

Grown children fret about parents' driving

Parents who fret when teens begin to drive may be surprised to see their now-grown children fretting about their parents' driving skills.

A driver's license is often viewed as a key to independence, particularly in rural areas with scant public transportation, said Jill Frost-Steward, a doctoral student in family studies in the College of Human Ecology at Kansas State University.

Frost-Steward, who has chosen safe driving for older adults as the focus of her research project, said that changing medical conditions, rather than age itself, often are the primary factor or factors in deciding when it's no longer safe to drive.

Driving is important in retaining

independence, said Frost-Steward, who said driving allows control over daily decision-making, such as when to go to the grocery store or schedule appointments.

For many older adults, driving also is a symbol of competence, said Frost-Steward, who identified three major types of health concerns that can affect driving ability:

- Changes in vision.
- Changes in physical health.
- Changes in cognitive function.

"Changes in vision are a common concern, as a decline in depth perception, peripheral vision and the ability to manage glare that could result from the aging process, an accident, injury or other medical condition can make driving more

difficult, she said. Eye conditions, such as cataracts, glaucoma, macular degeneration and diabetic eye disease may create blind spots in vision.

"Visual attention is another issue," said Frost-Steward, who explained that this is a term used to describe the ability to manage a changing environment. For example, in approaching a stop sign, a driver will need to consider other cars either stopped at or approaching the stop sign or intersection, which driver has the right-of-way and pedestrians in his or her decision-making process.

A decline or other change in physical health also can be a determining factor, she said.

Flexibility, strength and coordination also are important for safe driving because a driver will need to be able to rotate his or her neck to look from side to side to view road conditions and traffic and to turn around to check before backing up or parallel parking.

Some physical limitations may be able to be addressed by health care professionals or modifications to a vehicle, she said.

The third factor that can affect a person's ability to drive is a change in cognitive functioning.

To drive safely, a driver needs to be able to make judgments, such as when it is safe to make a left turn or to react quickly to a change in traffic conditions. Examples might

include a sudden stop or need to change lanes.

Cognitive functioning can be affected by a variety of factors. For example, if taking one or more prescribed or over-the-counter medications or supplements, a driver is urged to consult with his or her doctor or pharmacist to rule out negative drug interactions or side effects that could slow driving response times.

Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia also can interfere with cognitive functioning, said Frost-Steward said. In the earliest stage of dementia, some older adults are able to pass an on-the-road driving test. As diseases that affect the brain progress, drivers may get lost in

familiar places, may lose the ability to comprehend traffic signs and may lose awareness of how their driving is affecting others.

Adult children and others who serve as caregivers are encouraged to ask to ride along occasionally to observe driving capacity, she said.

"The topic can be challenging," said Frost-Steward, who recommended working with a driver in question and his or her health care providers to understand and address medical concerns.

When driving is no longer an option, Frost-Steward encourages family and caregivers to develop alternative transportation that will keep the former driver connected.

matters of record

Real Estate

The following real estate transactions have been reported by the Sherman County register of deeds.

Darlene L. Feikert conveys and warrants to Brian D. Brent and Laura L. Brent, the NW/4 of Sec. 7, T8S, R40W.

Reva J. Bauman and Jerry

Bauman to Teresa L. Richardson and Terry L. Richardson, an undivided 1/2 interest in SE/4 of Sec. 32, T9S, R42W.

Kenton T. Grubbs, James C. Grubbs and Donald L. Grubbs, Successor Trustees of the Thomas E. Grubbs Family Trust, to Kenton T. Grubbs, Trustee of the Grubbs

Farm Land Trust dated August 27, 2011, the S/2 of Sec. 7, T7S, R38W; NE/4 of Sec. 7, T7S, R38W; NW/4 of Sec. 7, T7S, R38W.

Gregory Dane Shores and Tasha Jo Shores, quit claim to Gregory Dane Shores, Lots 4, 5 and 6, Block 37, Second Addition to City of Goodland.

Bankwest of Kansas conveys and warrants to LB Financial Solutions, Inc., a tract of land in SW/4 of Sec. 19, T8S, R39W.

Kanorado Cooperative Association conveys and warrants to Frontier Ag, Inc., Lot 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12, except W10' of each said lot, in Block 3, Cody's Addition to

Town of Kanorado; a tract of land beginning at NW corner of NW/4 of Sec. 29, T8S, R42W; a tract of land in NE/4 of Sec. 29, T8S, R42W; a tract of land in NE/4 of Sec. 29, T8S, R42W; a tract of land in NE/4 of Sec. 29, T8S, R42W; a tract of land in NW/4 of Sec. 28, T8S, R42W.

Janet Johnson and Cora House,

Trustees of the Lowell A. and Thelma L. Chatfield Trust dated May 15, 1991, to Jeffrey L. Dinkel and Amber Jeanne Fromholtz, Lots 17, 18, 19 and 20, Block 75, Subdivision of Block to Original Town of Goodland.

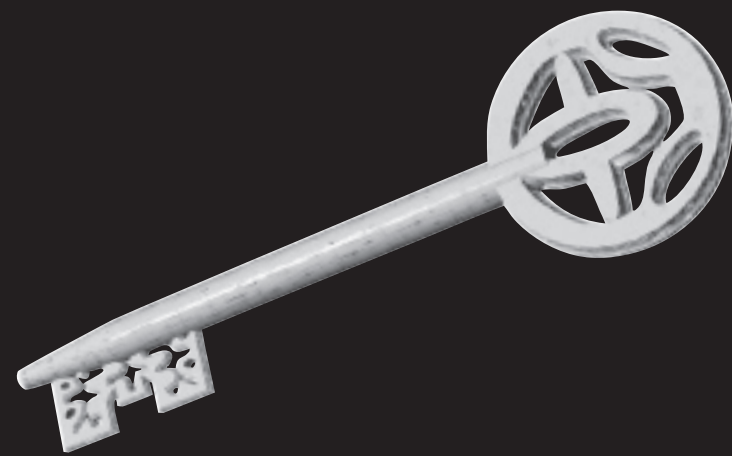
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