

news

NHTSA



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Editor: M.J. Noll

September 1975

School Bus Safety

Recently, the President received a letter from a second grader who wanted him to pass a law making school buses safer. This is indicative of the far-reaching concern all over the nation for pupil transportation.

With the start of another school year, over 20 million students will be riding school buses every day, according to Dave Soule, Pupil Transportation Safety Specialist, TSP.

Just passing a law, though, will not make our school buses safer. Understanding and cooperation by students, parents, and the general public is needed.

Parents should support the disciplinary actions that are taken by the school and used to enforce bus safety. Most kids get into some sort of mischief at some point in their lives, but a school bus should not be the place.

Seeing that the student gets to the bus stop on time is an important precaution. The mad-cap-last-minute-dash can, perhaps, be a fatal mistake.

Parents, as motorists, and the general public should be aware of the special laws that apply to school buses. In most states, vehicles approaching a stopped school bus, with its flasher signals operating, from either the front or the rear, must stop and wait until the flashers stop.

(See School Bus Safety on page 2.)



Hanley "Hank" Norment, director of the Office of Civil Rights, and Shirley Lloyd, women's program coordinator, pose before the "Women in Highway Safety" display. NHTSA's display to honor women was in the Southwest Lobby of the Nassif Building during August.

From the Desk of...

Elsewhere in this edition of NHTSA News, twin articles tell who we are and what we do in the office of Public Affairs and Consumer Services (PACS).



The Director of Public Affairs and Consumer Services.

I guess if I were asked to put the whole thing together in a few words, I would have to say our job is to get the message across--in both directions.

Good communications can never be a one-way street. Communications are incomplete unless we listen as well as talk. In some countries, where government perceives its information role as heavy on the dishing out and light on the intake, the process is called, "propaganda." Not here. Our ultimate goal is to achieve an understanding of the citizen's views in order to respond positively and accurately to them.

This is why the two divisions of PACS are structured together. The mission of the Public Affairs division is to promote public awareness of the nation's stake in highway safety, of the various motor vehicle and highway safety programs underway, and of the Administration's plan and accomplishments in carrying out those programs. The basic mission of the Consumer Services divi-

sion is to respond to consumer problems, initiate and disseminate consumer safety literature to reduce public hazards, and to translate to the consumer-public the hazard-data and regulatory actions of NHTSA.

Each one of us in NHTSA is, in effect, a "public information officer." Wherever we go, people are always anxious to tell us how they feel about safety programs. We should look for these opportunities to tell our story and to listen.

We need public support to reach our objectives of reducing crashes, deaths and injuries on the nation's highways. We will get that support when we get the message across--in both directions.

John Kuwase

School Bus Safety (from page 1)

Parents, as well as those students who drive to school, should also be aware that most schools have a restricted area where school buses load and unload. The bus drivers have enough to worry about. The other buses are picking up or letting off students. The students themselves are adding to the confusion. Parents need not do the same.

It is important that students actively participate in approved emergency drills. One never knows just when it might be necessary to apply this knowledge.

The student should be encouraged to obey the driver. He has the responsibility of seeing that students riding on his bus arrive safely.

If a student must stand, it is important that he stand correctly. He should stand facing the window with his feet spread apart and a hand on the seat back to his right and a hand on the one to his left. If he is carrying books or other objects, he should give them to someone who is seated.

Also, it should be impressed upon the student to never throw anything on the bus. An object that is thrown could easily miss its target and hit the driver, causing him to lose control. The school bus is no place for horseplay.

If students or parents know of an individual who follows unsafe practices, it is their responsibility to inform the school officials. A situation cannot be corrected if no one knows about it.

With everyone's help and cooperation, this school year can be the safest ever. Riding a school bus is a privilege, not a right.

graffiti

**Drinking Drivers
Enhance their Chance
to Highball Home
in an Ambulance**

Burma Shave Roadside Sign
—Dealers Safety & Mobility Council

Regional Highlights

Region I

One of the more pleasant memories of a visit to Region I is meeting the Regional Administrator's secretary, Diane Sinausky. Fetching, as she is pleasant and efficient, Diane welcomes all who visit or call on behalf of the staff of Region I. Her tips on eating places, entertainment and lodging arrangements are a major assist to those new to Boston and its environs. We know many of you who have traveled to or called Region I will agree.

Diane came to the Department after having served with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. She is a graduate of the Boston Business School. Although Diane is quite young, her education and experience have had strong impact on Region I from its beginnings in 1970 as the first field office independently operated from FHWA. Her overall knowledge of clerical and administrative applications has been a ready resource in the training of support staff. In her capacity as the Regional Administrator's secretary, she has so familiarized herself with the thrusts of the program and management policies of the office, that she is of continuous assistance to the staff, states and general public.

