

news

NHTSA



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Editor M. J. Noll

December 1975

"Make Yourself Conspicuous," Potomac Students Told



Bob Barlett, TSP, addresses about 150 fifth and sixth graders at Wayside Elementary School in Potomac, Maryland. The occasion was a special program on highway safety requested by school officials.



The children of Potomac, Maryland are becoming more conspicuous these days, and there's a good reason for it. They know that this conspicuousness may well save their lives.

"Many children are killed while walking or biking because a driver cannot see them," Bob Barlett, pedestrian and bicycle safety specialist, TSP, recently told about 150 fifth and sixth graders at Wayside Elementary School. The occasion was a special program requested by Wayside officials to help make their students more aware of the need for highway safety.

"More kids your age are killed and hurt in highway accidents than die from all kinds of diseases," Bob pointed out. "But there are things you can do to prevent this from happening to you."

A new film titled "Hush Puppy's Bright Idea," starring Shari Lewis, Pork Chop and Hush Puppy showed

the effectiveness of retro-reflective and fluorescent materials in providing conspicuousness for pedestrians and bicyclists. It was shown that during the daylight, children wearing fluorescent jackets or other materials are highlighted. In the dark, however, children wearing retroreflective material are more visible than those wearing fluorescent materials.

It was also shown that even the use of the traditional white at night is not as good as the use of retroreflective materials, especially designed for use on clothing.

A demonstration with the children further reinforced the value of retroreflective and fluorescent materials as a way of helping pedestrians and bicyclists to be seen. It was emphasized that the children were old enough to start thinking safety and to look for ways to improve their

(See Potomac Students on page 7.)



From the desk of . . .

As we enter the Christmas holiday season and approach a new year it is appropriate that we assess our performance in the year just ending.



The Administrator

From the standpoint of NHTSA's mission to help reduce motor vehicle crashes, deaths and injuries, I believe that 1975 may turn out to be an outstanding year. Preliminary figures reported by the individual states show that the nation's traffic fatalities are continuing a downward trend that began in late 1973 with the gasoline shortage and the 55 mile per hour speed limit. If the trend that became evident last August continues through the final two months of 1975, the current year may be as good as was in 1974 when the full effects of the gasoline shortage were being felt and the 55 mile per hour speed limit was universally adopted by the states.

Secretary Coleman has said that he is encouraged by this favorable situation. The figures appear to indicate that many motorists are cooperating with the lower speed limits, recognizing that there is a big payoff in safety as well as in fuel conservation.

We also continue to see the accumulative effects of

improved motor vehicle safety and driver habits and attitudes.

These latter factors are ones in which we can take personal satisfaction. The work produced by the NHTSA staff has been of high quality and has responded to the kind of effort required to affect the bottom-line results.

I look forward with confidence to the challenges that we will face together in the new year.

My thanks to each of you, along with my best holiday wishes.

James B. Gregory
James B. Gregory

Personnel

Welcome Aboard

Marilyn Jackson, Student Aid, Reg. VI, 11-9.

Mary E. Gross, Clerk-Typist, Reg. I, 11-19.

Karen K. Chinn, Student Aid, Reg. X, 11-19.

Marion D. Wilburn, Student Aid, MVP, 11-9.

Bonnie Chambers, Clerk-Steno, MVP, 11-17.

"Bye and Good Luck"

Barbara A. Feagin, Clerk Dict. Mach. Trans., MVP, 11-22.

Mary E. Kimble, Clerk-Steno, TSP, 11-18.

Corenthia V. Lopez, Clerk-Steno, RD, 11-22.

Paige T. Smith, Clerk-Typist, AD, 12-1.

Congrats on Promotion

David Houseman, Contract Procurement Analyst, AD, 11-23.

Sheldon Stucki, Safety Standards Engineer, MVP, 11-23.

Job Openings

For complete details on these job openings, see the official vacancy announcements. Vacancy announcements are posted on the NHTSA Bulletin Boards at both the Nassif and Transpoint Buildings. They are also distributed to each Office Director.

Math. Statistician,
GS-529-11, RD. Opens:
11/29, Closes: 12/19.
NHTSA 76-21

Math. Statistician,
GS-1529-11, RD. Opens:
12/3, Closes 12/23.
NHTSA 76-22.

Electronics Engineer,
GS-855-13, TSP. Opens:
12/3, Closes: 12/23.
NHTSA 76-23.

