

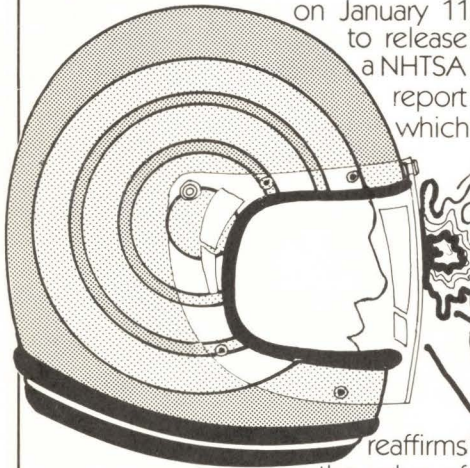
# NETWORK

## Helmet use laws

Ever since the U.S. Congress repealed the penalty for states which failed to pass mandatory motor cycle helmet usage laws for riders 18 and over, helmet laws have been on the decline.

In 1975, 47 states, the **District of Columbia**, and **Puerto Rico** had helmet laws for all cyclists. Today, only 21 states, DC, and Puerto Rico still do.

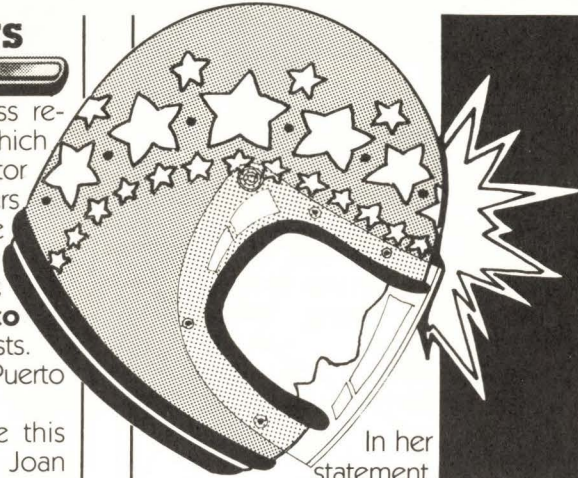
In a move to help reverse this trend, NHTSA Administrator Joan Claybrook held a news conference on January 11 to release a NHTSA report which



reaffirms the value of helmet laws. The report is a summary of results from five recent studies conducted in **South Dakota, Kansas, Colorado, Oklahoma,** and Southern **California**.

The studies show helmets work. Riders involved in crashes who don't wear helmets have twice as many head injuries as those who do, and three to nine times as many fatal head injuries.

The studies also show helmet usage laws work. Before repeal of the laws in the states studied, over 95 percent of motorcyclists wore helmets. After repeal, fewer than 60 percent did. As expected, head injuries increased, particularly fatal head injuries, which doubled in three states studied.

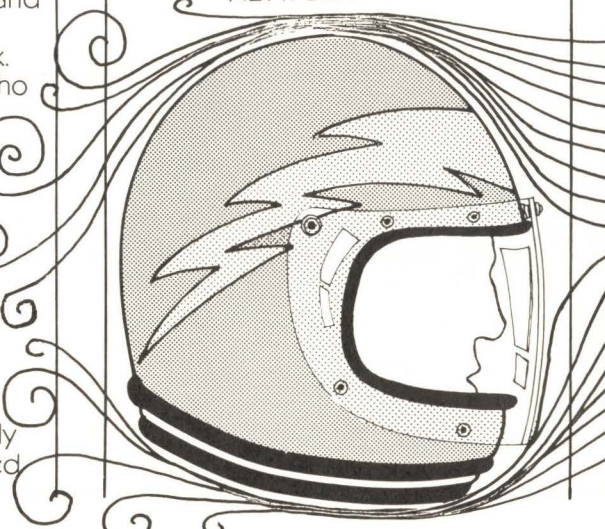


In her statement,

Claybrook noted that, with a new legislative season approaching, strong efforts would be needed to keep those helmet laws still in effect and restore those which have been lost or weakened. She is sending letters to all governors asking them to work for helmet laws in their states. She is also seeking the support of the medical community, safety groups, insurance companies, and motorcycle manufacturers.

