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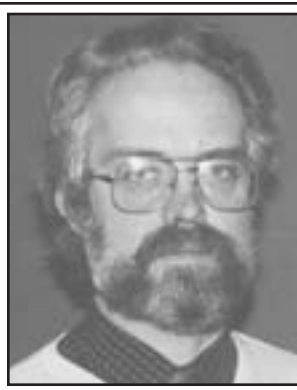
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**Bill's  
Bulletin  
Board**

By Bill Rea

Considering all the recent tragedy, it's hard not to be moved about the fight to deal with bad drivers.

We're also hearing a lot about street racers. I believe most of us can agree we're referring to two somewhat different animals.

There are bad drivers, and then there is the extreme, represented by the likes of street racers.

Bad drivers are, I think, a lot more common than many people would like to admit. The reason I say that is because most of us are sometimes guilty of bad driving.

We who drive automobiles are human beings. That means we are capable of pulling boners with an almost predictable frequency. I admit it. I've had my share of lapses at the wheel, and I'm willing to bet most, if not all of you could make the same statement, if you're honest.

When I refer to lapses, I mean letting the speed of the car creep a few too many clicks over what's

appropriate, or forgetting to signal a lane change, or making a snap decision to race an amber light when maybe one should have stopped. Things like that.

Now my layman assessment of the situation tells me there are a number of factors which add up to such mistakes not resulting in disaster. Part of it is good old-fashioned luck. Also, I think cars and road patterns are designed with certain margins in mind, meaning there's sort of a zone of forgiveness between infraction and dire consequences.

There's also the reality that other users of the road are used to the idea that the "other guy" is likely to screw up, so they are sort of prepared to allow for it. I saw two such incidents last Wednesday. Ironically, one of them was as I was driving back to my office from the presentation to York Regional Police Services Board on traffic safety and things like street racing.

I was heading west on Highway 9. Now it is true I

was going a little over the posted speed limit, although anyone who regularly drives that road knows that's more routine than remarkable. I was keeping up with the traffic flow, and I was in the curb lane, thus not representing much of an impediment to anything. Both lanes were occupied ahead of me, so I couldn't have gone much faster than I already was, simply because I wouldn't have had any place to go.

What was up ahead was of little worry to me. It was what was going on behind that was bothersome.

There was a rather large delivery truck that was right on my tail, and stayed there for several kilometres.

I really don't know what it was about my rear bumper that was attracting the driver of this rig. All I know is he (I'm assuming it was a man) was much too close, and there was no reason for his to be trying to park his truck in my back seat. I couldn't have gone any faster, and even if he got by me, he had nowhere appealing to go.

Since he didn't seem interested in getting off my tail, I decided to switch lanes and let him tailgate someone else for a change.

Things didn't work out quite that way, however. My getting out of his path opened up some road in front, but he made no move to fill the gap. I wondered

what I had done to earn having some total stranger crawling up my rear.

The whole issue sort of resolved itself when we got to Highway 400. This dope headed north, and as he disappeared over the horizon, I noticed the back of his trailer had one of those notices, "How's my driving?" followed by a number to call.

I could have quickly jotted down the number, and made the appropriate phone call, but a couple of things prevented me. For one thing, it would have been a little tricky to note a phone number, write it down and keep control of an automobile travelling at some 90 clicks. It's things like that which can lead to goofs that I already referred to, and it's probably not wise to be a bad driver in order to report a bad driver. I was also struck with a bit of a live-and-let-live gut feeling, combined with a desire not to get holier than thou and probably a couple of other cliches when it comes to driving. As I already stated, I'm quite a few paces away from being perfect, so I really shouldn't get too uppity. Maybe this truck driver was having a bad day. Maybe he was behind schedule with a pebble-headed boss breathing down his neck (I do know what that's like).

So in the end, I realized I wasn't angry enough to rat on this guy.

