



Ralph Guarasci

Reflections of a New Driver Granddaughter Tells All In Interview with Grandpa

Our granddaughter has been driving since October 2022. She agreed to sit down with me to share some of her experiences.

- | | |
|--|--|
| Q. When are you most likely to use your car? | A. Every day and most evenings |
| Q. Do you have a curfew? | A. 8:00pm to 10:30pm depending on the day |
| Q. Do you ask permission to take the car? | A. I ask permission to go places, not to drive |
| Q. What car expenses do you cover? | A. Gas and I give mom \$200 per month |
| Q. Do you allow eating in your car? | A. Yes. I hate crumbs so I vacuum often |
| Q. Do you allow music in your car? | A. Yes. I prefer music to silence |
| Q. Do you allow cell phone use in your car? | A. Yes, I use hands free |
| Q. Do your parents track you when you're driving? | A. Yes, using Life 360 they can follow me. |
| Q. Have you ever bumped another car? | A. No |
| Q. Has anyone ever honked their horn at you? | A. Yes, if I don't turn right on red fast enough |
| Q. If the posted speed is 35, how fast do you drive? | A. 40 and I still get passed all the time |
| Q. Do you drive on the highways | A. No |
| Q. What do you like best about having a license? | A. The independence |
| Q. Do you watch for police? | A. Yes. On Clubview Dr in Worthington Hills |
| Q. What intersections worry you? | A. I270 and Sawmill Rd because its so busy |
| Q. What situations make you nervous? | A. Clearing the intersection on a left hand turn |
| Q. Do you limit passengers to one non-family? | A. No. Sometimes I will drive 3-4 friends |
| Q. What about the legal limitation on non-family? | A. Most people follow that at first. Then ease up. |
| Q. What irritates you about other drivers? | A. People that tailgate |



The Perils of a Left Turn

As a new driver Cameron has learned that drivers don't always stop for yellow lights—or even red. To enter the neighborhood where she lives, she has to make a left hand turn from Hard Rd. “Approaching traffic has just left 315 so they're still driving fast” she said. “Sometimes the light is a green arrow which is a relief. If not, the cars are coming fast and I know some people are trying to beat the light. Sometimes there is another car behind me that also wants to turn left. It's a lot of pressure”.

Gatlinburg Sky Bridge A Warning About Pedestrian Safety



During a recent visit to Gatlinburg TN, Lynn and I crossed the scenic Sky Bridge. Although she is a thrill seeker, she was petrified by the swaying of the bridge. I generally don't like thrills but very much enjoyed the 700 ft long cable bridge.

I got a kick out of the Safety messages, especially "No lifting of children to the top of, or over the railings". It's a 500' drop!

To learn more I contacted an attorney that defends liability claims. Safety warnings can be critical. His suggestion is to include pictures along with the wording. To cover all the bases, consider a set of warnings in Spanish.



General Liability Claim Settled 16 Years After Injury Coverage Never Intended, Court Orders Insurance Company to Pay

Our agency wrote a business liability policy for a company that manufactured pollution control equipment. Due to the hazardous nature of the item, no product liability insurance was provided. On 9/3/06 a worker was injured while cleaning the equipment. Being a product liability claim, it was denied by the insurance company. Our customer understood and agreed that no coverage applied.

The injury took place in Alabama. The injured worker engaged legal counsel to compel the insurance company to provide coverage. Thru litigation, the insurance company was forced to honor the claim. All appeals by the insurance company thru the Alabama court system were unsuccessful. The matter was settled in mediation for \$750,000. Plus the legal bills for the insurance company were in excess of \$200,000.

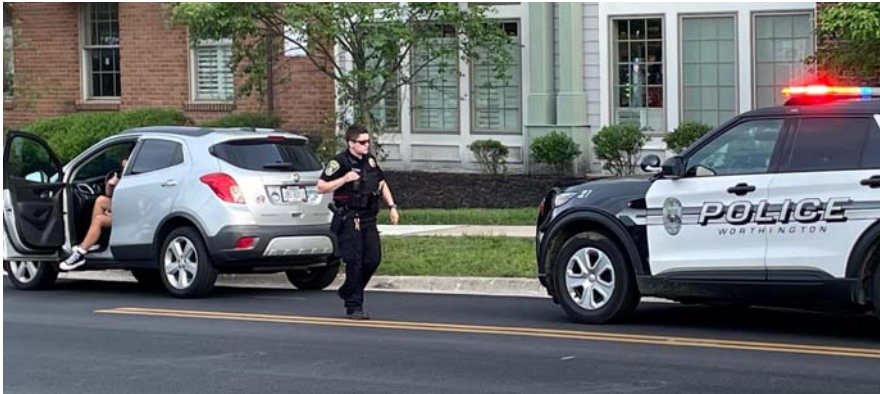
Rate Increase Too Much For Long Time Customer

Prices industrywide are increasing for personal home and auto insurance. There are many reasons including harsh weather and claims inflation. After receiving a rate increase of 12.6%, I got this email from a long time customer.

As of 4/25 we are switching our family insurance coverage. The new agent will be sending cancellation notices. We have enjoyed working with your agency over the past many years. However, the latest premium increase was just too much. The new coverage is appreciably less, important given our status as seniors on a fixed income. Thanks for all of your past assistance.

We don't get communication of this type very often. Our rate of retention in personal lines is over 95%. That includes accounting for people that move away, quit driving, or sell their property.