"With a broad-based support from society as a whole," she said, "we should be able to restore the life-saving capabilities of helmet use."

For a copy of the helmet report and/or Claybrook's statement, write NETWORK.

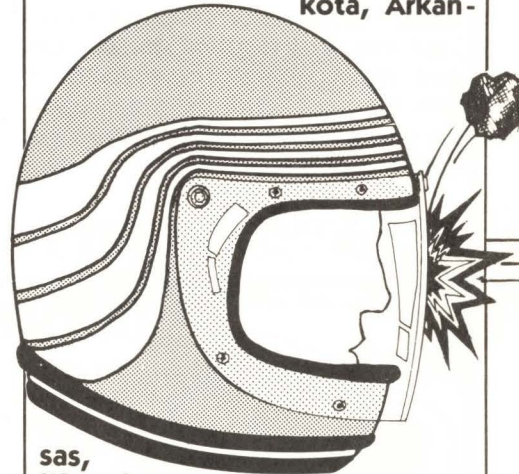


## Bare heads lose

A comprehensive technical assistance program is being developed in NHTSA for states involved with issues of retention or readoption of helmet use laws.

A two-day session among selected state representatives was conducted in January.

The meeting, designed to yield recommendations for developing strategies and programs to counter moves to remove helmet laws, included **Wisconsin, Virginia, Pennsylvania, North Dakota, Arkan-**



**sas, Wyoming, Michigan, South Carolina and Georgia.**

Efforts will also be made to inform national voluntary health and safety organizations about the helmet law issue.

Video tapes and slide presentations based on a University of Southern California study on motorcycle fatalities will be made available to the states.

NHTSA personnel will be available upon request to provide testimony to state legislative committees.

The agency will also report to the Congress by the end of this year on the effect of removal of national sanctions for not having helmet laws.

## Nonlimited access

The **Elements of Style**, by William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White, is the classic writer's helper. This little book, first published in 1935, says more about good communication than a semester of good lectures on the subject.

Some may consider it fussy and overprotective of the language, but good writers appreciate its devotion to clarity and economy. It's about the best two dollar investment one can make toward being better understood in print.

Make definite assertions. Avoid tame, colorless, hesitating, non-committal language. Use the word **not** as a means of denial or in antithesis, never as a means of evasion.

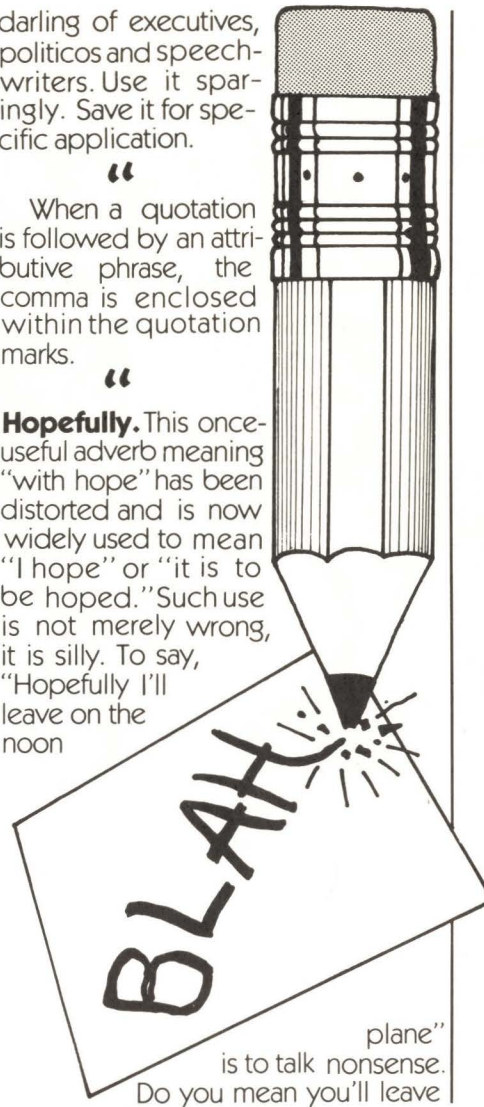
**Finalize**, for instance, is not standard: it is special, and it is a peculiarly fuzzy and silly word. Does it mean "terminate," or does it mean "put into final form"? One can't be sure, really, what it means, and one gets the impression that the person using it doesn't know, either, and doesn't want to know.

