Friday, September 30, 2011 c:/outlk11, 11wc22 (2011 Letter #13)

**The Senior Driver**

We have successfully negotiated the Ontario Ministry of Transportation’s Senior Driving program. For drivers over the age of 80, this is an every two year discipline consisting of: An eye test focused on peripheral and distance vision. A class room session on senior driving. A multiple choice driving knowledge test. Attendees were separated into two sections, 12 in each. To begin with, all 24 were in the same room with the two female program directors seated up front, each with an eye-testing machine.. First impression, excepting the directors, …WOW, everyone looked so old!

Directors went thru their class lists alphabetically, calling attendees up front for the eye test.

“George Jefferson.”

Nervous George[[1]](#footnote-1)[1] jumps up and goes to the front of the class. Nervous because the guy sitting next to him had spoken up saying that his name had been skipped. It was checked, he was not on either class session list and banished to another room.

Director*, “Do you wear glasses to drive?”*

George, *“No”.*

Director*, “Really?”*

George*, “And truly.”*

Then the peripheral test. Flashing lights, right left, up down,

here and there. Lots’a fun.

Director*, “Fine”.*

Then, lowering her voice and leaning a bit forward, she asked,

*“How come you look so young?”*

Taken a bit aback, we recovered quickly, leaned a bit forward ourselves and replied, in best theatrical mode.

*“My spouse takes good care of me.”*

*“Ah, good for her.”*

We don’t think we look very young, it’s just that everybody else looked so old.

Back to business, the distance vision test. No problem here , had had a very recent eye exam and been told the drivers eye test would be easy for me to pass. The very fact that I was on a class list took care of most of the nervousness. For one reason or another, the date of the class had been changed three times since the original summons had been received in July.

The two sessions now split up. We went to classroom #2 along with 11 others. An hour class ensued. It was very basic, interesting and well presented. Then multiple choice tests were handed out Two parts, 20 questions in each part. We were told we could get 4 questions wrong in each part and still pass the test. Wasn’t really too bad. Somewhat sneaky though. Like some of the choices were word for word right out of the study manual except for one word. i.e*.: “Role forward”* when the correct answer was *“Role back.”* (This was from the *“behind a truck at a red light page”.)*

When papers were all handed in, Ms. Instructor/Director corrected them at a desk in the front of the classroom. Everybody seemed to have a different exam and she had a grid for each page of each exam. She’d take the grid for page one, place it next to the answers, mark each wrong answer, turn the page, flip on page two’s grid etc. She was very fast and adept, but it was not too hard to guess how many questions she circled. After being corrected, when a paper was put off to the side, it probably meant bad news for someone. A Mr.Irving was called to the front, given a handshake and his passing documentation. Oh boy, …ours would be next. Nervous once more, we held our breath and watched closely. Page one, page two, page three, no pen action. Feeling better. Page eight, last page, still OK. GREAT! Called to the front we received the normal passing accolade and departed with light bouncy step.

Well, there you have it. The Jeffersons got wheels till 2013. Do we agree with the “System”? Definitely. It is stressful & a bit time consuming, but a very fair and necessary evaluation of the second most accident prone age group

Finally, in closing … think we will look into getting a good bicycle anyway.

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1. [1] Not curious, … aka Ken [↑](#footnote-ref-1)