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Recreational and Driving Safety

# Road & Rec

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Summer 2006



WINNER

2005



# Road & Rec

Volume 18, Number 3    Summer 2006

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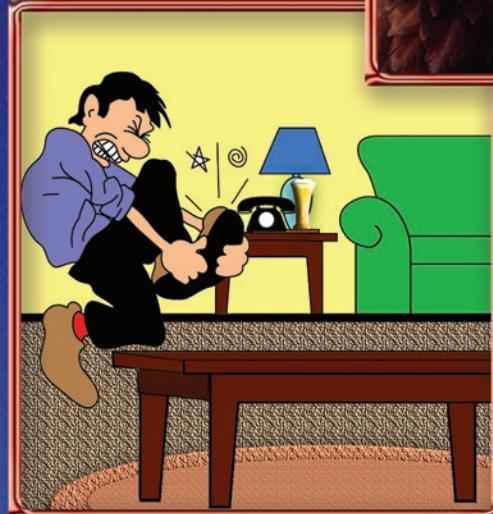
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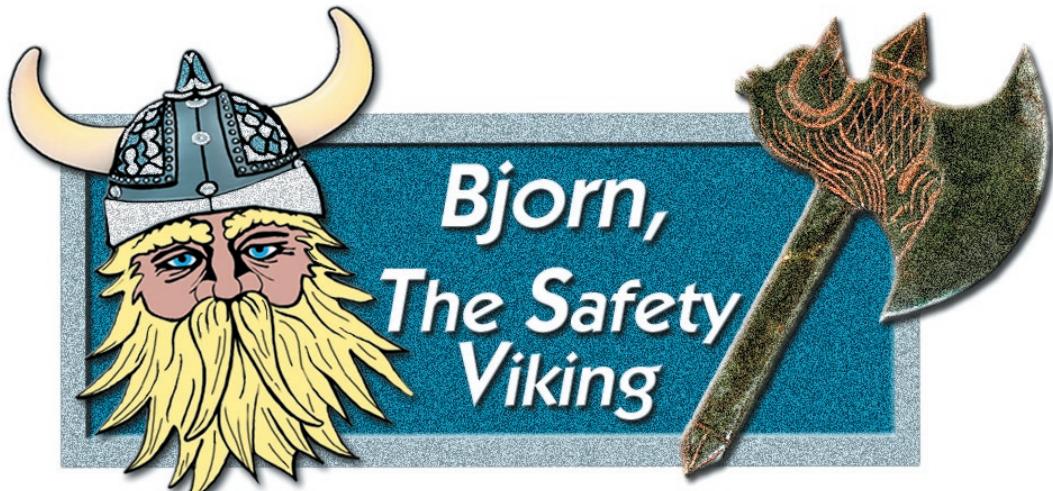
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**CONTRIBUTIONS & FEEDBACK—***Road & Rec* welcomes reader contributions, comments and constructive criticism. The editor may revise contributed material to improve clarity, without altering the author's intended meaning.

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## Bjorn, The Safety Viking

### Sizzle and Doink

**ZACHARY WAKEFIELD**  
332 ECS/SCMM  
Balad AB Iraq

**C**ongratulations to all who read this, for surviving the winter and spring months, at worst only partially scathed! Need I remind you that letting the ol' guard down now would be sillier than trying to wrestle a flagon of mead from a thirsty Viking? I hope not, but just in case, heed these overly adjective-enhanced words before jet-tisoning thyself forehead-first into the bottomless pit of unsafe summer happiness, and maybe you can subsequently avoid things like pain and untimely death!

Perhaps you didn't realize it, but somewhere in your day you will probably be within 50 yards of a barbecue grill. While many are more than overjoyed at the mere mention of delicious flame-grilled meat and associated side-helpings of more flame-grilled meat, there lurks a great potential for pain, burns and piles of smoking rubble that used to be your house. Recent studies have shown that contrary to popular Cro-Magnon belief, heat rises. Fire, with its tendency to pro-

duce said heat, should therefore not be placed underneath things with low flash points, like wood, thatch roofing or tanks of acetylene. In the event that you should notice some of these items near your backyard conflagration, do not attempt to move the fire with your bare hands, as you would no doubt scream like a sissy and wake the neighbor's baby.

