

# The First Drive

By David (06/26/13)

Somehow, I had taught Owen how to drive a stick shift in the Trooper without me losing my mind or him hating me. Or maybe Yvonne taught him? Well, I choose to remember that I did it and was a great driving instructor, indeed his advanced clutchmanship was a result of my incredible efforts. (Upon review of this document by Yvonne a revision is likely forthcoming). Anyway, he was good enough at it to pass his driving test and get his license in the Trooper.

Of course the first thing he wanted to do was drive somewhere. This represents a massive milestone as a child moves towards an independent adulthood, and one that every parent fears on a visceral level. We were no different in this regard, and the thought of Owen driving a 2-ton battering ram up and down the Mt. Rose highway was...terrifying.

He had exhibited to the State of Nevada Department of Transportation that his driving skills were sufficient to warrant issuance of a license. We were also convinced that his skills were sufficient. He had also shown in thousands of instances a maturity in his decision making. But like any other child he also had a number of, shall we say, lapses.

So there it was. He lodged a formal request to drive to Baskin and Robins for the purpose of purchasing, and consuming an ice cream cone, AND, he desired to treat Dominique. The latter part of his request was unexpected and a parental summit was held. We decided that in matter of Owen and Dominique driving together, to find for the applicant and allow said action after dinner and when traffic would be at a minimum.

At that moment we were considered the best parents on this and any other nearby planet. Little did they know of our inner turmoil.

After dinner, and after concerned parents each reminded Owen of the great responsibility which now rested upon his shoulders, I tossed him the keys and out they skipped. We immediately ran upstairs to watch them leave, hopefully without their knowledge. It was a very happy moment for them, and even though Owen had always held the exalted position of big brother, we could see he now accepted this new level of responsibility with seriousness. I am sure that there was also pride that we would trust him to such an extent.

And as we watched our happy children we of course felt deep feelings of happiness. What a great moment for them both. Of course we would feel even happier when they safely returned.

As we watched, they fastened their seat belts. Owen carefully adjusted the mirrors, started the car, put it in reverse and backed into a tree. Our driveway offers some challenges, one of them being that it is surrounded by trees, one of which now had a Trooper attached to it.

We could see them talking and then Dominique jumped out and examined whether there was any damage. There was apparently no damage to the car and we could hear Dominique say, "It's OK!" She bounced back into the car and with a bit of maneuvering Owen guided the Trooper into the street and on the way to Baskin and Robbins.

We hoped the minor brush with the tree would not ruin their enjoyment, and Yvonne was able to calm me down sufficiently to not say anything when they returned.

Upon their return they were indeed happy, but it was detectable that Owen felt that there was something to tell us, and he did. Thanks to Yvonne I didn't react in my "corrective action is required" voice or mode. We asked about the drive and the ice cream. I probably threw in something about being more careful backing up because that is what I would do.

But we were very proud. Not that he backed into the tree, but because he told us. And we were proud that he wanted to take Dominique on his first solo drive. We were extremely happy to have such great children. Still are.