

Annual financial violation

Since this is June, and the calendar is approaching the double digits of the month, I'm once again feeling that annual violation.

You see, I have a birthday coming up soon. And with that birthday comes the aforementioned 'violation'.

For some unknown reason, the government feels one's birth date is the prime time to collect obscene piles of money— just because they can.

I'm talking about all those things that come due on one's birthday.

First, the Ministry of Transport: I have three vehicles— the Lil Red Rocket, an SUV and the farm truck.

All of them require licence renewal stickers, at \$74 a pop for the first two and \$81 for the farm truck.

Total outlay for stickers— \$239.

One of the vehicles needed an emission test this year (and because one is an even year and the other is an odd year, one needs it every year) so with taxes in, I had to lay out another \$39 for the Drive Clean test— the Lil Red Rocket passed with flying colours. I thought of taking 'er out for a graduation dinner.

I have a major problem with the Drive Clean program. It's discriminatory. If I happen to live in Northern Ontario, there wouldn't be any emission tests.

Why is that? Does that northern air stifle cars and trucks from polluting?

I think our northern neighbours breathe the same air as the rest of us, so it's simply not fair that they don't pay and we do. I think it's time to scrap the program.

Fortunately for me, the farm truck is exempt from emission tests, or there would be another reason for me to grumble.

And on top of all the charges for the cars and trucks to be driving on the road, this year I'm also required to have my photo taken, and cough up another \$74 to have a valid driver's licence.

While I'm at it, I recently received notification that my health card expires— you guessed it— on my birthday. The only consolation is I can renew it at the same place as the licence stickers and driver's licence.

Ted Brown



But I have one huge problem with all this.

IT'S MY BIRTHDAY!!!

And I'm required to cough up almost \$350— on my birthday.

As my kids used to say when they were little: "Not fair!"

Geez, the government should be giving me a birthday present, especially since this is a so-called 'milestone' birthday and I'm entering the sixth decade.

Or, and this is a really novel approach, why not have our licence stickers, drivers licence, health card, you name it, be due for renewal six months after one's birthday, just to avoid putting people like me through all this anguish when my birthday comes around.

Geez, I tell ya, when you get to be my age, it's depressing enough to know I'm another year older, without making me produce almost \$350 in renewal fees.

The Ministry of Transport could just send me a nice birthday card on my birthday, with a gentle reminder that they'd be back for their cut in December.

A gift certificate could be thrown in as well, just to be nice— how about a free tank of gas for renewing on time?

Ain't gonna happen.

Ontarians will continue to have their birthdays sullied by the provincial government, just like the federal government does to all Canadians at Easter, when the income taxes are due.

So as I sit back, pop open a Sleeman's and contemplate being another year older, I will try to put the renewal fees out of my mind.

'Cuz ya know, as my dad used to say, celebrating another birthday is always better than the alternative.

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