A few words such as these are not adequate to describe the total impact

that a dedicated employee like Diane brings to her job and fellow workers. But we know you'll get the general idea.

Region II

The essential, everyday basic office activities for Region II are conducted by women. One of these is Mrs. Anna Kachena, administrative secretary and "dynamo" of the office.

Anna's federal employment began with the New York City Post Office in 1964 as clerk-steno. In 1966 she started a 4-year stint with the Department of Defense as a "traveling secretary" which led to a promotion with the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Finally, in April 1972, shortly after Region II's move from Delmar, to White Plains, Anna joined our staff and without any NHTSA training, she organized an effective procedural system for the office.

Her duties as administrative secretary, are varied. Some of her responsibilities include coordinating the office work distribution, travel arrangements for the staff and advance details for all conferences.

A firm advocate of self improvement, Anna has taken courses on advanced secretarial techniques and administrative correspondence, so that she may more effectively do her job. "The ability to adapt to different work demands and to know more than the minimum necessary" says Anna is the key to her

success. By heeding the credo "practice what you preach" she has developed through reading, listening, and questioning a working knowledge of the regional office program operations. She believes she is a better secretary for it.

Off the job, Anna's time is consumed by her new home and hobbies that include gardening and macrame. Judging from the heavy foliage in the office, her gardening skills like her secretarial skills are uniquely advanced.

EEO Selections

At its meeting on July 29, the NHTSA Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Committee selected Leamon Strickland as its Chairperson and Willetta Wilson as Vice-Chairperson for FY-1976. Other members of the Committee are: Drena Campbell, Zelphia Gouldson, Alberto Jimenez, Mattie Johnson, Charleen Kelly, Steven Levy, Dorothy Moton, William Searcy, Doris Shepherd, Diane Somerford, and Frances Young.

Job Openings

Electronics Engineer (General), GS-855-13. Office of the Associate Administrator, MVP, Compliance Test Facility. Opens: 8/26/75. Closes: 9/9/75. NHTSA 76-09.

Program Analysis Officer, GS-345-14. Office of Driver and Pedestrian Programs, TSP. Opens: 8/25/75. Closes: 9/15/75. NHTSA-76-10.

Who They Are and What They Do

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Office of Public Affairs and Consumer Services performs several functions through its two separate divisions. The following articles describe how these activities relate to NHTSA's mission.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY TO PUBLIC AFFAIRS

BY HAL PARIS
PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST

It is a relatively simple task to accurately describe the major role and function of the NHTSA Office of Public Affairs. You can sum it up in one word--communications.

Our job is to assure a high level of awareness and to keep the public informed on new developments and issues

affecting highway safety. To reach our goal with a consistent degree of success, we have to communicate not only with the outside world--the news media, the industry we regulate, the state and local governments, the Congress, and the private sector--but also with the people who make this agency tick--the engineers, researchers, lawyers, economists, and program specialists.

A public affairs specialist must be equipped with certain tools, such as writing and editing skills. But, most of all, he or she must be versatile and have the characteristics of a good boxer--able to roll with the punches. Thick skin also helps, partic-



Public Affairs Specialists Ed Reiley (standing) and Hal Paris discuss an art layout for an alcohol brochure as Secretary Helen Jackson looks on.

ularly when we're criticized by the press, the industry, consumer groups, or, as in the case of the ill-fated interlock system, the fellow on the street.

We handle literally hundreds of inquiries a month, both by phone and mail, on a broad range of subjects, that could come from almost anywhere. Since the office is small, we frequently operate on short deadlines, and we respond to requests as quickly as possible.

We are here to get the highway safety message across--the story behind the statistics. To accomplish that, we write, edit and review news releases, pamphlets, brochures, speeches and annual reports. But that's only a first step. We rely heavily on the print and electronic media to tell their readers and viewers what our programs are about, and what we're doing to

(See Public Affairs on page 6.)



Ms. Bea Dane, public information specialist, and Bobby Boaz, chief of public affairs, examine final copy prior to publication of the annual reports to Congress on administration of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety and the Highway Safety Acts of 1966.

SERVING THE CONSUMER

BY BERNIE AMES
CONSUMER SERVICES
SPECIALIST

The safety and protection of the motoring public are the principal concerns of the Office of Consumer Services. This office performs a wide variety of functions aimed at educating and informing the motoring public, providing assistance in resolution of vehicular problems, and assuring that automobile manufacturers meet their responsibilities to the public.

Routine, day-to-day activities find the Consumer Services staff evaluating, processing, and responding to consumer complaint letters from all over the country. This involves handling 1,000 to 1,200 letters a month, and the workload is steadily increasing. The routine day of the Consumer Services specialist also finds him checking with other staff elements of



Checking over planning details for the Hotline installation, scheduled for operation in mid-October, left to right, Irv Chor and Mrs. Drena Campbell of the Consumer Services staff discuss the facility with division chief, Gil Watson.

