

Tahoe bear needs driving lessons, wrecks car

By Justin B. Phillips, Contra Costa Times

It was 3:30am, and Brian McCarthy was fast asleep when a bear took his 2002 Toyota Prius for a test drive. The Pleasanton man's car had been parked in the driveway of his west Lake Tahoe cabin.

After wedging itself inside the car, the bear became stuck. Frustrated, hungry and mad, it kicked, scratched, bit and tore at the interior of the hybrid, trying to force a way out as easily as it found its way in.

In its behind-the-wheel rampage, the bear ripped open the seats, bit a chunk out of the steering wheel and damaged the Prius' gear box, shifting the car into neutral.

From the safety of the cabin, the awakened family watched helplessly as the commandeered Prius slowly started rolling out of the driveway.

"Our son was the first one who woke up, and he was watching the bear through the window," McCarthy said. "We were looking out of our bedroom window and from our view, you could look down and see the bear in the car, and its arms were just flailing all over the place, through the windows and everything."

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