But I encountered another jerk on my way home that evening. I was trying to make a lane change to the left and noticed (after dutifully checking the blind spot) that there was a car uncomfortably close to me in that lane travelling at roughly the same speed as I. So I signalled my intentions and put on a bit of gas to create enough room to perform this operation safely. The other driver responded by stepping on his gas at the same moment, thus making my lane change impossible. I could have gone even faster, but I reasoned that would involve me in a street race, especially if the other driver elected not to back down.

So I took the prudent course of slowing right down (there was no traffic right behind me to make that a problem) and let this dolt have his 15 seconds of glory, while I pulled in behind and satisfied myself by muttering a few choice ones under my breath.

Again, after some reflection, I concluded I was dealing with some other user of the road who maybe committed one of those lapses that I've been guilty of in the past.

People like us might not be as dangerous as street racers, but we do present problems for everyone else, and I think we all have to be aware of that too.

**Editorial**

**Fire department comes in for some well-deserved praise**

It's no great secret that the work of King Township's firefighters have been prominent over the last couple of weeks.

Officials at The Country Day School have issued their thanks for the way a small, but potentially serious situation was handled late last month.

And there was last Friday's stubborn fire in Pottageville, which occupied the attention of crews for most of the day.

As well, the recent carnage on Highway 400 has not bypassed King, meaning the local brigades have been called out to show their stuff.

So it's nice to see they're getting some recognition. Indeed, Mayor Margaret Black and several of her colleagues made a point of doing that at Monday's council meeting.

She cited several of the recent occurrences, as she asked Chief Bryan Burbidge

to convey the thanks of council and the community for jobs well done to the men and women who make up his department.

"They really had quite a bunch of work over the last couple of weeks," she declared, adding firefighters were on hand over the weekend at the Kingfest festival.

Councillor Bill Cober expressed his admiration for the job that was done in Pottageville, too, adding he's heard from a number of people who agree. "It was incredible feedback; very positive feedback that I received," he remarked, and Councillor Jane Underhill expressed similar comments.

It's impressive when one considers these firefighters are mainly volunteers. It was quite a contribution for them to spend a very warm day in Pottageville dealing with a persistent fire.

It's nice that the people

who run the Township appreciate the contributions. We just hope that the rest of

the community realizes what they have.

An expression of thanks

to the next firefighter you see might be most appropriate.

**Letter to the Editor**

**Our water could run dry**

Some of us, old enough to remember smog-free summers and four definite and distinct seasons to the year, recollect too our education being augmented with proverbs, such as "look before you leap," versus "he who hesitates is lost," or "a penny saved is a penny earned," or "pride goeth before the fall."

Gems of wisdom; one of which is especially apt today, in light of deep concerns about fresh water resources — "You never miss the water until the well runs dry."

The macro world situation has relevance to local micro ones when one ponders the forecasts of increasing water scarcity. Water security is the most pressing

issue of the 21st century. Many still rely on the myth of water wealth, convinced the proverbial well will never run dry. One could say they are "mythstaken."

The United Nations estimates that 1.1 billion people lack access to potable water, and that by 2050, if present trends continue, that figure will double to more than two billion. With climate change, we are looking at dire consequences. Spratt Asset Management of Toronto argues that small temperature changes could trigger changes in rainfall patterns that can lead to massive droughts.

At the 11th hour, some governments are making efforts to mitigate the severity of global-warming

effects. Some efforts are token, some realistic. Now many cities and towns, especially in the United States, are not waiting for the feds, but are implementing essential measures of their own. In Canada, B.C. Premier Gordon Campbell has called for the province to reduce its greenhouse gases by 33 per cent by 2020, which would also reduce evaporation of lakes and glaciers.

In Alberta, a challenge is confronting Okotoks, a rapidly growing town near Calgary. If town council and the electorate succeed in their plans, population will be climbing no higher than what the aquifers will sup-

**See 'Need' on page 5**