**Thrust**. This showy noun, suggestive of power, hinting of sex, is the

darling of executives, politicians and speechwriters. Use it sparingly. Save it for specific application.

When a quotation is followed by an attributive phrase, the comma is enclosed within the quotation marks.

**Hopefully**. This once-useful adverb meaning "with hope" has been distorted and is now widely used to mean "I hope" or "it is to be hoped." Such use is not merely wrong, it is silly. To say, "Hopefully I'll leave on the noon



plane" is to talk nonsense. Do you mean you'll leave

on the noon plane in a hopeful frame of mind? Or do you mean you hope you'll leave on the noon plane? Whichever you mean, you haven't said it clearly. Although the word in its new, free-floating capacity may be pleasurable and even useful to many, it offends the ear of many others, who do not like to see words dulled or eroded, particularly when the erosion leads to ambiguity, softness or nonsense.

**Utilize**. Prefer **use**.

## Custom TV tags

More than 30 states now have their own personalized state tags placed on USDOT-produced public service TV announcements.

Some states want to have custom tags put on these spots because "governor's highway safety office" doesn't fit all situations.

If your state wants to add a custom tag, contact your NHTSA regional office or write NETWORK.

TV spot release schedule is as follows:

Feb. 1—"Disco" alcohol spot. Shows a Travolta-type dancer who says he's too drunk to dance. His conscience then reminds him he's also too drunk to drive.

## Children, please be seated

Do parents know about child safety seats? Do car dealers offer seats as an option? Are all seats dynamically tested before sale?

These questions are important for a child's safety even before the first trip home from the maternity ward.

Recent surveys show car crashes are a chief cause of child injury and death. Yet less than 10 percent of new parents provide safety restraints for their children. Even when provided, observation studies show many are improperly used so they are of little benefit.

To attack this problem, NHTSA is producing an action kit for community groups who want to get involved. The kit will show hospital clinics, auxiliaries, and civic and church groups how to set up a loan-a-seat program or promote use of child restraints.

Much of the material is based on **Michigan's** Motor Vehicle Occupant Protection Program, which has developed a complete action package for interested groups.

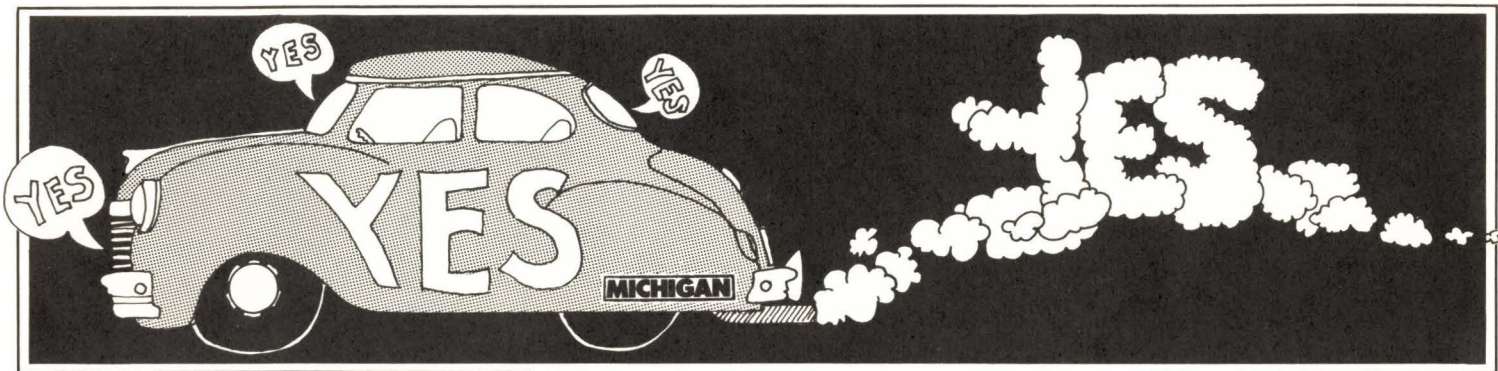
The staff works with communities to get programs started.

