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A driving myth

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I've decided that from now on, every time I take my vehicle out for a ride I'm going to wear some solidly constructed footwear. Preferably they should have steel toes, heavy duty leather ankle supports and super grip soles.

No more barefoot driving for me. It's just too dangerous and risky to cruise around town like Tom Sawyer on a log raft.

Ever since they increased the fines for barefoot driving, I have been very aware of the dangers posed by naked feet on a gas pedal and the accidents that have been caused by an errant pinky toe. Except there isn't now, nor has there ever been, a fine for driving barefoot.

I've heard about the barefoot law since I started driving. It's not even a local legend ? it is apparently a driving myth across North America. And yet there is no jurisdiction anywhere that has a law requiring people to wear shoes behind the wheel.

It's just one of those myths that for some reason becomes part of the general knowledge.

A few years ago it was announced that you should drink a minimum of six full size glasses of water per day to stay healthy. For a while you saw that advice everywhere.

I'm not sure how it started, but I'll bet the companies that fill plastic bottles from a standard city water system and give it a French sounding name had something to do with it.

The new way of paying someone else for the same water you get out of your household tap was a great marketing scheme and convincing people they were going to shrivel into dried out prunes if they didn't carry a bottle of water around with them at all times sure made some people rich.

However, all the health conscious people who downed bottled H2O like it was some kind youth regenerating elixir thought nothing of tossing the empty bottles out of a car or leaving them on a beach for some poor whale to eat after high tide carried it out to sea.

There are millions and millions and millions of those empty plastic bottles discarded carelessly around the planet.

The myth of the ?six glasses a day' rule fell apart when health officials finally figured out a solution.

If you need water, your body has a built gauge that monitors your water level and tells you when to top up to maintain optimum health ? it's called being thirsty.

Scientists are now working on a way to determine if there is some way your body could also tell you if it's time to eat something.

Another myth, which I didn't believe from the start, was that cattle, that's ?cows' to the lay person, were highly responsible for greenhouse gasses and global warming.

Scientific ?studies' showed that cattle were producing methane gas at an alarming rate. Enough in fact, to cause serious damage to the environment.

Yes, those cows you see in the field on your way to work are firing out atomic blasts of gas that ultimately result in glaciers melting and ice bergs dropping into the Atlantic in yet another attempt to foil a large passenger carrying ship.

That showstopper of a news flash quickly went away. It's not like cows were blasting clouds of the offending methane over the fields like the Bhopal gas disaster.

The methane gas spilled into the atmosphere by Bessie and her friends actually could be compared to pouring a cup of water into an Olympic size swimming pool.

Giving children sugar does not make them hyperactive. In fact sugar has no impact on a kid's behaviour at all.

I've often heard parents lament that their child will be climbing the walls and swinging like Tarzan on a chandelier after having a sugary treat.

However it turns out that is just another myth. Sugar does not have the power to turn your five year-old into Spider Man.

Eight of ten dentists, however, would probably agree it doesn't do their teeth much good.

Then there are the two myths that have always bugged me ? mostly because I was taught them as science fact by a high school science teacher.

He told us that glass is actually a liquid, and is constantly moving. The evidence was apparent in old factories where the glass took on a marbled effect and was thicker at the bottom. It turns out that is just because they didn't a good job of making the glass. Otherwise those century old antique goblets you find in old stores would be kind of wilted by now.

The same teacher told us that if you dropped a penny off the Skylon Tower in Niagara Falls, where we lived, it would hit terminal velocity and upon striking a person on the head would go completely through their skull and kill them.

He should have read the part of the book about weight, air resistance, and that sort of thing.

These and other urban myths will always be around, but I'm still going to wear my shoes when I drive.