

Advice & More

Drivers must give task full attention

DEAR ABBY: You asked readers to share their pet peeves with you. Mine is careless drivers. I am a single mother who supports her children. I can't afford to be killed or maimed on the road.

This afternoon I was behind a woman who was driving erratically. She rolled through stop signs, sped up and slowed down for no apparent reason, and switched from lane to lane. When I was finally able to safely pass her, I saw that she wasn't drunk as I had suspected – but was driving her van down the crowded freeway with her elbows on the wheel because she was using both hands to hold the hamburger she was eating. Abby, the woman was doing 70 miles an hour. All she needed to do was sneeze once to lose control of her vehicle.

I am angry with people who drive while talking on a cell phone, eating, applying make-up, reading, searching through purses or briefcases, or playing with pets on their laps. People who are behind the wheel have the power to end not only their own lives and the lives of their passengers, but also the lives of every driver, passenger and pedestrian they encounter in the blink of an eye.

Please, America! Clean up your act. If you don't have both hands on the wheel and your full attention on the



Jeanne Phillips
Syndicated advice columnist

road, then you are not driving responsibly. Maybe your family doesn't need you alive and healthy, but my kids need me! – Cindy in Minneapolis

DEAR CINDY: Something as simple as paying attention and observing the traffic laws would prevent many injuries and death. To do anything less is to invite a tragedy. Every evening there are news reports about perfectly healthy people in the prime of life who lost their lives because of the carelessness of another driver. When commuters are behind the wheel, it is vital that they keep both hands on the wheel, their eyes on the road and their minds 100 percent on the task at hand.

DEAR ABBY: I recently bought a couple of items in the dollar store here in town. I had \$2 in change to pay for them. The owner of the store refused to accept the dimes and told me to go back to the bank and get paper money.

I was under the impression that dimes are legal tender and should have been acceptable. It was a humiliating

experience. Am I wrong? – Miss J. in Whiting, N.J.

DEAR MISS J.: You're not wrong. Coins are legal tender, and the store owner should have accepted them. By not doing so, the store owner was telling you that your business was not welcome. I wouldn't blame you if you never set foot in that establishment again.

DEAR ABBY: We have a ring controversy at the office. Some say the engagement ring should be worn on the ring finger of the left hand before marriage. Others insist it should be worn on the ring finger of the right hand until after the ceremony. Which is correct? – Frank in Milford, N.H.

DEAR FRANK: According to Emily Post, in the United States the engagement ring is worn on the third finger of the left hand – next to the little finger – although in some foreign countries it's worn on the right hand. It is removed for the wedding ceremony, when the wedding band is placed on the bride's finger, and replaced immediately after the ceremony outside the wedding ring. (The wedding band is always worn "closest to the heart.")

– Write to Dear Abby at P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069 or at www.DearAbby.com.

Several illnesses confuse patient

DEAR DR. GOTT: I have three questions for you. I am a 65-year-old lady in fairly good health. I was diagnosed with fibromyalgia about five years ago, which I am learning to live with.

1. I was diagnosed with Bell's Palsy a year ago this month. Some of the paralysis still exists. What are options for approaching this illness? What can you tell me about this viral attack? Will the paralysis ever totally leave?

2. Last month, after wearing a heart monitor for heart palpitations, I was diagnosed with premature atrial contractions. I take Corgard when they happen. What else could cause PACs if I can eliminate chocolate, caffeine and anxiety? Could poor sleep contribute? Could this all tie into the fibromyalgia? I am curious about fainting goats (which actually do not faint, but rather their muscles freeze up on them). Has there been any study between these goats and fibromyalgia?

3. While the doctor was examining me, he heard a



Peter Gott
Syndicated medical columnist

swooshing sound in my right carotid artery, so he sent me to have a Doppler test, which turned out to be normal. He said he supposed that the swooshing sound was where the artery made a turn. Can you expand on that?

DEAR READER: 1. Bell's Palsy is a nerve disorder marked by paralysis of some of the facial muscles on one side of the face or the other. It's cause is presumed to be a viral infection; however, in some cases, Bell's Palsy can accompany Lyme disease and other nerve disorders.

In most instances, the paralysis disappears within a year. Some patients take longer to recover fully. Rarely, the paralysis can be permanent.

2. Premature atrial contractions are common, harmless

and do not signify underlying heart disease. PACs can be related to stress, exertion, thyroid disorders and caffeine.

I do not know of any patients with fainting goat disease, so I cannot comment on this condition. The cause of fibromyalgia is unknown; symptoms are treated as they develop, and goats haven't been involved.

3. The carotid arteries, one on either side of the neck, are a main source of blood to the brain. Ordinarily, this blood flow is silent. "Whooshing" sounds can reflect plaque partially blocking the artery or an unusual curve in the artery.

In your case, the Doppler study virtually ruled out significant carotid obstruction, so you can relax.

From your description, I believe that your physician has covered the bases. Stick with him or her.

– Write to Dr. Gott c/o United Media, 200 Madison Ave., 4th Fl., New York, NY 10016.

