

# PROGRESS REPORT

## DAYLIGHT SAVINGS ENDS – TIME TO BRIGHTEN UP!

Now that the dark evenings of winter have descended, pedestrians need to think about nighttime safety. Before you go out in the evening, imagine how hard it will be for drivers to see you — and put on some retroreflective clothing.

“Retro-reflective” means that an object reflects light back towards the source. Though most retro-reflective material appears gray in daylight, at night it sends light back at the driver of a car and appears as a brilliant patch of white. The AAA Foundation for traffic safety sells retro-reflective vests, caps, armbands, and stickers, which are visible to motorists at a distance of 500 feet, compared with 180 feet of visibility provided by white clothing. That means a motorist can see a person in plenty of time to avoid trouble.

Pedestrians, cyclists, skaters, and scooter users should wear retro-reflective garments when they’re out after dark. Even dogs and cats can use the extra safety from retro-reflective leashes or stickers on their collars. If you walk your dog after dark, wear a retro-reflective vest yourself and put a reflective collar and leash on your pet.



The AAA Foundation’s web site offers a great selection of colorful retro- reflective wear made with 3M Scotchlite™ technology. Find out more and purchase products at <http://www.aaafoundation.org> or <http://www.headlitescorp.com/Page3.html>.

## CAN A SCHOOL BUS WALK?

Yes! Instead of putting children into a motor vehicle, the program called “Walking School Bus” provides a safe, convenient way to get children to walk to school. According to the Centers for Disease Control, today less than 10 percent of children walk to school. Even children who live less than a mile from their school don’t walk — nearly 70 percent take some other form of transportation.

The “Walking School Bus” and “Kidswalk-to-School” programs are trying to change that pattern by offering a safe, convenient way for children to get healthy exercise.

Both programs work the same way: Adults who know the neighborhood pick out a safe route for children to take to the school. Then every school day an adult escort picks up the children from their houses, just as a school bus would, but instead of climbing aboard the children simply follow the adult to the school. For added safety, two adults may escort the group, one ahead and one behind. The escort carries a few safety items, such as a flag to stop traffic and a cell phone, and makes sure the children cross streets safely. When school is over, the group meets at a predetermined location and the adult walks the children back through the neighborhood, dropping each child at home along the way.

Walking to school does more than provide  
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healthy outdoor exercise. It's convenient for parents, who don't have to drive the children to school, and schools also benefit from reduced traffic congestion and increased safety in their parking areas.

If you're interested in a walk-to-school program for your neighborhood, contact the Centers for Disease Control, [cdcinfo@cdc.gov](mailto:cdcinfo@cdc.gov), visit their web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/index.htm>, or phone (770) 488-5820.

## **BAD DRIVING IS NORMAL FOR JUVENILES, STUDY SUGGESTS**

A study of German adolescents concluded that young drivers who commit traffic violations have normal personality traits. The study, "Venturesomeness and extraversion as correlates of juvenile drivers' traffic violations," by Walter Renner and Franz-Georg Anderle, appeared in the September, 2000 issue of *Accident Analysis and Prevention*.

Researchers gave the Eysenck personality questionnaire to 95 juvenile first-time traffic offenders who had been sent to traffic school and also to a control group of 78 driver's license applicants. The questionnaire measures several key personality factors, including extraversion, neuroticism, psychoticism, impulsiveness, and venturesomeness. The researchers theorized that traffic offenders would score higher on extraversion and venturesomeness, since people with those qualities are more likely to show off and take chances, and that offenders would also score higher on psychoticism, or lack of concern for social norms and other people, and on impulsiveness, or absence of self-control and inability to foresee the consequences of behavior.

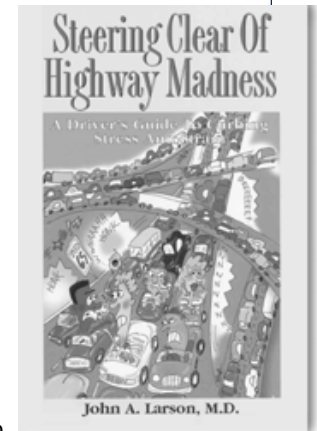
Instead, the researchers found that while young driver offenders did tend to be more thrill-seeking and spontaneous, they were not any more inconsiderate or unable to exercise self-control than young drivers who had not committed a traffic offense.

The researchers state, "The findings suggest that... the juvenile traffic offenders who took part in the study are basically able and willing to comply with traffic rules, to plan their future

behavior, and to understand its possible consequences. Therefore psychological interventions have a substantial probability of being successful in this group." The authors noted that habitual offenders, such as repeat drunk drivers, do have a higher incidence of aberrant psychological traits.

They concluded that "traffic violations in juveniles should primarily be viewed within the scope of normal behaviour and do not necessarily imply serious personality disorder."

