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Tragic Rise in PMV Deaths



TIMOTHY A. PEPPE, MAJ GEN, USAF
Air Force Chief of Safety

In less than two weeks the United States Air Force has sustained eight off-duty private motor vehicle fatalities in five separate mishaps. Three of the five mishaps involved multiple fatalities. These losses place an enormous strain on the member's family and seriously degrade our units' capability to complete their mission.

Since the beginning of this fiscal year, we have experienced 20 off-duty PMV deaths compared to 15 during the same timeframe last fiscal year. If this trend continues, we will exceed the loss we experienced last year.

The common theme among these mishaps appears to be the Air Force member's "disregard" for common sense. In each case the member appears to have been driving in excess of posted speed limits or was driving faster than was safe for current road conditions. It is also possible that some of the members were not wearing their seatbelts and some were driving while under the influence of alcohol, however, it's still too early in the investigations to know.

My point is — **"EACH OF THESE TRAGIC EVENTS WAS PREVENTABLE."** This unacceptable trend can only be stopped by immediate and pro-active intervention at all levels through vigilance and emphasizing Operational Risk Management (ORM). Simply put, ORM is identifying hazards associated with an activity and taking the appropriate action to prevent a mishap from occurring. If our personnel extend ORM into their off-duty activities, and compensate for known hazards, then mishaps such as these won't happen. ■

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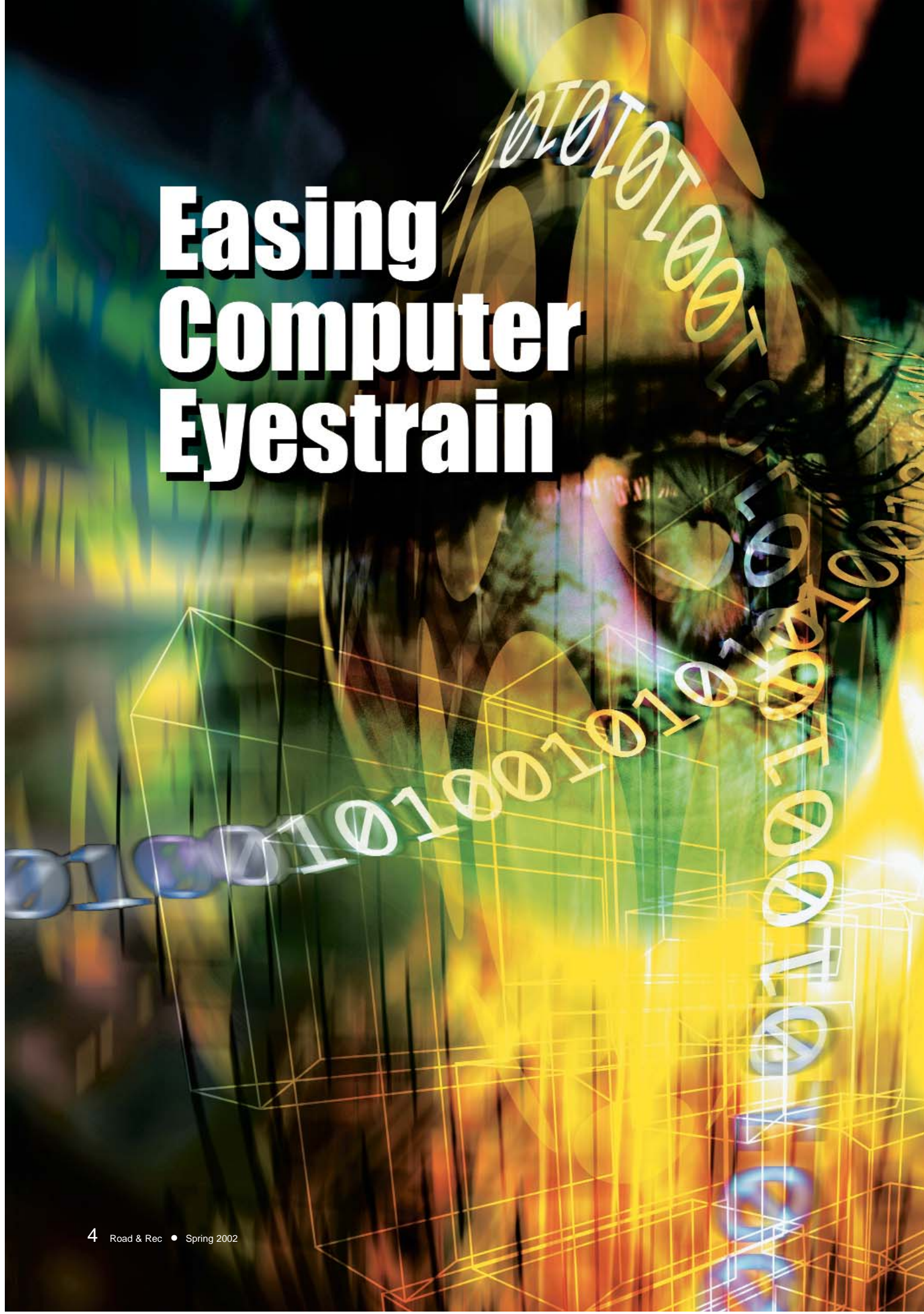
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Easing Computer Eyestrain

We use our computers for just about everything — work, games, shopping and correspondence. People who use computers for long periods of time each day can experience computer vision syndrome (CVS), a condition which may be characterized by tired, dry, watery or irritated eyes; blurred or double vision; headache, tense muscles; or neck, shoulder and back pain.

Supervisors can assist their workers who experience CVS symptoms by encouraging them to consult with their primary care physician or eye-care professional. **Caution: The symptoms of CVS can sometimes be similar to those found in other conditions. For example, a person experiencing headaches may have a vision problem unrelated to computer use or might even be experiencing another type of health-related problem.**

What Causes CVS?

While looking at a monitor, the human eye must constantly focus and refocus on fuzzy details. Repetitive focusing stresses the eye and can produce CVS symptoms.

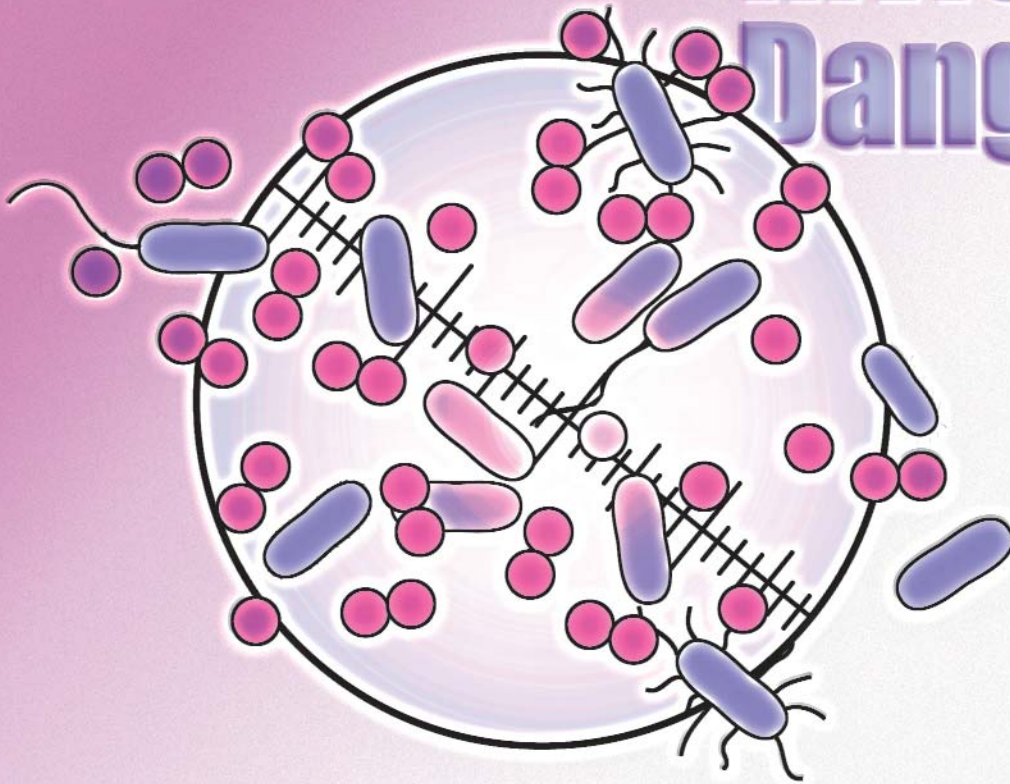
Overly bright overhead lighting can cast a bright reflection on the screen back into the eyes of the user. This can result in glare and discomfort.

Computer use requires a relatively static body, head, and eye position, which can lead to muscle fatigue.

Tips To Help You Avoid CVS

- Alternate tasks, if possible, to rest the eyes and neck muscles. Try filing, phone work, or other tasks that do not require your eyes to continually focus and refocus.
- Stretch neck muscles regularly by bending the head downward and then slowly upward, and side to side. This will minimize muscle fatigue.
- Use your break or lunchtime to relax your eyes by closing them for short periods of time.
- Periodically look away from the screen and focus on distant objects.
- Move the monitor away from sources of direct glare or light.
- Since the human eye is most comfortable when, and most efficient at, viewing objects at or below eye level, tip the monitor slightly downward. The top of the computer screen should be at or slightly below eye level and about 20-26 inches away from your eyes. The Centers for Disease Control recommends, "If bifocals/trifocals are used, place the monitor at a height that allows easy viewing without tipping the head back."
- A document holder should be close to the screen and at the same height and distance from the eyes as the screen.
- Black characters on a white background are preferable.
- Clean the monitor regularly to keep letters and pictures as crisp as possible. If you wear glasses, keep these smudge free as well.
- Employees should tell their vision care specialist about their computer use. ■

Invisible Dangers



Reprinted Courtesy, *ASHORE*, Spring 2001
MSGT GARY L. JOHNSON, USAF (Ret.)
Ground Safety Manager
Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota

Outdoor activities, such as camping, hiking, fishing or picnicking offer obvious rewards. However, they also present dangers — dangers so small you can't see them, but they are as deadly as any you'll ever meet in your lifetime.