NHTSA Tradition

Employees who would like to contribute to Children's Hospital in lieu of sending greeting cards to others in the agency are asked to submit their contributions to Mrs. Alice McGonagle or their respective AA's secretary no later than December 19. Contributors are encouraged to sign the poster-size card outside Dr. Gregory's office.

graffiti



The shortest night of the year is Christmas Eve--from sundown to son up.

OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Hurrah for the pumpkin pie, and all the other goodies on the Christmas table!

Whether serving an intimate little dinner or a feast for a family of twenty, keep in mind these hints from the Department of Agriculture.

Cooked seafood, poultry, meat and vegetables should be kept HOT (above 140° F), so bacteria does not grow.

Perishables like cream pies, and dishes made with eggs should be kept COLD (below 40° F).

Don't let these foods stand at room temperature more than two hours. This can be especially difficult if you are serving a large number of people. Don't try to feed more people than you can handle. Consider refrigerator space, oven space, time, the size and quantity of cooking equipment you have, and your supply of eating utensils and dishes.

If roast beef with pan drippings is on the menu, heat the pan drippings to boiling point before serving. If gravy or drippings are kept for a second meal, boil them a few minutes before serving.

Bacteria can cause food poisoning. Often, people mistake foodborne illness for a simple "bug" or virus. The real cause may be food that was not properly handled, prepared, or served. This can be prevented.

Have a merry and safe Christmas.

The Festival of Hanukkah

The Jewish festival of Hanukkah, celebrated this year beginning November 29 and lasting for eight days, is a joyous holiday period of freedom from oppression for the Jewish people and a miracle that is a cornerstone of Jewish folklore.

In approximately 165 B.C., a Jewish army led by Judah Maccabee defeated and drove from Jerusalem the Syrian Greeks who had destroyed the Jewish Temple and imposed their idol worship on the area. While their victory marked only temporary freedom from oppression for the Jews, it preserved the concept of monotheism--the belief in one God--for all time.

The legend of Hanukkah maintains that though the Jewish Temple was destroyed during the war, the Eternal Light--symbol of the continuity and durability of the Jewish people--survived in its ruins. However, only one small cruse of consecrated oil--enough for one day--was available to keep the flame alive. Miraculously, that one cruse lasted for eight days until more oil could be found. In commemoration of this miracle, the Festival of Lights is celebrated for eight days.

In Jewish homes around the world, each day of Hanukkah is marked by the lighting of candles in the ceremonial candlestick or Menorah. One candle is added each day until, on the final night of the holiday, all eight candles are lighted. In recent

times and because its occurrence coincides with the Christmas season, the custom of exchanging gifts has added a twentieth century touch to this ancient festival.

Santa and Such

In Scandinavian countries a little elf called Julenissen brings toys to good children on Christmas Eve. In England it is Father Christmas who brings the gifts. In France the gift-bearer is known as Bonhomme Noel and he is accompanied by Pere Fouettard (Father Whipper) who leaves a birch rod for the unfortunate child who has been naughty during the year. In Spain and some other Spanish-speaking countries it is Balthazar, one of the Wise Men, who brings the gifts on the eve of Epiphany. In Syria the Good Camel brings the gifts. According to legend, he was the youngest of the camels that bore the Wise Men on their journey to the Christ Child. A little old woman called Befana brings the gifts in Italy. According to legend, the Wise Men were on their way to Bethlehem when they encountered the old lady cleaning her house. They asked her to join them on their journey, but she said she was too busy. And, since that time she has been wandering around seeking the child Jesus.

--Washington Irving

Taylor Vinson Combines Vocation and Avocation

Trivia questions: In 1956, what auto manufacturer introduced "life-guard features"? In what year did GM introduce the "Turret Top"? Hint: Wander into room 5219, Office of Chief Counsel. The framed safety ads you'll discover are the property of Z. Taylor Vinson, senior staff attorney.

ACCUMULATING

Taylor claims he is a frustrated auto designer. He has been collecting publications, catalogues, and ads about cars since he was a mere lad of eight. He would cut out the pictures. After while, he realized the catalogues, etc., were more useful as complete entities.

He started his collec-

tion with catalogues from dealer showrooms. Taylor points out that a dealer must buy his publications from the auto manufacturers. There are different kinds of materials he will purchase such as throwaway folders which are placed in the showroom, and catalogues of different sizes. The larger catalogues are kept in the dealer's office, and are reserved for hot prospects.

