

# Breakdowns, trucks, bad weather scare highway drivers

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alone in Ontario in 2002.

"That's 63 collisions a day," Mr. Kelly said from his Thornhill office. "Unsafe speed is the No. 1 cause of accidents in Ontario."

John Lefevre, president of the Ontario Safety League, said it's natural to have phobias about driving.

"Most people think learning to drive is a physical thing, how to park and manoeuvre the vehicle," he said. "They don't take into account that driving is mostly a mental activity and that gives rise to phobias."

And given that it typically takes 25 hours of instruction, 10 of them in-car, to get a Ontario driver's licence, he believes our fears may be justified.

"By comparison, it takes two years to get a hairdresser's licence and how many people have died from a bad hair day rather than a bad driver?" he asks.

Staff-Sgt. Cam Wooley of the Aurora OPP detachment said one of the biggest fears for drivers — a fear that is fully justified — is having your car break down on a multi-lane highway.

"The 400-series highways are among the safest in North America because, generally, everyone's going in the same direction at the same speed, but it's very scary if you're caught (break down) in one of the live lanes," Mr. Wooley said.

"It's happened to me and the best advice I can give is to abandon ship, get out and

leave it. It's only a matter of time before someone slams into it."

And he says the fear of wheels and or debris coming off big trucks forces some motorists to take unusual actions.

"People do funny things around big trucks. They don't want to be near them, so they accelerate to get in front of them, then they slow down."

The CAA pointed out there are more than 700,000 trucks in Canada and 612,000 truck trips in a typical week, so we'd better get used to sharing the road with them.

Staff-Sgt. Wooley said the biggest fear for drivers is bad weather.

"At one time, my wife would get sick if she heard there was going to be a storm the next day. I took her to skid school and now she enjoys practising skids in her station wagon and she has a new confidence about driving."

merging on to multi-lane highways is also a major concern for many drivers, according to Angelo DiCicco, manager of Young Drivers of Canada in Markham, Toronto and Mississauga.

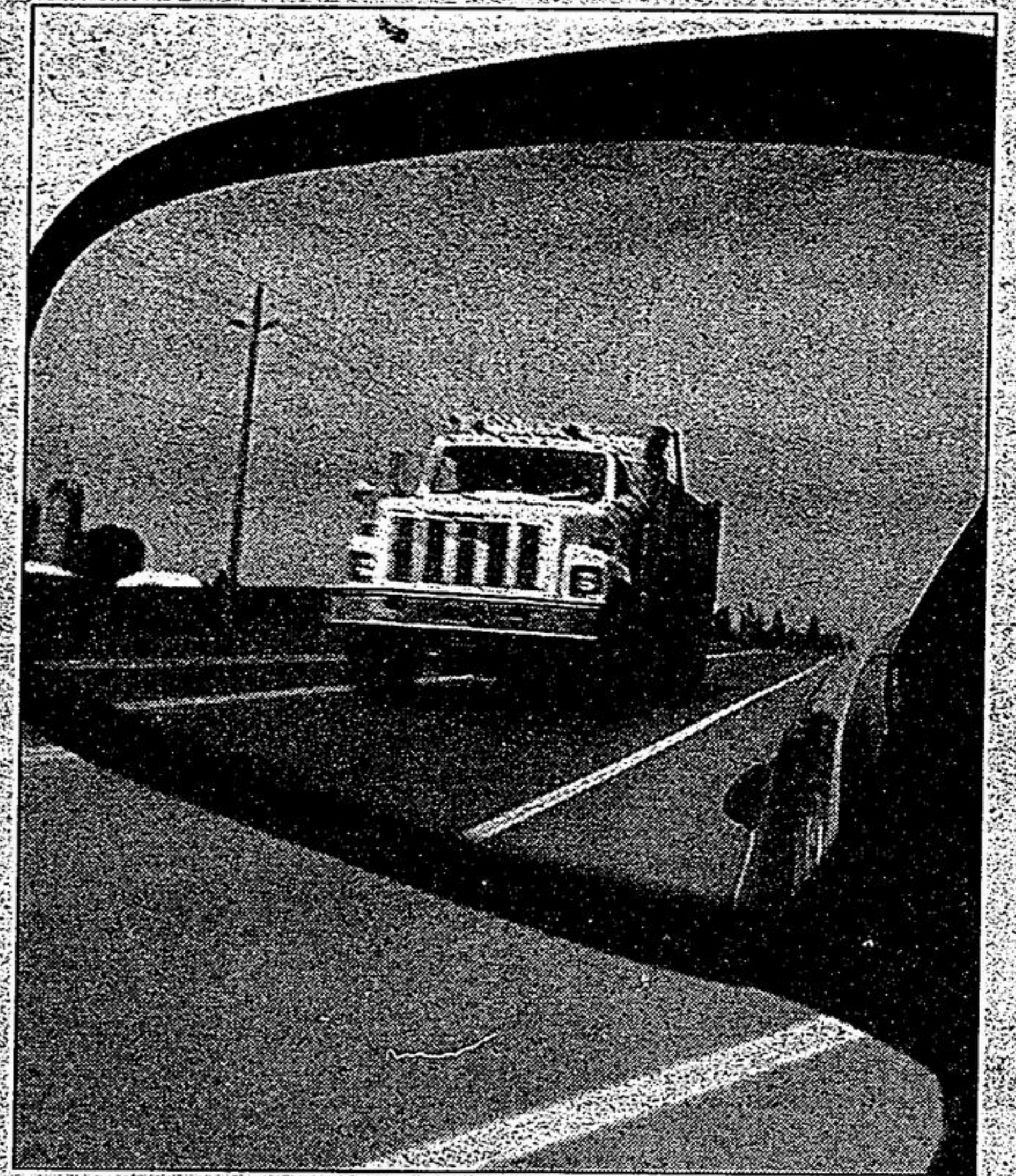
"You're travelling at one speed and the vehicle in another lane is at another speed and you have to change without comprising the other driver," Mr. DiCicco said. "It's being able to ascertain where a space is going to be at some point in the future. To some people, it's a very natural thing, but to many drivers, it's a learned skill."

And because most of us drive on congested GTA highways, it isn't going to get better any time soon.

"The traffic volume here is equal to or surpassing Los Angeles," he said. "We actually battle back and forth with L.A. for top spot. New York is No. 3."

Be afraid. Be very afraid.

What scares you? E-mail us at [newsroom@ymg.com](mailto:newsroom@ymg.com)



STAFF PHOTO/BILL ROBERTS

Seeing a truck in the rear-view mirror causes some drivers to take strange actions, according to the OPP.

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