What are these tiny hazards? *Giardia lamblia*, tularemia, hantavirus, plague, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, hepatitis, and rabies; just to name a few of the hundreds of bacteria, viruses, and organisms that can infect hunters, fishermen, campers and hikers. Many of you have heard of rabies, hepatitis, plague and maybe even the highly publicized hantavirus and Lyme disease, but what about the others? Maybe the more common names will

spark your memory: *Giardia lamblia* is also called beaver fever, and tularemia is rabbit fever.

Beaver Fever

According to *Opflow* (a publication of the American Water Works Association), beaver fever is caused by the most common disease-causing intestinal parasite (*Giardia lamblia*) in the United States. This strong-willed micro-bug can thrive in a wide temperature range and fends off typical chlorination and filtration procedures. The parasite enters the water supply through the feces of a host, and while many animals can serve as a host, the main culprit is thought to be the beaver. Symptoms include severe diarrhea, nausea, vomiting and fatigue and may mimic a peptic ulcer or gall-bladder disease. Symptoms usually appear from five to 25 days after exposure.

The best way to avoid this disease is to never drink directly from creeks, rivers, lakes, ponds and

other free-flowing or free-standing bodies of water that animals or people use as toilets. Other effective methods include boiling drinking water or using water-filtration devices especially designed to combat Giardia. Some purification tablets that contain iodine are effective too, but you may wish to add some pre-sweetened drink mix to improve the taste of the treated water. One thing to remember: Beaver fever can be transmitted from one person to another, especially if the infection involves a young child, infant or handicapped person who requires help in controlling an active case of diarrhea.

Rabbit Fever

Tularemia is a disease caused by a bacterium, *Francisella tularensis*, which can effect both animals and humans. Most cases occur during the summer when deerflies and ticks are abundant and in the early winter months during rabbit-hunting season. You can get tularemia from the bite of infected blood-sucking insects, such as deerflies. You also can get it by getting blood or tissue from an infected animal into your eyes, mouth or openings in your skin, such as cuts and scratches. Another way of contracting the disease is by eating rabbit meat that has not been well cooked. Rabbit fever is not communicable.

Symptoms of rabbit fever include fever, chills, headaches, muscle aches, chest pains, and coughing. They usually appear within three to five days after exposure, although they may appear in as little as two or as many as 10 days from infection. Antibiotics are effective in most cases, but prevention is the best method. Wear insect repellent containing DEET when hunting. Wear surgeon's gloves when skinning rabbits and cook wild rabbit meat thoroughly.

Diehard outdoors people who may be thinking these diseases are no big deal — just like cases of flu — should consider this: While symptoms associated with these diseases are not life-threatening if you're near home or medical help at the onset, they can be killers if you're still in the woods. The severe diarrhea associated with beaver fever can quickly cause dehydration that can and does affect your ability to reach safety. Likewise, the headaches, muscle aches, chills, fever, and chest pains that are the symptoms of rabbit fever can have the same effect.

Hantavirus, Plague, and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever

Of these three, hantavirus is the deadliest; it is always fatal if untreated. According to the Center for Disease Control, 38% of all reported cases have resulted in death. This virus is passed in the urine of the deer mouse and becomes airborne on dust particles. Most infections occur when people are exposed to the pathogens while cleaning in places where deer mice have been present. Sweeping an

old cabin or shed, or shaking out an old rug or blanket can carry the particles into the air and into your lungs. This disease is widespread, with cases occurring in 30 of the 50 states. It appears to be more common in the western United States. Symptoms are almost flu-like, with fever, muscle aches and fatigue being common. There is no vaccine for this virus.

Plague — the "Black Death" that wiped out one-third of Europe during the Middle Ages — is transmitted by fleas that normally infest rodents such as mice, rats, squirrels and prairie dogs. Sporadic outbreaks of plague still occur today in the west and southwestern United States. Symptoms include swollen or tender lymph glands and a fever that appears within one to six days after exposure. The disease can progress to a generalized blood infection (septicemic plague) or pneumonic plague. People or pets (both dogs and cats) with pneumonic plague may transmit the virus to others when coughing. Antibiotics are effective.

The last and least lethal of these three diseases is Rocky Mountain spotted fever, transmitted by the Rocky Mountain tick, *Dermacentor andersoni*, and other related ticks. Infection normally results from being bitten by an infected tick. The disease occurs more commonly in the East, from New York to Florida and Alabama to Texas. April through September are the months of highest incidence, but it can occur anytime during warm weather. Symptoms are fever, headache, rash, and nausea or vomiting, normally occurring three to 12 days after a tick bite. Left untreated, this disease can kill. There is no vaccine.

Why take chances with these deadly diseases? Use insect repellents with DEET to keep fleas, ticks and other pests at bay. Another product, Permethrin (a tick repellent), is an aerosol that you can apply to clothing.

If you're going on an overnight hiking, camping or hunting trip, carry enough water or a water purifier rated for Giardia with you. If you get tired and have a choice of pitching a tent or staying in an old shack, pitch the tent. Carry a bar of soap and wash your hands frequently if water is available. Carry alcohol swabs and use them in the absence of water. Also, waterless hand sanitizers are available. If you're hunting, carry disposable gloves (like surgeons or hairdressers use) for skinning, and always cook the meat thoroughly.

If you don't feel well after a field trip, go to your doctor and explain, in detail, where you've been and what you've been doing. This is particularly important for travelers. Doctors won't be as likely to suspect a disease that doesn't occur as frequently in their geographic region.

For more information on these and other diseases log on to: www.medcout.com/diseases/infections/index.htm ■

Stay Safe While Skateboarding

Courtesy *National Safety Council*

Skateboarding is a popular activity enjoyed by many young people. However, it's also an activity that causes many unintentional injuries.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), more than 80,000 persons need hospital emergency room treatment each year for injuries related to skateboarding. Fractures are a frequent type of injury. Deaths as a result of collisions with motor vehicles and from falls are also reported.

Irregular riding surfaces account for more than half of the skateboarding injuries caused by falls. Wrist injury is the number one injury in skateboarding, usually a sprain or a fracture. Skateboarders who have been skating for less than a week suffered one-third of the injuries. Experienced skaters generally suffered injuries when they fell because their boards struck rocks or other irregularities in the riding surface.

The National Safety Council offers these skateboarding tips:

Skateboard/Protective Gear

- There are boards with varying characteristics for different types of riding; i.e., slalom, freestyle or speed. Some boards are rated accord-

ing to the weight of the intended user.

- Protective equipment, such as closed, slip-resistant shoes, helmets and specially designed padding, may not fully protect skateboarders from fractures. However, wearing such equipment can reduce the number and severity of cuts and scrapes.

- Padded jackets and shorts are being made for skateboarders, as well as padding for hips, knees, and elbows. Wrist braces and special skateboarding gloves can also help absorb the impact of a fall.

- The protective equipment currently on the market is not subject to government performance standards and, therefore, careful selection is necessary.

- In a helmet, for example, look for proper fit and a chin strap; notice whether the helmet blocks the skater's vision and hearing. If the padding is too tight, it could restrict circulation and reduce the skater's ability to move freely. Loose-fitting padding, on the other hand, could slip off or slide out of position.

How to Fall

Learning how to properly fall may help reduce the chances of a serious injury.

- If you are losing your balance, crouch down on the skateboard so that you will not have as far to fall.

- In a fall, the idea is to land on the fleshy parts of your body.

- If you fall, try to roll rather than absorb the force with your arms.

- Even though it may be difficult during a fall, try to relax your body rather than go stiff.

Tips for Using a Skateboard

- Give your board a safety check each time before you ride.

- Always wear safety gear.

- Never skate in the street.

- Obey the city laws. Observe traffic and areas where you can and cannot skate.

- Don't skate in crowds of non-skaters.

- Only one person per skateboard.

- Never hitch a ride from a car, bicycle, etc.

- Don't take chances; complicated tricks require careful practice and a specially designated area.

- Learn to fall — practice falling on a soft surface or grass. ■



Short Circuits



Auto Recalls

The Traffic Safety Administration has recently announced the following vehicle recalls.