As his collection grew, so did his contacts. Taylor has corresponded with other hobbyists around the world. When he was in college, a Dutch man offered to sell him his whole collection. Taylor wrote back, "Sure. But it will take me three years to pay for it." Building on that collection, Taylor has compiled

one of the best collections of foreign car publications in this country. He explains that most American collectors concentrate on American memorabilia. Only recently has the demand for foreign publications increased. It is a demand that cannot be completely filled. Taylor explains, "In 1939, for example, there were only about 500 foreign cars imported into this country. In Europe, stuff was destroyed in the two world wars. Old foreign materials are simply scarce."

Another milestone in Taylor's quest came in 1971. While vacationing in Italy, he visited the Museo dell' Automobile in Turin ("That's the Detroit of Italy, you know.") He brought with him a list of duplicates he was willing to trade or sell. The museum was glad to obtain some sought-after publications.

On that holiday, Taylor also obtained what he considers one of the best items in his collection, a signed copy of the autobiography of Commendatore Ferrari, who presented the book to Taylor.

The Italian Museum is not the only institution that is aware of Taylor's assortment. He has also dealt with the Smithsonian and the Philadelphia Free Library. When asked whether he would like to leave his motor vehicle memorabilia to a museum, he replies he would certainly "like to see the collection kept together."



Taylor Vinson, senior staff attorney, OCC, lovingly displays his 1941 Buick Limited catalogue. Before him are his 1934 Ford 3-D catalogue, with glasses, 1934 Hispano-Suiza catalogue, and 1926 bronze Renault boat-tail speedster.

VOCATION AND . . .

As an attorney for the International Finance Corporation, Taylor heard that a motor vehicle safety bureau was to be formed. He joined the staff of the National Highway Safety Bureau in 1967, and remained when NHTSA became NHTSA. "I kept tabs on the development of this agency and got in on the ground floor. I combined vocation and avocation."

Presently, you'll find him on the flea market circuit, buying, selling, trading, in Baltimore, Gaithersburg, and Frederick, Md. and Carlisle and Hershey, Pa. These are Taylor's favorite sources for new items.

QUINTESSENCES

Taylor enjoys describing some of the superlatives among his acquisitions.

The oldest is a 1902 Belgian catalogue for the "Dechamps." It is a combination sales catalogue, repair manual, spare parts manual, owner's manual, and rules-of-the-road manual. "This reflects," says Taylor, "the fact that you had no salesmen, showrooms or repair shops then."

The oldest American items among Taylor's publications are a 1904 Studebaker booklet and a 1905 Reo catalogue.

The rarest item is his 1934 Hispano-Suiza catalogue. The car was manufactured in France. "It had the quality of a Rolls Royce." Only 500 numbered copies of the catalogue were published. Taylor owns number 319.

He owns another numbered catalogue from the French Manufacturer Talbot, but does not know how many of those were published. So, he doesn't know if it is as rare. The Hispano-Suiza, though, is "like a limited-edition book," and beautifully rendered.

Perhaps the award for the strangest collectable should go to a folder for the 1958 "Aurora Safety Car," designed by a Catholic priest. "It looks like a melted St. Christopher's medal," says Taylor.

Though his catalogues take up 24 file drawers and a "large chest of drawers for outsize items," these are not the only aspects to Taylor's collection.

At the top of the stairwell in Taylor's home, the visitor may behold the spotlighted visage of a 1938 LaSalle radiator.

Taylor also collects car models. They are not the standard, self-assemble variety, but a refined version. Some are promotional tools that have been used by the manufacturers since the early 1950's. Some are reproductions of early vintage year models. The Italians produce many of the latter, which are beautifully detailed.

WHY COLLECT?

His memorabilia is appealing in three ways, Taylor believes.

First, it is interesting to view the evolution of the mechanical specifications of the automobile over its seventy-odd year history.

The second level of

appeal is aesthetic. One need only view the binding, type face, and colors in an old catalogue to be delighted. Between the world wars, most catalogues employed drawn or painted conceptualizations of new cars. After World War II, catalogues with photographed pictures began to appear. Now the media for sales catalogues is almost exclusively photographic. Taylor believes there have been excellent artists in both the old and new media. Rockwell Kent, for instance, made a beautiful woodblock print for the 1940 Nash and Peter Max's influence can be seen in the catalogues of the late 1960's. Today, says Taylor, the photographic work done to promote the sale of automobiles such as Citroen is "some of the finest industrial art." It is a photography of mechanics. Yet it can capture moods. It can be surrealistic.

