

Days of waiting for rides over

No better birthday gift than drivers' licence

By ANI PEDERIAN
Herald Staff Writer
Ron McKnight, 33, got his driver's licence on his birthday last year, April 7.

He's wanted his licence ever since he was ten, he said.
Mr. McKnight's dream took a long time coming true.
Born with cerebral palsy, his legs aren't of any use to him when it comes to driving. In 1965, he underwent surgery to fuse his knee joints. The operation allows him, without leg braces, to put some weight on his legs, enough to walk short distances with crutches, but not enough for pushing the standard gas or brake pedal.

How does Mr. McKnight drive without the use of his legs? He uses hand controls instead. For an extra \$450, Mr. McKnight's 1982 Mercury Zephyr was adapted by a supplier to meet his special needs.

With his left hand, Mr. McKnight can operate the gas and brake pedals, high and low-beam lights, signal lights and horn. The operations are all on a rod that extends from the steering wheel column. By pushing the rod down towards his knee, Mr. McKnight puts on the gas. By pushing the rod straight back, he puts on the foot brake.

DOWN PAT
"It was difficult at first getting used to the feel of the controls, but now I've got them down pat," Mr. McKnight said with a smile. He got his licence on his first try, he said proudly.

There is also a special control on his steering wheel which allows him to steer with one hand. The one-hand wheel spinner

knob is unlawful except for the physically handicapped.

"It makes me a lot more independent," Mr. McKnight said. "It was a nice birthday present to have my driver's licence."
Before that, he got around thanks to friends, relatives and taxi cabs. Actively involved in the Rotary Club, minor hockey, baseball and other organizations, Mr. McKnight used to have to wait for somebody to come pick him up and drop him off before.

EXPENSIVE
"I've been using taxis for 30 plus years. I can remember taking a taxi to school every day," he said. "In those days it was 35 cents to go anywhere in town. Now it's \$1 right off the top and ten cents a kilometre. When you add it up it gets expensive."
Employed as dispatch-

er at the town's works offices on Trafalgar Road, Mr. McKnight drives to and from work every day, parking his car in the spot specially designated for the handicapped.

"There are a lot of people too lazy to walk any great distance who pull into handicapped parking spaces," Mr. McKnight said. "Hopefully this problem will be solved with time."

Along with the new car stickers this year were issued special licence plate stickers for the handicapped, which Mr. McKnight hopes will help solve the parking situation by making it easier to spot offending vehicles parked in spots for the handicapped.

MORE MOBILE
"I would strongly recommend anybody with a physical disability who wants to be more mobile should at least inquire

about taking driving instructions with a qualified vehicle and instructor and check it out with their family physician," Mr. McKnight said. "I know it's the best thing I've ever done."

The majority of handicapped depend on others, cabs or ActiVan for getting around, he said. He called ActiVan "a God-send" for people with no other means of transportation available to them.

Having your own driver's licence means you're no longer limited to the hours ActiVan runs or having to book outings in advance, Mr. McKnight noted.

"Personally, I like to do as much as I can for myself. I don't like imposing on people," he said. "Soon it will be Mr. McKnight's first anniversary as a driver, something he's sure to celebrate."

Handicapped make careful drivers

By ANI PEDERIAN
Herald Staff Writer

It takes driving instructor Jack Beer all of eight minutes to convert his four-door Plymouth Volare sedan into a car a handicapped person can operate safely.

The 49-year old man has been a driving instructor for eight years, starting up with private lessons until he set up his own driving school, Basic Technology Systems (BTS) on Georgetown's Guelph Street.

Besides teaching high school students in Georgetown and Acton, Mr. Beer has recently become interested in putting the handicapped behind the steering wheel.

Investing \$525 in special equipment that makes his car operable by someone with paralysed legs or paralysis on one side of the body, Mr. Beer has taught four handicapped people to drive.

"The handicapped generally make excellent drivers," Mr. Beer said. "They have to work very hard, harder than the average person, to get their licence."

He said it takes them a little more time to learn to drive, with the biggest difficulties being parking and backing up. In general, these maneuvers are more difficult because the handicapped can't turn in the usual way, Mr. Beer said. In some cases, extra mirrors have to be fitted.

"Handicapped drivers not only have to work harder to get their licence, but also to keep their licence—to keep from traffic violations and accidents—because they have a lot more to lose if they lose their licence," Mr. Beer said.

"There's no doubt about it that the freedom

of driving your own car is more important than for the handicapped than for the person who can walk to the bus stop."

The handicapped have to be assessed as to the nature of their difficulties and a suitable vehicle selected and adaptive controls installed, he said.