1998-2000 AM General Corporation Hummer. Number involved — 2,839. Defect: On certain sport utility vehicles, the turn signal switch plastic cancellation pin can wear prematurely, causing the signals to fail to cancel after the vehicle has completed a turn. This could confuse the drivers of following vehicles, increasing the risk of a crash. (NHTSA Recall No. 01V336, AM General Recall No. AMG R0102)

2002 DaimlerChrysler Dodge Caravan/Grand Caravan, Chrysler Voyager, Chrysler Town & Country. Number involved — 52,649. Defect: Certain passenger and sport utility vehicles fail to comply with the requirements of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 225, "Child Restraints Anchorage Systems." The owner manuals supplied with these vehicles do not indicate which seating positions are equipped with tether anchorages and child restraint anchorage systems as required by this standard. (NHTSA Recall No. 01V310, DaimlerChrysler Recall No. 996)

2002 DaimlerChrysler Jeep Liberty. Number involved — 72,000. Defect: On certain sport utility vehicles, the driver's side knee blocker trim panel assembly can disengage and fall and startle the driver, thus increasing the risk of a crash. (NHTSA Recall No. 01V311, DaimlerChrysler Recall No. 997)

1996-1999 DaimlerChrysler Dodge Viper. Number involved — 4,645. Defect: Vehicles used extensively in racing events and subjected to aggressive driving conditions can experience cracks at the rear differential mounting bracket welds. This could eventually lead to the differential mounting bracket separating from the vehicle frame and the driver losing control. (NHTSA Recall No. 01V312, DaimlerChrysler Recall No. 998)

1996-1999 DaimlerChrysler Dodge Viper. Number involved — 7,050. Defect: Vehicles used extensively in racing events and subjected to aggressive driving conditions can experience cracking of the steering rack mounting brackets. These cracks could eventually cause the steering rack to separate from the vehicle frame, causing steering looseness and lag. (NHTSA Recall No. 01V313, DaimlerChrysler Recall No. 999)

1994-1997 Ford Mustang, 1995-1997 Lincoln Town Car. Number involved — 911. Defect: On certain of these vehicles which had their driver's airbag modules replaced after April 5, 2000, poor welds on the airbag's inflators could prevent proper inflation of the airbag. In the event of a crash, the driver's airbags may not properly deploy. (NHTSA Recall No. 01V318, Ford Recall No. 01S28)

2002 Chevrolet Trailblazer, GMC Envoy. Number involved — 78,004. Defect: On certain sport utility vehicles equipped with 4-wheel-drive, the calibration of the transfer case control module could cause insufficient high-speed gear engagement. If the gear is not engaged, the vehicle can roll when the transmission is in "Park." (NHTSA Recall No. 01V334, GM Recall No. 01064/01065)

2001-2002 Volkswagen of America Audi TT Quattro V8. Number involved — 3,700. Defect: On certain passenger vehicles, moisture could enter the rear track control arm mounting bushing and bolt and cause corrosion. This corrosion could prevent the rear track control arm from moving freely. (NHTSA Recall No. 01V325, Audi Recall No. LL)

Owners who do not receive a free remedy for these recall defects within a reasonable amount of time should call the following telephone numbers: AM General, 1-800-638-8303; DaimlerChrysler, 1-800-853-1403; Ford, 1-866-436-7332; Chevrolet, 1-800-222-1020; General Motors, 1-800-462-8782; Volkswagen (Audi) 1-800-822-2834.

continued on page 11

Fractured Follies

BOB VAN ELSBERG
Managing Editor

"I think I can, I think I can ..."

It was a dark and stormy night. The wind howled mournfully through the trees as the gathering clouds cast their shadows over the landscape. A chill ran down the master sergeant's spine as his steel steed struggled to escape the quagmire along the edge of the pond. Soon the storm — and perhaps other things lurking in the chill October night — would be upon him. It was a desperate moment. It was time to take drastic action before the gathering gloom enveloped him.

OK, maybe that's just a "little" too melodramatic. Let's just say it was shaping up to be a rainy fall evening when our masterful master sergeant got his old "John Deere" stuck in the mud next to his farm pond. Seems the brush around the pond had been getting thick, so he hooked a "bush hog" to the back of his tractor and decided to clean things up a bit. And he'd have done right fine if it hadn't been for that slippery, slimy mud near the pond's edge. He'd no sooner than driven to the pond than the wheels dug themselves into the gooey mess. Shifting into reverse and giving the engine more gas proved of no help — the tires just spun uselessly.

"Hmmm ... not a good situation," he must have thought as he looked at the sky and realized the coming rain would only make things worse. Abandoning the tractor, our sergeant hopped into his four-wheel-drive pickup then drove back to the pond. Backing his pickup as close as he dared to the pond, he hooked a chain from the back of the pickup to the back of the tractor. Maybe with a little tug from the pickup he could free his mud-mired farm equipment.

So far, so good — but then he had a brainstorm! Maybe if he put the tractor in reverse and let the engine idle, the tractor could sort-of help the truck pull it out of the mud? You could almost hear the tractor engine chugging, "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can ..."

Sure 'nuff, the combination of the chugging tractor and tugging truck did the trick. The tractor climbed over a slight rise then rumbled onto good old terra firma. Satisfied at his successful strategy,

our master sergeant piled out of the pickup, then headed to the back of the pickup to unhook the chain.

Now a lot of folks will tell you that a mishap is comprised of a chain of events, which were one link removed, the mishap could have been prevented. The following sentence from the mishap report may suggest one such link: "Operator 1 failed to place the transmission of Vehicle 1 (our trundling tractor) into the parked position prior to placing himself between the two vehicles."

Anyway, "crunch time" came when the bush hog — still attached to the back of the tractor — caught our sergeant's arm and pinched (maybe "crushed" is a better word) it against the pickup's back bumper. Now you know how tractors are; they aren't fast but they have lots of power, especially when they can get traction — which our tractor now could. Trapped as surely as if his arm was caught in a vise, our miserable master sergeant used his one good hand to call for help on his cell phone (lucky for him he could still reach it!).

Help arrived and our tractor-trashed NCO was air evacuated to a hospital where X-rays showed he'd chipped a bone in his lower arm, which he also accessorized with various cuts and tears to the soft (and very tender) tissue. In total, there was enough damage to this NCO's wing to keep him laid-up for 12 days at home.

And the morale of the story? Like the wheels of progress, the wheels of a John Deere turn very slowly — but they DO turn, even at an idle. And if you're unwittingly in the path of those slow-turning wheels, it may cost you "dearly."

An "Uplifting" Experience

Remember how much fun you had on teeter-totters when you were a kid? It was always more fun when the kid on the other side was about the same weight as you. However, heaven help you if your opposite was some "Fat Albert" — especially if he decided to dump all of his weight on his end at once. Such teeter-totter-to-catapult conversion was sure to get your attention.

Well, they say men are boys with bigger and more expensive toys — and some go about proving it. Take, for instance, three guys intent on hooking up a four-wheel flatbed trailer to a tow vehicle, then

loading a scissor lift onto the trailer. No-brainer, you say? Well, it would be, but timing and alignment can be real important some days — and this was one of them.

Seems the driver of the tow vehicle had almost gotten the tow vehicle's pintle and the trailer's tongue lined up perfectly together. Jumping out of the tow vehicle and running back to survey his work, he discovered the "windage" was good but the elevation was off slightly. No sweat, he'd just climb onto the trailer's tongue and use his weight to push down the front suspension enough to line up the tongue with the pintle.

Meanwhile "spotter one" — responsible to oversee the entire operation — had become fascinated with the antics of our tow driver-cum-trailer weight. Indeed, he was so fascinated that he forgot about worker number three, just starting to drive the scissor lift up a ramp attached to the back of the trailer.

You have to appreciate the principles of leverage — or teeter tottering — to understand what happened next. Imagine the rear wheels of the trailer as the pivot on a teeter-totter. On one end you've got most of the trailer, not yet secured to the tow vehicle, with the driver still perched on the tongue. On the other end you've got a ramp running down from the trailer bed to the ground. "No problem for the guy out there on the tongue, you say. After all, he's still got most of the weight on his side of the teeter-totter. Well, not quite, especially if "Fat Albert" is about to plop down on the other side. Then all bets are off.

The driver of the scissor lift — "Fat Albert" in our story — thought the trailer was hitched to the tow vehicle and began driving up the ramp. According to witnesses, he only made it a short distance up the ramp when the teeter "tottered." With the back of the trailer suddenly weighing more than the front, the tongue flew up and launched our tow driver into the air like a stone from a Roman catapult. His unexpected "two-and-a-half-gainer" landed him four days on quarters to recover from a bruised back. And while he earned high marks for artistic merit from the witnesses, they all agreed this was not likely to make it as an Olympic sport.

Just a little reminder: Being focused on the job is great. However, if you're responsible for everyone's safety, losing sight of the big picture can "launch" somebody else into trouble! ■

Short Circuits ... continued from page 9

FDA Diet Drug Warning

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued a warning concerning the dietary supplement Lipokinetix. This supplement has been implicated in several cases of serious liver injury. The FDA has received reports of six instances where

people have developed acute hepatitis and/or liver failure while using Lipokinetix. These individuals had no preexisting medical conditions that could have caused their medical problems and began experiencing problems two to three months after starting Lipokinetix.

Lipokinetix has been promoted for weight loss by "mimicking exercise" and supporting "an increased metabolic rate." The product contains norephedrine — also known as phenylpropanolamine — along with caffeine, yohimbine, diiodothyronine and sodium usinate.

Any consumers who are using Lipokinetix and are experiencing nausea, weakness, fatigue, fever, abdominal pain or any change in skin color should contact their physician immediately. ■

Letters to the Editor...

LOD Versus Medical Benefits

In looking at your fall 2002 issue of Road & Rec, I noticed an error on page 7 concerning Line of Duty Determinations. The article by TSgt Bill McDaniel states, "The worst-case scenario would be a Line-of-Duty determination that would leave you paying your own medical bills if the injury is determined to be from non-use of PPE."

This statement is not true. AFI 36-2910, **Line of Duty Determinations**, is clear in describing what a Line of Duty (LOD) determination can be used for. An adverse LOD determination cannot be used to make an active-duty military member pay for medical costs. Medical care is a statutory entitlement and is not affected by LOD determinations. While an adverse LOD finding can affect medical benefits after a person leaves active duty service, it does not do so as long as a member remains on active duty.

I've been trying throughout my career to eliminate this particular myth from common usage, so I thought I'd write to let you know about it.

Mark C. Garney, Major, USAF
Deputy Staff Judge Advocate
509th Bomb Wing
Whiteman AFB, Mo.

I checked with our JA here at the Safety Center and your comment is absolutely correct. I remember discussing the article with the author during the editing process. His statement concerning LOD was in reference to people who'd left active duty while still suffering medical problems related to not wearing PPE during a motorcycle mishap. The article listed the possible loss of medical benefits along with many other consequences, but did not make the distinction concerning a person's military status. Your letter effectively clarified that issue. Thank you for writing. — Ed.