The third level of appeal comes when the reader evaluates the sociology of the ads. For instance, in the 1920's, it was the "Tiffany-like" snob appeal of cars like the Rolls. During the Depression, ads appealed to consumer thriftiness. "A price cut of \$15 meant something then." Today, the public relations force attempts to convince the consumer with gas mileage ratings. A pitch toward a longer-life, more durable car may come in the future, Taylor feels. One selling point has proved invariable, though, he says. "They've always claimed they build safe cars."

Annual Reports



by Beatrice Dane
Office of Public Affairs
and Consumer Services

The basic 1966 laws on highway and motor vehicle safety contain a requirement for annual reports to the Congress on the administration of the Acts. The legislation requires a comprehensive accounting on a calendar year basis, as well as several specifics of interest to the supervisory Congressional Committees. Legislative amendments over the years have expanded the responsibilities of the agency and hence of the reporting requirements.

The original reporting date of March 31 was unachievable and has since been amended to June 30. Even this has proven illusory due, in part, to the fact that the Secretary must submit the reports to the President for transmittal to Congress, which adds at least six weeks to the preparation and review time.

It is only natural that the Congress should wish to be informed about the work of the agency it created, the programs it has established, how the agency spends its funds, and the results achieved.

This must be done in two separate reports prepared and submitted at the same time, which puts pressure on you, the staff, for assembling the basic material, and for prompt review of successive drafts. For those of us directly concerned, it means six months of total immersion. Delays, whatever the cause, can quickly snowball into a major crisis.

It is a constant battle to satisfy our reporting requirements, and to keep the texts of the reports within acceptable limits of length. We do this partly through advance planning, assignment of topics by office, and the imposition of page limitations. In part, we have resorted to Appendices in order to keep the text as brief and simple as possible. However, we've gone about as far as we can with that device. Occasionally, we have been able to substitute a table or figure for a considerable body of text. Our principal weapon, however,

is a ruthless editing pencil when it comes to reducing copy to the bare essentials, and determination to keep both a sense of humor and a sense of proportion about the important versus the peripheral. A good dictionary helps, too.

Our deadlines may be painfully tight, but are not established arbitrarily. The schedule is made up in light of experience of the minimum time required for each step of the process: editing, typing, review (twice), NHTSA approval, OST review and approval, White House review and approval, galley, galley proofing, make-up, and printing. It is a long road dotted with unexpected detours and hazards, only some of which can be overcome by ingenuity.

We appreciate your cooperation in responding to the many "spot" requests levied upon you as the manuscripts evolve, and as we see how examples

Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk

'Tis the season. Many of us will celebrate the holidays with a group of partygoers. Let's follow the guidelines in NHTSA's pamphlet "How to Keep the Life of the Party Alive."

Plan to serve food with alcohol. Have several jiggers at the bar, to measure mixed drinks. If you serve an alcoholic punch, make it with a non-carbonated base. Have nonalcoholic beverages available for your guests.

Don't force drinks on your guests. Stop serving

alcohol an hour before the party is to end.

If you observe a guest who is drinking too much, engage him in conversation to slow down his drinking and offer him food.

After the party, if a guest has been drinking excessively, suggest that you drive him home, that he stay overnight, or that you call a taxi for him.

If he still insists on driving, try to take his car keys away.

"Friends don't let friends drive drunk."

or illustrations would point up the text or make the end-product more readable.

The Annual Reports have changed considerably over the years, and, we like to think, improved. Perhaps the most visible changes have been the illustrations, attractive covers, and brevity of text. Handling the material topically rather than by office has helped avoid duplication and simplified the format.

There has been a need for a simple, inexpensive brochure, or booklet, to tell people what NHTSA is all about--its purposes, programs, and its "track record." This year we have prepared such a booklet entirely made up of excerpts from the Annual Reports. It is being printed in quantity and should be available about the time this newsletter reaches you.

The Department also must make an annual reporting to Congress. This is on a fiscal year basis, and does not require Presidential review and approval. The NHTSA portion of that report is normally prepared in July against an August deadline. Thus it partially overlaps work on our own Annual Reports, but follows the most intense phases. It has been our custom to print a limited number for distribution primarily within NHTSA as a sort of mid-year up-date in capsule form. It has proven particularly useful in the Regional Offices.

Once this is accomplished, the planning cycle begins again.

Potomac Students

(from page 1)

conspicuousness by making or modifying materials at hand.

Bob also spoke briefly about school bus safety. "The school bus is not the place for boisterousness, he said. "The driver needs to devote his full attention to the task at hand."

And he stressed the importance of wearing a safety belt when riding in a car. As a gentle reminder each child was given a "hot dot" inscribed with the message "Buckle Up ... I Do!"

