opinion. Try it locally first. Is there a local safety group? Call Public Health or local law enforcement agency and ask what you can do. At least offer your classroom for a place to meet or host a brain storming session with all the local players to see what your local safety issues are. You'd be surprised what can come of it. You may even have the local media attend (if you invite them). I've been interviewed many times by local TV and newspaper and now they know to call me before they try the other four driving schools in town.

I've been a member of DSAC for over 25 years, a Member of the Board of Directors for most of those years and the Northern Vice President of DSAC the last 2 years. Our association needs good people. If you're not a member, join. If you're not active member, get involved. In Shasta County we have a new chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving and I'm a founding member. I'm on a grant funded committee called Enforcement of Underage Drinking Laws that's chaired by our own District Attorney.

I recently started a new program called the Car Control Clinic that teaches drivers, especially young, new drivers, advanced techniques. The city allows me to use an area near our airport and the police department let's me use their orange cones, all at no charge. I believe this is part of the future of driver training. Hands on, real world stuff, and its fun, too. I even joined a local car club that puts on timed events (Auto-Cross) so I could learn more about the subtle techniques of car control at the limit. I also travel to a race track not far from here to learn high speed driving skills (did I mention its fun too?)

Promoting your business is not easy. Advertising, in any form is rarely cost effective. We have enough to deal with just keeping our cars running well and our other costs within reason. Find ways to promote your business without spending a lot of money. After a meal at a local restaurant leave a really good tip for your server and include your business card. I've gotten several customers doing this. Get involved with programs like TeenSmart (and sell extra driving lessons with it) or the Welcome Driver online Driver Education course. Sell student licenses, promote driver training for 15 year olds and then sell more than 6 hours. Contact your local Employment Development Department for special programs that help people get on their feet. We get many students where an EDD program (S.M.A.R.T., P.I.C.) will pay for their lessons. Even our local Wintu Tribe pays us for services provided to their members.

If you become well known in your community, people will come to you to fulfill their needs. Become the expert in your area. Never stop learning. Do volunteer your time, "Pay it forward." Don't be afraid to give a discount for special acquaintances, friends, or business associates. It really feels good when someone thinks you're special. Oh...and if you haven't done it lately, raise your rates, if you want to stay in business. You deserve it. And make sure your clients, customers, and students get what they pay for. It will always come back to you.

Note: Jon Pecaut was recently given an Award of Excellence from the Shasta County Public Health Advisory Board for recognition of his contributions in injury prevention, physical activity promotion, bike safety and child passenger safety.

Teaching the Fearful

Some Basics on How to Instruct Nervous Students Safely and Effectively

By Robert Stahl, Past President DSAC

Teaching the nervous and fearful is a challenging task, but it can also be very rewarding on an emotional and financial level.

Is teaching the fearful driver for every instructor? No! Clearly it is not. It requires a great deal of experience and compassion and should not be attempted by an inexperienced instructor. Emotion and adrenaline are major components of a fearful student, which is a very dangerous combination that is unpredictable behind the wheel.

So where do we start? First, talk to your student. Calm them down and gain their trust. Listen to what they have to say and you will gain insight into your student's mind and where it is. Ask them what they are comfortable with and try to move at their pace. If your student tells you that they are terrified of traffic, clearly do not put them into that situation. Not only will you lose a client you could help, but you may cause them never to drive again.

Next, move with baby steps in a direction that will build their confidence and make them feel more comfortable behind the wheel. This may simply be turning on the car and sitting in one place for a time. Once comfortable, put the car into "Drive" and have them move forward without using any gas. I would suggest staying in a parking lot or quiet residential street to begin with. You may have to steer clear of traffic for many hours. Do not be alarmed by this. It is all in the effort to make the student feel more confident in their abilities.

While teaching, make sure you look for signs that the student is becoming overly stressed. Strangling the steering wheel, fast breathing and the color of their skin all give clues as to where they are emotionally. If your student shows any of these signs stop and try to relax them. Conversation and light-heartedness goes a long way.

All of this can take time; in fact teaching the fearful is a very slow process and should never be

rushed. If you perceive it is taking longer than you think it should, remember, you are being paid for your time, willingly, by your student. As long as they are convinced they are learning, what is your problem? Do not lose sight of your objective: progress that your student recognizes. It is the foundation on which you will build your student's confidence and skill.