The kit will be released at the ten upcoming workshops (see schedule) which will show participants how to increase child restraint usage, promote usage laws and improve restraint availability through local dealers.

### Child restraint workshop schedule

Region 4—Atlanta	Mar 21-22	Region 7—Kansas City	May 17-18
Region 3—Philadelphia	Apr 23-24	Region 8—Denver	Jun 4-5
Region 2—Newark	Apr 26-27	Region 5—Chicago	Jun 7-8
Region 1—Boston	May 3-4	Region 10—Seattle	Jun 21-22
Region 6—San Antonio	May 14-15	Region 9—San Francisco	Jun 25-26

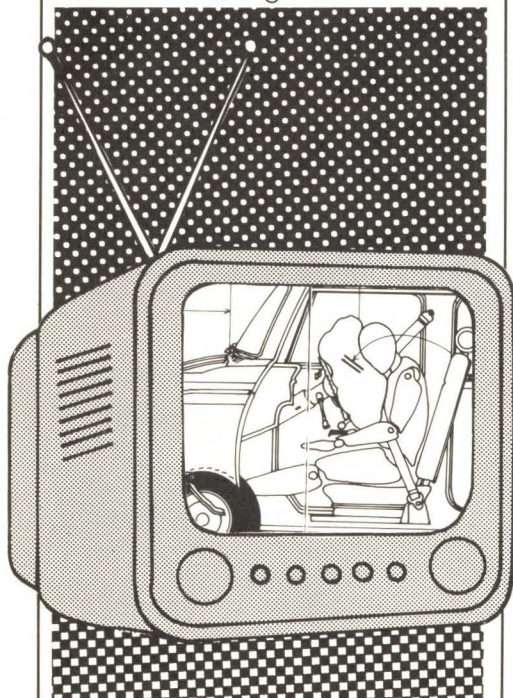




Feb. 30—"Egg," a Canadian-produced spot that shows how restraints (in this case, a piece of tape) keep an egg from breaking from a violent blow. Demonstrates that safety belts, in the same way, prevent injury by preventing severe impact.

April 1—Third "friends" alcohol spot. Subject undetermined at this time.

April 30—"Pumpkin" is another Canadian spot that likens a pumpkin to a person. It gets dashed into a telephone pole and pavement and mashed by a truck. The announcer, all the while, is talking about how unbelted passengers get thrown from the car during a crash.



July 1—Fourth "friends" alcohol spot. Subject undetermined at this time.

October 1—Fifth "friends" alcohol spot. Subject undetermined at this time.

## Michigan survey

All of the surveys reported so far in NETWORK have been primarily designed to help create public communications programs for high-way safety.

They have been used to identify target audiences, detect problems, and develop strategies for influencing people.

But there's another use for surveys—the survey as policy advisor.

In this approach, the survey is used to find out public attitudes toward safety laws and regulations, both existing and proposed, so government officials know public opinion when deciding what changes to make. Such survey information can be very valuable in promoting high-way safety issues.

The Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning conducted a telephone survey of 600 **Michigan** motorists (and 219 motorcyclists) in August. The respondents were asked questions about their attitudes toward motorcycle helmet laws, safety belt laws, the 55 mph speed limit, and other issues.

On motorcycle helmets, 85 percent of the driving population and 67 percent of motorcyclists think helmets should be worn at all times. There is general agreement, then, that helmets are beneficial.

On the more difficult question of helmet laws, 80 percent of drivers and 53 percent of motorcyclists think cyclists should be required by law to wear helmets at all times.

On 55, a big majority (78 percent) favors maintaining the current speed limit. But support is a bit soft. When asked if they'd go for a 60 mph limit on the expressways and a 50 mph limit on other roads, 55 percent said yes. A small plurality (48 to 44 percent) favored giving penalty points for speeding when ticketed be-

tween 55 and 70 (not currently done).

