

LIFE IN POETRY

# Time Flies By

BY TED KOOSER

U.S. POET LAUREATE, 2004-2006

I'd guess that nearly everyone is aware that time seems to speed up as we age. Whenever I say that something happened ten years ago, my wife reminds me that it was twenty. Here's a poem about time by the distinguished Maryland poet, Linda Pastan.

COUNTING BACKWARDS

How did I get so old,  
I wonder,  
contemplating  
my 67th birthday.  
Dyslexia smiles:  
I'm 76 in fact.

There are places  
where at 60 they start  
counting backwards;  
in Japan  
they start again  
from one.

But the numbers  
hardly matter.  
It's the physics  
of acceleration I mind,  
the way time speeds up  
as if it hasn't guessed

the destination—  
where look!  
I see my mother  
and father bearing a cake,  
waiting for me  
at the starting line.

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## Check Immunization For Youth And College Freshmen As They Head Back To School

PIERRE — A state health official is urging parents to make sure their high school and college freshmen get a meningitis immunization before the school year starts. Parents are also encouraged to get a booster dose of pertussis, or whooping cough, vaccine for their 11-12 year old children.

"South Dakota parents do a good job keeping their infants and toddlers appropriately immunized but too many aren't aware that adolescents also need vaccinations," said Bonnie Jameson, Disease Prevention Administrator for the Department of Health. "Now is the time to make sure they're up to date on their meningitis and pertussis vaccinations."

College freshmen living in dorms and unvaccinated kids entering high school are among the high-risk groups for meningococcal disease and should be vaccinated.

The whooping cough vaccine series is recommended for children at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 15-18 months, and 4-6 years. A booster dose is recommended at 11-12 years as immunity begins to wane.

A bacterial infection, meningococcal disease is an inflammation of the tissues covering the brain and spinal cord. Symptoms include fever, severe headache, stiff neck, vomiting and a rash. Prompt treatment can prevent disability and death. Ten to 14 percent of people with the disease die and up

to 19 percent of survivors may suffer permanent disabilities such as hearing loss, limb amputation or brain disease. South Dakota has reported 2 cases of meningococcal disease to date in 2011, one child and one elderly adult.

Whooping cough is also a serious illness. It causes uncontrollable coughing, rib fractures, pneumonia, loss of consciousness and even death. Young children are at highest risk, with two-thirds of those under age 1 who get it needing hospitalization. There have been four cases reported in South Dakota to date in 2011.

Meningococcal vaccine is available from family health care providers and campus student health centers. The department provides the vaccine for those 11-18 years of age who are eligible for the federal Vaccines for Children Program (Medicaid eligible, Native American or Alaskan Native, uninsured or underinsured). The vaccine is free for these children but providers may charge an administration fee.

The department provides the childhood series of whooping cough vaccine and the booster dose free for 11-12 year olds. Providers may charge an administration fee.

To find a vaccine provider, see <http://doh.sd.gov/LocalOffices/Vaccine.aspx>. Learn more about meningitis or whooping cough at <http://doh.sd.gov/DiseaseFacts/>.

# Shaking Car Is Not Something To Mess With

BY TOM AND RAY MAGLIOZZI  
www.cartalk.com

Dear Tom and Ray:

Hi! My husband and I now live in the Dominican Republic. We have a secondhand 1998 Toyota Corolla LE. We live in the mountains, which we access on some paved, some nonpaved and some terribly potholed roads for 17 miles after we leave the nice highways along the south of the island. The problem: When the car gets up to 55-70 mph on a regular road, the steering wheel shakes. My hubby, Jim, said, "Tires need balancing and alignment," which we got done, and guess what? It still shakes. I was thinking that because of the condition of the roads to get home, the front end is getting shaken to get heaven and something else is loose. What do you guys think? — Donna and Jim

**TOM:** Well, the first thing I'd do is stop driving at 55-70 mph until you figure it out. When the steering wheel is shaking at high speed, it could be a sign of impending doom. It might not be, but do you really want to find out the hard way?

**RAY:** The first thing I'd check for is a bad tire. A tire with tread separation, particularly if it's a front tire, can cause your wheel to shake.

**TOM:** You usually can feel a bad tire at low speeds. So find a smooth road somewhere,



CAR TALK

Tom and Ray Magliozzi

and try driving at 5 or 10 mph with your hands very lightly on the wheel. If you have a front tire with tread separation, you'll usually feel the steering wheel tug a little bit to one side every time that spot in the tire comes around.

**RAY:** If you feel that, you can figure out which tire it is by swapping one of the front tires with a rear tire and seeing if the shaking goes away or diminishes. If it does, you've found the bad tire, and you can replace it before you have a blowout.

**TOM:** If you don't feel any shaking in the wheel at low speed, then it's more likely to be

a bad ball joint or a bad tire rod end. There are two ways to figure that out. One is to find a mechanic who knows enough about front ends to be able to get under the car and really inspect it for you.

**RAY:** The other option is to drive it, and if it's one of those two things, it'll eventually break while you're driving, and you'll end up in the Caribbean Sea — assuming you make it past all the palm trees and rocks on the way down the mountainside.

**TOM:** Then when you hit the water, you can look at each other and say, "I guess it was a bad ball joint, hon."

**RAY:** Needless to say, we recommend the first approach — soon. Good luck, Donna.

Stop the madness! You can stop driving like a knucklehead, and you'll help your car in the process. Learn how your driving habits can harm your car in Tom and Ray's pamphlet "Ten Ways You May Be Ruining Your Car Without Even Knowing It!" Send \$4.75 (check or money order) to Ruin, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475.

