

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety PROGRESS REPORT

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8TH GRADER'S TRAFFIC SAFETY RESEARCH WINS PRIZE

Julia Quinn, 13, is getting an early start on a career as a traffic safety researcher: Her paper, "Are Gender and Age Factors in Road Rage?" won first place in the Illinois Junior Academy of Science State Science Fair, the highest level possible.

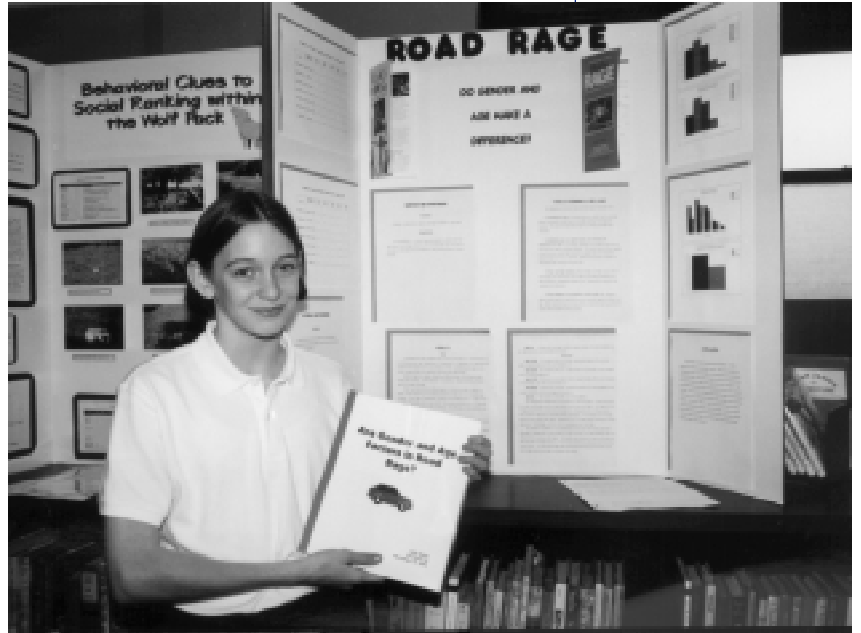
What gave this 8th-grader at the Sacred Heart Academy in Chicago the idea for this study? "When I was out in the car with my mom I saw an accident occur because someone ran a red light," Quinn says. She'd read about the AAA Foundation's road rage research and decided to do some traffic safety research of her own. Her hypothesis: Most red light runners will be male drivers 25 years old or younger.

Quinn's methodology was simple. As she explains in her award-winning paper, she first identified four different types of red-light running: Jumping the gun, speeding up on yellow but entering the intersection on red, going through a red without changing speed, and not stopping on a red before turning right. She prepared a code chart with columns for the date, weather, types of red lights run, and approximate age and sex of the drivers. Then Quinn sat at the corner of Ridge and Lake Avenues in Evanston, Illinois, between 4:30 and 6 p.m. for seven days, recording red-light runners.

Her results? "Every single day of my testing showed that males ran more red lights than females. In the 7 days of observation, a total of 175 red lights were run. Male drivers ran 105 of those lights and females ran 70. This means that 60% of the 175 red lights were run by males and

OOOPS!

A caption in the last issue of *Progress Report* inadvertently moved Marguerite D. Hambleton to a different club and state. Dr. Hambleton is still President and CEO of AAA Western and Central New York.



about 40% by females." However, "test results showed that males 26-40 years old ran more red lights." Females in that age group were also key offenders. Quinn recommends that the AAA Foundation target red-light running education at males 26-40 years old and possibly females 26-40 years old.

Quinn says she learned at least two things while conducting her experiment: "I learned that there are a lot of aggressive drivers, of all ages. I also saw an accident when I was doing my research, so it taught me that traffic safety is very important."

ZED NOW WORKS ON WINDOWS NT

The much-anticipated patch for Windows NT users has finally arrived at the driver-ZED website. If you are using an NT workstation and would like to run driver-ZED, download the patch from <http://www.driverzed.org>. The AAA Foundation has received many inquiries about running this valuable driver education program on NT machines, and now it's possible. Order driver-ZED online, by mail, or from 1-800-305-SAFE.