The most important issue when teaching the fearful is TRUST. This simple five-letter word will move mountains or, in this case, a car. If your student believes in you, they will overcome their lack of belief in themselves. As with any beginning student, you must build their knowledge "brick by brick." But in the case of the nervous student, you must place every brick solidly and carefully.

Allow your student to learn at a pace that is comfortable to them. Do not push them; rather encourage them to take the next step when you know, without a doubt, that they will not stumble. It is not uncommon for a fearful student to take two, three or more times as long as an average student to learn, which should be expected. Remember, it is not how fast they learn. It is how well you teach them. This will determine what kind of driver you have in the end. That should be the only criterion that is of any importance to you as an instructor.

As your student progresses, encourage them to move forward to harder tasks, telling them all the time that you know that they can do it. Bet them an ice cream that if they do not succeed it is your treat. Even if you lose the bet, you will win. They have tried and survived, and that is the goal.

You know one thing for sure that your student does not. You will make them a driver and you will succeed even if they do not know that yet. If you do not believe that, please, change professions. I have never given up on a student and have never met one that I could not teach to drive. I have, however, had a few that I would rather have not taught.

Instructors (continued)

A Few More Tips for Teaching the Fearful

1. Never train a fearful student until you have the appropriate amount of training and experience.
2. Over the years of gaining experience, take students in an order that begins at a low level of difficulty and then work your way up to the more challenging students. If the student you are teaching is beyond your level, do not attempt to push them any further than both of you feel is comfortable. You could easily do more harm than good.
3. If you see your student is becoming overly tense or scared, take a few steps back to skills they feel more confident with. Once the student is back in the appropriate mind-set for driving, talk to them about why they felt scared and try to deal with those emotions.
4. Keep in mind that teaching the fearful **is not about mechanical driving only**. It has much more to do with psychology and understanding your clients fear. Try to think back to a time when you were afraid of something.
5. Adrenalin and gasoline are a dangerous combination.
6. Have a plan ready to enact if the student panics in ANY situation.
7. You rarely get a second chance with a nervous student. Start small and go from there and the rewards will be well worth your time.

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Throughout the year, many articles are published in newspapers, magazines and web-sites that are of a direct interest to our industry. As a service to our readers, we have published these articles to keep you informed of what information is available to the public about the Driver Education community. The views expressed in these articles are not a direct reflection of the *Road to Excellence* newsletter, but are provided for your information. Please feel free to submit articles you have found of interest by sending them to the address provided on the cover of the newsletter.

Some teenagers are actually deciding to wait to get their driver's licenses

By Kathy Van Mullekom
Newport News Daily Press

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. - At age 16, Jason Widlacki made an adult-like decision. He chose to forgo getting his driver's license because he felt that age was just too young to slide behind a wheel.

"There are a lot of distractions at that age," says Widlacki, now 20 and a student at Christopher Newport University in Newport News, Va.

"Sixteen-year-olds are not safe drivers. They take more risks."

Instead, Widlacki got his learner's permit when he was 17, his regular one when he turned 18.

His sister Amber Widlacki, 18, has taken the same road, waiting until this summer to get her license before she starts classes at CNU.

"I've just put it off," says Amber Widlacki, a student at Denbigh Baptist Christian School in Newport News.

Even though the majority of teens count the days until they can drive, Amber Widlacki and her brother are among small numbers of young people who put it off.

"It's not a major trend, but we're starting to see more of it, mostly with girls," says Mary Ann Rayment, program manager for the Community Traffic Safety Program sponsored by the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles.

"They have buddies who are willing to take them, or they have experienced several crashes and are scared to do it.

"Or, it's just not a part of their rite of passage."

When Jason Widlacki made that decision to drive when he was older, he was not alone in his theory that 16-year-olds are prone to more auto accidents.

Brain researchers at the National Institutes of Health say the part of the teen brain that weighs risks, makes judgments and controls impulsive behavior does not

fully mature until age 25.

The research helps explain why younger drivers, especially 16-year-old ones, crash at rates far higher than older teens.

Jason Widlacki says his parents, Shirley and Timothy Widlacki of Newport News, did not influence his decision, nor have they tried to keep his sister from driving.

"We asked occasionally if they wanted to get their license, but we didn't pressure them," says their mother. "In fact, I was the last in my senior class to get my license."