## **"STEERING CLEAR OF HIGHWAY MADNESS" — GET YOUR COPY NOW!**



The original book on driver aggression by Dr. John Larson is still available from the Foundation, while supplies last. The book contains excellent information about how to deal with aggression behind the wheel, and includes a test to determine a person's level of driving aggression. To get your own copy of "Steering Clear of Highway Madness," send \$9.95, which includes shipping, to Book Offer, AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, 1440 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005

***"...while young driver offenders did tend to be more thrill-seeking and spontaneous, they were not any more inconsiderate or unable to exercise self-control than young drivers who had not committed a traffic offense."***

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## WORKPLACE SAFETY INCLUDES DRIVER-ZED

For "Drive Safely at Work Week," the Auto Club of New York brought traffic safety home to the office. "We had an event for three days in the employee lunch room," says Robin Augustson, a traffic safety specialist at the Auto Club of New York. "Driver-ZED was set up for all three days, and people came by and just tried it. We didn't really have a competition going, it was just more for them to experience it." Still, Augustson offered prizes: an Otto the Auto puppet, a certificate to the driver improvement program, and a AAA Foundation "Wake Up!" mug and tape. Around 75 employees participated in the safety event.

In addition to driver-ZED, Augustson offered an aggressive driving test and a test on handling driver emergencies based on the AAA Foundation's "On the Scene" video. "The aggressive driver index describes 12 situations and asks you to rate your anger," she says. "The answers derive down to four personality types: Type A competitor, passive-aggressive, Jekyll/Hyde, and polite enforcer." The driver emergencies test proved more difficult than Augustson had



*Robin Augustson (left) demonstrates driver-ZED to employees of the Auto Club of New York (below).*

expected, but that turned out to be an advantage: "People were stumped by the questions, so they learned," she says.

After the program a number of employees took driver-ZED back to their families, Augustson says. "We offer it to employees at a discount, and a lot of people wanted to get copies for their relatives – nieces, nephews, and so forth, people who were learning to drive."



## SCOOTER SAFETY

The latest fashion in transportation is the scooter — an old-fashioned wheeled vehicle made new with low-friction skate wheels, light materials, and a collapsible handlebar. The Directorate for Economic Analysis, a division of the CPSC that tracks the safety effects of CPSC policies, predicts this year's scooter sales to be 2 to 5 million units — an increase from virtually zero last year.

As the number of scooter users has skyrocketed, so has the number of injuries. Although the new cool-looking scooters may seem harmless, the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) reports a 286 percent increase in scooter-related emergency room visits over 1999 — and that's just through August.

About 90 percent of the injuries happen to children less than 15 years old, the major scooter-using age group. "No deaths have been reported involving unpowered scooters since 1993," explains the CPSC, and "none have been reported involving the new kind of scooter." But this doesn't mean scooters are harmless. The CPSC suggests that proper use of safety equipment

could dramatically decrease the number of injuries. Most important are helmets, which prevent head and face injuries and could reduce head injuries by 85 percent. (Head injuries can be particularly serious in children, whose heads are proportionately larger than adults so they tend to land head first.) Knee and elbow pads, along with wrist guards, could prevent 34 percent of the total injuries, particularly those to the knee, wrist, lower arm, and elbow.

The CPSC suggests that children under 8 not ride scooters without close adult supervision. Nearly a third of injuries this year have involved children under 8.

## PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS GO ON-LINE

Feeling sleepy? Don't drive! That's the message the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety is sending to late-night computer users with a series of new banner advertisements on popular Web

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***“People who work at night or who get less than six hours of sleep have a greatly increased chance of being in a sleep-related crash.”***

### **PUBLIC SERVICE** (continued)

sites. The idea is to reach potentially drowsy drivers before they get into their cars and while they're surfing the Web. To make sure the ads reach their intended audience, they'll be only be rotated on to the sites between midnight and six a.m.

The three banner ads have attention-getting graphics and punchy themes, such as “Feel like snoozing? Don't go cruising! Wake up before you drive!” and “Work all night? Ready to crash? Get out of your car!”

“Our study of drowsy driving crashes identified some important risk factors,” says David Willis, the AAA Foundation's president. “People who work at night or who get less than six hours of sleep have a greatly increased chance of being in a sleep-related crash. We're trying to make them aware of the danger at a time when the danger is greatest.”

## **RESEARCHERS WANTED FOR UNLICENSED DRIVING STUDY**

The AAA Foundation's recent study "Unlicensed to Kill" examined the role of unlicensed drivers in fatal crashes and found that one fatal crash in five involved at least one driver with a revoked, suspended or expired license, or who never had been licensed. Many drivers had their licenses revoked several times, yet were still driving at the time of the crash. Unlicensed driver involvement rates varied widely among states, with Maine the lowest and New Mexico the highest.

Now the Foundation wants to look more closely at this problem to determine how differences in state licensing and enforcement policies influence unlicensed driving. Researchers are encouraged to visit the AAA Foundation Web site to read the Request for Proposals and submit full proposals for performing the research. "Unlicensed to Kill, The Sequel" is at [http://www.aaafoundation.org/rfps/unlicensed2kill\\_rfp7.cfm](http://www.aaafoundation.org/rfps/unlicensed2kill_rfp7.cfm).

**FEEL LIKE SNOOZING?  
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