



Youth Activities Newsletter

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

WINTER 1975

A Newsletter Is Launched

Approximately 30% of all highway fatalities every year are youths between 15 and 24 years of age. The Youth Highway Safety Advisory Committee was organized by the Secretary of Transportation in 1970, to provide assistance to NHTSA in developing highway safety programs which would be effective in reducing accidents in this age group. A program designed to assist the States in establishing advisory and action groups at the State and local level was developed by the Committee.

NHTSA Administrator James Gregory endorsed the concept, and asked each State Governor to send two representatives to a conference in Scottsdale, Arizona, on March 29-31, 1974, at which the Committee's program was presented. Delegates from 47 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Indian Nations attended the conference.

As a follow-up to the conference, to create better communications in the area of youth highway safety activities, NHTSA decided to publish this newsletter. NHTSA believes that the exchange of information among the State and local youth leaders and within NHTSA will increase awareness of existing programs, foster new ideas, and involve more young people in the campaign for better highway safety.

The Big Problem

About 50 young Americans will be killed on the Nation's highways today. Nearly 250 will be maimed or disfigured. Half of these young Americans will die because someone was drunk.

Not a 40-year-old drunk. Not someone with a red nose and a pot belly.

But someone like you.

Someone who, just this once, had too much wine at a party, or too much beer at a drive-in.

Someone who, just this once, is drunk out of his mind and behind the wheel of a car.

He might kill his best friend. He might kill a stranger. Or he might just kill himself.

Anyway, someone young and alive is suddenly young and dead. Nearly 8,000 young Americans are killed each year in drunk-driving accidents.

That's more than war. More than drugs, or suicide, or disease. And most are killed by people their own age.



1974-75 Youth Highway Safety Advisory Committee Being Sworn In.

In fact, the number-one killer of young Americans is young Americans. It doesn't make any sense.

You're young. Just beginning to really live.

You see things wrong in the world and want to change them.

You march against war and protest against pollution — because you want a better life for everyone.

Yet the thing that cripples and kills more young Americans than anything else, you do little about.

The automobile is the greatest single threat to people under 30.

And you do very little to stop it.

It just doesn't make sense.

Some Solutions

Suppose you're convinced that something must be done to help young people recognize the peril they face every time they drive under the influence or ride with someone who is.

What can you really do about it? Plenty. Here's a list of possibilities generated in a brief brainstorming session with the Youth Highway Safety Advisory Committee.

1. Write to your State legislator, local councilman, or mayor, in support of alcohol safety legislation, or just to indicate support for expanded programs to combat drunk driving.

2. Write or contact local safety councils, auto clubs, student associations, and clubs, to determine if they have interests or activities related to alcohol and highway safety.

Some groups you might contact include:

Junior Achievement	Key Clubs
State Highway Safety Clubs	High Y
State Auto Clubs	YMCA
National Safety Council & Chapters	YWCA
Student Government	Demolay
Upward Bound	Future Farmers
Four-H	Girl's State
Catholic Youth Organization	Boy's State
National Student Association	

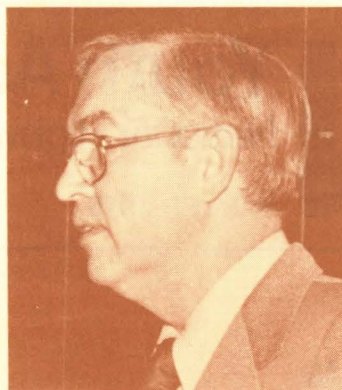
3. Refuse to ride with a drunk driver.
4. Talk a drunk driver out of driving — get the keys.
5. Plan parties in ways to avoid abusive drinking and prevent driving after drinking.
6. Bring along a non-drinker to do the driving.
7. Get a knowledgeable authority to stage a calibrated drink-in. Focus should be on impairment caused by small amounts of alcohol, not on how much liquor can be consumed within legal limits.
8. Contact the driver education teacher; ask whether alcohol safety is included in the driver ed course. Supply a list of possible films or other resources for the teacher's use.
9. Get the support of the PTA for greater emphasis on alcohol and highway safety in school curriculum and activities. Inform the PTA of student concerns in these areas.
10. Conduct a survey of student knowledge, attitudes, and drinking/driving practices. Use this data when you talk to the driver ed teacher and the PTA.
11. Sponsor student rap sessions, perhaps using trigger films as discussion starters.
12. Start a club to coordinate a school-wide alcohol safety education program.
13. Invite a speaker for a school program or plan a series of speakers to cover various facets of alcohol and highway safety.
14. Wear a button. Enlist local merchants to pay for buttons or stickers to promote anti-drunk driving campaign.
15. Wear a bracelet (similar to the POW/MIA bracelets) bearing the name of a person who is a "Victim of Collision."
16. Contact student editors of school and campus publications, newspapers, & radio stations. Ask them to develop stories or opinion surveys on alcohol and highway safety.