One reason our renewal rate is high is our ability to move customers to a new company within our agency. A recent example is a customer that experienced a rate increase from \$4,812 to \$6,818. We shopped for him and found quotes as low as \$5,181.



Are Officers Issuing Fewer Traffic Tickets?

An agency customer operates several construction companies. Each has a large fleet of trucks. He's convinced that police officers are writing fewer tickets. I did a little research and he's on to something.

One reason is the shortage of officers. Writing a ticket and doing the back office report takes up valuable time. According to an experienced claim adjuster, some reports are too brief and no longer very useful.

Unless there are injuries, it appears officers are not visiting accident scenes. That started during COVID for the safety of the officers.

Even if there are injuries, the officers are less inclined to issue a citation. The determination of fault is left to the insurance companies.

A former police chief told me a traffic stop often turns up people wanted for crimes. Plus a traffic stop may reveal illegal weapons. That's especially true between midnight and 4:00am.

“The Streets are Too Dangerous for an Old Man” 94 Year Old Gives Up Driving

We got a cancellation notice in the mail from a long term customer. A post-it note was attached to the form:

“Please cancel my car insurance. I am 94 years old. My wife and son say the streets are too dangerous for an old man like me. I sold my car”.

I'm reminded of my own parents. In her early 80's, mom suffered an arm injury in a fall. She was not allowed to drive during her 3 month recovery. Mom's mental state was in decline. Our family decided that would be the end of her driving. She went along without saying much.

Dad continued to drive for several years after mom stopped. I think he was scraping other cars because the front of both sides of his car had paint marks. I don't remember exactly how we convinced him to give up the car but I do remember donating it to charity. I watched as the tow truck lifted it onto the trailer. It was unexpectedly emotional to watch.



Frantic Call During Winter Storm Elliott

Ohioans won't soon forget the record cold just before last Christmas. Our agency received many calls from people with burst pipes. Some calls were right away, others not until January, and one as late as March.

I got a call from our next door neighbor on Dec 24th. “I'm away with the family for the holiday. I never expected it to turn this cold. I hear pipes are freezing all over town. Will you go next door and shut off my water? I will give you the garage code to get in”.

I checked for water upon entering the house. Fortunately, no issues. After I turned off his water, I asked if he wanted me to drain the pipes (photo). He said not to worry about it—so I didn't. What about the hot water heater? Maybe he wanted me to adjust the setting. “It's already on the vacation setting. I did that before I left”.

Customer Finds Answer with Annuity A Place to Put Almost \$300,000 to Work

Scott Egelhoff, a partner in our business, helped one of his customers navigate an unusual situation. A man had two life insurance policies with almost \$300,000 of cash value. In his late 70's he saw no need to keep the life policies. But what to do with all the cash value?

Thru Cincinnati Life Insurance Company, Scott showed his customer an annuity. It's a product we didn't know too much about. When the customer showed interest, Scott took a course to learn more. He also involved the company rep who handled the details.

The customer will earn 5% on the money rolled from the life policies. The earnings are tax deferred. He can take money out at a time of his choosing. According to the company rep, many people buy annuities and never take the money out. It goes to the beneficiary without going thru probate.

According to the company rep, annuities are often bought by people that roll over a bank CD. The high interest rate and favorable tax treatment are attractive features.

The Work- From-Home World I'm Starting to Get it

I've never understood the work from home trend. Even during the pandemic, I came to the office as I have for nearly 40 years. I tried to work from home for a few days but got nothing accomplished.

I spend part of the winter in FL. My son suggested that I work remotely. I thought it was worth a try so he set me up.

Well, let me tell you it was quite an experience. No need to set the alarm clock. The dog got walked at 7:30 instead of 6:00. I sat down to my computer at 8:00 in sweats and a tee shirt. I didn't shower until 9:00. I worked in 30 minute bursts followed by periods of personal pursuits such as laundry, chores, dog walking, and golf practice.

The remote office helped me stay current. I was able to stay engaged with our customers and staff. After all, when I'm in Ohio these are largely digital relationships anyway. I have a better appreciation for why people (especially working moms) like to work from home.

Long Car Trip Highlights Differences in Driving Styles

The day after Christmas my wife Lynn and I leave cold and gray Ohio on our drive to warm and sunny Ft Myers FL. The first day we make Macon GA. Then we finish on day two. My brother also has a place in FL. He drives it straight from Columbus but that's not for me. I get too drowsy and prefer not to drive in the dark.

Most of the drive is on I75. I like to drive in the right lane at a comfortable speed a few miles above the limit. That way I can relax, take in the scenery, and drive worry-free. Lynn prefers to drive in the left lane at higher speeds. It's aggravating to her when I lock in behind a car in the right lane. "Why don't you pass this guy?" she asks. On the other hand, I remind her the left lane is for passing, not full time travel.

A few years ago Lynn was driving south on I75 in northern KY. The speed limit changed from 70 to 55 and she was pulled over by an officer. He clocked her at 78. 'Oh no', I thought. 'That's 23 MPH over the limit. This could be a serious violation that will show up on her motor vehicle report'. Insurance people think that way. I also wondered about a possible court appearance.

After about 10 minutes in the cruiser, the officer returned. "I'm going to do you a favor today. The ticket will show 56 miles per hour, just 1 over the limit". I was relieved. Why would he write the ticket for just one over? For a short time I wondered if he wanted a little reward. I considered slipping him \$20. On the other hand, that seemed like bribery so I decided against it.

Insurance Agency of Ohio

7100 N High St, Suite 300, Worthington OH 43085

(ph) 614-848-3000 or ralph@iaofohio.com