Reprinted Courtesy *ASHORE* Magazine
Spring 2001

More and more Americans are robbing their bodies of sleep, cheating themselves out of an hour or more a day, experts say.

Sleep needs vary — some folks need 10 hours or more. But in general, Americans need an average of eight hours a night, and many are getting less

than seven.

Too little sleep leads to worn-out adults, cranky kids, and exhausted teens. Children who are short-changed on sleep are more likely to fall asleep in school, researchers say. And tired people can drift off in meetings or during lectures, or — dangerously — while driving.

When people don't get enough sleep, they build



up what experts call a “sleep debt.” The debt accumulates night after night: If you get one hour less sleep than you need each night for eight nights in a row, your brain will need sleep as desperately as if you had stayed up all night, says sleep researcher, William Dement of Stanford University.

People with large sleep debts take longer to react to challenging situations. Tired people are more likely to make math errors, drop things and become emotionally distant from their families, friends and colleagues, he says. Sleep debt also takes a toll on their motor and intellectual functions, raising their risk of being in a traffic mishap.

One of the most dangerous things about sleepy drivers is that they don't know they're sleepy. Researchers have asked thousands of people over the years if they are sleepy, only to be told no — just before people fall asleep. What does this mean? Many people don't know whether they are sleepy, when they are sleepy, or

why they are sleepy. When driving, don't think you can tough it out if you're sleepy but only a few miles from your destination. If you are tired enough, you can fall asleep anywhere.

Even though you may not realize you are sleepy, your body will give you warning signs:

- Your eyes close or go out of focus.
- You have trouble keeping your head up.

- You can't stop yawning.
- You have wandering, disconnected thoughts.
- You don't remember driving the last few miles.
- You drift between lanes, tailgate or miss traffic signs.
- You keep jerking the car back into the lane.
- You have drifted off the road and narrowly missed crashes.

If you experience any of these signs, turning up the radio, chewing gum or opening your windows won't keep you awake. The only short-term solution is to pull over at a safe place and take a short nap or drink something with caffeine. The only long-term solution is prevention — starting well rested after a good night's sleep.

Here are some ways you can keep yourself from falling asleep at the wheel.

- Start any trip by getting enough sleep the night before. Plan to drive during times of day when you are normally awake, and stay overnight rather than travel straight through.

- Avoid driving during your body's “down time.” Take a mid-afternoon break and find a place to sleep between midnight and 6 a.m.

- Talk with your passenger if you have someone else in the car. A passenger also can let you know when you are showing signs of sleepiness. If your passenger thinks you are getting sleepy, let your passenger drive or pull over and sleep.

- Make sure people in the front seats of the car are awake. A person who needs rest should go to the back seat, buckle up, and sleep.

- Schedule a break every two hours or every 100 miles. Stop sooner if you show any danger signs of sleepiness. During your break, take a nap, stretch, take a walk, and get some exercise before getting back into the car. ■

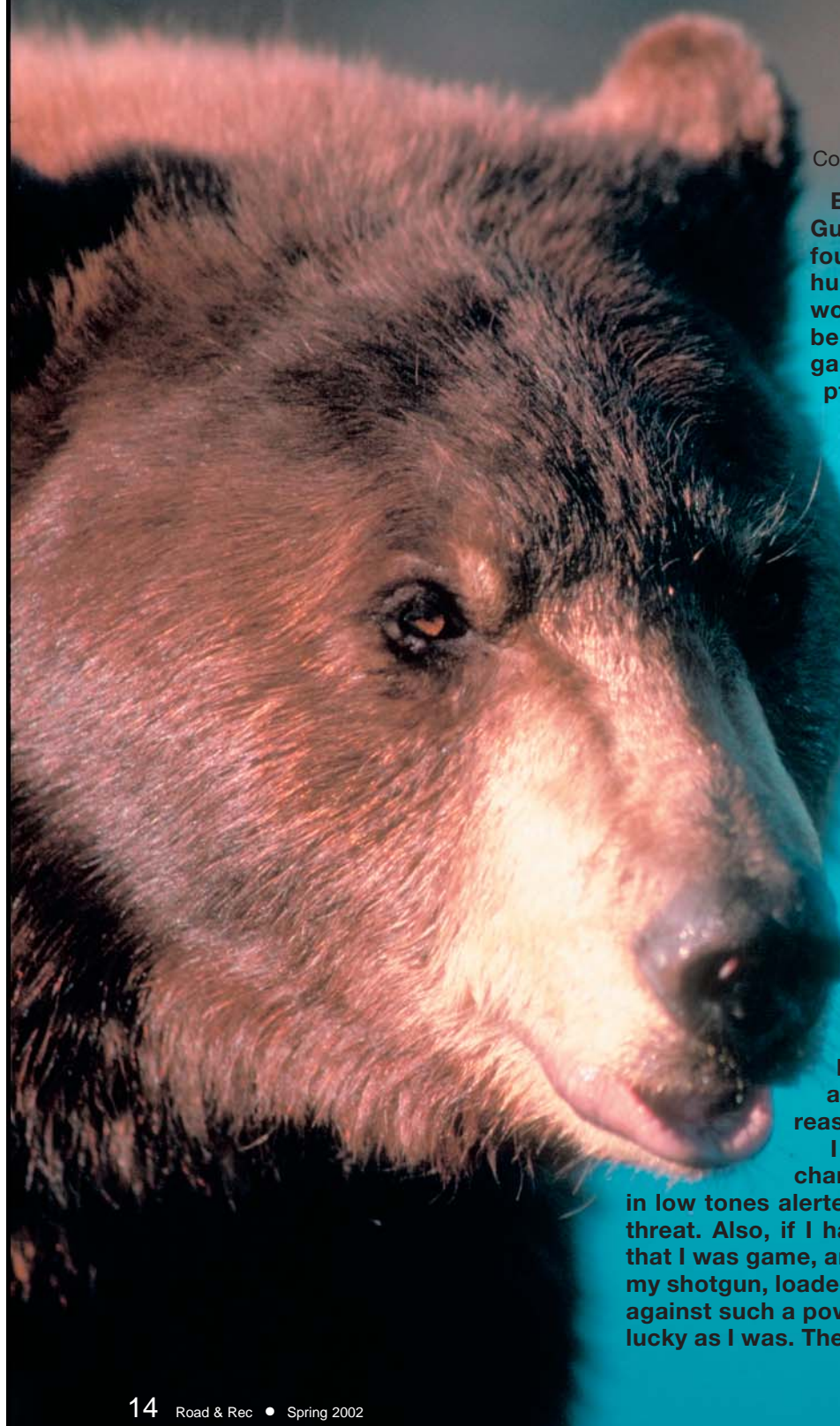
Getting The Sleep You Need

Sleep needs vary by age. Toddlers and preschoolers need 11 to 12 hours of sleep, plus naps. School-age children need about 10 hours. Teens need an average of 9 1/4 hours a night. One study showed that most get less than 8 1/2. Adults' sleep needs vary, but in general, they need 8 hours a night. The average adult gets 6 hours 57 minutes on weeknights, 7 hours 31 minutes on weekends.

There are ways to make sure you can get a good night's sleep. Here are some of them:

- Go to bed and get up at the same time every day.
- Exercise regularly, but complete the workout at least three hours before bedtime.
- Establish a regular, relaxing bedtime routine, such as taking a bath or reading a book.
- Associate your bed with sleep; don't work or watch television.
- Avoid caffeine (coffee, tea, soft drinks, chocolate), nicotine and alcohol late in the day. (**You want to fall asleep — not pass out. Ed.**)

The "Bear" Essentials



Courtesy *Alaska Department of Fish and Game*

Editor's Note. When I was a young Coast Guardsman in 1972, my cutter stopped for four days at Kodiak, Alaska. Eager to try hunting in one of the truly wild parts of the world, I bought a license and a box of number 6 birdshot loads for my single-shot 20 gauge shotgun. I figured I'd try for some ptarmigan.

I hiked toward the base of Woman's Mountain, trying to stay clear of some angus cattle grazing there, especially one bull that was paying more attention than I liked to my orange hunter's vest. Veering away from the bull as I worked through the brush, I saw the biggest, furriest, reddish-brown rump I had ever seen. Having been raised in the city, I didn't recognize what I was looking at, and moved a bit closer to see what I thought was a truly huge cow. As I got within about 20 feet it turned broadside to me and, to my horror, I saw it was a Kodiak bear — probably about 850 pounds. I stood frozen in place, staring at the bear's very impressive teeth. Then I began to talk to the bear in calm, low tones as I slowly backed away, taking care not to point the shotgun at him. He simply stood there and watched me as I moved away. Finally, I got to a dirt road and flagged-down a couple of girls in a pickup and got a ride out of the area. Hanging in the back pickup's window was an M-1 Garand rifle, something I found very reassuring at that moment.

I had made the right choices during my chance encounter with the bear. Talking to him in low tones alerted him to my presence without signaling a threat. Also, if I had run that would have suggested to him that I was game, and he could have easily overtaken me. And my shotgun, loaded with birdshot, would have been of no use against such a powerful animal. Still, many people are not as lucky as I was. The last 12 months have been particularly bad

for bear attacks in New Mexico with at least one fatality occurring as a result. The bears responsible are not the more fearsome grizzlies of the north, but black bears, animals many people think of as cute rather than as powerful predators. The following is some information from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game you might want to "bear" in mind when you are in bear country:

Bears and People

Bears Don't Like Surprises! If you are hiking through bear country, make your presence known — especially where the terrain or vegetation makes it hard to see. Make noise, sing, talk loudly or tie a bell to your pack. If possible, travel with a group. Groups are noisier and easier for bears to detect. Avoid thick brush. If you can't, try to walk with the wind at your back so your scent will warn bears of your presence. Contrary to popular belief, bears can see almost as well as people, but trust their noses much more than their eyes or ears. Always let bears know you are there.