Get more Click and Clack in their new book, "Ask Click and Clack: Answers from Car Talk." Got a question about cars? Write to Click and Clack in care of this newspaper, or email them by visiting the Car Talk website at [www.cartalk.com](http://www.cartalk.com).

## Back-To-School Checklist: Supplies, Clothes, Social Security Form

BY JENNIFER HLADKY  
Yankton Social Security Office

If your son or daughter is a high school student turning 18, you've probably spent some time shopping for school supplies and the latest fashions, working out the schedule for the academic year, maybe even looking into colleges.

If your young senior is collecting monthly Social Security benefits, here's one more thing to add to your "Back-to-School" checklist.

To make sure that Social Security benefits continue beyond age 18, eligible students must obtain certification from school officials that they are still in high school and provide it to Social Security. Otherwise, monthly Social Security benefits automatically stop when a student turns 18.

For more information about Social Security student benefits, visit [www.socialsecurity.gov/schoolofficials](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/schoolofficials). The website outlines how the process works with instructions on what the student and school official must do to ensure that benefits continue past the student's 18th birthday. With the appropriate certification, Social Security generally does not stop benefits until the month before the month the student turns 19, or the first month in which he or she is not a full-time high school student, whichever is earlier.

Some students receive Social Security survivors benefits because a parent is deceased. Others may get dependent benefits because their parent receives Social Security retirement or disability benefits. Benefits for minor children generally continue until age 18 — or 19 if they're still in high school. The only exception to this rule is if a student is disabled and eligible for childhood disability benefits. In that case, a separate application for benefits is required.

Social Security's website also includes:

- a downloadable version of the required Student's Statement Regarding School Attendance (Form SSA-1372) that must be completed by the student, certified by the school, and returned to Social Security;
- answers to frequently asked questions for school officials and

students; and

- a field office locator to find the address of your local Social Security office.

So as you're buying school supplies, trying out back-to-school fashions, and figuring out when the holiday break begins, don't forget the important step of visiting [www.socialsecurity.gov/schoolofficials](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/schoolofficials).

MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT SOCIAL SECURITY RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Social Security is a vital program that touches the lives of almost everyone in the country. In part because of its size and in part because of its national impact, there are many myths and misunderstandings about the program.

**Myth:** My Social Security benefits will be based on my last three years of earnings.

**Fact:** Social Security retirement benefits are based on a lifetime of earnings. To figure your benefit, we will add up your highest 35 years of earnings after adjusting each year for inflation. Then we will divide by 420 (the number of months in 35 years) to come up with your average inflation-adjusted monthly wage. Then we apply a formula that replaces a percentage of that monthly wage with a Social Security benefit. Assuming you earn an average income, your retirement benefit would represent about 40 percent of your pre-retirement earnings.

**Myth:** If I take my own Social



Jennifer HLADKY

Security benefit, I am always locked into it. If my husband later dies, I cannot switch to a widow's benefit on his record.

**Fact:** A woman who becomes a widow can switch to benefits on her husband's record if it is to her advantage to do so. (A widower also can make the switch if it pays him more money.)

YOUR QUESTIONS, SOCIAL SECURITY'S ANSWERS

**Question:** What should I do if an employee gives me a Social Security number but cannot produce the card?

**Answer:** Seeing the card is not as important as putting the correct information on the worker's Form W-2. You can verify employee Social Security numbers by using the Social Security Number Verification Service. Just go to [www.socialsecurity.gov/bsv](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/bsv). This online service allows registered employers to verify employee Social Security numbers against Social Security records for wage reporting purposes. If the employee recently applied for a Social Security number but does not yet have a card when you must file the paper Form W-2, enter the words "Applied for" on the Form W-2. If you are filing electronically, enter all zeros (e.g., 000-00-0000) in the Social Security number field. When the employee receives the card, file Copy A of Form W-2C, Corrected Wage and Tax Statement with Social Security to show the em-

ployee's number.

**Question:** Is there a time limit on how long I can receive Social Security disability benefits?

**Answer:** Your disability benefits will continue as long as your medical condition has not improved and you still cannot work. We will review your case at regular intervals to make sure you are still disabled. If you are still disabled when you reach your full retirement age, we will convert your disability benefit to a retirement benefit at the same amount. You can learn more about Social Security disability benefits at our website: [www.socialsecurity.gov/disability](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disability).

**Question:** If both my spouse and I are entitled to Social Security benefits, is there any reduction in our payments because we are married?

**Answer:** No. We calculate lifetime earnings independently to determine each spouse's Social Security benefit amount. When each member of a married couple meets all other eligibility requirements to receive Social Security retirement benefits, each spouse receives a monthly benefit amount based on his or her own earnings. Couples are not penalized because they are married. If one member of the couple earned low wages or failed to earn enough Social Security credits (40) to be insured for retirement benefits, he or she may be eligible to receive benefits as a spouse based on the spouse's work record. Learn more about spouse benefits at [www.socialsecurity.gov/retire2/yoursouse.htm](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/retire2/yoursouse.htm)

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Dr. Dickes was born in Norfolk, NE and grew up in Brookings, SD. She graduated with her undergraduate degree from Creighton University in Omaha, NE. Dr. Dickes earned her Doctor of Osteopathy medical degree (D.O.) from the Des Moines University Osteopathic Medical School in Des Moines, IA. She recently completed her residency at Grandview Hospital in Dayton, OH.

We welcome Dr. Dickes, her husband Chris, and their son John to the community and our practice.

Appointments for Dr. Dickes can be made beginning August 8, 2011.

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