To rid them of guilt after overindulging at a barbecue, some will don their unfortunately revealing shorty-shorts and take the bicycle out for a spin. This enters them into a whole new world of danger, as a driver's temptation to smack bikers with the car door is nearly irresistible. This is a key reason to wear a helmet, for it will protect one's head when whacked and pitched off the bridge into the gravel pit. Additional protection against road rash is also a plus. For those driving, it is unsafe to participate in biker-baseball, since the uncontrollable fits of laughter resulting from a home run will cause you to lose control of your car, which will resemble a taco when they pry it away from the tree.

In some areas of the world, the summer months also invite extra brightness to emanate from the glowing ball in the sky. This added brightness feels great, until it rends the skin from your body in such a way as

## THINGS THAT SHOULD BURN AND OTHER THINGS THAT SHOULDN'T BURN ... BUT DO ANYWAY

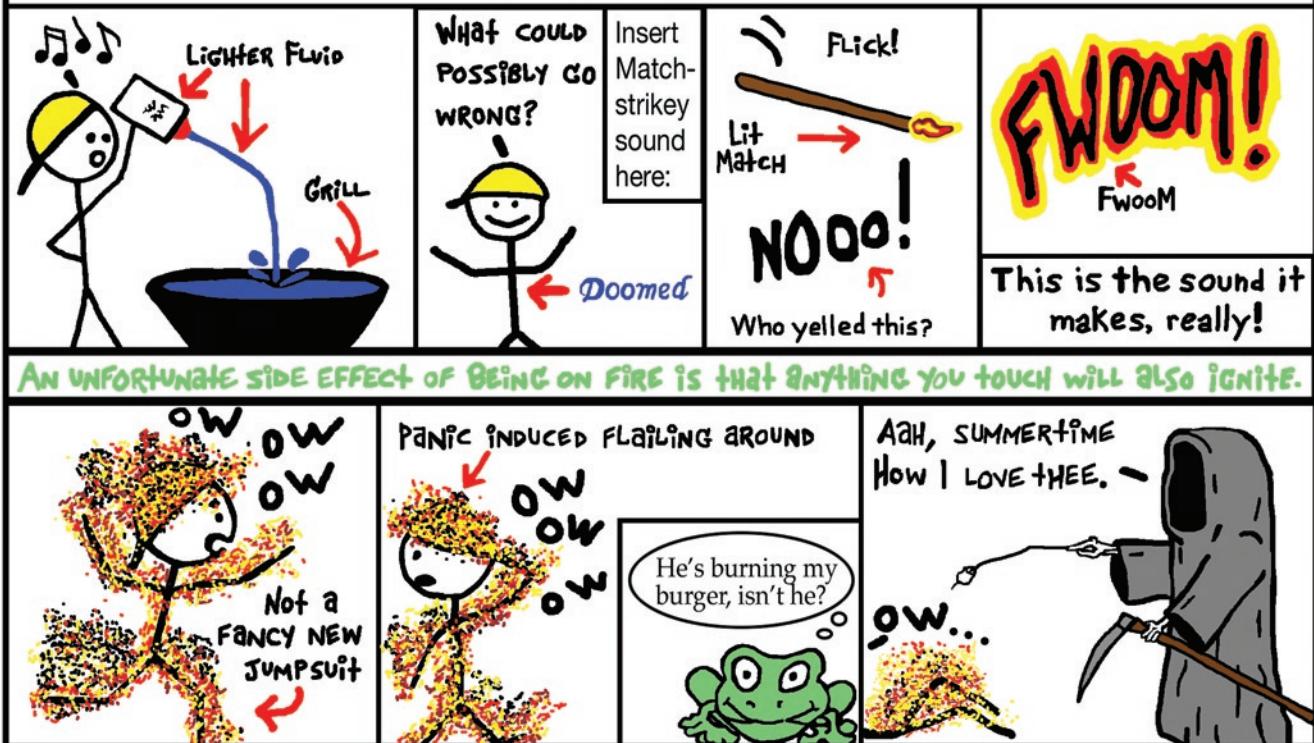


Illustration by Zachary Wakefield

to make a friendly slap on the shoulder justification for a beating. Squeezy-tubes of sun-be-gone can help keep the reddening and pain at a more bearable level, but only if you purchase and use it. A huge beard can also be implemented to keep the sun off your face, if you feel so inclined to grow one.

