Reducing the Number of Bad Drivers

Dear Editor:

As a teenager, I was afraid to get my driver’s license because of so many bad drivers; I had a healthy fear of driving. When I finally got my license, I was a defensive driver. My wife often tells me that I am going to get an ulcer from stressing out about others’ bad driving habits. On the contrary, I just want to be safe from foolish drivers when I am on the road. Unfortunately, Mecklenburg County has too many bad drivers, which are a danger to other drivers; therefore, the training and test for receiving a driver’s license should be made more difficult.

Drivers in this city do not have to wait for a very long time before coming in contact with a reckless driver. Whether [me] is merging onto the crowded highway or onto a one-way city street, bad drivers can be found everywhere. I cannot tell you how many times I have heard people defend their driving with the statement, “I am a city driver.” That is not a valid defense for illegal driving habits. Whether a driver is ignorantly or willingly breaking traffic laws, they are potentially endangering all other drivers and pedestrians with whom they come in contact. Such bad driving habits include changing lanes while in an intersection, failing to use turn signals, going faster than the speed limit, and using high-beam lights towards oncoming traffic.

More examples of bad driving could be added to the list, but my point is clear: by breaking these laws, reckless drivers are endangering the citizens of this city.
I have personally experienced the hazards caused by bad drivers. Both my wife and I were involved in a car accident in May of last year. The day was rainy with poor road conditions. I was driving thirty miles per hour in a thirty-five mile per hour zone, while ahead of me was a pregnant nineteen-year-old driver (with suspended license) and her two-year-old child in the passenger seat. Apparently thinking that a turn signal was not important, she decided to hit the brakes and stop the car for her unannounced turn. I immediately hit my own breaks and skidded twenty-five feet on the wet pavement into her bumper. My car was totaled. Ultimately, she caused damage to herself and placed her children in danger by failing to obey the law and signal a turn. Irresponsible driving habits put my life and the lives of those I love in danger. Bad driving is not an asset to society and it must be countered with a proper response. Therefore, I believe we need to do a better job of teaching people how to drive. When I took the driver’s safety course in my hometown, I studied the driver’s manual book for months before taking the test. After taking the test, I was surprised by how easy it was. I did not even need to study for it to have passed. I believe that most young drivers are not being taught much about driving before they are given a license. The laws of driving must be taught and learned if bad driving is to be eliminated. Because the test is so easy, a young person has no excuse to neglect studying for it. I would like to see the teaching and testing become much more extensive. But in order to require more of the student, more must be given by the teacher. I would like to see the county add a weekly class for new drivers in which the applicant would receive a lecture and not just read a manual. In that session, lectures should be given from law enforcement and first responders. I know that such classes do exist, but they are often not required, but just encouraged. I want every license applicant to be trained about driving and then tested to reflect
that training. Is this added teaching and testing going to be an inconvenience? Yes. But I believe this can protect and save the lives that are endangered every day by bad drivers.

In conclusion, Mecklenburg County’s responsibility is to protect its citizens from bad drivers because they are a danger to innocent lives and themselves. The county’s further duty is to ensure that more effective forms of teaching are incorporated into the process of obtaining a driver’s license. Almost everyone who drives has no doubt experienced a bad driver, and the experience seems to only be getting worse. We cannot afford to continue allowing people to begin driving before properly teaching them how to drive safely. People know they should not drive drunk or text while driving, but do they know the basics of driving?

Sincerely,

First Name Last Name