NHTSA to get specific answers to technical questions, gathering fact sheets and booklets to send to individuals or consumer groups needing the type of information produced. He may contact automobile and automotive equipment manufacturers to follow-up or expedite handling of complaints referred to them, or refer consumers to other agencies when their complaints deal with problems outside the jurisdiction of NHTSA. The job includes telephonic queries on all sorts of subjects relating to vehicles, vehicular equipment, and the laws and regulations pertaining thereto. Telephonic queries alone, number 30 to 50 each day.

Consumer Services functions also include the writing of news releases, public advisories, and

consumer protection bulletins to alert the motoring public of defects or hazards in specific automobiles, automotive products, or servicing practices. Fact sheets and booklets on various aspects of vehicular safety and operation are also published. The latter are provided to individual consumers, who request them and, to hundreds of consumer organizations throughout the country.

A recent and rapidly expanding service is the provision of information to consumers on whether their individual automobiles were involved in any defect recall campaigns. Currently, the Consumer Services staff is handling 25 to 50 such requests each day. This is but one method being used in an attempt to rid

(See Consumer Services on page 6.)



A vehicle owner asking for the defect recall history of his "new" used car receives prompt service from Consumer Services' clerical staff, left to right, Barbara Kumm and Romauld Jimenez.

reduce the carnage on our highways.

That takes effective planning and strategy, including press, radio and television interviews for the administrator and his associates, both in Washington and in cities across the nation. It also includes news conferences, radio and TV talk shows, and even seminars for the news media.

Last year alone, the NHTSA Office of Public Affairs issued more than 150 news releases dealing with various aspects of the agency's operations, such as rulemaking, research contracts, recalls, compliance testing, and other highway safety program activity.

Interviews with NHTSA officials resulted in informative articles in popular magazines, newspapers and trade journals, as well as filmed segments on TV network news and special shows. The media, for the most part, paid particular attention to such items as air cushions, bumpers, Alcohol Safety Action Projects (ASAPs), the 55 mile per hour speed limit, research safety vehicles, pedestrian and bicycle safety, and traffic fatality statistics.

We also work closely with the Executive Secretary's Office by providing public information support for the National Motor Vehicle Safety Advisory Council, the National Highway Safety Advisory Committee, and the Youth Highway Safety

Advisory Committee. We maintain needed liaison with our sister department, the Office of Consumer Services, and with the Department of Transportation's Office of Public Affairs.

The NHTSA Office of Public Affairs also works with the Office of Driver and Pedestrian Programs to coordinate a public education campaign on the dangers of drinking and driving. This effort includes the production of pamphlets, visual aids and advertising material intended for the general public and the mass media, and developed principally by Grey Advertising, Inc., of New York City.

Perhaps one of the vital assignments this office is responsible for is advising the administrator and other key NHTSA officials on the implication of highway traffic and motor vehicle safety program activities, and public reactions and management decisions affecting those programs.

Rapport with other departments within the agency is absolutely essential if the Office of Public Affairs is to succeed in its mission.

Consumer Services (from page 5)

our highways of unsafe vehicles.

Inherent in the Consumer Services mission is the obligation to provide these services to all Americans. In furtherance of this requirement, the Consumer Services Office is currently developing a program to assure that minority groups (the Black

Community, the Spanish-speaking community, the American Indian) and the handicapped are made aware of the services available. Contact has already been established with the various media (newspapers, radio stations, magazines) serving such groups to determine their requirements and the best method of getting the NHTSA messages to the widest possible audience/reader-ship. Similar coordination has also been done with hundreds of other state, county, and private consumer groups which will regularly be provided information, news releases, recall information, and fact sheets for use in their consumerism functions.

Over the past year, workload requirements of the Consumer Services Office have increased; largely due to publicity in the press and broadcast media, and as a result of contacts with consumer organizations throughout the nation.

Requests for services, for information and for defect and recall histories on specific consumer vehicles are on the increase. The office will open a 5-line, toll-free Hotline facility in October. Aimed at speeding up and improving the quality of information exchange between NHTSA and vehicle owners, the facility will undergo a 1-year "pilot" period of close control and frequent performance evaluation. During the period the facility will serve a limited 12-state area.

Who's Who in NHTSA

Ideas reposing on the petals of a flower: Poetry. The fundamental beliefs of an individual or culture: Philosophy. They express civilization in two tongues, not always distinct.

To Stanley C. Feldman, attorney-adviser, Office of Chief Counsel, the two disciplines combine to form an intriguing Muse. Stan recently wrote a double book review, exploring these two themes, which will be published in the fall issue of Southern Review, the literary journal of the Louisiana State University Press. The books reviewed are Poems and Epistles by John Fuller, one of England's leading poets, and Collected Poems, by James K. Feibleman, a poet and one of America's leading philosophers.

