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September

Traffic Safety Section

Vol. VIII No. 9

TEXAS HIGH SCHOOLS EXCEL, DOMINATE NATIONAL SAFETY CONFERENCE

The National Student Safety Program's (NSSP) annual conference was dominated by awards and honors which were presented to Texas high schools and their representatives. One of these honors included the election of a Rockdale, Texas, high school senior as president of NSSP.

Darren Martin, elected during the 22nd Annual National Student Safety Conference, held at Spearfish, South Dakota, was one of two Texas high school students to be selected to serve in an NSSP office. Denise Alexander, student representative from Mt. Pleasant High School, Mt. Pleasant, was elected to the NSSP board of directors.

The July 21-24 conference was attended by 310 student delegates representing 23 states. The Texas delegation

consisted of 54 students representing 51 school districts. These students represented those schools which contributed to or conducted outstanding youth safety programs within their respective communities during the 1979-80 school year.

Texas schools also received a majority of the honors at the conference. Plaques were presented to 24 schools from around the country for outstanding achievements in conducting youth safety activities during this past school year. Eleven of these awards were presented to Texas schools. They were: Burkburnett, Caprock of Amarillo, Coronado of El Paso, Crockett of Austin, Graham, Northbrook of Houston, Phyllis Wheatley of San Antonio, Roma, Van Vleck, West Orange-Stark, and Woodboro.

In addition, 15 Texas schools were among 24 from across the U.S. to be presented with certificates of excellence in youth safety activities. They were: Azle, Canyon, Chapel Hill of Tyler, Cisco, DeSoto of High Island, H.M. King of Kingsville, Littlefield, Mansfield, Marshall, Martin of Laredo, Northshore of Galena Park, Rockdale, Stephenville, and Travis of Austin.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission presented



The Texas delegation participates in a work session during the Annual Conference of the National Student Safety Program held in Spearfish, South Dakota.

awards to Crockett High School of Austin and West Orange-Stark of Orange for outstanding achievements in conducting consumer product safety projects.

The Commission also honored Joddie Witte, Texas Education Agency, for his contributions to the promotion of consumer product safety through educational programs.

DEALING WITH MOTOR VEHICLE EMERGENCIES

At least once in a lifetime, every driver will probably face a potentially serious emergency behind the wheel.

It might be a brake failure, a stuck throttle, or an engine fire. The time to plan what to do in these situations is now.

If you lose your brakes completely, try pumping them to bring up brake pressure. If this doesn't work, shift the transmission into a lower gear. Even if your car has an automatic transmission this will

help. Then apply the emergency brake. If you're still out of control on a hill or mountainous road, it may be better to sideswipe a hillside or guard-rail to slow the car down.

In new cars with power steering or brakes, what feels a complete failure could really be just a problem with the power assist. Steering and braking are still possible; it just takes much more physical effort.

In this case, apply steady

(continued on pg. 4)

Safety Tips for Joggers & Drivers

They appear everywhere — sometimes when least expected. Joggers are really "fast moving pedestrians" and the activity is becoming increasingly popular.

We are startled sometimes when a jogger and a car experience a near-accident; that kind of challenge usually results in the driver coming out ahead.

Joggers, consider these safety tips:

Always run or walk facing traffic.

Watch the driver, not only the vehicle. Eye-to-eye contact makes for better communication on each other's movements.

Be aware of the things around you — when you're tired you're no longer alert to traffic.

Wear light colored clothing (reflectORIZED) for higher visibility. It makes you more recognizable.

Joggers have a right to their space on the road, of course, but drivers and bicyclists have similar rights.

Safety is no accident!



Denise Alexander, Mt. Pleasant, and Darren Martin, Rockdale, were elected NSSP officers for 1980-81.

AROUND THE STATE

FT. WORTH --During the Spring session of Safety Town, 658 students took part in classes conducted by the local police department.

BIG SPRING --A bicycle rodeo was held for students at Immaculate Heart School.

GALENA PARK --The SDHPT recently provided funds to the City to implement a sign replacement program to insure compliance with the *Texas Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices*.

