

# PROGRESS REPORT

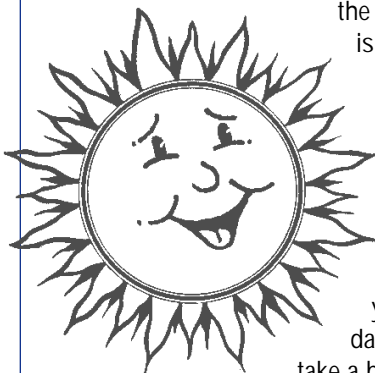
## SUMMER'S HERE — STAY COOL!

Pedestrians, cyclists, and runners put themselves at risk in traffic – but also from weather. Summer temperatures can tax the body's ability to manage heat, with potentially deadly results. Heat exhaustion and heat stroke can strike anyone who is exercising outdoors in hot weather, so exercise your caution as well as your body.

Symptoms of heat exhaustion include clammy, cool skin, dry mouth, dizziness, fatigue, weakness, headache, nausea, cramps, and a weak and rapid pulse.

Heat stroke symptoms include hot, dry skin, an elevated body temperature, confusion, and even unconsciousness or convulsions. The solution for both is to drink a lot of liquids (without caffeine or alcohol) and get into a cooler environment.

The best strategy for dealing with heat is prevention: Don't exercise during the middle of the day, when the sun is highest and air is hottest.



Drink plenty of fluids before, during, and after exercising, and wear loose-fitting, light clothing. If you're planning a day-long bike ride,

take a break during the hottest time of day, and make sure you have access to plenty of water, either by traveling near rest stops or by bringing enough with you.

Heatstroke can also affect anyone who's sitting in a closed car on a hot day, but is particularly dangerous for children. Never leave any living thing in your car while you dash into the store "just for a minute." That means not animals, not children, not even a potted plant. On a sunny summer day, the temperature inside a car can rise to over 120 F very quickly — that's plenty hot enough to kill.



## SCHOOL BELT CHECKS CATCH ON IN NY

Kath Buffington knows a good idea when she sees it. When Buffington read about a high school seat belt check program in this publication, she realized it was something she could do locally.

Buffington, who is the Travel Safe Coordinator in Allegany and Cattaraugus counties in New York State, tried the idea at one of the 13 Allegany County schools. As students arrived, watchers asked seat belt wearers for their name and offered them a muffin or pizza at lunch, along with a ticket saying "You have been caught being smart."

The first check worked so well that Buffington extended the program to the other schools in the county. She assembled "ticket squads" of one to six people, who gathered in the parking lots before the students arrived.

"We tried to get someone from the school staff," Buffington said, adding that volunteers were easy to find because of concern in the county about the high number of youthful fatalities caused by head injuries. Seat belt squad members came from the county health department, the traffic safety board, a health network, a group that offers services to people with special

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*Guy James, chair of the Allegany County Traffic Safety Board, passes out muffins to a student who wore her seat belt in Belmont, New York.*

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### **SCHOOL BELT CHECKS** (continued)

needs, the county STOP-DWI program, village and state police, and school nurses, counselors, and administrators. At every school students were rewarded for wearing their belts.

The students were puzzled at first – onlookers speculated that the ticket squads were looking for drugs or bombs, were checking teachers' or students' arrival times, or were looking for smokers. But when they found out what was going on, both teachers and administrators welcomed the program, Buffington says.

Though Buffington originally offered pizza, "We switched to muffins after we had to buy 154 slices of pizza for one of the schools," she said. "But it was great to have 77 out of 91 kids wearing belts."

The percentages of students who were buckled up varied greatly by school. Schools have had observed rates between 40 and 85 percent; the average belt use rate for the 310 students checked so far was 72 percent.

The belt-check program has started to spread throughout the state of New York. State Police Trooper Jerome Hart liked what he saw and started going to every school in his area, bringing information cards about occupant restraints and handing them out to unbelted students. Another officer wrote about the belt checks for the state police magazine *Gray Line* and encouraged officers across the state to try a similar program.

"It's the purest kind of positive reinforcement," Buffington said. "We give them congratulations, praise, and a reward from a source they probably don't expect. Everyone smiles and has fun. When they get into school their names are read and they are congratulated before the entire school."

Travel Safe is a research and education program at Cornell Cooperative Extension, with the Allegany County Traffic Safety board and funded by the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee.

### **NEW BOOKLET HELPS FAMILIES WITH OLDER DRIVERS**

The crash rate for older drivers starts to rise at age 55 and becomes worse with increasing age. That doesn't mean all older drivers are unsafe, but it does mean that older drivers need to stay aware of their changing abilities. To help families understand how age affects driving, the AAA

Foundation for Traffic Safety has produced "How to Help an Older Driver," a 30-page booklet that covers all aspects of older driver safety.

This colorful, easy-to-read booklet includes a discussion of physical changes and offers strategies older drivers can use to help improve their safety. These include vehicle modifications such as adding wider mirrors, features to look for in choosing a car, and lifestyle changes, such as stretching and getting more exercise. A section on "retiring from driving" suggests how to find ways to get around without driving. Finally, an appendix offers the address, phone number, and Internet address for every state department of motor vehicles.

Individual copies are available either by writing to the AAA Foundation or by going to the Foundation's web site, [www.aaafoundation.org](http://www.aaafoundation.org). Organizations may request up to 250 copies free of charge by faxing a written request, on letterhead, to 202/638-5943.