In a separate discussion with the teachers about pedestrian/cyclist safety, Bob pointed out that dry statistics are of little interest to the students and teachers, too, for that matter, and that teachers must find ways to make safety fun by showing and doing safety projects together. The "how to be safe" is just as important as the negative "don't do" that we so often get in safety lessons.

Since the program, fluorescent jackets, "hot dots" and retroreflective



"See, that's how it works," Bob Barlett, TSP, tells Team III (fifth/sixth grade) teacher Verilette Parker (left), Assistant Principal Lynn Bandy (2nd from left) and Principal Doris Goldman study the retroreflective band.

strips on clothing and bicycles seem to be the "in" fashion in the neighborhood. Even some parents are using them.

And one mother said that her daughter has started encouraging her to buckle up before she starts the car. Kids have a way of getting important messages across.

"Right on," children. Parents can learn, too.

'Round About NHTSA

Hurray for Ray! Ray Sellers, a writer-editor in the Executive Secretariat, has just completed a course in Computer Programming at the Computer Learning Center in Fairfax, Virginia. Graduation day was Monday, November 21. He graduated with honors, receiving the highest score in his class.

Three NHTSA employees recently received awards for noteworthy performance on the job.

Receiving outstanding performance ratings were Sidney Williams and Carolyn Marrs, both of MVP.

Frank G. Richardson, RD, was given an award for high quality performance.



Christmas Customs

Christmas in the New World. Traditions to be kept, discarded, changed. We Americans have grown up with Christmas customs and passed them on to our children. Many of these customs originated in Europe. Following is a brief history of American Christmas customs, presented so we all may appreciate the cultural richness of our country during the season of sharing.

Holiday

In pre-Christian times, the Romans celebrated "Natalis Solis Invicti," the "Birthday of the Unconquerable Sun," on December 25. Church references to the Christ child as the "Sun of Justice" and the "Day-spring" still recall those ancient celebrations.

The Pilgrims, as Puritans brought with them a great dislike for Christmas. Strong religious antagonism persisted into the nineteenth century. However, by 1836, the pagan-Christian celebration had won sufficient acceptance to be recognized by the state of Alabama as a holiday. By 1890, every state and territory had made similar acknowledgement. Christmas is the only annual religious holiday to receive this secular sanction.

Tree

The Tannenbaum is Germany's national symbol

of the season. It is undeniably the Pennsylvania Germans who brought the symbol to us. A Christmas tree was first mentioned in America in the diary of a Pennsylvania Dutchman, Matthew Zahm, on December 20, 1821. By 1877, a writer for the Philadelphia Weekly Press states, "As well might we dance without music . . . as to keep Christmas without a Christmas tree."

The community tree is solely an American custom. The first two were erected in Madison Square Garden and on Boston Common in 1912.

Feasting

The Puritans made an effort to substitute Thanksgiving for Christmas. So, while Europeans tradition calls for boar's head or goose, we Americans usually prefer turkey.

An account of a holiday dinner with President Washington is amazing in its bounty: "roast beef, veal, turkey, ducks, fowl, hams, etc.; puddings, jellies, oranges, apples, nuts, almonds, figs, raisins, and a variety of wines and punch."

Poinsettia

A Mexican legend tells of a boy who had no gift to give the Christ child. In the spot where he knelt, a beautiful plant with scarlet leaves immediately grew. He presented it as a gift.

Dr. Joel Roberts Poinsett, first United States Minister to Mexico, brought that Christmas flower to this country in the early nineteenth century.

Door Decorating Contest

"Deck the halls with boughs of Holly. Fa la la la la, la la la la. 'Tis the season to be jolly."

And throughout NHTSA brightly decorated doors depict the traditional and fantasy thoughts of the season. Some took a lot of thought and work, and could be winners in the DOT/ERA door decorating contest.

The door decorating contest is open to all DOT employees in the Nassif Building, Transpoint and FOB 10A. Six prizes will be awarded in each of the three locations, a total of 18 in all. In each building, a first and second prize in each of three categories will be given.

The three categories are:

Traditional: Religious and pastoral

Contemporary: Santa, reindeer, snow scenes, etc.

Open: Humorous types.

All door entries must comply with DOT Notice 1730.11, Use of Christmas Decorations in Government Buildings. Entries are limited to outside hallway doors only.

NHTSA employees interested in entering this contest should contact Mr. Timothy C. Sumner, Executive Vice President of the DOT/ERA, room 8300, Extension 61464. The deadline for entries is close of business, Friday, December 19.

Prizes for winners will be provided by the DOT/ERA.