NHTSA Seeks Help From Young Drivers

The foremost reason for holding the National Youth Conference on Highway Safety in Scottsdale, Arizona in March 1974 was "to explore ways in which young people can become actively involved and participate in the planning and carrying out of local and State highway programs that will have a direct influence on young drivers," according to Dr. James B. Gregory, National Highway Traffic Safety Administrator.

The number of accidents, the severity of injuries, and the number of deaths have risen steadily each year, as more and more cars have been driven more and more miles, and as more and more drivers have taken the wheel. To decrease deaths and injuries, Dr. Gregory said, NHTSA must develop balanced programs which emphasize those areas of the physical, engineering, and social sciences which are known to influence highway safety.

One area for program action involves the driving habits of young people. The proper solutions must be found so that positive influences can be exerted. Young drivers can help NHTSA develop these beneficial influences.



Dr. James B. Gregory,
NHTSA Administrator,
Addressing Youth Conference

Revisions to Bicycle Legislation Considered

Existing laws covering bicycles must be reevaluated and revised to reflect the recent dramatic increase in volume of bicycle traffic. Because of urban congestion, fuel shortages, the inefficiency and cost of other transportation, and the desire for physical fitness, what was once largely a child's toy is now a viable means of adult transportation, exercise, and recreation.

More bicycles on the road has meant more accidents involving bicyclists — and bicyclists are extremely vulnerable to injury or death in collision with other vehicles. In 1960 there were 400 bicycle fatalities. This number steadily increased for the next ten years. In 1970, bicycle fatalities began to accelerate rapidly and, by 1973, there were approximately 1,100 fatalities and over 400,000 injuries requiring attention in hospital emergency rooms.

This situation led the Congress to include bicycle safety in the Highway Safety Act of 1973. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is developing proposed safety legislation that will cover traffic controls and bicycle lanes and paths. NHTSA issued an advance notice of proposed rule-making on bicyclist safety in October 1974. Comments on the safety issues outlined in this notice have been solicited from the bicycling public.

These are some of the questions that will be answered in the process of finalizing these standards:

- Should the same rules-of-the-road apply to motor vehicles and bicycles?
- Should there be separate roadways for bicycles? (This concept presents a number of difficult problems involving right-of-way and procedures for passing and making turns.)
- Should there be a minimum age limit for bicyclists on major highways? (Two-thirds of all bicycle injuries involve youngsters under 15.)
- Would uniform traffic laws and equal enforcement reduce bicycle accidents?
- Should bicycle and pedestrian standards be combined?
- Should the regulations include motor-driven cycles of 5 h.p. or less?

Study Reports on Student Drinking

Half of America's high school students are in unsupervised drinking situations at least once a month, according to a study released this month by NHTSA Administrator, James B. Gregory.

These students are equally active in school affairs, get just as good grades, and share the same interests as their non-drinking peers. Yet, of the half who are in alcohol-related situations (ARS), 45 percent say they drink at least one day a week, 26 percent say they drink two or more days a week, and 61 percent claim to have been drunk at least once in the past month.

The study was conducted by Grey Advertising, as part of NHTSA's public education program on alcohol. Some 1,848 households were contacted by telephone to locate high school students willing to participate in the study. Personal interviews were completed with 397 young people. One quarter of the students came from each of the four high school grades; the sexes were also equally represented. The interviews were conducted at central locations, in 25 areas selected to reflect the geographical and urban-rural composition of the nation.

The study found that

- The high-school ARS-involved group drinks approximately as much and as often as its adult counterparts.
- The personality profiles of these students show that they are impulsive, willing to take risks, and are motivated by peer group pressures. They lack deep personal commitments to other people, beyond just keeping up with the crowd.
- Their drinking is related to driving; over a third of the group reported that they drink while driving around.
- They do not understand the relationship of drinking to blood alcohol concentration (BAC), especially for beer and wine.

