

news

Technology has turned us into lazy drivers

I expressed excited optimism in my last column about automatic braking and other technologies that have a hope of finally putting a significant dent in our car crash epidemic.

Two readers—Roger, a retired professional driver who has logged two to three million kilometres; and Andrew, a former client who is a victim of negligent driving—helped me recognize an irony about technology.

The irony is that technology can be blamed for the car crash epidemic in the first place.

Andrew referred me to the operation manual

Achieving Justice

PAUL HERGOTT



for a 1926 Model T Ford, found easily on the Internet. As Andrew pointed out to me, "You controlled virtually every aspect of this vehicle's operation."

The car has become, in Andrew's words, "automatic everything," requiring less and less driver attention and effort.

Technology has transformed the motor

vehicle from a machine that could not be operated without the full attention (and effort) of the operator, to one with effortless power steering

and brakes, and cruise control.

What naturally occurs when less and less attention and effort is required? Less and less attention and effort is applied.

Andrew notes that at the same time, air bags, seat belts and other safety features like automatic braking has been "lulling us into a ridiculous

complacency."

Big budget marketing campaigns are geared to convince us that this or the other make of automobile has the highest safety rating, the message being that if you buy that particular car, you won't get into a crash.

If you do, the crash won't come with consequences.

Are those marketing campaigns as dangerous and irresponsible as those for which tobacco manufacturers have been sued for promoting

smoking without clear warnings about the danger?

Roger remembers: "When I started to drive (in Europe), there was no speed limit, there were no signs that indicate every little curve, there was one single centre line that you just did not cross when solid. Now we need concrete barriers, because a double or triple solid line does not mean anything anymore."

Roger's opinion: "Personally I am against just about everything that has been brought in over

the years to make, what they say, driving safer for everybody."

He made this point: "...if you make something 'idiot-proof,' it does not take long before a bigger idiot shows up."

Andrew and Roger have helped me recognize the reality that technological advances in the operation of the automobile coupled with advances in road safety have made us correspondingly worse and worse drivers.

It sure helps explain the ridiculous prevalence of

the rear-ender crash.

Instead of putting a significant dent in our car crash epidemic, any automatic driving technologies short of a fully driverless car might just result in a previously unheard of low of idiot driving.

Perhaps the sensible thing to do, until we live in the reality of the driverless car, is to bring back the Model T.

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Street sweeping to start in West Kelowna

The District of West Kelowna will begin street sweeping in the community starting the first week of March.

Sweeping will begin in neighbourhoods with lower elevations, south of Highway 97, and will work upwards into the neighbourhoods that are at the higher elevations.

Signs will be placed in neighbourhoods indicating when

sweeping is anticipated to begin and while street sweeping is underway.

Sweeping will be conducted in school zones during spring break, between March 16 and 27.

Residents are reminded to help ensure sweeping is effective and efficient by keeping roadways clear of parked vehicles and any other obstructions.

Residents are also asked to

ensure their household recycling and waste loads are secure to help keep streets clear of debris.

Sweeping is anticipated to take approximately six to eight weeks to complete.

For more information, call 778-797-2225, email roads@districtofwestkelowna.ca or visitdistrictofwestkelowna.ca/streetsweeping.



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CENTRAL OKANAGAN WEATHER FORECAST

Central Okanagan

Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue
4° -1°	7° -4°	6° -6°	5° -2°	6° -7°
AM 60% PM Clearing	BREEZY		30% Mixed Precip	

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