

## Transportation

*by Harry Zirkelbach*

What a fine topic. One not blathered to death.

As a child my favored transport in summer, the feet. Took me everywhere. Seeming never to tire of their duty to please that inquisitive mind, the need for the body to be exercised, kept healthy.

Then winter, the sled. Doing pretty much the same as summer. This new thrill, riding downhill, the eye inches above ground, the white and wondrous world zipping by at seemingly insane speed, the vehicle barely controllable as it passed others joyously pulling their vehicle back to hilltop, again and again, until we all were either exhausted, soaked in sweat, sometimes melted snow, or that call from afar, some Mom, announcing, "It's dinner time, and you still have to study." That sled, first hint of reckless speed, the danger to self or others, inducing obligation and responsibility into consciousness.

Ah, the day arrives, no longer a child, walking and sled still transports. But, there are new horizons. The bicycle is added. It propels to High School for four years, allows pedaling of the daily newspaper after school.

This bonus. That exercise gives a regular income for the first time, coin in the pocket every day. Also, the first business obligation, pay the Publisher promptly. You become an adult. Not quite.

Everyone has a unique tale of their first ownership of an automobile. My wife and I would purchase a home, before either bought an automobile. It's complex. With five years of College completed, I had used only public transportation; occasionally a passenger in a friend's automobile.

Joining the Navy, moving from one location to another by train, finally leaving San Francisco for Hawaii by Aircraft Carrier. Continuous training in Honolulu, learn to drive an automobile, this a Jeep. The Navy issues a driver's license without exam; formal licensing was the States' responsibility, and Hawaii still a possession.

It would be 1946 in Japan that I began to drive regularly. And differently.

The Japanese, when accepting the outside world upon Admiral Perry's 1854 departure, adapted the best features of other countries. One, the English decision to drive forward on the roadway's left side. I would be one of a few Americans who did not have to relearn to drive there, on the wrong side of the road.

Later, the first year as Denver Policeman, I walked or used the bus to get to work. Later that summer, first year of marriage, my wife and I buy a house before the foundation was begun. Near Stapleton, required an auto. That would be a '37 Chevrolet purchased from my brother-in-law. What memories!

In review. Sixty-five years later the train remains my favorite transport. First remembered vehicle ride, the train, from Dad's pass as PRR employee. Much later, Shinkansen Bullet Trains in Japan, most European trains, moving at speeds over 200 mph, riders inside seemingly motionless, except for disappearing scenery.

And this luxury, conversation, as you leave the driving to others.