Teenage years time of experiments

DR. WALLACE: I live in a neighborhood where a lot of teens hang around a nearby park. They are not unruly, but I am amazed by the number of teens who smoke. I thought that more boys than girls smoked, but now I'm not so sure. I see a lot of young ladies puffing on a cigarette. With the high price for cigarettes, why do teens want to see their money evaporate in smoke?

Any comments for me? – Grandma Pat, Dallas.

GRANDMA PAT: The years between 12 and 20 are a time of experimentation, and smoking cigarettes is a strong challenge for many young people. According to Dr. Roberta Beach, director of adolescent services at the Denver Department of Health, living at home with adult smokers is the most potent factor pressing kids to smoke. They feel it's OK to smoke because mom and dad do. The second strongest influence is peers. If friends smoke, it's just a matter of time before the nonsmoking teen will be tempted to take a puff and join the "fun."

Your observation is cor-



Robert Wallace
Syndicated advice columnist

rect. One of the main reasons that smoking is on the rise among girls even as it's declining among boys appears to be the images the tobacco companies are using in advertising. Ads often display slim, attractive young women smoking. Many girls falsely believe that smoking will give them a look of sophistication – and help them stay thin.

Another reason why teens smoke is that they are oblivious to the long-term effects on the human body – lung cancer, emphysema, bronchitis and heart disease. They couldn't care less about the important statistic that informs us that each cigarette smoked reduces a life by up to five minutes.

Someday this statistic will haunt them!

DR. WALLACE: I would like to enter the debate on whether or not seatbelts

should be worn when riding in a motor vehicle. I don't wear a seatbelt because I believe every person on earth has a destined time in which that person will die. It matters not whether a seatbelt is worn. When the time has come to die, a person dies!

Do you agree? – Nameless, Brookhaven, Miss.

DEAR NAMELESS: I agree that when it's time for a person to die, that person will, indeed die, but wearing a seatbelt when riding in a motor vehicle, I believe, might mean that you were not destined to die when the vehicle you were in was hit head-on by a drunken driver.

I encourage every vehicle rider to wear a seatbelt. A life is too precious to be wasted because of not "buckling up."

We all could make plans if we knew when that fateful day will arrive, but thank goodness we don't.

– Write to Dr. Wallace c/o Copley News Service, P.O. Box 120190, San Diego, CA 92112 or e-mail to rw Wallace@galesburg.net

Community Life Bulletin Board



STAR graduates Posted by Leslie Larkin



Six students recently graduated from STAR Foundation's employment training program, which prepares those with limited incomes to find long-term, meaningful employment in the local community. The foundation trains students in computer literacy, life skills and job readiness at no cost to participants. STAR is an agency of the United Way, and

offices and current applications for the program are located at 1907 Gloucester St., in Brunswick. Pictured standing are **Katie Orrel**, from left, program director, **Shana Baucham**, **Reida Davis**, **Ellen Murphy**, executive director, and **Angie Hall**; seated are **Danisha Tripp**, from left, **Evelyn Esparza** and **Brenda Green**.



St. William Catholic Church Posted by Betty Davis



St. William Catholic Church Council of Catholic Women recently presented a check for \$500 to Frank Kubat of the Boys and Girls Club of Brunswick and St. Simons. This will help sponsor the Mentoring Program that provides after-school tutoring.

St. William Council of Catholic Women annually donates to organizations such as

Manna House, Seafarer's Center, Amity House, Student Ambassadors to China and other programs, addressing women's and children's needs in the area. Pictured are, back row, **Faye Ruehling**, of the church council, having presented the check to **Frank Kubat**; first row, **Kyle Leschnik**, from left, **Lindy Hendrix** and **Anna Janes**, all of the Boys and Girls Club.



Glynn Art Association Posted by Judith Hall



Glynn Art Association is presenting a new exhibit through the month of May entitled "From the Garden to the Sea" with two talented area artists, **Trish Rugaber**, left, and **Arlene Kline**. A reception for the two artists will open the month-long exhibit on Thursday, May 3, from 6 to 8 p.m. Plants and flowers have been a lifelong inspiration to Trish Rugaber. She is a gardener herself and has popularized botany courses at Coastal Georgia Community College.



Lower Altamaha Historical Society Posted by Lower Altamaha Historical Society

Laura and Meredith Devendorf, coastal conservationists and recipients of the National Arbor Day Foundation's Good Stewardship Award, presented a special program at the Lower Altamaha Historical Society Meeting on April 19 at the Fort King George Historic Site in Darien.

They discussed the relationship between

Georgia's coastal environment and its history and culture. They also focused on the role of the live oak in Georgia and the world.

Together, this mother and daughter manage land granted to their Puritan ancestors in 1755 and are passionate about the history of the Georgia coast.



Coastal Georgia Learning Center Posted by Robin Flores

Coastal Georgia Learning Center has recently received the Level 1 Certification for its tutor program from the College Reading and Learning Association.

The CRLA is an international organization which consists of a group of student-oriented

professionals active in the fields of reading, learning assistance, developmental education and tutorial services at the college and adult level.

This program provides recognition and positive reinforcement for tutors' successful work from an international

organization.

Certification by the association validates the quality of training provided to tutors who work for the Center. It is evident that the Learning Center engages in effective assessment activities in order to improve its services.