

# news

# NHTSA



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Editor M. J. Noll

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## What Value Media Advertising?



NHTSA Administrator Joan Claybrook and Deputy Administrator Howard Dugoff are amused by Jerry Mander's response to an audience question.

Should NHTSA campaign more vigorously for auto safety in print rather than on TV? Why does the driving public support safety measures, including the speed limit, overwhelmingly in surveys but less in practice? Should NHTSA in fact discourage the use of private automobiles? These and other questions surfaced in an informal discussion of NHTSA's public relations policy by Jerry Mander, media consultant and author of a controversial book on television.

Mr. Mander spent the first 15 years of his public relations career in commercial advertising, which included an auto manufacturer account. In the late 60's, he became aware of and involved with the growing ecological movement. He left the commercial advertising

world to found the country's first non-profit, socially oriented ad agency, Public Interest Communications.

Increasing concern with the effect of advertising and the media on peoples' lives led him to write Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television. Part of his approach is the assumption that television is a "nonreformable" technology--i.e., its very nature carries with it certain intrinsic problems. In his presentation, he paralleled his critical view of television to movements which question the worth of other technologies--nuclear research, recombinant DNA experimentation, chemical food additives, etc., on the basis of such characteristics.

(See **Media Advertising** on page 4.)

## Who's Who in NHTSA

### A Busy Person Who Gets Things Done

In a city crowded with workday commuters who depend on its services and abandon it to its community problems the rest of the time, Steve Levy is locally involved.

It's a much more "grassroots" sort of involvement than some, and one that many commuters, in their suburban developments, will probably never need to face. But property owners in the Central City must either be at the mercy of active currents sweeping their neighborhoods—creating parking spaces or destroying them and turning residences into commercial spaces or tampering with historic character, or take part in the changes by making their wishes known. Finding out what the wishes are in Foggy Bottom, and making them known, have been for Steve a challenge and nearly another full-time job.

It began when Steve moved into the George Washington University area as a tenant. He has since bought a small house there, which he is restoring. As he grew to love the neighborhood, he became aware of larger forces at work. University expansion, sometimes by devious means, has steadily driven low-to-moderate income residents from the area. Developers and Organizations with influence have contributed to the expansion of business which is not



Steve Levy

resident-related, and to the dwindling of neighborhood support services. Buildings of historical interest have been razed, sometimes simply for lack of concern on their behalf. When Congress gave the District of Columbia a measure of home rule, it created the means for residents to present their views to government agencies through groups whose authority to do so was officially sanctioned. Steve jumped in with both feet, so to speak, and has had hardly an unscheduled moment since.

The District was divided into 36 sections for the purpose, and one of these new bodies, called Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANC's), is authorized in each. The act which created them

directs District agencies to give "great weight" to opinions expressed by citizens through the ANC's, and to provide them with 30 days' advance notice of any actions. In some communities, organization has been lacking or too divided or apathetic to organize an effective ANC, but in others residents have gone to great pains to create an ANC with integrity and credibility to represent neighborhood positions in such matters as housing, demolition and construction, zoning variances, and landmark preservation.

Steve was an active participant in the Foggy Bottom/West End ANC almost from its beginning. As Project Director, he coordinated the ANC's effort to limit adverse effects on the neighborhood of the World Bank's new annex which will rise shortly at 20th and G. At stake was a whole block of residential property, which included the Concordia United Church of Christ, the F Street Club, and a number of historic houses. The Zoning Commission called Steve's testimony, and the set of alternative developments which he proposed, "one of the best testimonies ever presented before this Commission," and major features of his proposals were adopted in the Commission's final order.

Another major project which he directed was the first residentially-oriented

analysis of parking demand and supply in the city. It was hailed by the D.C. Parking Commissioner as "the best piece of work ever to come out of an ANC."

But these accolades weren't easily earned. The life of a community organizer and activist is one of the busiest and most political imaginable. He must learn the ins and outs of city government, win the confidence and support of everyone who could help, canvass residents and present their views at interminable hearings. He must also pound the pavements to publicize meetings and otherwise awaken citizens, most of whom are blissfully unaware and hard to arouse as sleeping bears, to whatever imminent change threatens their wellbeing. Additionally, he must become well informed on the technical side of every issue, because the community organizer's sincerity and credibility are, in the long run, his or her most important assets.

Steve estimates that he has spent, since August 1976, between 20 and 30 hours per week wearing his various community representative hats. He belongs to several community associations and serves on several of their committees. On one he serves as representative to the Federation of Citizens Associations, and works on three of its committees. But his largest commitment is to his elected public office, one of seven Commissioners of the Foggy Bottom/West End ANC.

In addition, the other six Commissioners selected him to be the Chairman of the ANC. During his one-year term Chairman, Steve has directed almost every aspect of its operations. However, he is considering not running for Commissioner again when his term expires in January 1980, because he prefers intensive work on a few issues to administrative responsibility for many. He is a generalist, in the sense that he tends to look at the larger picture, but he feels he can achieve more by bringing that awareness to bear on specific problems.