Bears, like humans, use trails and roads. Don't set up camp close to a trail they might use. Detour around areas where you see or smell carcasses of fish or animals, or see scavengers congregated. A bear's food may be there and if the bear is nearby, it may defend the cache aggressively.

Don't Crowd Bears! Give bears plenty of room. Some bears are more tolerant than others, but every bear has a personal "space" — the distance within which a bear feels threatened. If you stray within that zone, a bear may react aggressively. When photographing bears use long lenses; getting close for a great shot could put you inside the danger zone.

Bears Are Always Looking for Food! Bears have only about six months to build up fat reserves for their long winter hibernation. Don't let them learn human food or garbage is an easy meal. It is both foolish and illegal to feed bears, either on purpose or by leaving food or garbage that attracts them.

Cook away from your tent. Store all food away from your campsite. Hang food out of reach of bears, if possible. If no trees are available, store your food in airtight or specially designed bear-proof containers. Remember, pets and their food may also attract bears.

Keep a clean camp. Wash your dishes. Avoid smelly food like bacon and smoked fish. Keep food smells off your clothing. Burn garbage completely in a hot fire and pack out the remains. Food and garbage are equally attractive to a bear, so treat them with equal care. Burying garbage is a waste of time. Bears have keen noses

and are great diggers.

If a bear approaches while you are fishing, stop fishing. If you have a fish on your line, don't let it splash. If that's not possible, cut your line. If a bear learns it can obtain fish just by approaching fishermen, it will return for more.

Close Encounters: What to Do

If you see a bear, avoid it if you can. Give the bear every opportunity to avoid you. If you do encounter a bear at close range, remain calm. Attacks are rare. Chances are, you are not in danger. Most bears are only interested in protecting food, cubs, or their "personal space." Once the threat is removed, they will move on. Remember the following:

Identify Yourself — Let the bear know that you are human. Talk to the bear in a normal voice. Wave your arms. Help the bear recognize you. If a bear cannot tell what you are, it may come closer or stand on its hind legs to get a better look or smell. A standing bear is usually curious, not threatening. You may try to back away slowly diagonally (don't turn your back to the bear), but if the bear follows, stop and hold your ground.

Don't Run — You can't outrun a bear. They have been clocked at speeds up to 35 mph, and like dogs, they will chase fleeing animals. Bears often make bluff charges, sometimes to within 10 feet of their adversary, without making contact. Continue waving your arms and talking to the bear. If the bear gets too close, raise your voice and be more aggressive. Bang pots and pans. Use noisemakers. Never imitate bear sounds or make a high-pitched squeal.

If Attacked — If a bear actually makes contact, surrender! Fall to the ground and play dead. Lie flat on your stomach, or curl up in a ball with your hands behind your neck. Typically, a bear will break off its attack once it feels the threat has been eliminated. Remain motionless for as long as possible. If you move and the bear sees or hears you, it may return and renew its attack. In rare instances, particularly with black bears, an attacking bear may perceive a person as food. If the bear continues biting you long after you assume a defensive posture, it is likely a predatory attack. Fight back vigorously.

Protection

Firearms should never be used as an alternative to common-sense approaches to bear encounters. If you are inexperienced with a firearm in emergency situations, you are more likely to be injured by a gun than a bear.

A .300 Magnum rifle or a 12-gauge shotgun loaded with rifled slugs is an appropriate

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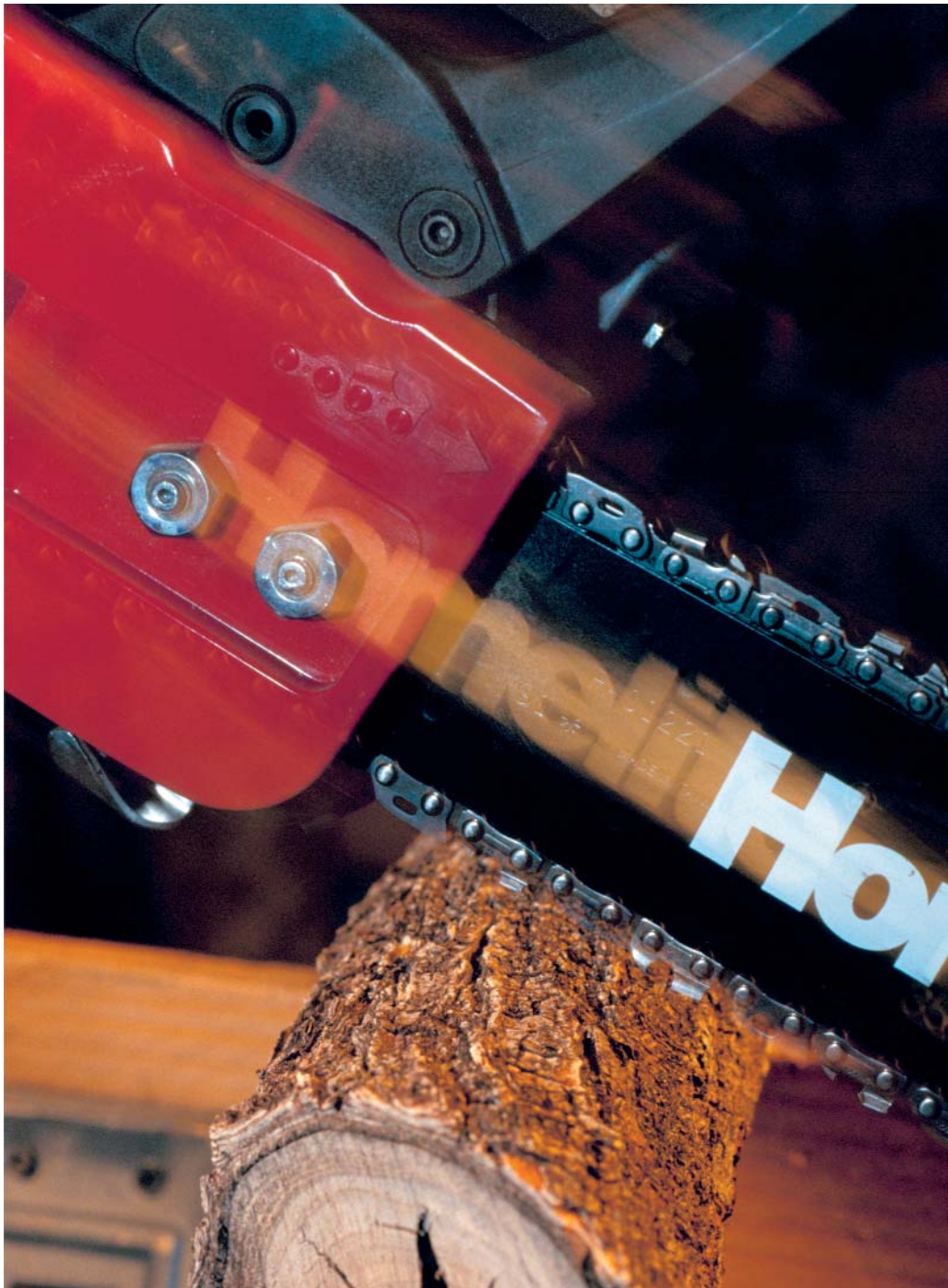
weapon if you have to shoot a grizzly bear. Black bears, normally being smaller than grizzlies, can be stopped with less powerful rifles such as a .30-06, or a .30-30. Heavy handguns such as a .44 Magnum may be inadequate in emergency situations, especially in untrained hands.

Defensive aerosol sprays which contain capsaicin (red pepper extract) have been used with some success for protection against bears. These sprays may be effective at a range of 6-8 yards. If discharged upwind or in a vehicle, they can disable the user. Take appropriate precautions. If you carry a spray can, keep it handy and know how to use it.

In Summary

- Avoid surprising bears at close range; look for signs of bears and make plenty of noise.
- Avoid crowding bears; respect their "personal space."
- Avoid attracting bears through improper handling of food or garbage.
- Plan ahead, stay calm, identify yourself, and don't run.

In most cases, bears are not a threat, but they do deserve your respect and attention. When traveling in bear country, keep alert and enjoy the opportunity to see these magnificent animals in their natural habitat. ■



Dangerous Chain Reaction

Courtesy *Safety Times*

There is a famous sports story about a college football team that went out the night before their Saturday game and saw the movie, *Texas Chain Saw Massacre*. The next day, the team was humiliated by an opponent it was sup-

posed to beat easily. When asked what happened, the players said they couldn't concentrate on the game because all they could think about was the horrors they had seen in the movie the night before.

The lesson here is to leave the massacres to the Hollywood special effects people. Unlike the football players, you'll lose more than your composure if you aren't careful using a chain saw.

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, about 30,000 chain saw injuries require emergency room treatment each year. Before you begin cutting, remember these tips.

Dress for the Job

To work safely you'll need:

— Leather gloves. They'll absorb some of the vibration, and they'll protect your hands from abrasions.

— Safety goggles or safety glasses with side shields. Regular prescription glasses or sunglasses will not protect you.

— A pair of protective work boots, or shoes with safety top caps, metatarsal guards and slip-resistant soles. No tennis shoes!

— Trim-fitting long pants and a long-sleeved shirt to protect you from exhaust burns.

— Earmuffs or insert-type earplugs to protect against high noise levels.

— A hard hat to protect against falling objects and possible kickback.