COLLEYVILLE --A construction and barricading use ordinance was passed and is in effect within the City.

MIDLAND --A motorcycle instructor training course was held at Midland College.

WACO --Central Freight Lines received a President's Energy Efficiency Award for pursuing an aggressive fuel conservation program involving training of drivers in fuel efficiency techniques and the use of innovative fuel-saving devices in fleet vehicles.

Traffic Safety Education Texas-Style

By Susan Bryant

This is the second in a three part series on the multi-faceted Texas Traffic Safety education program.

One of the major reasons for the success of the traffic safety education program in Texas is the joint cooperation among agencies and private concerns. The school safety handbook, for example, was developed by a committee of administrators, teachers, and students. Consultation and review was provided by the Texas Safety Association, the Texas Association of Student Councils, and the state office of traffic safety.

This cooperation is also evident in another important program, the Texas Youth Safety Program, a combined effort on the part of those same agencies. The TYSP involves high school students in establishing a safety committee, and planning and conducting traffic safety projects in the school and at home. Schools which conduct outstanding programs are recognized at the annual state student council conference and are given the opportunity to send a high school student to

the National Student Safety Conference. Last year's president of the national organization is a member of the Texas program.

The emphasis on education for the young is based on a belief in the need to teach tomorrow's drivers today, but there is also a significant emphasis on the driver of today. Mass communication and person-to-person communication are used ostensibly to reach the adult driver. Television, radio, and newspapers are involved in conveying traffic safety information to the public on both a regional and statewide basis. Throughout Texas certain weeks are set aside for particular emphasis, and material conveyed in a multi-media manner. Each spring, for example, the Traffic Safety Section of the SDHPT and the Texas Motorcycle Roadriders Association (TMRA) unite in a motorcycle safety program during Motorcycle Safety Week. This program has

SYMBOL SIGNS MORE READILY UNDERSTOOD BY YOUNG DRIVER

Recently, the number and variety of symbol signs conveying highway information have increased. Symbol signs can convey the same message as conventional printed signs but in less space. A Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) contract study was conducted to determine whether symbol signs constitute a safety problem for older drivers, who are familiar with word messages and may have particular difficulty adapting to new symbols.

indicator instruments. Subjects simulated driving on a two-lane country road. Subjects ac-

Subjects 50 years and older incorrectly identified two-thirds of the symbol meanings. However, after learning the meaning of the signs, subjects of all ages reduced recognition errors to 20 percent or less.

Moreover, after being retested 1 week later, no age group showed an appreciable amount of forgetting. The researchers concluded that elderly persons do not have serious problems in learning and retaining road sign symbol information.



SCHOOL ZONES

tivated controls to approach, turn, or slow in response to road and road signs on the simulator screen. The subjects indicated when they first recognized a symbol sign and later explained the meaning to the experimenter.

Driver age affected the sign recognition distance. Older persons were closer to the signs than were younger persons before recognizing sign meaning; i.e., older persons took more time to recognize the sign meaning. The effect was thought to be caused by slowed mental processes rather than by impaired visual acuity. Older persons did not show degradation in acuity.

In preliminary trials, subjects 21 to 24 years old failed to identify slightly less than one-half of the symbol meanings.

considering the great migration of new Texans into the state.

Since both these programs are short-lived—"Metrowatch" lasts between eight to ten months—a continuous forum for traffic safety is provided through a weekly anecdotal column called DRIVELINE, which is distributed to all newspapers and major in-house newsletters in the state. DRIVELINE is a conglomeration of interesting facts, helpful hints, and important statistics on multiple safety-related topics and can be reprinted full length or used to provide fillers.

Along with the column, a calendar and traffic safety cartoon is distributed. The calendar highlights important dates



STOP AHEAD

Subjects from 21 to 75 years old were tested on their abilities to read, understand, and remember 72 symbol signs that conveyed warnings, regulations, and motorist services. The study was conducted using a driving simulator equipped with steering wheel, brake, accelerator pedal, and

typically included posters, brochures, and public service messages produced by the Traffic Safety Section and distributed by the members of the TMRA.

