



Youth Activities Newsletter

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

WINTER 1975

New Youth Committee Meets



The 1975-76 Youth Highway Safety Advisory Committee held its first meeting in Washington, D.C. on September 26-27, 1975. The 1975-76 Committee members are as follows:

John Abramson, Jr.
Sam F. Berardino, III
Kenneth H. Bingle
Charles L. Bryner, Jr.
Ralph A. Butler
Mark Colon
Jo Ellen Diers
Dennis Hake

Region II
Region II
Region V
Region III
Region III
Region II
Region V
Region X

Pamela W. Kneller
Margaret Leonard
Rita G. McCoy
Earl Price
Robert Raich
Melinda Shockey
Ray L. Watts

Region I
Region VII
Region IX
Region IV
Region VIII
Region VI
Region IV

Earl Price of Region IV was elected Chairman and Pam Kneller of Region I was elected Co-chairman. The Committee decided that the goal for the upcoming year would be to increase youth involvement in highway safety especially focusing on the young drinking-driver problem.

The Drinking Chronicle Of a Teenager

This is the actual story of a recovering alcoholic youth, from a middle class family, whose father is an alcoholic. The first-person narrative is taken from a talk he gave recently to a junior high school PTA in a Washington, D.C. suburb. At last report, the father was still drinking and the youth was living with another family.

"I'm Charles, 17, a high school student and an alcoholic. I started drinking at the age of 12. I was hanging around with an older group of kids and I drank to be 'cool.' Nothing much happened from my drinking until I was 14. By that time I looked older than I was, and I could buy beer or liquor without any trouble.

"The summer before I entered the eighth grade I started working in a gas station in a neighborhood where the people were very alcohol-oriented. My boss drank a lot, and he always had beer around the station. He encouraged me to drink. I changed a great deal that summer and took a turn toward alcohol. I changed my attitude towards other people, got sloppy and careless, and started getting into fights.

"By the time I started school that fall, I was drinking so much that I needed something every morning for some get-up-and-go. I started pitching in with other boys in the eighth grade to buy a case of beer so we could drink during school. We would hide it in some bushes near the school and go up there during recess. By lunch, we would be pretty well totaled.

"The group of us started growing in number. The playground supervisor began wondering why half of the eighth grade were wandering up the hill during recess. Finally, he took a look — and found the beer. He let us off easy; just told us not to do it anymore. When we asked him what to do with the left-over beer, he said to put it in his car.

"It was a fun year. I got drunk every weekend. It seemed like everybody in the eighth grade graduating class was drunk. One boy fell down as he was about to get his diploma.

"I left home that summer. I caddied for a country club and lived in the clubhouse. At night, friends and I would go bar-hopping. One night in a Washington bar, I got up to talk to a pretty girl who had smiled at me. The next thing I knew, I was coming to in an alley.

"I moved back with my father and entered junior high school. I started smoking pot, but it was making me lose the desire to do things. So I cut it out and started drinking booze again. By the time I got to the tenth grade, I was keeping a six-pack of beer in my locker at all times. I went out for the football team and would have been a starter if I hadn't been drinking.

"I turned into a super derelict. I didn't care about school or anything, just drinking. I started getting the DTs. I stayed drunk all the way through the next summer. In the fall, I went out for football again. The coach kept me on the bench most of the time because he knew I was drunk. He put me in one game, at the very end, as a fullback. I couldn't get going and about 20 guys piled on me.

"It took an accident to get me straightened out. I was driving along, started to hallucinate, and crashed into the median strip of a highway at about 50 miles an hour. I was knocked unconscious for about 10 minutes. When I came to, I decided it was time to do something about my drinking. Since I already belonged to Alateen, I knew about Alcoholics Anonymous and that's where I went for help. I haven't had a drink for six and a half months. I'm staying sober one day at a time" □

Boy Scouts to Offer Traffic Safety Merit Badge

Attention Scout Counselors: The National Boy Scouts of America Headquarters in North Brunswick, N.J., has announced the addition of a traffic safety badge to its merit badge series.

For those who are not involved in scouting, the Merit Badge program provides an award that is given to a Scout who completes various requirements in a particular subject. For a Scout to climb the "ladder of progress," he must obtain certain merit badges.

This program is one of scouting's basic character development tools. A Scout builds his self-confidence by overcoming difficult obstacles to achieve a goal. If you are involved in traffic safety, and care about the leaders of tomorrow, the Scouts can use your expertise.

Traffic Safety, a booklet published by the Boy Scouts of America, guides Scouts in practically all areas of the field. Everything from the cost of a crash to safety standards is covered. No matter which area of traffic safety you are involved with, you can help a Scout through your participation in this program.

Although the booklet is intended primarily as an aid to Scouts in meeting merit badge requirements, it is available to the general public through local schools and public libraries.

If you have an interest in promoting traffic safety and want to help, you can write to John Nelson, Editorial Division, Boy Scouts of America, Route 130, North Brunswick, New Jersey 08840. □

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Michigan

Youth Committee Profile

For several years, Michigan has tried to involve young adults in highway safety. At one point, four young people were selected for the Governor's Task Force on Drinking-Driving Problems. However, more direct involvement was needed.

In Michigan, the age of majority was lowered in 1972, and it was not long before teenagers became increasingly involved in the drinking-driving problem. State officials were not sure how to reach beginning drivers and impress upon them the need for highway safety — teaching and preaching did not seem effective.