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A Rainy Night in Georgia

BOB VAN ELSBERG
Managing Editor

The skies were overcast as I left Dobbins Air Reserve Base in Atlanta on a Sunday afternoon after finishing my Reserve duty weekend. Heading south on Interstate 75, I hit some fairly heavy rain showers just south of Atlanta. Nothing that made me pull off the road, but heavy enough to cause me to slow down and run the wipers on high speed. As I headed into Macon I opted for the most direct route home, staying on the interstate through the city rather than taking the 475 bypass.

I was about halfway through Macon when the sky suddenly fell in! It looked like someone had dropped a gray blanket all around the car as the rain pounded against the windshield and roof like machine gun bullets. I carefully eased to the side of the road, looking for a place where I could stop off the roadway. Fortunately, I was able to pull over to the shoulder and take shelter with some other vehicles beneath an overpass. I turned on my four-way flashers and then tuned the radio searching for a weather forecast. I had heard about fierce rains in Georgia, but I had never experienced anything like this before.

I decided the smart move was to sit tight until the rain shower was over. In the past, I had always driven through the rain, but I'm glad I didn't try it this time. I couldn't see the road, much less any traffic. I also wondered just how much speed it would take to cause the tires to hydroplane in such a heavy downpour. I didn't want to find out.

Under the circumstances, not trying to plow through the rain was the right move. Even though all-weather radial tires can give improved traction on wet roads, the key to safety is knowing how to handle wet driving conditions. The

following are some wet weather driving safety tips provided by the National Safety Council.

- Prevent skids by driving slowly and carefully, especially on curves. Steer and brake with a light touch. When you need to stop or slow down, maintain a mild pressure on the brake pedal to avoid locking your wheels and skidding.

- If you do find yourself in a skid, remain calm, ease your foot off the gas and carefully steer in the direction you want the car to go. For cars without anti-lock brakes (ABS), avoid using your brakes. This procedure, known as "steering into the skid," will bring the back end of your car in line with the front. If your car has ABS, brake firmly as you steer into the skid.

- While skids may be frightening, hydroplaning is completely nerve-racking. Hydroplaning happens when the water in front of your tires builds up too fast for your tires to push it out of the way. The water pressure causes your tires to lose contact with the road surface and ride on a thin layer of water. When this happens, your car can completely lose traction with the road, putting you in danger of skidding or drifting out of your lane or even off the road.

- To avoid hydroplaning, keep your tires properly inflated, make sure your tires have good tread, slow down when roads are wet, and stay away from puddles. If possible, drive in the tire tracks of the cars ahead of you.

- If you find yourself hydroplaning, do not brake or turn suddenly as this could throw your car into a skid. Ease your foot off the gas until the car slows down and you can feel the road again. If you need to brake, do so gently with light pumping actions. If your car has anti-lock brakes, then brake normally. The ABS computer will mimic a pumping action as necessary. ■

Weathering the Storm

GEFF GILSTROP
12 CS/SCBBI
Randolph AFB, Texas

It was our ninth day of vacation on our 28-foot-long sailboat "Finesse," sailing on Canyon Lake, Texas. It had been a great vacation sailing from point to point, stopping to do some scuba diving or to anchor for the night in some protected cove. Usually before going to sleep I would switch the VHF radio from channel 16, the hailing channel, to the weather channel and listen to it to be sure we didn't have anything coming at us during the night.

That night the skies were clear all around and we were all tired from a busy day of diving. I cooked some steaks on the grill on the back of the boat, and then we set up the television and VCR to watch a movie before turning in. It was around 10 p.m. when we went to sleep, riding at anchor about 30 yards south of Overlook Park. Earlier when we had dropped anchor, I used scuba equipment to go down and make sure we had a solid anchorage. I'd found a sunken 28-foot-long powerboat on the bottom, so I tied our anchor line to it for security during the night.

Most severe storms this time of year come from the north/northwest, and where I had positioned the boat would give us protection from that direction. I never thought a storm of the magnitude that we were to find ourselves in that night would ever approach from the south/southwest.

At 2:20 a.m. Sunday morning, the storm hit us with such force it threw me from my bunk. The boat started pitching violently and I went up on deck to check on the anchor line. The wind was blowing faster than 50 mph and gusting up to 75 mph. The "boom tent" — a piece of cloth we put up for shade that runs from the mast to the stern — caught a gust and broke all the spring cords holding it to the boat, almost sweeping me overboard.

I had left three complete scuba rigs on deck after we had finished diving the previous day. With the boat pitching the way it was, I knew I had to get the rigs inside the cabin or lose them over the side. While retrieving the last one I saw the anchor line go slack. I pulled the line up only to find the piece of the sunken boat. Now we were being blown toward the rocky shore, only a few yards away.

I started the engine and headed directly into the storm to regain control. I ran the engine up to 4,500 rpm, which would have normally moved Finesse at 8 to 9 knots. However, we were barely able to make

a half knot. At least we were moving away from the rocks and shore — which was a good thing. My wife, Rose, came up on deck with the foul weather gear and took the helm while I moved the rest of the diving gear into the cabin.

We pulled out our personal floatation devices (PFDs). I put mine on, since I was staying on deck. My wife and our son David took theirs below, but did not put them on. If we were to go down, wearing a PFD could trap them inside the cabin as it flooded.

The lightning was so bright that it blinded me for a few seconds each time it flashed. It reminded me of when I was in high school learning to arc weld. I felt a shock through the helm on a few occasions when the lightning was extremely close.

The rain blew straight at me, nearly blinding me. I thought about having Rose give me my diving mask, but I didn't know where it was. I looked east toward the dam and saw two small fishing boats being thrown around like little toys. They were both attempting to head west toward the closest marina located about a mile and a half away.

Not a bad idea, I thought. I could make better time and wouldn't be bucking the full force of the storm, so I changed my heading from south/southwest to due west. However, the full force of the storm hit me broadside, causing the boat to heel 25 to 30 degrees — and I didn't even have the sails up. I turned back into the storm and resumed my south/southwest course. Finesse has 4 feet of freeboard (the height of the deck above the water). As we headed into the storm again, the waves broke over the bow, meaning they had to be 3 to 4 feet high. A lesser boat would have been swamped.

An hour passed and I could see the southern shore whenever the lightning flashed. I was able to make out the entrance to Turkey Cove, but it was still a long way off. I took a compass bearing on the western point of the cove in case I lost sight of it in the rain.

Although it had only been 45 minutes since we had lost our anchorage, it seemed like hours in the storm. I was finally able to see the entrance of Turkey Cove. Once I got in there, the surrounding hills should break some of the force of the storm. Also, there would be higher objects around to attract the lightning than our 42-foot mast.

Another flash of lightning and I could just make out the small dock at the Turkey Cove Lodge. I just hoped it was strong enough to hold after I secured Finesse to it. Because of the way the dock faced, we would be taking the full force of the storm on our starboard side once we docked.

Rose had secured the mooring lines to the bow

and starboard (right) stern cleats. As soon as I got close enough, I jumped to the dock and quickly secured the mooring lines. Rose and David grabbed Chica our Chihuahua and headed to the front porch of the lodge while I secured the boat. I got a flashlight and some towels from inside and wrapped them in an extra foul weather jacket to take to Rose and David.

I took one more look around to be sure everything was secure, then went up the hill. The water coming down the hill was at least a foot deep and covered the entire road. When we got to the lodge, we all wrapped up in the dry towels to stay warm while we

waited out the rest of the storm. About 5 a.m. the lightning stopped and we walked back down the hill. It was still raining but we were tired, so Rose and David climbed into the V-berth and I lay down on the starboard berth and we all fell asleep.

When we awoke around 7:30 a.m. — other than some limbs being down — you couldn't tell what had happened just a few hours earlier. We headed out of the cove toward the northern side of the dam to look for debris. If one of the other boats had sunk, some of the wreckage would have washed ashore and we would notify the sheriff's office.

Finding nothing, we headed west toward our marina to dry out and rest.

I learned two lessons from this experience: (1) Always listen to the weather before turning in for the night, and (2) Never underestimate the power of a storm, no matter what direction it is coming from. ■

An Unlikely Encounter

CW4 (Ret) TOM CLARKE
Patuxent River Naval Station, MD

In May 1980, I was at Fort Rucker, Ala., approximately one month from graduating the Warrant Officer Rotary Wing Qualification Course, otherwise known as "Flight School." A few weeks prior, I had purchased a car — a red 1977 Firebird. A typical hot-looking "pilot car" not uncommon to the parking lots within the various companies at flight school.

One evening, I decided to go to a nearby town for a little fast food. After having dinner, my hot little sports car and I were on our way back to the barracks. The four-lane, undivided road was well known to all stationed at Fort Rucker.

As I neared the post in the right lane of the eastbound lanes, something caught my eye. On the left

(westbound) side of the road, I spotted a single light, or what appeared to be a headlight, in the grass 10 feet from the pavement. As I returned my eyes to the front, less than 100 feet in front of me was a steel cable lying across all four lanes of the road! The wires were lying flat in the middle two lanes and suspended at least a foot or two above the road surface in the outer east and westbound lanes. Coincidentally, that included the lane that I was in!

At 50 mph, I had to immediately swerve to the left lane to cross the wires where they were lying on top of the pavement. Fortunately, there were no cars behind me, so this maneuver didn't cause an accident.

After safely crossing the wires, I braked and moved my car a few feet onto the shoulder of the road. I shifted the car into park, applied my emergency brake, turned on the car's flasher signal, and left my headlights on.

As I got out of my car to figure out a way to warn



other motorists, a young lady in a pickup truck hit the wires where they were suspended off the ground. The wires engaged her rear axle like it was the tail-hook of an F-14 Tomcat during a carrier landing. Her vehicle went from 50 mph to a dead stop within 10 feet and turned 180 degrees right before my eyes! After witnessing this, I knew there was bound to be more trouble.

