

Behind the wheel: struggling with driver's ed

By Jess Hess and Ximena Alaniz

Febreeze and a fly swatter--the ultimate survival guide for being on the road. Or at least that's what beginning driver sophomore **April Adams** says saved her from a spider.

Adams, who has her permit and took drivers ed online, was driving with her mom when she was surprised by an eight-legged visitor.

"I'm terrified of spiders, and this spider fell from the top of the car onto me; I almost crashed the car," she says. "I stopped, we pulled over and got out. My mom has a Febreeze can and a fly swatter... We never found it," she says, remembering the traumatic experience.

Fortunately, the family doesn't own the car anymore and never has to risk that a spider will crawl out to invade their space anymore.

With driving comes great responsibility and independence. It's also one of those teen adventures that kids of all types obsess over. Perry students and teachers are full of driving stories, whether it involves driving into a lake or a driver's education instructor rescuing an inexperienced student driver from a meltdown and near

"I drove that car into a lake. We had to call a tow truck to come get the car out."

- Camden Dybwad

debacle.

Sophomore **Reagan Elliot** remembers an encounter with an inattentive driver.

"I was on the interstate during rush-hour, and I was trying to get over a lane, I had my signal on and thought this guy was letting me over because he was stopped, and then before I was getting over, he hit the gas," Elliot says. "He didn't hit me because I slammed on the breaks."

Defensive Driving. A term anyone who aspires to be a good driver must learn.

"Imagine everyone on the road is trying to kill you," Adams notes. "That way you're always on guard of everyone else."

For students who attended drivers ed online, some have mixed feelings on the class.

"It was long because you had to click through all the slides," says Adams. Adhering to the classic movie stereotype, she says a fair amount of

"Once they're comfortable and I'm comfortable with them, then we move out to the street."

-Brett Andrews

drivers ed was showing bloody crashes. However, this practice is not useless, as Elliot says, "It taught you some important things."

Junior **Emmeh Russell** says, "I feel like drivers ed in car instruction was the most beneficial preparation for driving on your own," and while she took the class online, she says health teacher **Joel Black** helped her become a better driver.

"I was one of those beginning drivers that's afraid to go above 30 mph, but Black really reassured me and made me more confident in my driving," she says.

Sophomore **Camden Dybwad**, who also took drivers ed online, says he could have learned the same information if just his parents taught him to drive. Besides he'd already taken it upon himself to drive without a single lesson at age 12.

"My dad's house is on a hill, and there's a lake at the bottom. It was my first time in this car, and I floored it. I didn't realize what I was doing, and I



Reagan Elliot explains how attentiveness is a necessity for new drivers (Photo by Olivia Light).

drove that car into a lake. We had to call a tow truck to come get the car out."

Thankfully, the damage was minimal, and his dad only had to drain the interior.

Still, he isn't up to par quite yet with race car legend A. J. Foyt.

Recently, Dybwad's dad banned

his son from driving his work car.

The 16-year-old notes it was "probably because I wrecked two cars."

Social studies teacher **Nathan Orme** remembers getting in trouble with his parents over driving too.

After his dad taught him to drive in Perry's parking lot and then out on the road, Orme passed his driving test on the first try. But his parents, after reading statistics that showed multiple teens in one car led to more fatal accidents, forbade him from driving with more than two other students at a time.

"The only time I ever got grounded was when I rode with some friends to lunch during a half day. My parents are wonderful, and they were also sometimes annoyingly protective. But I'm still here, so I guess it worked."

However, Orme's cars haven't been the most reliable, he admits, pointing to hubcaps and door handles that have fallen off. Orme prefers to quip that he's "ripped them off with my Hulk-like strength."

He remembers his old Ford Tempo.

"I had to touch two wires together, which made a spark every time I wanted to open the gas cap. Every stop at a gas station was a risky experience."

The scariest driving experience Russell has had was driving to school on ice.

"My steering wheel had been shaking for the past few days," she says. "I heard a loud pop, and my car bounced and stayed pretty low. My car started slowing down by itself, but the speedometer was going between 0 and 120."

She pulled her car into a turning

"BAM! We hit the curb and there was a phone pole in front of us. They panicked and hit the gas instead of the brakes"

- Brett Andrews

lane, turning on her hazards. "Turns out the wheel studs were completely sheared off and my tire was all the way off the hub. There's a good chance my tire would have flown off."

Veteran driver's education teacher **Brett Andrews** says his worst accident with a student driver occurred with someone who had never been behind a



Experienced Driver's Education Instructor Joel Black enters a specially designed vehicle before heading out to a driving session in Greenwood (Photo by Jess Hess)

wheel before.

"The student I was with was turning, but didn't let go of the wheel and then, 'BAM!' says the science teacher, with a shout, his hands clapping together.

"We hit the curb and there was a telephone pole in front of us. She panicked and hit the gas instead of the brakes," he says. Meanwhile, Andrews pushed his brake to the floor, avoiding

a head-on crash, only scraping the car a little.

Then, his student froze and started to sob.

"Let's go," Andrews told her. "The car's OK. You're still driving."

Since that experience, Andrews always starts with students driving around the parking lot.

"Once they're comfortable and I'm comfortable with them, then we move out to the street."

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Perry's Dodgeball tournament was hosted on March 2
(Top Left) Junior Caitie Baird is the last woman standing as she winds up for a toss.

(Top Right) Junior Franklin Hammond stands in front of his team at the start of a round.

(Left) Jesse Wainscott Senior protects himself with a dodgeball near the dangerous middle section.
(Photos By Alexis Lee).

TWEET OF THE WEEK



olive
@CastanedaOlivia



The pupper that stands with the cop in the main hallway makes my day better



Student of the Month Winners and their Favorite Sandwiches (From Left to Right)
Hannah Hunt
Freshman
Nominated by Mr. Vierling
I like provolone cheese, whole grain bread, with lots of spinach, mushrooms and grilled chicken.

Rachel Pollachek
Senior
Nominated by Ms. Crawford
Toasted italian bread provolone ham spinach.

Ben Fair
Junior
Nominated by Mrs. Schreiner
At Subway I always get the meatball marinara with extra meat and cheese.

Mason Jones
Sophomore
Nominated by Mr. England
Honestly, I just like a classic ham and cheese sandwich.
(Photo by Payton Romans)