Claiming to be "a student, an active participant in current philosophical debate," rather than a philosopher himself, Stan feels especially sympathetic to Feibleman's philosophy, which he calls a variant of "Platonic Realism." Feibleman, Stan thinks, "brings Plato up to date."

Stan's interest in both poetry and philosophy have been developing for quite a while. He majored in the latter at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, and has been writing poetry since early youth.



Stan Feldman: attorney-adviser, philosopher and poet.

A more active interest in philosophy in this country could have great social implications, Stan believes. "I realize philosophy is not considered very important by most Americans. Yet people need to think of the basic issues it raises in order to be able, at least, to come to grips with pressing problems of our time and try to make some sense of the bewildering complexity of our highly technical industrial society."

Stan has made, and is making, other contributions to literature. He wrote a chapter for Technology and Human Values, a collection of essays edited by Philip Ritterbush, published in August 1974. He is in the process of writing a book which he has tentatively titled An Introduction to Feibleman's Philosophy. Also, he is enthusiastic about an article he has been invited to write for Tulane Studies in Philosophy, a series published by Tulane University Press, Louisiana.

The attorney, philosophy student, and occasional poet thinks variety is very necessary to the growth of the individual. He recently completed a three-month detail with the President's Clemency Board. He also sculpts. Stan has sculpted in clay and made "halting efforts," as he says, at plaster casts.

Calendar of Events

September

- 13-18 International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) 82nd Annual Conference, Denver, Colo.
15 WITY Program (sponsored by FHWA), 10:30 a.m., Room 2230, Nassif. Ms. Virginia Allan, Dep. Asst. Sec. for Public Affairs, Dept. of State.

October

- 6-10 Motor Vehicle Collision Investigation Symposium, sponsored by NHTSA, conducted by Cal-span Corporation, Buffalo, N.Y.

Editor's Note

Two regular features--"For Women Only" and "Employee Service Center" are omitted because of space limitation. They will appear in the next issue.

"Who They Are and What They Do" is a new feature which you will see from time to time in NHTSA News. Each will focus on a different office of this Agency.

It's International; It's VIN

Is your vehicle one of many recalled for a safety defect and still being operated on our highways? NHTSA has established a computerized listing of vehicle identification numbers (VINs) for vehicles that have been recalled since January 1, 1974, but still remain uncorrected in the manufacturers' records in the ninth month of each recall campaign.

This service permits rapid determination by present owners and prospective buyers of used cars of whether a vehicle is on the "wanted" list. State and local governments, insurance companies and other interested organizations are also afforded this useful tool for locating second and later owners of vehicles that may require a Campaign Inspection and/or Correction.

A telephone or mail inquiry--supplying the manufacturer's name and the VIN of the vehicle for a single vehicle search or the recall number or manufacturer when a complete VIN listing is desired--will in most cases bring a 24-hour response from NHTSA's VIN-retrieval information service.

Under federal regulations NHTSA may charge an at-cost fee for the service. However, single-vehicle requests will be handled on a no-charge basis. A list of charges for multi-vehicle listings and other services will be

provided as each inquiry is received. Inquiries should be addressed to: Office of Consumer Services (N40-41), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, 400 7th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590.

While this service is limited to vehicles recalled after January 1, 1974, individuals or parties interested in obtaining this same information for recalls of vehicles prior to January 1, 1974, may write directly to the vehicle manufacturer supplying the VIN to obtain this same information.

Personnel Gains, Losses and Promotions

Gains

Betty Sampson, Clerk-Steno, Research and Development, 8-3.

Promotions

Lauraline Clark, Contract Specialist, Administration, 8-3.

Charles Ashworth, Contract Specialist, Administration, 8-3.

SuEllen Gardner, Clerk-Typist, Traffic Safety Programs, 8-3.

Wendell Cook, Electronics Engineer, Traffic Safety Programs, 8-3.

Have an Idea?

HELP NHTSA FIND A BETTER WAY.

Do you have an idea which will save energy or contribute to the economy, effectiveness, or efficiency of operations? Why not submit it through the NHTSA Suggestion Program? You could receive a cash award. Suggestions should be submitted on the Official Suggestion Form (FHWA-90) to the NHTSA Incentive Awards Coordinator, Office of Personnel Management, N48-20.



Neither Dr. Dawson Mills, left, nor Mr. Joseph Napoli, right, seemed unhappy about the prospect of retirement when they met with Dr. Gregory on July 31, their last day on the job. Dr. Mills, who was chief of the Enforcement and Emergency Services Division, had been with NHTSA since its establishment and retired after 6 years of service. Mr. Napoli, assistant to the director for Interagency Coordination, retired after 33 years of government service.