On mandatory restraint use laws, there's mixed reaction. Fifty-four percent of the drivers say they would favor a law requiring all children under four years of age to ride in special safety seats (36 percent oppose).

Only 35 percent favor a law requiring those under 18 to wear a belt or ride in a safety seat. Only 39 percent would support a law requiring all passengers and drivers to use restraints.

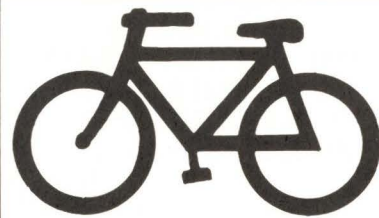
Other questions cover driver education, drinking age laws, and vehicle inspection. For a copy, write Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning, 7150 Harris Drive, Lansing, MI 48913. Limited copies are available.

## Pythias posters

The Knights of Pythias lodge conducts an international "highway courtesy and safety poster contest" each year.

The contest promotes highway safety "thinking" by students who have recently become drivers and those who will soon become drivers.

State eliminations foster local in-



**BE  
BRIGHT  
AT NIGHT**

terest. Prizes amounted to \$900 in competition last year.

Themes deal with drunk drivers, pedestrian safety, safety belts, speeding, etc.

The contest is open to all high school students. For more information, write to the Grand Lodge, Knights of Pythias in your state or Jule O. Pritchard, Supreme Secretary, 47 N. Grant St., Room 201, Stockton, CA 95202.

## On guard, drivers

Florida's "On Guard" campaign, a combination enforcement/publicity program to hold the line on rising fatalities in late 1978, got a helping hand from many sources.

Publix supermarkets, Sears and K Mart included a small safety message inside their newspaper advertisements.

Many newspapers donated space for display ads that promoted safe driving.

Several alcohol demonstrations, where media people experienced intoxication (.10) under official sanction, produced much coverage on the effect of alcohol at the legal level.

All this publicity was sparked by a special plea from the governor for the state's businesses and citizens to cooperate in the On Guard program. Also, special funds from the Governor's Highway Safety Commission provided extra enforcement for state police and some jurisdictions.

For more information, write Carol Basile, Bureau of Highway Safety,

Room 530, Carlton Bldg., Tallahassee, FL 32304, or call (904) 488-5453.



This is **NETWORK**: a monthly meeting place for sharing ideas among highway safety public communications professionals.

**NETWORK** covers the highlights. If you want more, it tells you where to go.

Need help? Got some ideas? Working on a good campaign? We want to hear from you. Write **NETWORK**, NHTSA, NTS-10, Washington, DC 20590.

**NETWORK** is a publication of the Office of Driver and Pedestrian Programs, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The Secretary of Transportation has determined that the publication of this periodical is necessary in the transaction of the public business required by law of this department. Use of funds for printing this periodical has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget through Dec. 30, 1980.

## Viva, volunteers!

Citizen participation in highway safety programs is getting a lot of attention at NHTSA.

Administrator Joan Claybrook spelled out the philosophy of the new emphasis in a speech to governor's reps in October (See **NETWORK**, December 1978, **Tahoe talk**).

Citizen participation topics filled half a day's agenda in the January 23 meeting of NHTSA regional admin-

istrators.

The agency will use citizen panels to advise community-based demonstration projects. Policy guidance is also being developed to encourage state highway safety agencies to involve citizens in program planning and evaluation.

Several new developments will open the way to more direct involvement of citizens:

- Negotiations are underway with selected states to develop community-based organizations for family members of people killed or injured in traffic crashes. In each locality, voluntary agencies would contact family members of crash victims to determine their interest in working on crash remedies in their communities.

- A series of regional conferences on child restraints this spring will help citizens develop voluntary programs to promote the sale or loan of child seats and promote their use.

- A national conference is being planned for the spring to train voluntary safety leaders to form coalitions of citizen organizations around highway safety issues.

New publications to be ready this spring include an action guide for voluntary organizations, a package on vehicle/consumer issues, and a child restraint action kit (see related story).

April's training program for state public communications specialists (**NETWORK**, January 1979, **First class**) will include theories and methods for increasing citizen participation in highway safety programs.

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