Student Ron McKnight, 33, paralysed in his legs, got his licence after three months of driving lessons with Mr. Beer. He drives a 1982 Mercury Zephyr with special hand controls for the gas and brake pedals.

"This car gives me lots of room to get in and out," Mr. McKnight said. "There's no way I can get into compact cars like a Volkswagen."

With his legs stiff at the knees due to fusion surgery at an early age, Mr. McKnight maneuvers himself into the driver's seat, and swings his legs in under the steering column. He throws his crutches in beside him, until it's time to get out.

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of driving your own car is more important than for the handicapped than for the person who can walk to the bus stop."

"With all due respect for people with handicaps, usually their other senses are more finely tuned, like a deaf person would have better vision so that his handicap is compensated for by better use of his available senses," Mr. Beer said.

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Driving is a privilege Ron McKnight doesn't take lightly. Licensed last April, the 33-year old driver has wanted to drive since he was ten. Born with cerebral palsy, he has no use of his legs and had his car installed with special hand controls for the gas and brake pedals. Mr. McKnight got his licence on his first try, thanks to patient training by instructor Jack Beer. (Herald photo)



Parking spots for the handicapped are marked in many plazas and municipal lots. However, a lot of people too lazy to walk pull into these spots, and block them up from use by the handicapped, Ron McKnight (right) said. The new licence plate stickers designating a car driven by or carrying a handicapped person should make it easier for police control of parking abuses. Jack Beer says awareness of the needs of the handicapped is improving the situation. (Herald photo)

Workshop stresses communication

Sexuality more than the physical

By CHRIS AAGAARD
Herald Staff Writer
We've lost touch with what sexuality should mean and that's having an adverse effect on the way we deal with people, especially those closest to us.

That theme was woven into a special, day-long workshop at the Glen Williams town hall Saturday.

Sponsored by the North Halton Social Planning Council, the workshop focused on "Sexuality in the Later Years". But in doing so, sex therapist Jaye Larry and addiction counsellor-nurse Linda Longman chose a broader, more enlightened view of "sexuality".

"Sexuality is another dimension of the human being," Mr. Larry told The Herald, stressing that it's not simply a physical way of expressing ourselves.

COMPROMISE
"It's a way of communicating with two people, the way we compromise in a relationship to find things that give us both pleasure. By it, we tend to weed out what is not necessary in a relationship."

"Sexuality is not something we gain as we grow older," Ms. Longman added. "It starts from infancy and we take it right on through life as we learn values which will affect our relationships."
By the time a baby is two years old, Mr. Larry commented, sexual "imprinting" (from how others deal with the child as boy or a girl), is so strong that the child's potential as a "total male" or a "total female" is already laid down.

Imprinting from others, plus the environment in which we live, builds our sexuality, and our sexu-

ality determines such things as how we speak to a girl or boy, a man or a woman.

Our sexuality lets us know when we are attracted to other people. A pictogram given to workshop participants detailed how a relationship forms and where it's most likely to fall apart.

CONFLICT
First, there's a period of insecurity and conflict as we weigh our sexual values with those of our new friend.

The period of conflict fades into communication, but the way we communicate, whether we choose to be broad and vague or "deep" and honest, will determine the longevity of the relationship.

"Broad" disclosure leads to game playing, which leads to one or both partners ending up hurt and distressed. For solice, partners may turn to drugs or alcohol before the relationship crumbles completely with a physical or emotional separation.

"Deep" disclosure is a more honest route in which a couple puts all of its cards on the table. The relationship, while not necessarily free of problems, is sustained by its frankness and honesty and a crisis can be overcome through compromise.

TOUCH
One way we've let our sexuality lapse is in our use of touch as communication. All too often, Mr. Larry pointed out, we touch only when we want sex, not as a matter of general, affectionate communication.

We don't use touch because we are afraid of passing on the wrong messages. We put

distance between ourselves and our children and they, in turn, pass on

these distorted values to their children. During the afternoon

workshop session, participants watched a film. Continued on page A11



Linda Longman and Jaye Larry

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Wild party

An 18-year old man called for police help when a party he'd thrown at his parents' Mary Street home got out of hand and there was \$1,500 damage to the house interior, 1 a.m. Saturday.

Windows were smashed and carpets soiled throughout the house, Halton regional police said.

Nine officers arrived on the scene and disbanded the 150 people gathered at the home.

An 18-year old man was arrested for assaulting police and for underage drinking. He'll appear in Milton provincial court April 11.

Police said an impaired driving charge was also laid against another party-goer.
Police said the parents were away and the party had started at 6 p.m. Friday night.

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