Last, the dangers of getting carpal tunnel syndrome from calculator keypad-punching are greater in the summer, due to the confusion revolving around those tricky 101 Critical Days. Rather than using advanced calculus to determine exactly what your odds are for survival based on the current-vs.-projected 101 Days statistics, it is wiser to assume the worst. That way, no matter what happens, you're either happy or you're right. As an added bonus, you can also wave the "I told you so" flag in barely contained, self-satisfied glee if something does go horribly awry. In the interest of keeping that flag furled, keep an eye out for things that can harm you, and maybe they won't. ■

*What's The Bottom Line?  
Don't do  
dumb  
things!!*

*Sincerely,*

**Bjorn, Your Friendly Neighborhood Safety Viking**  
*Observer of Obvious Things  
 Discoverer of New Lands  
 Devourer of Many Colorful Foodstuffs*



# The Luckiest Guy in the World

ANONYMOUS

In high school, my good friend had a habit of going to a party, getting drunk, and driving down residential streets at 80 miles per hour, with his headlights off. He was invincible. Throughout high school, he scared and excited many people with his spectacular displays of bravery and skill.

Then, after high school, he used his incredible intelligence and aptitude to get admitted to Cornell University, to pursue a degree in

computer engineering. While he was there, I went to visit him on multiple occasions, only to find that he was still up to his same old stunts. Even worse, all around Ithaca, NY, there are very steep gorges. The gorges were beautiful to look at, but deadly for those who either fell or jumped into them. One night, my young, invincible, daredevil friend decided to walk on the rail of a bridge over one of those gorges on the way home from the bars. Once again, his youthful exuberance was reinforced, because he not only survived, but impressed many onlookers.

One summer, after his junior year, he was at his parents' summer home on the lake. They

had a very powerful ski boat that we loved to race around on. One weekend, he decided to go out on the boat by himself and enjoy the speed. He also decided to take a case of beer with him. Eight or nine beers later, he hit a clearly marked shoal and destroyed the boat. Fortunately, nobody was injured or killed.

After college, my friend landed a high-paying job with a Fortune 500 company, as a computer expert. That was not enough for him, though. He wanted a job with more excitement and action. So, he decided he'd try to become an FBI agent. He was still invincible, until one fateful day.

My friend thought that it was perfectly OK to drink enough to kill a horse, and then drive home. This day was different, though. He was on his way home from work when he stopped at a bar during happy hour to have a drink with a couple of coworkers. He drank only three bottles of beer over more than an hour and a half. How many people do you know who drink the same amount over a similar period and drive home without any worry? He only really drank two and a half of those beers, because he spilled part of one on his shirt. On his way home, he was pulled over for driving just 10 mph over the speed limit. The police officer smelled the beer and decided to administer a breathalyzer test. My friend scored a 0.1 BAC, which was just over the legal limit. The officer arrested him and took him to jail.

Finally, the law had caught up with him, although it was in a most unlikely situation. He spent a night in jail, paid a \$10,000 fine, his insurance company dropped him, and his driver's license was suspended for six months. Even more important to him than having to find a ride to work every day for six months was that he was no longer eligible for the FBI. He was absolutely devastated.

So, why is this article called "The luckiest guy in the world?" Because, on that day, my friend realized that he would not live forever, and he could not tempt fate indefinitely without ever being held responsible for his actions. After that day, he never drove drunk and he never disrespected alcohol again. Most importantly, he learned all this without killing anyone (especially himself).

How does this article apply to you? I know

many different people throughout the entire range of risk takers. Some people never drink, always wear their seatbelts, never exceed the speed limit, and always minimize the risks they take. Another extreme includes those who have almost no regard for their own safety or that of others. Almost all of us are somewhere in the middle. Yet, most people (including my friend and people like him) vastly underestimate the risks they take. For example, my friend thought absolutely nothing of having three beers on his way home from work. After all, he had driven home countless times after drinking more than 10 beers, and survived without incident.

How many people say things like "I only live two miles away," when deciding to drive home without a seatbelt? How many people say "I don't feel drunk," before rationalizing their ability to drive home? How many people think "I do it all the time," when doing something they know is risky? It's very easy to read an article like this and think about all the people you know who make decisions like these. It is also very easy to forget about the most important person you know—YOURSELF.

Whether you are a 19-year-old Airman who decides to do Ecstasy and then ride a motorcycle without a helmet, or a 40-year-old lieutenant colonel who uses a power saw without taking the time to put on your safety goggles, this article applies to you just the same. You spend your entire life making good bets and bad bets. In the long run, if you make enough bad bets, you will eventually lose. More often than not, the loss is not at all proportionate to the small gains you may have achieved by taking the risks.