The study also revealed several misconceptions commonly held by the group. They believe that:

- Their driving skills are unimpaired when they have been drinking.
- Serious consequences don't exist for drunken teen-aged drivers.
- Legal penalties for unlawful possession of alcohol are not very serious for them or their friends.
- Cold showers and black coffee are means of getting sober.
- Young drivers can compensate when they are drunk and driving.
- Adult drunk drivers are more dangerous than teenagers.
- A can of beer is less potent than a drink of liquor.

There are indications of an underlying willingness on the part of the students to get personally involved on behalf of friends. About half of the ARS-involved youth said they were "extremely likely" to drive a drunk friend home.

Charles F. Livingston, Director of Driver and Pedestrian Programs, has outlined some program objectives stemming from the study:

- To correct young people's current misconceptions about drinking and driving.
- To convince them that it is acceptable peer group behavior to give and accept help when drinking makes this necessary.
- To persuade youth to take positive actions to prevent drunk driving.

Mr. Livingston added that parents and school authorities must help to (1) create an awareness of the magnitude and seriousness of the problem, (2) educate young people to the facts and potential dangers of the situation and (3) support proposed countermeasures.

In addition to utilizing the study findings in existing NHTSA programs, Dr. Gregory stated that there would be an expanded effort to meet with other agencies and disciplines to create alternative educational approaches for dealing with this newly documented drinking and driving problem among high school students.

How Much Is Too Much?

How much can young drivers drink before their driving is affected? Analyses of adult drinkers show that three drinks in a two-hour period can produce a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .05 percent in a 140-pound man — enough to definitely interfere with his ability to drive. Since young drinking drivers killed in crashes show BACs well below those for middle-aged drivers, it appears that the driving ability of young people is impaired at around .05 percent BAC.

Weight	DRINKS (Two-Hour Period)											
	1 1/2 ozs. 86° Liquor or 12 ozs. Beer											
100	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
120	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
140	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
160	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
180	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
200	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
220	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
240	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

BE CAREFUL
BAC TO .05

DRIVING IMPAIRED
.05 — .09

DO NOT DRIVE
.10 & UP



Pennsylvania Youth Traffic Safety Council Reports Experiences

In October, 1971, five young Pennsylvanians attended SURVIVAL '71, a national youth traffic safety conference held in Oakland, California. As a result of four days of extensive meetings and workshops, these delegates realized the serious need for a statewide traffic safety council, and returned to Pennsylvania deeply committed to forming a statewide committee.

Three months later, after developing a plan of action, these young people met with Governor Milton Shapp. Impressed by their sincerity and enthusiasm, Governor Shapp issued an Executive Directive establishing the Governor's Traffic Safety Council and an advisory group, the Youth Traffic Safety Council. The Directive stipulated that (1) members of the Governor's Traffic Safety Council were to serve in person, and that (2) members of the Youth Council were to be appointed by the Governor and report directly to him.

The Executive Director of each of the State's 29 districts was contacted and asked to select several high school students to serve on the Council, and a driver education teacher to act as an advisor. Students and advisors were oriented to the problems of traffic safety and some ways to solve them at a kick-off conference in May 1972.

As a result of their experiences in three years of operation, the Pennsylvania group has some suggestions for other States embarking on similar programs:

1. If at all possible, meet with the Governor and get his personal commitment.
2. Don't try to bite off more than you can chew.
3. Always remember, you don't have unlimited funds.
4. Don't fall into the rut of talking instead of doing.
5. Don't let the adults in the program treat the youths as "kids."
6. Make sure every project you try is well organized.
7. Get publicity for your organization.
8. Find the people in the community who will help.
9. Don't let the advisors run the organization.
10. Don't ignore your advisors.
11. Replace uninterested advisors.
12. Don't hold a conference late in the spring; school vacations can destroy plans and ambitions.
13. Keep a fluid exchange of ideas between areas and with other organizations.
14. Don't forget, the program belongs to the youth. It is their commitments that keep it going.

The Pennsylvania group has found that continuity is the key to a successful program. Continuity must be maintained in spite of gaps left when delegates graduate or advisors resign, or during government administration changes.

Youth Safety Week Designated

Governors of the five States comprising the Mid-Atlantic States Coalition have proclaimed March 16-22, 1975, YOUTH TRAFFIC SAFETY WEEK.

If you belong to an organization that is actively participating in the cause of Highway Safety, please let us know about it.

If you have any suggestions that you feel might save lives, please write us.

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