On a more local basis, media campaigns are designed for the major problem areas—the larger metropolitan regions—based upon the top three accident causes and with local flavor. "Metrowatch," in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, for example, is a program conducted through the local traffic safety agencies with the advice and assistance of the media, particularly the public service directors. "Metroplex—A Great Place to LIVE" was a logical choice for a slogan this year,



SLIPPERY WHEN WET

NOTE: Research conducted by Texas Transportation Institute indicates the most commonly misunderstood symbol signs in Texas are those representing the messages stop ahead, signal ahead, slippery when wet, pavement with transition, advanced school zone warning, advanced rail warning, and roadway alignment signs.

each month to encourage additional editorials or stories. The cartoon is available for reprinting and coordinates with the



month's particular topic. After two years of distributing DRIVELINE, over two hundred Texas papers regularly print the column and/or the cartoon.

SAFETY BELT USE TO INCREASE WITH IMPROVED COMFORT

By making seat belts easier to put on and more comfortable to use, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) expects to raise the level of safety belt use in vehicles.

In a notice of proposed rulemaking, NHTSA has outlined measures to reduce seat belt discomfort and inconvenience, which the agency says are cited by many people as their primary reasons for not wearing safety belts.

Although some critics have claimed that rulemaking in those areas would not be cost beneficial, NHTSA predicted the current 14 percent belt use rate could be boosted to 22 percent if new rules were enacted.

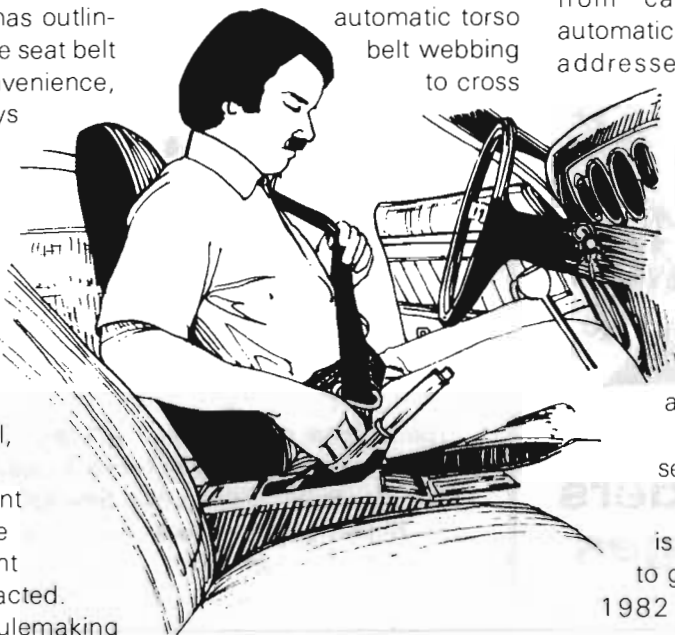
The proposed rulemaking would cover both automatic and manual lap belts, but not manual combination lap and shoulder belts in the front seating positions. It's expected those three-point systems will be phased out with the gradual introduction of automatic restraint systems.

Since automatic belts are expected to be a primary mode adopted by car makers for complying with NHTSA's automatic restraint rule (FMVSS 208), "it is imperative that the automatic belts be comfortable so they will be acceptable to the

public," NHTSA said in its rulemaking notice.

Under the proposed rules, these are among the problem areas that would be addressed:

- Improper fit would be alleviated by requiring automatic torso belt webbing to cross



the shoulder and chest. This would prevent the belt webbing from hitting the neck and face and shoulder tip. Chest discomfort, frequently cited by women, would be eased by limiting contact pressure to 0.7 pounds.

- Excessive tightening of lap belts caused by automatic locking retractors would be eliminated by banning the use of this type of retractor system in the front seat positions and replacing it with emergency

locking retractors with manual locking devices. The manual locking devices would permit the installation of child restraint systems in the front seat position.

