

from our readers

# Is columnist naive about safety of seatbelts?

**Editor:**  
Some things demand a reply. And Mike Scanlon's column about seat belts and Canadians demands such a reply. First, anyone with such an abysmal lack of knowledge of the laws of physics can certainly be expected to show other deficiencies. As a fourth generation Detroit and a neighbor of Canadians, since remarks and platitudes about that neighbor strike me as coming from a person whose "expertise" derives from one or two excursions into that country. The Canadians' "stupidity" has given them a lower death rate from auto accidents, a lower crime rate and cleaner roadways than we have in the U.S.  
For the writer to be so naive as to think that he has any control over his body in a car which is tumbling end-over-end shows that the laws of physics do not apply in his case. The G-forces involved would make it impossible to hang onto anything to keep his body from flying around inside the car. The usual result of an unrestrained occupant in such a case would be to have that person go halfway out the door or through the windshield and be crushed

as the car continues to tumble. (A case I've seen a number of times.) The shoulder belt does not prevent the upper torso from being pushed to the side as the roof comes down. The driver in a belt, in this case, would probably end up lying down on the seat, trapped, but not crushed by the caved-in roof.  
So, Mike Scanlon beat the overwhelming odds in favor of seat belt use. Bully for him. Had he been wearing the belt, he might not have lost control in the first place. It takes some real doing to make a modern car turn turtle. A driver out of position and hanging on to the steering wheel for dear life in a violent maneuver is out of control. A seat belt would have kept the driver in the seat and in control where anyone but an inept driver might have avoided the rollover by making proper steering corrections.  
By law, every car must have a steering and suspension system in good order. Brakes must be in order, tires must be adequate and windshields must be free of cracks that hinder vision. These are required to keep the car under control. A seat belt keeps the driver behind the wheel where he will con-

ting the car driverless. Whatever excuse that driver could have used to explain away not using a belt and keeping control would have sounded hollow. So what's wrong with a mandatory seat belt law? Isn't a law valid that may protect pedestrians and other drivers from your out-of-control vehicle?  
Not using seat belts is contributing to the high cost of insurance. Occupants who break a windshield or instrument panel, break off shifters or seats will

often make the difference between a repairable and a totalled car. And this is not counting the shattered face that went into the windshield or the busted knees and broken arms that probably will require plastic surgery and hospitalization. The human repair procedures are far more expensive than any damage that might have occurred to the car. A mandatory belt law, strictly enforced, should at least prevent insurance costs from spiraling from their present rates. It might even keep a few lawyers who specialize in auto-accident damage awards from getting any richer. It seems ludicrous to see a highly polished car with stickers indicating complete rust-proofing being driven by an unrestrained driver. He's very concerned about protecting his car against any malady, but not worried about protecting himself, other drivers, their passengers or pedestrians.  
James F. Carpenter  
Farmington Hills

## Reporter does injustice to teacher

**Editor:**  
Regarding the article "Public Infringement on private enterprise?" by Brian Murphy, July 16, I feel that the reporter did a great injustice to Mary Lou Grant. In all the years I have known Mrs. Grant I have heard her say good positive statements about Farmington Public Schools. Mr. Murphy's quote: "I have very strong feelings about what the Farmington Public Schools are doing" is correct except

Mr. Murphy didn't continue to express Mrs. Grant's strong feelings in the proper context.  
He chose only what he thought good for his article and in doing so made it look as if Mrs. Grant was against Farmington Public Schools. She has spent too many years involved in the school system to "blame" it for anything. When she ever questions the system she does so with constructive criticism and speaks directly with the people involved and offers her help if needed. She has referred numerous children to all themselves of many of the special classes and services offered by Farmington Public Schools.  
All preschool nurseries have membership drives each year to fill their classes. Of course, the economy and high unemployment rate effect membership. Farmington Cooperative Nur-


sery is not in competition with the Public School Preschool.  
I feel a definite statement should be printed in reference to the article to properly and correctly show Mrs. Grant's views regarding Farmington Public Schools and preschools.  
Chris Bartlett  
Northville

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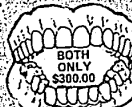
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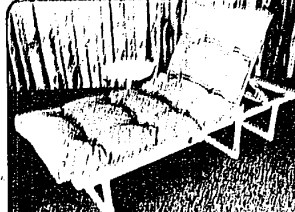
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