I rushed to her vehicle to check on her immediate condition. As I opened her door, the first thing I did was turn on her flasher signal and put the transmission in park. She was dazed. She had apparently struck a part of the steering wheel with her head and upper torso. Thank God, she was wearing her seatbelt! It probably saved her life.

Before attempting to move her, I asked her how her neck and back felt. Her only complaint was a bruised forehead. I told her that the safest place for her was in the cab of her truck wearing her seatbelt.

Then, I ran to check on the headlight lying in the grass that first caught my attention. As I approached, I realized it was a motorcycle. The rider was lying in the grass next to the bike. At first, I thought the rider had been decapitated. His neck was so severely broken that his head was tucked almost entirely under his upper torso. I could only detect faint breathing, so I didn't move him.

Meanwhile, a van had pulled alongside the road where we were. I quickly ran over to the driver to explain the situation and ask him to try and get help. To my good fortune, the driver of the van was an Army medic and had a CB radio inside his van. He made a quick call and notified authorities of the accident. As he examined the motorcycle driver, I went back toward the pickup truck in an effort to flag down other vehicles that would surely arrive at the scene.

As I neared the pickup truck, I noticed a small fire near an abandoned farmhouse on the north side of the road. Beneath a pile of bricks that used to be a chimney on the side of the house was a wrecked Corvette. Suddenly, I heard screeching rubber, closely followed by the sound of a collision near the pickup truck. What now?

The driver of a compact car with at least four people inside had become distracted by the pickup truck. He didn't see the debris of a fallen telephone pole in the road until it was too late. He locked his brakes and stopped short of hitting debris. The car behind him was following too closely and plowed into his rear bumper, pushing his car over one of the fallen poles. Now there were **five** vehicles involved! Other traffic began to react in time and slow to a halt.

Soon, the welcome glow of flashing lights from emergency vehicles and police cars arrived at the scene. EMTs arrived and we assisted the victims. Fortunately, the people in the compact car were wearing seatbelts and, as a result, didn't have more serious injuries.

Meanwhile, a medevac helicopter from Fort Rucker landed in a field. As they began shutting the aircraft down, I ran over to brief the crew on the accident scene and where the victims were located. I went to the farmhouse where the car lay beneath the bricks of the collapsed chimney. Local firefighters and police officers were surveying the scene and informed me that they were looking for the driver. After removing some of the brick debris, they could not find the driver.

Using flashlights, the police searched the immediate area. An officer finally spotted the driver. He had not been wearing a seatbelt and was thrown clear of his vehicle. He was dead, impaled on a branch approximately 10 feet up in a tree.

By that time, the motorcycle rider had been rushed from the scene by an ambulance, only to be pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital. As I spoke with the police regarding what I had witnessed, they

continued on next page



soon began to piece together the accident.

Putting It All Together

The driver of the motorcycle was a flight school student who knew the driver of the Corvette, a young instructor pilot. They had met earlier in the afternoon and decided to have an impromptu race into town.

As both vehicles exited the post and approached the beginning of the four-lane portion of the highway, they pulled alongside of each other and began to race. The driver of the Corvette pulled ahead of the motorcycle and continued to increase his lead. In doing so, he lost control of the car and sheared right through a telephone pole. The pole held one end of a steel cable that spanned to a pole across the road and supported some utility lines. As the pole fell to the ground, so did the support cable.

As the motorcycle driver approached, the cable caught him across his helmet, broke his neck, and knocked him off the bike. Both he and his bike slid several hundred feet down the road, coming to a stop on the grass. Part of the support cable was tangled in the wrecked pole and prevented the entire length of the cable from lying flat across all four lanes. That's where I encountered them.

Although the experience I just related was tragic, it could have been worse. The one element that prevented more serious injuries or fatalities was the use of seat belts. The young lady in the pickup could have easily have been thrown out of the vehicle and killed.

The occupants of the two vehicles involved in the rear-end collision could have all been injured more seriously than they were. (The occupants in the back seat of the compact car were not injured at all.)

Another thing to consider is safe following distances. The last of the accidents could have been prevented had the driver not been tailgating. Don't just use the rule of thumb allowing two seconds or two car lengths for every 10 mph you are traveling. Add buffer distances when visibility is reduced because of darkness, fog, heavy rain, snow or other circumstances. Also, don't overdrive your headlights at night. If you can't stop in the distance you can see, you're just asking for trouble.

What do you carry in your trunk for safety devices and signaling equipment? Flares? Warning triangles? Flashlights? A lot of people carry cellular telephones in their vehicles now instead of CB radios. Do you carry a first-aid kit and/or are you trained in basic first-aid or CPR? All of these things should be a consideration, not only to help yourself or your passengers, but others who may be involved in an accident.

Finally, be mentally prepared for emergencies when you drive. Think about what you would do if you encountered a serious accident. Just thinking about what you would do will make you better prepared if the situation ever arises. The first several minutes after an accident are often chaotic and chaos creates poor decision-making. So if you're faced with chaos, keep your wits about you! ■

Even Before You Start

- Read and understand all operating instructions, parts and settings. Practice using the chain saw with someone who knows how.
- Keep other people and animals out of your work area.
- Keep your work area clear of branches and other objects that could cause kickback.
- Be sure the chain blade is sharp and at the proper tension. A saw that is properly sharpened won't vibrate as much or be as tiring to operate.
- Clean dirt, spilled fuel and sawdust from your saw.
- Stand on the uphill side of the log when cutting, because the log may roll downhill.
- Be sure your body is clear of the natural path the saw will follow after completion of the cut.
- Check that handles are clean and dry.
- Call a professional for jobs off the ground.
- Don't work alone. When chain saw accidents occur, they are usually serious.
- Review safety tips the first time you use the saw each year.

When the Blade is Running

Typically, kickback results when the tip of the saw comes in contact with a solid object or tough piece of wood. It can also happen when the saw

tip touches the bottom of the cut. Stay alert!

- Start the chain saw only on clear, level ground, not on your leg.
- Use a well-balanced stance.
- Hold it with one hand on the rear handle and one on the top handle to support and guide it.
- Never carry a saw while it is running. When it is not running, carry it below your waist with the guide bar pointed down.
- Cut with the part of the saw closest to the motor end, not the tip.
- Let the chain do the work. Don't try to force the saw through the cut.
- Start all cuts at top speed (full throttle) and continue to cut at top speed.
- Take your hand off the trigger between cuts.
- Be sure the chain does not rotate when the controls are in the idle position.
- Watch the moving chain until it comes to a full stop before moving the saw near your body.
- Turn off the saw and make sure the chain has stopped before making any adjustments or repairs.
- Inspect the blade for any cracks at least once an hour during use. If you find any, replace the blade.
- Refill the tank only when the engine is cold and the saw is not running.
- If you feel tired, rest. Fatigue can lead to accidents. ■

USAF Photo by TSgt Mike Featherston



To Bee O

Courtesy *Safety Times*

Let's clear up the buzz about the "killer bee."

Yes, the "killer honey bee" does exist, mostly in South America and Mexico. Some have been spotted in the southern United States. No, they do not pose an immediate threat to your life. Yes, if threatened they are more aggressive than the domestic honey bee flitting around your backyard, and they have killed people and animals. No, they will not hunt you down and sting you for the sport of it.

While the "killer bee" invasion is more myth than fact, stinging insects can inflict pain on all of us, and endanger the lives of some of us. What's a person to do?

Avoidance Is A Good Rule

- "Killer" and domestic honey bees look the same, so stay away from all bees.
- Bees usually don't sting unless disturbed. Stinging is their defense.
- When you might be exposed to stinging insects, dress in long pants, a light-weight long-sleeve shirt and a hat.
- Do not wear bright-colored clothing, flowery prints, or shiny jewelry. Dull white, dark green, and khaki are good colors. Honey bees, in particular, hate dark colors.
- Avoid floral-scented shampoos, soaps, powders and perfumes.
- Don't walk barefoot in the grass.
- Avoid the types of places bees and other stinging insects congregate, such as: gardens when flowers are in bloom, garbage areas, stagnant pools, buildings used infrequently, and junk piles.
- If you see bees flying in and out of a small opening there is probably a nest inside. Leave it alone and call an expert.
- Don't reach into a space if you haven't previously looked into it.
- Keep your yard clean. Empty water from barrels, old tires, cans, and wading pools. Also keep the lawn mowed.
- Bees will respond to vibrations and exhaust from mowers and other equipment. Check for bees before using mowers, trimmers or chain saws.
- Fill potential nesting sites such as tree cavities and cracks in walls.
- Place screen over weep holes in houses and on top of rain spouts and chimneys.
- Seal food scraps in plastic bags and dispose of them in a tightly closed garbage can that is lined with a garbage bag.



R Not To Bee



- Don't rely on insect repellents. They are effective on biting insects such as flies and mosquitoes, but do not repel stinging insects such as bees.

- When drinking sweetened beverages outside, use a plastic cover with a straw.

- If you encounter bees during outdoor activities, leave the area immediately.

When They're In Your Midst

- When bees are nearby, avoid rapid movements which may look like attacks.

- If a stinging insect lights on your body, brush it away. Do not slap it against your body. That will trap it and give it the chance to sting you.

- If you stumble onto a nest, move away slowly.

- If you are attacked by bees:

- Run away. (Domestic honey bees will chase you about fifty yards, "killer honey bees" will chase you three times that far.)

- Try to get inside a car, building or heavy brush. Jumping into water won't help. They'll probably be waiting when you come up for air.

- If possible, wrap your head with clothing or other material. Leave an opening for your eyes.

