

Lifestyles

Getting driver's license wasn't a trip through the fast lane

Posted: Sep 30, 2011, 5:00 am

By [Catherine Cojocaru](#)

The Post-Bulletin, Rochester MN

Receiving a driver's license is an exciting milestone in a teenager's life. I can now say this with certainty, because last week, I finally passed my driver's test — on my fourth try. You read that correctly. A relatively smart teenage girl with only slight astigmatism managed to completely tank a simple road test, not once, but thrice.



How did I get here? I completed Driver's Ed, obtained my permit, and finished my driving hours on time. But I failed my first exam in June 2010, and I was devastated. Many friends had received their licenses by then, and soon I'd be the only one who didn't have some car keys on their lanyard — quite the status symbol in high school.

I signed up for a subsequent test in August.

August came, and another test failed. This time, my error was pretty blatant — I had hit a pole while attempting the acrobatic 90-degree backup. I felt like a freak. Maybe I'd just give up on driving and ride my bike everywhere. I'd be saving the environment ... out of shame.

In the meantime, my extracurriculars

started to intensify, with school dances, musical practices, speech team meets and Baker's Square outings. I began to rely on some dear friends to drive me everywhere. While even today they say they don't mind taking me places, I knew that the time to get out of their hair was fast approaching.

When I took my third exam in June, I was confident. I had practiced extensively and followed every rule I was aware of. Driving back to the DMV, I was sure I had passed.

Then I was informed that since I didn't "cover the bike lane" on a street while making a right turn, I had failed. I was outraged — this couldn't be a real rule. When I got home, I researched, and to my surprise, it was true.

Everything seemed to be going well during my fourth test, but about 10 minutes in, the examiner told me to drive back to the DMV. I kept my cool on the outside, but I was truly panicking that I had already broken another unknown rule.

"Did I pass?" I asked, voice shaking.

With his nod, I felt a huge weight come off of my shoulders.

It's still sort of surreal that I can finally go

places by myself, not having to burden others and shorten parties. While I do feel a bit sheepish telling people that I only recently obtained my license, I think that this trial shows that things truly get better in time.

Catherine Cojocar is a senior at Lourdes High School. To respond to an opinion column, send an email to life@postbulletin.com.