Sarah Makepeace of Newport News was all set to take behind-the-wheel training when she got into a car accident. Suddenly, she was no longer interested in driving.

"Mainly, traffic just stresses me out," says the 18-year-old.

Most of her friends drive, so she catches rides with them. Her mother, Kathleen Makepeace, often juggles her schedule to get her daughter where she needs to go.

"I really don't go anywhere that much because I'm really a homebody," Sarah Makepeace says.

She knows soon she needs to get her driver's license because it "does become a hassle trying to find a ride. But somehow it always works, so I don't get too stressed about it."

Her father, Michael Makepeace, says it mystifies him that his daughter doesn't care much about driving.

"I could hardly wait to get my license at that age," he says.

Road fear about what careless drivers are doing on the highways keeps April Young, 18, from wanting to get her license. A senior at Menchville High School in Newport News, Young says she has been in a number of wrecks with her family, and those accidents were the fault of other drivers, she says.

"It just freaks me out, other people's driving," she says.

"I tried driving. It's not that I don't like it. I guess it's

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Articles of Interest (continued)

just the fear of other people not paying attention and getting into a wreck with me.”

TIPS FOR TEEN DRIVERS AND THEIR PARENTS

Here are some safe-driving sites for teens and parents:

- DaimlerChrysler: Free parents' guide and safe-driving video game at www.roadreadyteens.org
- Ford Motor/Governors Highway Safety Association: Free video, interactive online site and brochures at www.drivingskillsforlife.com
- National Safety Council: Free guide and workshops or parents at www.nsc.org
- SADD, or Students Against Destructive Decisions (formerly Students Against Driving Drunk): www.saddonline.com
- Tell-My-Mom: Tips and bumper stickers at www.tell-my-mom.com, or call toll free (866) 2-tellmom
- CarChip: Davis Instruments Corp. offers vehicle systems that monitor and report via computer how a car is being used and driven; developed for parents and fleet managers. Visit www.davisnet.com, or call (510) 732-9229

Driver's ed gets turbocharged

By Marco R. della Cava, USA TODAY

LAS VEGAS Ford's muscular Mustang is Barbie Walden's favorite car. But chances are the 16-year-old's dream drive does not involve being at the wheel as the car skids wildly out of control while she belts out an eardrum-shredding "OH MY GOD!" The car stops; Walden is practically hyperventilating. The man next to her shakes his head and ... smiles.

"Great job," says instructor Brian Leib, whose matinee-idol looks aren't lost on his student. "That was a nice controlled slide. You won't leave here Barbie Andretti, but you will be a more confident Barbie."

Behold a radical new approach to traditional driver's ed: using hip young instructors to coach teens through hair-raising maneuvers on a track so they can survive the unexpected on the road.

Typical of this breed is Driver's Edge. Tucked into the infield here at this city's mammoth motor speedway, the free half-day course is the brainchild of a former race car driver who felt teens needed his help.

Such clinics are shifting into overdrive nationwide, fueled by the disappearance of high school courses and the fact that car crashes kill more 15- to 19-year-olds than murder and suicide combined.

But opponents of the programs say teaching new drivers aggressive maneuvers instills false confidence and leads to video-game-type antics. And like other programs, it puts inexperienced drivers on the road earlier; states grant autonomy behind the wheel sooner if kids attend a driver's ed class.

"The problem with crash-avoidance courses is they can backfire by encouraging kids to go out and be unnecessarily aggressive," says Allan Williams, former chief scientist with the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, an insurance-industry-sponsored non-profit that studies accident data.

Williams acknowledges that hands-on programs, especially ones that stress hazard perception, "can serve as a good foundation," but overall, "the studies on driver's ed come to the same conclusion: It doesn't make kids safer drivers."

Driver's ed hit schools in the 1950s, a product of the great highway building boom. But a 1980s study found few beneficial effects of formal instruction, and an inexorable move away from funding such classes

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www.dsac.com

began. Today, most states do not pay for driver's ed, requiring instead that parents log 40 to 60 in-car hours with their kids as a prerequisite for a license.

The market is filling the void. Safe Smart Women, a non-profit group in Silver Spring, Md., will stage clinics for female drivers in 12 cities. Florida-based New Driver Car Control Clinics will roll out to 10 states; its \$150 half-day seminars place teen drivers and one parent inside a car while experts radio over instructions on how to brake at the vehicle's limit and swerve while retaining control.