Julia Quinn, 13, of the Sacred Heart Academy in Chicago, won first place in the Illinois Junior Academy of Science State Science Fair with her study on Road Rage.

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CARRY YOUR ID IN YOUR HELMET



Bicyclists and skaters, especially children, often hit the road without identification. If there's a medical emergency, lack of ID can make the situation worse.

That's why Dr. Louis J. Gaston developed the "Medical Information Carrier System," a way to carry personal information without tags or wallets. "During the 1996 Keystone bicycle ride, a state trooper and I realized we had all these riders but we did not have a good information system," Gaston says. "We thought, why not do something inside the helmet?" Children especially tend to go bike riding without any identification on them,

Gaston says.

So Gaston came up with the idea of putting a small information packet inside a bicycle helmet with the rider's name, contact information, and any medical problems written on waterproof paper. "But you have to know it's there, so we thought, why not put something on the outside to show that?" A round reflective medic alert sign sticks on the back of the helmet to tell medical personnel the rider's information is there. "It's a low-tech system, but this is an advantage for emergency personnel, who can just pull out the information and use it," Gaston says. "It's got to be very straightforward. In a crisis you don't have time."

Response to this product has been very positive, Gaston says. The ID system is endorsed by USA Cycling, which sponsors the Olympic team, and by the Pennsylvania Sheriff's Association.

So far nobody's life has been saved because of his invention, but that's fine with Dr. Gaston. "To be honest with you, we want people to buy them and never have to use them," he says. The packets will last as long as the helmet, and because it's just a hand-written form, information can be added or updated as necessary. Gaston points out, "The nice thing is that it's Y2K compatible. And Y3K and Y4K too."

The ID system, with instructions, pouch, special form, and identification sticker, is available from <http://www.meds.org> or by calling 724/295-1988. A package of four kits is \$10.95, including shipping, handling, and any taxes.

REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS

The AAA Foundation is soliciting proposals for the following two studies. See the website or call the Foundation offices for more information on proposal requirements.

SPLASH AND SPRAY SUPPRESSION FROM LARGE TRUCKS

Splash and spray created by large trucks is a continuing motorist concern. This is in spite of improvements in truck aerodynamics during the past decade.

Research objectives include:

- Identify devices, technologies, and operating practices shown to be effective in reducing splash and spray from large trucks.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of European Union directives aimed at splash and spray suppression.
- Make recommendations for needed additional research and field testing.

The full request for proposals for this project is available on the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety web site at <http://www.aafts.org/Text/splash.htm>. Proposals are due Friday, July 2, 1999.

THE ROLE OF DRIVER DISTRACTION IN TRAFFIC CRASHES

During the past quarter of a century many new sources of potential driver distraction have emerged, yet the degree to which they contribute to crashes has not been adequately assessed.

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Address correspondence to Editor, AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, Suite 201, 1440 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20005.
Telephone: 202-638-5944; Fax: 202-638-5943

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The overarching research objective is to identify the major sources of driver distraction that result in crashes and near misses and to understand the relative importance of these distractors. This will involve examining the NASS Crashworthiness Data Systems and developing and validating a driving log methodology to estimate driver distraction rates in the US population.

The full request for proposals for this project is available on the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety web site at <http://www.aaafoundation.org/Text/distraction.htm>. The deadline for submissions is July 26.

SKATEBOARDING: MORE DANGEROUS THAN SKATING

Waking after a 50-year sleep, a modern-day Rip Van Winkle would be amazed at the skaters and skateboarders whizzing by on city streets, sidewalks, and bicycle paths. Skating has become a major recreational activity, with injuries skyrocketing accordingly. In 1996, hospital emergency rooms treated 139,000 people for inline skating and skateboard injuries.

A study using data from the National Pediatric Trauma Registry at the New England Medical Center shows that skateboarding injuries tend to be more severe than those from skating. The study analyzed nearly 600 hospital records of skating and skateboarding injuries for severity. Among skateboarders, 50.8 percent had head injuries, compared with 33.7 percent of inline skaters and 18.8 percent of roller skaters. According to Injury Severity Scores (a medical measure of how seriously hurt a person is), skateboarders were 8 times more likely to be severely or critically injured than roller skaters and twice as likely as inline skaters. The average hospital stay was 6.0 days for skateboarders, 3.4 days for inline skaters, and 2.4 days for roller skaters.