- Simplicity of entry and exit from cars equipped with automatic seat belts would be addressed, together with motorized track systems for automatic belts.

To eliminate the groping search for hidden belts, the proposed rules would also stipulate that belts be accessible and convenient to use, both in front and rear seating positions.

The proposed rule is tentatively scheduled to go into effect with the 1982 model year.

-Insurance Institute for Highway Safety Status Report Vol. 15, No. 1

Why Do Drivers Fail to Signal?

Good question, especially considering the number of accidents in which improper or non-existent use of turn signals is a contributing factor. According to Department of Public Safety traffic reports, turn signal violations figured in 2,162 Texas accidents last year. Of those, 372 involved injuries and four

resulted in death.

Aside from the potential for accidents, improper signaling can cost a driver much the same way a traffic ticket does. According to J.M. Cowan, captain of traffic law enforcement with DPS, it is a class C misdemeanor to not signal properly.

SCHOOL BUSES BACK ON ROADS, AUTO DRIVERS EXERCISE CAUTION

Nationwide there are many serious school bus accidents on the highway.

Here is what can happen when a commercial motor vehicle collides with a school bus: Early on a chilly afternoon, a heavy truck ran a stop light at a rural intersection and struck a moving school bus broadside. The body of the bus was ripped off, and the bus was flipped over. Five students were killed and 21 others were seriously injured.

This is only one of many recent school bus accidents involving motor vehicles on our highways. In Texas, similar tragedies resulted in 10 deaths during 1978-79; most of these accidents could have been avoided had the driver exercised more awareness and caution.

Guest Editorial

By Allen Monroe,
Traffic Safety Coordinator, Amarillo College

A Parent's Responsibility To A Child

I cannot understand why a parent will not insist that a child wear some form of restraint-seat belt, harness or approved car safety seat. Maybe it is because they have a guilty conscience because they, the parents, do not wear them.

The following are some simple precautions to take:

Everyone must sit and remain seated while the vehicle is in motion.

Hands, heads and possessions must be inside the vehicle.

No one may distract the driver by fighting, fussing, or yelling.

No lollipops or popsicles, no sharp edged or heavy toys loose in the vehicle.

No obstructions to the driver's vision, such as balloons or hanging clothing.

No maybe's or just-this-time about the rules.

No exceptions, or broken rules bring discipline.

Yes, it is difficult. Yes, it is a constant battle. Yes, we must set an example if we care.

Accidents kill approximately 16,000 children under the age of 15 each year. Over one-third of these are killed in automobile accidents.

Make it a rule to never leave a child in a vehicle alone and never leave your keys in the vehicle. If you live in a hilly area where your vehicle could roll out of the drive or down the street, set the brake, put it in park or reverse, turn your front wheels to the curb, and *lock the vehicle*. Children are killed and injured every year because of careless parents and friends.

As parents we have to set an example for the children; the school cannot do it. A Driver Education Program given to a student cannot erase 15 years of bad examples by a parent or parents.

Drivers, when you see a yellow school bus ahead, slow down and remember: a yellow school bus is like a moving traffic signal. If the amber lights on

when the pupil is a pedestrian. Even when the bus leaves, watch for the straggler!

Remember, too -- most



the bus are flashing, prepare to stop; if the red lights are flashing, stop at least two vehicle lengths away from the bus -- this permits better visibility of students leaving/entering the bus. Most pupil fatalities occur

serious accidents occur on rural highways, and a stopped school bus means many unpredictable events if the school bus driver is distracted by active children inside and outside the bus.



Emergencies continued from 1

foot pressure on the brake to take advantage of any remaining power. Steer carefully avoiding sudden wheel movements that may be hard to correct without power.

Here's another. What if you lift your foot off the gas and the car keeps accelerating? The throttle's stuck. Carefully turn the ignition key to the off position. But don't turn it so far as to engage the steering lock.

Know what to do in case your hood pops up while you're driving at highway speeds.

Don't jam on the brakes—you could be inviting a rear-end collision. Stick your head out the window or glance at the left shoulder of the road to maintain your direction.