Steve describes himself as the office generalist in our Office of Program Evaluation, P&P. Presently a Program Analyst, he began his Government career as a Management Intern at the Department of Commerce in 1970, and came to NHTSA in 1973. As an analyst, he has primarily assisted in evaluating the effectiveness of programs in furthering agency goals, concentrating on Traffic Safety Programs.

In addition, he represents the Associate Administrator on the Scientific and Technical Information Advisory Board. Among other things the Board sponsors monthly technical Seminars. Steve is also the current chairman of the Sole Source Review Board, which must approve all NHTSA purchase of equipment or services from specified sources rather than on a bid basis, and he occasionally serves on the Contract Award, Merit Promotion

Review, and Financial Assistance Review Boards. All of this amounts to an impressive collection of hats. Hats which all require: a questing mind, a preference for independent research and method, the ability to gather information and then use it in a larger panorama. Where the panorama is our agency's mission, Steve's struggles are internal to preserve impartiality and good judgement in the evaluation of our programs. Where it is the neighborhood where he lives, they are preservation of a community and, stimulation of civic awareness and pride. For these are the things, Steve believes, that turn houses into homes.

### Moped Drivers

Moped drivers are involved in fewer crashes than motorcyclists. But when they do crash the riders' risk of injury is similar to motorcyclists according to a recent West German study. The injury risk for drivers of motorized two-wheeled vehicles in a crash is at least 10-15 times higher than for car passengers.

### Thanksgiving Prayer

We thank Thee Lord  
for giving us  
Thy gift of bread  
and meat.  
We thank Thee, too—  
a little more—  
That we are here to  
eat!



—Leverett Lyon

## Media Advertising

(from page 1)

Should people be protected from the possible destructive outcome of their (questionable) assumption that they can control three tons of machine barreling down the highway? If this protection is necessary, should the machine exist at all?

Perhaps, he hazarded, a major reason for the discrepancy between the sort of safety the public wants in its automobiles and its failure to take specific preventive measures (such as buckling up or slowing down) is that these measures act as depressing reminders of possible tragedy therefore, the mind averts the thought by avoiding the deed.

He suggested that campaigns which seek to increase awareness are more successful if they appear in print rather than on TV or radio, which are more passive media. That is, reading involves you (how many times have you had to reread something because it just didn't catch? You felt compelled to "interact" with it until you understood it), whereas hearing or seeing merely implants images without making you conscious of having learned anything.

It can certainly be argued that a safety message is more likely to arrive in peoples' homes on television in the course of their daily viewing than it is likely that they will pick up and

read material on auto safety. But one must also keep in mind that in order to be effective, television advertising must be repeated over and over. And few government agencies, which usually rely on public service announcements, have the budget to bring their message repeatedly to the screen during prime time. Dollar for dollar, print stretches a message further.

Asking basic questions, says Mr. Mander, can help direct an agency such as ours by clarifying its responsibilities and goals. It is clear that only then can we design effective campaigns which take into account the existing behavior, the changes we want to effect, and basic human nature.

## Personnel

### Welcome Aboard

Catherine Wilkinson, Research Assistant, RD, 10-22.

Barbara McLane, Program Analyst, RD, 10-22.

Robin Willoby, Clerk-Stenographer, RD, 10-22.

Angeli A. Sebastian, Math. Statistician, RD, 10-22.

Margie Wooden, Clerk-Typist, AD, 10-22.

Shirley Y. Bryant, Secretary-Typing, AD, 10-22.

Lauraline B. Clark, Contract Specialist, AD, 10-22.

Alice M. Owens, Attorney Advisor, OCC, 10-22.

Pamela T. Anikeeff, Research Psychologist, RD, 10-15.

### 'Bye and Good Luck

Leola Chappelle, Administrative Assistant, RD, 9-21.

Henry D. Lederman, Trial Attorney, OCC, 10-21.

Nancy Eager, Attorney Advisor, OCC, 10-20.

### Congrats on Promotion

Sharon A. Hart, Math, Statistician, RD, 10-22.

Samuel B. Phillips, General Investigator, NEF, 10-8.

Terry M. Klein, Math. Statistician, NTS, 10-8.

Dan L. Butler, Hwy. Safety Mgmt. Specialist, NTS, 10-8.

Penelope R. Johnson, Math. Statistician, NTS, 10-8.

Dorothy R. Ness, Secretary (Typing), OCC, 10-8.

Suellen V. Halpin, Writer/Editor, RD, 10-22.

## Check It Out

Having to periodically add coolant to the radiator can be indicative of a leak in the radiator or hose or a malfunctioning pressure cap. If your vehicle is running hotter than usual it may be a cooling system problem caused by a faulty thermostat or a blockage of the system caused by rust or sludge. Have this problem checked by a professional.