Please take two things from this article. First, you are not invincible! No matter how many bad bets you may have won in the past, they will eventually catch up with you. Also, learn from others! There is no reason to make the same stupid mistakes that other people have already made. One person ruining his career, crippling himself, or dying, should be enough. Always ask "What's the worst thing that could happen in this situation?" when you assess the risk of an activity. Eventually (and usually when you least expect it), that "worst thing that could happen," will occur. Will it be worth it? ■



# From the Outside, Looking In

**TOM CLARKE**

Naval Air Systems Command  
Air Safety Analyst  
Patuxent River MD

I retired from military flying in 1999. At first, I missed the excitement and all the preparation that went into flying missions. Not long after retirement, the only thing I missed were the other aviators I flew with, the maintainers, and all the other folks who made our organization run so well. Since then, I've felt like 'someone on the outside, looking in.' That's been acceptable to me though, because I've always felt like I'd had my 'time,' and now it's someone else's turn. My son was getting older, and that made the reduced risk

much more acceptable.

A recent experience reminded me of the risk that goes into flying, and all the tedious preparation required to reduce the risks inherent in aviation—military and civilian.

While visiting my parents in Pennsylvania, with my wife and son, we decided to take a break around noon and beat the heat by going to the local military base for some relaxing, air-conditioned bowling. The base is co-located with a small municipal airport, and is about five miles from my parents' home. With my wife and son secured in our vehicle, we headed out to the base in our SUV. As we approached a road leading to the main gate, my wife remarked to our son that a plane was taking off (about 500 feet in front of us). As I

looked for the airplane, my heart immediately sank as I saw the light, single-engine aircraft lower than it should have been, and in a shallow descent beyond the boundary fence of the municipal airport runway. I immediately told my wife, "That plane isn't taking off! It's going to crash!"

At about 75-100 feet above ground level, the plane's nose began to pitch up. I knew that it would soon stall. Just like clockwork, the wings dipped left and right alternately, either as a result of the stall or a last-ditch effort by the pilot to maneuver the plane for emergency landing.

I drove toward the area I thought would have to be the crash site, and saw the plane go below the rooflines of a building, now only a block away. We could hear the impact, even with our windows up. Almost immediately, dense black smoke and a fireball rose from the crash site. Within 20 seconds (driving wildly around other traffic, blowing my horn and flashing my lights) we arrived at the mobile home community where the crash occurred. I parked less than 30 feet from the wreckage and got out to offer assistance, with several other people. The airplane appeared to land in a level attitude and the fuselage and cabin area appeared to have been in survivable condition, especially if the post-crash fire hadn't happened.

To my horror, the next image I had, which will haunt me forever, was of a man (later identified as the pilot) scrambling around the rear of the aircraft to the right side of the cabin, to attempt extrication of the other passengers. His pants, shirt and hair were smoldering from exposure to the high heat of the post-crash fire, and he appeared to be in extreme pain as he fell and tried to regain his footing. Another person and I began screaming at the man to get back. The heat was too intense to approach the plane!

Another image now got my attention, and reminded me that our car was parked too close to the site (with my family inside). A propane tank from the adjacent mobile home was now surrounded by flames and ready to blow! I had to move my vehicle with my family in it now! Just as I turned to run to the car,

a loud pop, followed by a jet of pressurized flame 20 feet in the air, confirmed my fear—the propane tank had ignited. I got in our car and backed out immediately, with my wife and son terrified of the scene we were departing. I went back to the main road where we first saw the plane, went to the military base and gave my name and phone numbers to security personnel at the gate as the first wave of emergency vehicles began to respond.

After getting my family safely back to my parents' house, I went back to the municipal airport and contacted the tower staff. They directed me to a nearby fixed-based operator to give their office a witness statement. Two days after the accident, I made contact with the lead National Transportation Safety Board accident investigator to ensure he had received my statement.

I had been on several aviation accident investigations (some fatal and some with ambulatory survivors) in the military, including one where my wingman crashed in a field, which required my help to extract the crew to a safe distance from the wreckage, but this was by far the worst scene I've ever witnessed.

Now that I reflect on the events that took place that day, it brought many things into perspective:

—When faced with catastrophic events, consider all aspects, including your surroundings, and how to minimize the risk to yourself and those around you.