Watch For Allergic Reactions

- In case of a sting, don't leave the stingers in your skin. Venom can continue to pump into the body for up to 10 minutes:

- Remove the stinger. Gently scrape it out with a fingernail, credit card or the edge of a sterilized knife. Do not pinch it out. That squeezes venom into the wound.

- Use ice packs and sting-kill ointment to reduce swelling and pain.

- More than 2 million Americans are allergic to insect bites and have serious reactions. If you have any of these symptoms after an insect bite, see your doctor at once:

- wheezing or trouble breathing

- fainting or dizziness

- hives or skin rash

- abdominal pain, nausea, or cramps


- rapid pulse

- diarrhea

- chills

- facial swelling, or swelling that extends beyond two joints

- Anyone who has had serious reactions to bee stings should carry a first-aid insect sting kit. Your doctor can give you the details. ■



The Hazards of Spring Cleaning

Illustration by Felicia Moreland

Courtesy **Safety Times**

The days are getting longer and warmer, and you're ready to break loose. The options are enticing. You can pull out the golf clubs, polish the car, or reorganize your fishing gear. Or, here's one you're going to love. You can do some much needed **old fashioned spring cleaning**.

We aren't kidding. Your house, yard, and garage probably need it, and now's the time, before the summer's distractions are impossible to ignore. **Because it involves some stress, a bunch of activity, and the use of household implements, spring cleaning is not risk free.** Here are a few things to keep in mind as you get the old homestead out from under the snow and ice.

In and Around the House

- Wear the right clothes for the work you'll be doing, including sturdy shoes and work gloves. Mrs. Cleaver looked swell doing the housework in high heels, but that was television.

- Wear safety goggles when doing any kind of work that might threaten your eyes.

- As you start the heavy cleaning, keep traffic lanes in the house open and uncluttered. Keep

small children and pets away from work areas.

- Clear off your steps and stairways. Check treads, risers and carpeting, indoors and out.

- After a winter of faithful service, have that fireplace cleaned.

- Discard old papers and magazines, clothing you've outgrown, useless furniture, broken toys and dried-up paint cans. You can live without them, but they provide great fuel for an unwanted fire.

- Inspect all patios, porches and driveways for cracks and holes created by the rigors of winter. Repair these dangerous tripping hazards.

- Walk around your yard and give it a good inspection. Remove leaves under wooden stairs and porches.

- Remove broken or low limbs. Using a professional is probably the safest bet.

- This kind of work generally involves some climbing. A chair is not a suitable replacement for a ladder. A step ladder will not do the work of a utility ladder. Choose the proper ladder for the job. Check all ladders for damage before you step foot on one.

The Things We Do to Our Garage

You've had several months to accumulate a lot of

needless clutter in the garage. Let's get organized.

- Install wall hooks and hang your hoses, extension cords, shovels and rakes on them. It's bad enough the puppy is at your feet, your ax shouldn't be, too.

- Hang pegboards for your tools. They'll be away from inquisitive hands, and you'll know where to find them.

- Look for newer, safer hooks and pegboards.

- Keep anything that hangs out of traffic areas.

- Don't hang bikes and sports gear at eye level or near doors.

- Hang tools with sharp points facing downward, but out of a child's reach.

- Lock up power tools. If a tool has a key, store it separately.

- Keep antifreeze and windshield wiper solvents off the floor where they can't tempt kids or pets.

- Dump all those solvents and empty cans that you've been accumulating on the shelf. Your local city hall should be able to tell you about hazardous waste collections.

Those Scary Spiders

While fatalities from spider bites are rare, consequences can range from trivial to severe.

- Sanitation should be the first step in control. Clean away all webbing along with spiders and eggs with a vacuum cleaner.

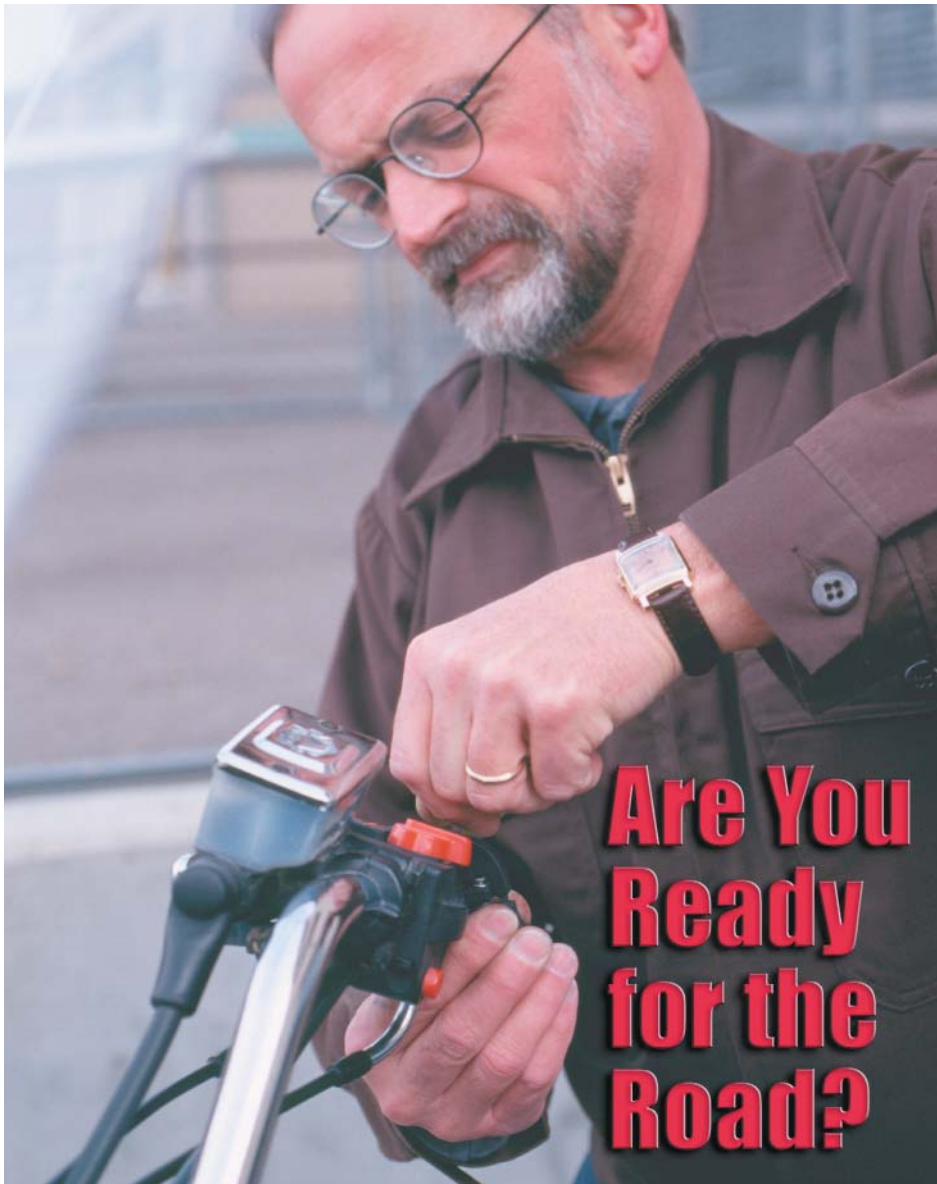
- Keep undisturbed areas of your home as free as possible of clutter. Periodically move stored materials around and vacuum these areas.

- Caulk cracks and crevices on the outside of the house.

- Hire professional pest control operators if there is a recurring problem. ■

USAF Photo by TSgt Mike Featherston





Reprinted Courtesy
COUNTERMEASURE, April 2001

It's a beautiful spring morning and the bikes are out on the road — motorcycles of all shapes and sizes, and riders of varying experience levels. It's hard to beat the joy of rolling down the open road on a motorcycle. However, before you plan to hit the road (hopefully, not literally), it is important to be prepared.

I have been riding motorcycles for more than 20 years — dirt bikes, touring bikes, and everything in between. I would like to share with you a few things I've learned over the years.

A few years ago, I attended an advanced skills riding course in the spring. I was somewhat surprised to see how much I had forgotten during the winter. I recommend finding some type of refresher course, advanced skills riding course, or some other motorcycle safety course before taking to the streets this year.

Like many other skills, riding skills are perishable. Due to the climate in many parts of the country, the motorcycle-riding season can be relatively short. And your riding skills may not be as sharp in April as they were in November when you last rode your bike. Another point to consider is that automobile drivers have not dealt with motorcycles for awhile either. Remember that it is the rider's responsibility to keep mentally alert.

Don't forget to consider roadworthiness of your bike. Just because it was OK



when you put it up last fall doesn't mean it's road ready now. A good initial inspection and routine maintenance will go far to ensure a safe and enjoyable riding season. I like to thoroughly inspect my motorcycle prior to taking it on my first ride of the new season. For example:

- Inspect your tires for dry rot/damage and proper tread depth. If the tires are serviceable, inflate to the proper operating level.

- Inspect your braking system to include brake pads, discs, and fluid levels. Always service your braking system according to the manufacturer's instructions.

- Ensure all fuses, lights, and horns are in good working order. Replace bad fuses and burned-out bulbs as required.

- Service all fluids and check for any leaks. Also, check your belt or chain and tighten anything that may be loose.

- Check the charge on your battery and service if necessary. If servicing is required, always follow the correct safety procedures and wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

- Inspect your riding PPE to make sure it is serviceable.

These components can affect the safe operation of your motorcycle. This certainly is not a comprehensive checklist. You should tailor your inspection to the type of motorcycle you ride and the manufacturer's recommendations.

Before you start riding this year, take some time to prepare yourself and your motorcycle for a safe, enjoyable year of riding. You'll be glad you did. ■

USAF Photos by TSgt Mike Featherston