What does this mean for parents? If your child wants skates or a skateboard, skates are safest, while skateboards have the most potential for causing injury. All skaters, especially skateboarders, should use pads and helmets to prevent injuries, since lower-body and head injuries can be quite serious.

A high proportion of injuries happen to new

skaters and skateboarders, suggesting that many skating-related problems could be prevented if novices practice the basics on flat, smooth, dry surfaces away from motor vehicles. Most skating injuries are caused by forward falls on outstretched arms. New skaters should practice falling and sliding on their wrist and knee pads. They'll learn how to handle a spill and the resulting dents and scratches will make the point about the importance of safety gear.

The study, by J. Scott Osberg, Sue E. Schneps, Carla Di Scala, and Guohua Li, appeared in *The Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine* Volume 152, October 1998. Reprints are available.



These skaters model a full set of protective gear.

NEW JERSEY DRIVERS LEARN FROM FOUNDATION VIDEO

Northern New Jersey drivers are learning more about controlling their anger behind the wheel, thanks to donations from AAA North Jersey. "The club has been working with the Bergen County Department of Health Services for over a year on preparing lesson plans and other materials on the topic of aggressive driving and road rage," explains William J. Visser, Manager of Public and Government Services for AAA North Jersey.

The club donated 40 copies of the AAA Foundation's "Preventing Road Rage" video to the Bergen County Department of Health Services to include with their lesson plans. The video will be used in the county's stress reduction programs and defensive driving courses.

"We have a comprehensive package on the whole problem of aggressive driving," Visser says. "In the package were copies of all our AAA Foundation materials, including the road rage pamphlet, and we have a card of our own that advises people what to do if they're a victim of road rage or witness anything that could be a problem."

Visser also uses "Preventing Road Rage" in the



William J. Visser, Manager of Public and Government Services, AAA North Jersey

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NEW JERSEY DRIVERS (continued)

AAA Driver Improvement Program. "We run seven classes a month and we show the road rage video at every class," Visser says, with 25-35 people in each class. "We get excellent comments from the students. Now, that's a mixed bag: You have students that are violators, and also good drivers that simply want insurance reduction. And we constantly get comments about how it's an excellent video and they've learned a lot from it."

MOTHER KNOWS BEST: GET DRIVER-ZED

"I felt I had to write and tell you what a great program driver-ZED is for teenagers," writes Deborah O. Gorman. Gorman, a member of AAA Lancaster County, saw an article about driver-ZED in the Lancaster Motorist and ordered a copy for her 16-year-old daughter.

"My daughter enjoys using the program. It is interactive and really makes you, as the driver, think. Ann told me that it has impressed upon her the need to be alert and aware of what's going on around you at all times.

"I must tell you that I also went through the program, out of curiosity to see how it worked and to see how well I could do. It does make you think, make you look, make you notice, and make you aware of what's going on in and out of your car."

Gorman says she was impressed with how difficult the ZED program was: "The first time I took it I got an 88. I was expecting to get 100," she says. Gorman says her daughter was also surprised at how hard it was to get a high score. "[My daughter] sat down thinking that because she had driver's ed in school and had read the manual that she's a pro." Because the program was so challenging, Gorman urged her daughter to go through it twice, she said, to really learn how to scan.

"I thought it was geared to that age level," she says. "If anyone would ask me, I would encourage them to purchase the program and let their kids go through it."

CROSSROADS? NO, CROSSWORDS!

Test your wits against the new traffic safety crossword puzzle, on the AAA Foundation's web site at <http://www.driverzed.org>. The clues may stump you at first but you can browse around the site to pick up hints. This puzzle is the first in a series that will be coming to the site. The puzzle can be printed out and distributed to friends, parents, new drivers, or driving instructors. "I hope it will add something different to the classroom and provide some thought-provoking fun," says Joshua Poole, who devised the puzzle. "I hope people will give it a try and then check back soon for the next puzzle in the series."

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AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety
1440 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 201
Washington, D.C. 20005