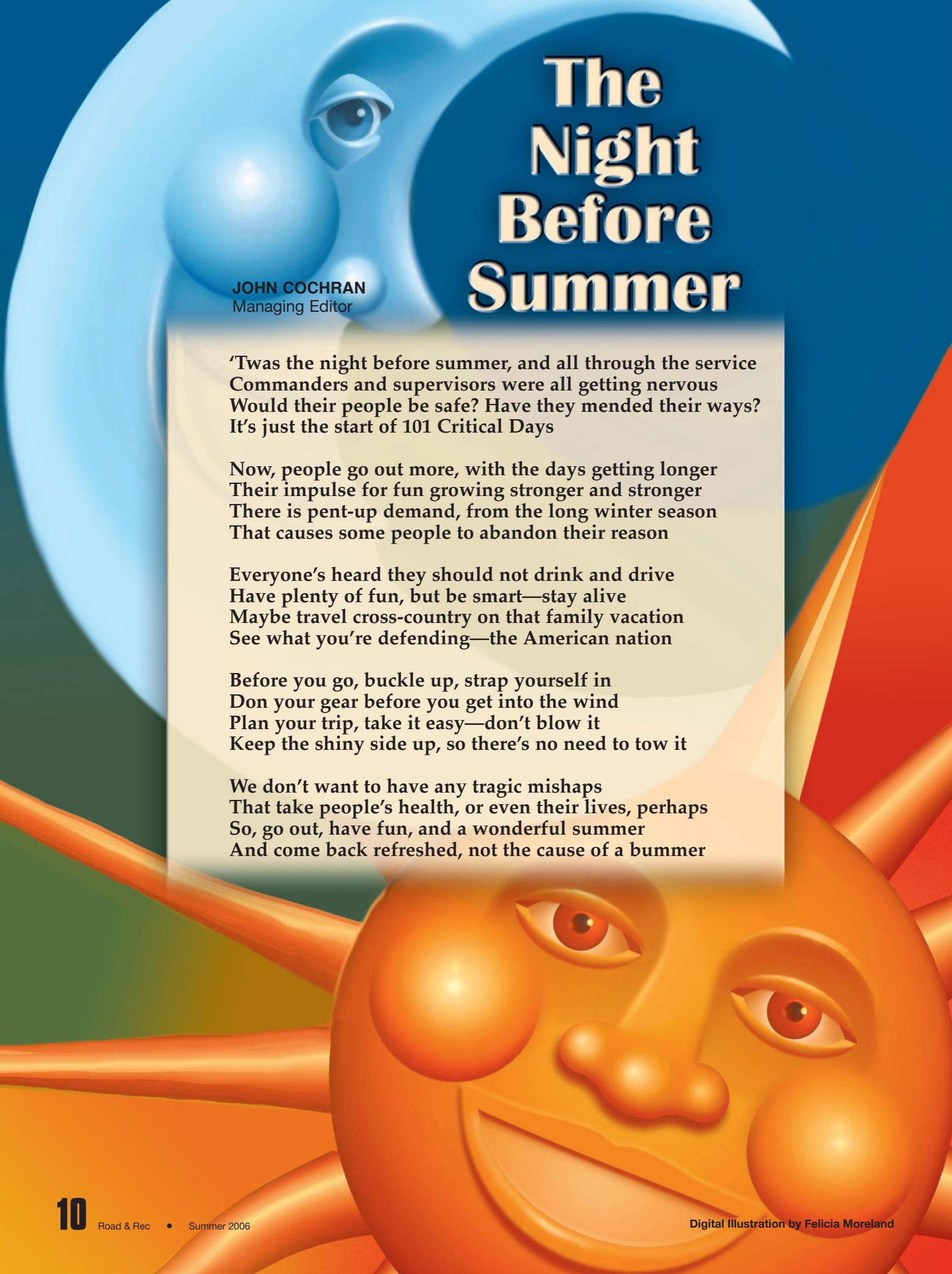
—Can you be better prepared for emergencies? How could I have changed the outcome if I'd had a good-sized fire extinguisher in my car?

—In your zeal to help others in trouble, don't traumatize those you're with.

—Sometimes assistance cannot be rendered, no matter how difficult that is to accept! (Don't beat yourself up for wondering what you could have done better.)