### **MORE WEB POWER AT THE FOUNDATION**

Surfers who click onto the AAA Foundation's web site will soon find a more dynamic and varied presence, thanks to Jack Hoch, the Foundation's new webmaster. Hoch comes from a background of web management including web-to-database design, network administration, and customer support. He's also used to working in cubicles – Hoch is a graduate of the United States Naval



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Academy and spent several years in the submarine force. He's still in the Navy, as a commander in the U.S. Naval Reserve.

The new webmaster will bring new technology to the web including increased interactivity, animation, active server pages, and fresh presentation of new content. Mr. Hoch now handles the AAA Foundation's growing family of web sites, adding features, fixing bugs, and making sure all the links work. He's also a proud father – that's his son Spencer in the photo. If you have questions about our web site, you can reach Jack at [webmaster@aaafoundation.org](mailto:webmaster@aaafoundation.org). Visit the site itself at <http://www.aaafoundation.org>.



## **TRUCK SPLASH AND SPRAY TESTS UNDERWAY**

The week of April 3 AAA Foundation-sponsored tests of truck splash and spray suppression technologies began at the Texas Transportation Institute, Texas A&M University System. Three different measurement systems are being employed to evaluate spray reduction from improved tractor aerodynamics as well as from add-on devices developed in Europe, Australia, and Canada.

Spray from large trucks during wet weather is a major annoyance to motorists and creates a perceived safety threat. The question being researched is: Can any treatments reduce spray in a measurable way at highway speeds? In order to answer this questions testing is being done at 55 mph and 65 mph with two tractors and two trailers. One tractor is a 1986 Freightliner with poor aerodynamics; the other is Freightliner 2000 Century S/T tractor with state-of-the-art aerodynamics and spray suppression devices (including the innovative use of spray suppression materials inside the steering axle wheel wells). These two tractors will be tested with both a van and a flatbed semi-trailer. Baseline tests under eight different wind conditions will be run without the addition of aftermarket spray suppression devices. Suppression devices will then be installed and evaluated under various wind conditions as well.

Many European trucks have been treated with

spray suppression devices for years that seem to be effective and, consequently, have reduced motorists' complaints about the problem. These devices include half fenders over tractor drive axle wheels and over trailer wheels, together with spray-catching mud flaps and "fringe" treatments over the sidewalls of the outside tires. Firms in the U.S., Canada, and Australia have also developed treatments that will be evaluated. More information on this testing will be posted on the Foundation's Web site at [www.aaafoundation.org](http://www.aaafoundation.org)

The research is scheduled to be completed in June.

## **MOST PEDESTRIAN AND BIKE INJURIES DON'T INVOLVE CARS**

Biking and walking can be dangerous – even when cars aren't present. In fact, a recent study showed that most pedestrian and cyclist injuries don't involve motor vehicles at all. Not that motor vehicles aren't a danger – collisions with motor vehicles produced the most serious injuries in this study – but a surprising number of cyclists and walkers hurt themselves without any cars being present.

The study, by Jane C. Stutts and William W. Hunter of the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center, found that hospital records tell a different story from police crash reports. Since police reports only address incidents that occur on public roadways, they tend not to record incidents that did not involve a motor vehicle. Hospital emergency room data indicate that 70 percent of the cyclist injuries and 64 percent of the pedestrian injuries did not involve a motor vehicle. Many of the incidents took place away from the road: 31 percent of the cyclists and 53 percent of the pedestrians hurt themselves on sidewalks, parking lots, trails, driveways, and other non-road locations.

Children in particular were more likely to incur bicycle injuries while away from the road, while adult pedestrians over 45 were more likely to be injured while walking off-road, most often by falling.

The authors conclude that many such incidents could be prevented by keeping sidewalks in better shape, by making parking lots safer for pedestrians, and by clearing public areas from snow and ice to prevent slipping. Children in particular would benefit from safe places to bike and skate, the authors found.

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## ***NEW VERSION OF WAKE UP! INCLUDES LATEST DATA***



More than 1,000,000 copies of the Foundation's popular "Wake Up!" brochure have been distributed so far – but even a best-seller can be improved. The new, improved "Wake Up!" looks like the old brochure but includes new, important information from the Foundation's recent study on drowsy driving. Readers are now informed about the dangers of operating a vehicle on six hours of sleep or less, and the brochure also stresses the danger of driving between midnight and 6 a.m. For a sample of the new "Wake Up!" brochure visit our web page and view the PDF, or send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Wake Up!" Suite 201, 1440 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005. Bulk orders of up to 250

can be ordered on line or by faxing a request (preferably on letterhead) to 202/638-5943.

## ***DRUNK DRIVING STUDY BEGINS***

In spite of the best efforts of many safety groups, drunk driving continues, and the rapid decline of the past few years has flattened out. Are there any effective strategies that have not been widely adopted? Are there new techniques that might further reduce this scourge? What additional steps can be taken to lower the incidence of drunk driving crashes even further? The AAA Foundation has awarded a research contract to the Preusser Research Group in Trumbull, Connecticut, to study existing anti-drunk driving strategies and to investigate what can be done to further reduce the incidence of drunk driving. The study will begin on July 1, 2000, and is expected to take 13 months.

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