Borrowing the idea of a youth highway safety program from the Youth Highway Safety Advisory Committee in the Department of Transportation, Michigan began to set up an organization for dealing with highway safety in the state's high schools.

Patterned after Arizona's TRAGYC (Traffic Representatives of Arizona's Governor Youth Council), by-laws and objectives were amended to suit Michigan's specifications. In July 1974, a group of 15 high school students was assembled to make final decisions on the organization and structure of Michigan's youth highway safety program. During that summer, goals were set, a peer-to-peer basis was established, activities were developed, regional boundaries were established, and the name SMASH (Students of Michigan Attaining Safer Highways) was chosen.

Under the co-sponsorship of the Office of Highway Safety Planning in the Department of State Police and the Office of Substance Abuse Services in the Department of Public Health, it was decided that, for the first year, SMASH would focus on the teenage drinking-driving problem. With headquarters in the Office of Substance Abuse Services, SMASH was ready to be implemented in the high schools.

Based on the experiences of Arizona and other states, the peer-to-peer approach seemed the best way to have direct input in promoting highway safety among teenagers. Members are students enrolled in any of the public, private, or parochial high schools in the State of Michigan. A member who has graduated is considered an alumnus and may participate in an advisory capacity until the age of 25.

SMASH belongs to the students; it has been structured, implemented, and directed by them. Adults and officials act as advisors and as resources. Activities and goals are set by the students.

At the 1974 conference, representatives were elected for 16 of the 19 SMASH regions. All of the conference attendees were urged to set up a SMASH program in their schools and to talk with their student councils and driver education instructors. In the months to follow, these students would expand SMASH and put it into a working form.

The executive committee participated in an "Education Weekend." They spent two days learning about the

background of SMASH, drinking and driving, and highway safety. In June 1975, the SMASH board met for the first time as a decision-making body. During two days of background information and business meetings, the students chose improvement of "highway booby-traps" as a secondary focus in an attempt to branch off from the drinking-driving problem. Also, several amendments to the by-laws were made; a proposed agenda was set for 1975-76; regional boundaries were modified; and the first state-wide activity, to be carried out in August, was chosen.

Since the beginning of its organizational stages one year ago, SMASH has become a definite, active high school organization dealing with highway safety awareness. Its success is not measured by a reduction in teenage automobile accident fatalities but by SMASH activities: improvement of driver education programs, information sharing through an active peer-to-peer approach, an increased awareness of highway safety in students and adults. Using these criteria, SMASH had surpassed its goal for the first year.

SMASH is rapidly gaining momentum. It has caught the interest of the MDTSEA (Michigan Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association), Michigan State Police, Michigan Department of Public Health, Secretary of State's Office, and many other offices and departments in the areas of highway safety, drug abuse, law enforcement, and legislation. □

News From the States

PENNSYLVANIA: The Steering Committee of the Youth Traffic Safety Council held its Fourth Youth Traffic Safety Council Statewide Convention in Harrisburg, on September 28-30, 1975. Over 150 students and 30 advisors attended.

In its annual report, the Youth Traffic Safety Council lists 17 of the 29 units within the State as active, 8 as shaky, and 4 as dormant. Also mentioned in the report, was action taken by the State to follow 2 resolutions, passed by the Youth Traffic Safety Council at their last conference, which involve the purchase of at least one seatbelt "Convincer" and a study of current Driver Education and Licensing programs in the State.

RHODE ISLAND: In Fiscal Year 1976, the Governor's Office on Highway Safety is anticipating funding a "Youth and Alcohol Coordinator" through the Department of Transportation Administrative Adjudication Division.

The position is to be assigned to the Administrative Adjudication Division, and the Coordinator will be directly responsible to the Assistant Director of Transportation for Administrative Adjudication. Primary responsibilities will be in the areas of youth driver retraining and the DWI Program.

NEW JERSEY: The State Police reports that the number of *young drivers* involved in fatal accidents while *drunk or impaired* has risen considerably since the drinking age was lowered to 18 on January 1, 1973. The number has jumped from 8.9 percent in 1972, to 16.3 percent in 1973, and 27.5 percent in 1974. □



DOT 517
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC
SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
POSTAGE AND FEES PAID

CALAMITY RECIPE or The FRUIT OF DRUNKEN DRIVING

Take:

- 1 "Prune"
- 1 "Pickled Peach"
- 1 date

Add:

- Whisky
- Brandy
- or
- Gin *

And saturate.

Put "prune" behind the wheel

Of a coupe.

"Prune" turns on gas

And takes

The right of way.

SMASH thoroughly.

Take to Morgue.

Let stand for hours.

Serve

- In long boxes
- garnished
- with cut flowers.

Sometimes a couple of beers can be substituted for whisky, brandy or gin.

Australian figures show that within two years after mandatory safety belts went into effect, deaths dropped 25%; eye injuries 300%; facial lacerations 50%; and spinal injuries 33%. That's the record, and it's impressive!

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY
ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590
Official Business
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, \$300



**THIS POPULAR HIGH SCHOOL SPORT
KILLED AND MAIMED
THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS LAST YEAR.**

Drinking and driving. You and your friends can help make it less popular.
Think about who's been drinking and who's going to drive.
You have to start taking care of each other. That's what friends are for.

FRIENDS DON'T LET FRIENDS DRIVE DRUNK.

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 person — enough to definitely interfere with the 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.

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 to us.

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