"Driving isn't about taking written tests. It's a real psychomotor skill, like making a jump shot or hitting a curveball," founder David Thompson says.

"We take drivers and make them athletes. There's a hunger for this teaching."

Micki Byrnes offers proof. When the marketing director for Cleveland's WKYC decided to trumpet a series of TV reports on teen driving deaths by offering viewers a chance to take Thompson's clinic, it booked up in 3½ minutes, and the station's voice-mail system crashed. This year, WKYC will sponsor 25 clinics; TV stations in Atlanta and Washington are following suit.

"Of course, one clinic isn't enough," says Byrnes, a parent of a teen driver. "But it helps you have broader conversations about what it means to drive a car safely."

Driver's Edge also is expanding; last year's 14-city tour grows to 25 this year. Nearly 10,000 teens have taken the program since it started 2½ years ago. The non-profit company reports that 1,000 graduates surveyed one year after their course had 54% fewer incidents than a control group of 1,000 Las Vegas 16- to 18-year-olds who did not attend the school.

"Not that it's easy to get to these kids, because some come with a lot of attitude," says founder Jeff Payne, 37, who raced open-wheel cars in Europe and Japan. "But hopefully both the timid girl and the cocky jock walk out of here with a greater awareness of what driving is all about."

At 8 a.m. on a Saturday, bleary-eyed teens shuffle into a racing paddock. A video plays images of a baby growing into teenhood. The mood is ominous, but it turns out the boy on the screen didn't die in a car crash; he killed three of his best friends when the car he was driving wrecked.

As soon as the video ends, that very teen shuffles in wearing handcuffs, a prison-issue jumpsuit and no trace of a smile. The classroom is silent as the teen sobs through his fateful night. When his mother urges the group to learn from her son's lesson, the gasps are audible. This scared-straight opening, complete with Nevada troopers, sobers up the crowd.

"I know bad things can happen," says Natosha Walden,

Barbie's mom. "At the same time, there's only so much time my husband and I have to drive her around parking lots. That's why we're here."

The teens clearly revel in the amusement-park-like excitement of the setting. Fast cars on a fast track. But judging from Walden's reaction on the skid pad—a water-soaked patch of asphalt meant to simulate a rain-soaked road—there also is a growing awareness that cars can be made to behave if drivers have the right stuff.

At first giddy and nervous, Walden finally reins in her last spin and bolts over to her mom. A day with her favorite pony car has gone to her heart.

"Did you see me?" she says. "I love that Mustang, Mom!"

Pushing safety over sexy, her mom replies, "That's nice, but you're getting a used Volvo."

For additional contributions please send to the address posted on the cover of this publication.

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Written and produced by Ken Cornelius who has been instructing Californians to drive since 1970.

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DSAC CONTINUING EDUCATION SEMINAR For ALL Driving Schools and Traffic Schools

REGISTRATION FORM

PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION

School Name: _____ DSAC Member: Yes ___ No ___

School Address: _____ City: _____

ZIP: _____ School Phone #: (_____) _____ School License #: _____

E-Mail: _____ Fax #: (_____) _____

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Registration form and Payment must be received by May 13th, 2005

NO EXCEPTIONS - If you do not pre-register by the deadline, you must pay at the door on Sunday, May 22nd, 2005. Add a fee of \$25.00 at the door. - Make check payable to **DSAC**

Seminar fees DO NOT INCLUDE LUNCH

Questions? Contact Shelley Collins, Treasurer at (530) 885-8109

SEND TO: DSAC Treasurer
1085 Grass Valley Highway
Auburn, California 95603

Seminar Location:
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Pleasanton, CA 94588
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Date of Seminar:

May 22nd, 2005

8:30 am to 4:30 pm

(Registration Begins at 7:30 am)

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<p>As a professional person, I promise to do all I can to contribute to the dignity, growth, development and upgrading of the driving school profession. Furthermore, I will uphold the ethics and ideals of The Driving School Association of the Americas, Inc. and pledge to maintain standards above those set by local, state and federal governments.</p> <p>Signature of Applicant _____</p>	PLEASE CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOXES		
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FAX WITH CREDIT CARD INFORMATION TO: 985-649-9877

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CALL IF ANY QUESTIONS: 1-800-270-DSAA (3722)



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