Apply your brakes slowly and turn on your emergency flashers. When you have the car under control, get off the road at a low speed.

For more tips send for the booklet, *How To Deal With Motor Vehicle Emergencies*. It's free from the Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, Colorado 81009.

Ann Landers Encourages Seat Belt Use

Columnist Ann Landers recently endorsed seat belt use to all her readers.

In Landers' endorsement she discredits many of the standard excuses for not using seat belts. Landers also goes on to explain that it is the driver's responsibility to serve as an example by buckling up—and to insist that anyone who rides with him does the same.



This newsletter is an official publication of the Traffic Safety Section of the Safety and Maintenance Operations Division—and is intended to inform the public on the traffic safety programs in Texas. Contributing articles from outside sources are the reflected opinions of the author and not necessarily those of the Traffic Safety Section. Permission is granted for reproduction of articles or photographs, except where the publication has obtained permission from other sources and provided credit. The Texas Traffic Safety Report is published monthly. Comments or contributions should be sent to:

TEXAS TRAFFIC SAFETY REPORT

Traffic Safety Section

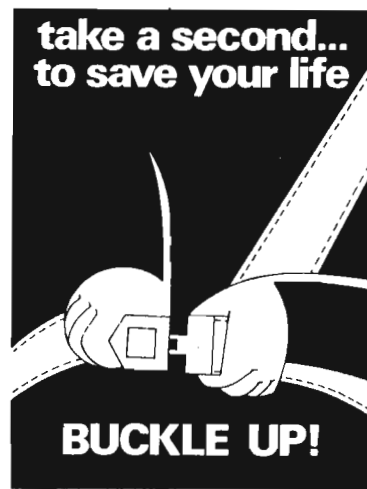
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Total traffic fatalities recorded by the Texas Department of Public Safety as of Aug. 29, 1980 . . . 2,647

NEWS

FROM

WASHINGTON

Truck Stop Operators Promote Driving "55"

Operators of many of the nation's truck stops are cooperating in spreading the word on the safety and fuel conservation benefits of the 55 mph speed limit, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The National Association of Truck Stop Operators (NATSO) through 102 of its members, is cooperating with the Joint Industry-Government Voluntary Truck and Bus Fuel Economy Improvement Program in the distribution and display of films, booklets and place mats emphasizing the fuel economy and highway safety benefits of the 55 mph national speed limit.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration manages the Department of Transportation's portion of the voluntary program.

The material consists of:

- Five booklets, "17 Tricks to Save Fuel and \$\$\$"; "Truckers Guide to Fuel Savings"; "65 vs 55 Who is Right?"; "New Trucks Save Fuel"; and "Why We are Sure the Double Nickel Saves Fuel for Trucks". These are available as part of the voluntary program's "Fuel Saver Kit."
- Place mats, displaying cost-saving information based on the booklet, "17 Tricks to Save Fuel and \$\$\$." Up to 1,000 place mats will be made available on request to individual truck stop operators for use in restaurants.
- Two films, "Truck Owner Operator-Fuel Conservation for Profit" and "The Double Nickel Challenge," which may be borrowed by organizations for showings to trucking personnel.

Typical of the truck stops' interest, one NATSO member, Truckstops of America, has distributed materials to all of its 27 truck stops.

The Joint Industry-Government Voluntary Truck and Bus Fuel Economy Improvement Program was formed following the oil embargo in 1973 to encourage voluntary conservation among the nation's truck and bus operators. The program, cooperatively sponsored by industry and the Departments of Transportation and Energy, includes among its more than 315 members the nation's largest motor carriers, vehicle and engine manufacturers, industry suppliers, members of the trade press, labor groups, and state and federal agencies.

To obtain "Fuel Saver Kits," place mats or films, or for further information about the Joint Industry-Government Voluntary Truck and Bus Fuel Economy Improvement Program, write to the Voluntary Truck and Bus Fuel Program, NRD-20, U.S. Department of Transportation, Washington, D.C. 20590.



A back to school message from SDHPT