This has been a sobering (possibly life-altering) reminder for me, that nothing in life is routine—driving, flying, boating, walking, running, exercising, or anything else. Don't take your life for granted, and always make sure you've done everything possible to minimize the risk to yourself and those you love. ■

## *"That plane isn't taking off! It's going to crash!"*



# The Night Before Summer

JOHN COCHRAN  
Managing Editor

'Twas the night before summer, and all through the service  
Commanders and supervisors were all getting nervous  
Would their people be safe? Have they mended their ways?  
It's just the start of 101 Critical Days

Now, people go out more, with the days getting longer  
Their impulse for fun growing stronger and stronger  
There is pent-up demand, from the long winter season  
That causes some people to abandon their reason

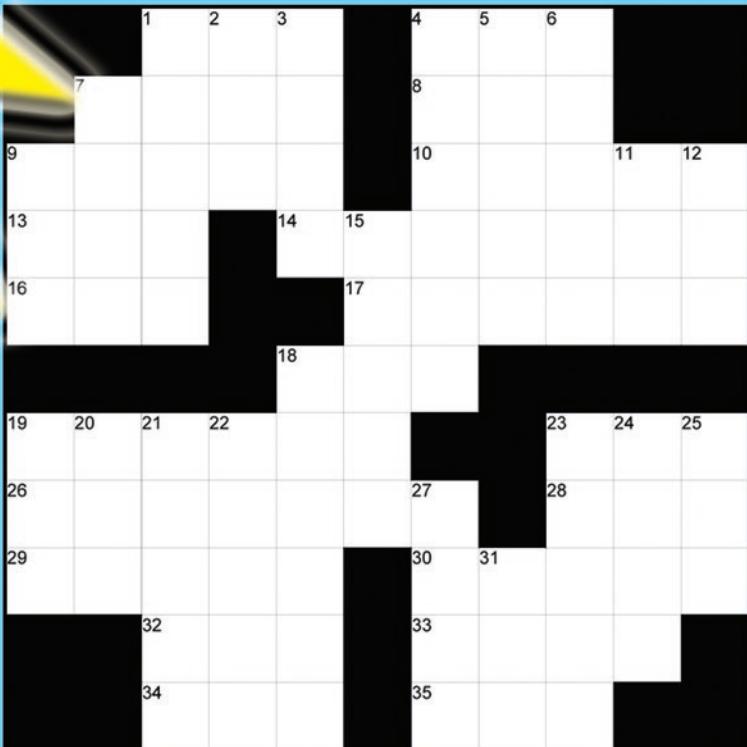
Everyone's heard they should not drink and drive  
Have plenty of fun, but be smart—stay alive  
Maybe travel cross-country on that family vacation  
See what you're defending—the American nation

Before you go, buckle up, strap yourself in  
Don your gear before you get into the wind  
Plan your trip, take it easy—don't blow it  
Keep the shiny side up, so there's no need to tow it

We don't want to have any tragic mishaps  
That take people's health, or even their lives, perhaps  
So, go out, have fun, and a wonderful summer  
And come back refreshed, not the cause of a bummer

# Summer Safety

**CAPT TONY WICKMAN**  
71 FTW/PA  
Vance AFB OK



## ACROSS

1. People who work ERs, in short
4. \_\_\_\_\_-Fit; Nike workout gear
7. Item used in many summer fatalities
8. USAF org. concerned with IEDs
9. Highway killer
10. Commonwealth
13. Singer Torme
14. Big contributor to vehicle accidents
16. Navy ship name starter
17. Mistakes
18. Settle
19. Speaks
23. On-duty or off-duty decision-making tool, in short
26. To drink enough water
28. Bonnet denizen
29. Evergreen tree
30. Damp
32. German "one"
33. Baseball catcher's glove
34. 1 ACROSS assistants, in short
35. USAF PME school

## DOWN

1. Old-time one-on-one battles
2. Rural road, in short
3. Soft drink
4. Behold
5. Airplane engine part
6. State home to Mountain Home AFB
7. Mocks
9. Dallas-area college, in brief
11. Mountain-climbing site
12. Golfer Ernie
15. Minimal
18. Masters the art of driving
19. Engine type, in short
20. Bread type
21. Snake
22. Instruct
23. Newspaper items for fatalities, in short
24. Item needed before driving, playing sports
25. NY baseball player
27. 1996 Paltrow movie
31. Car engine need

answers on page 15

# The Big Tomato

JOHN COCHRAN  
Managing Editor

A friend I've known forever lives in a major city in the Southwestern part of the United States. I've ridden in a car with him countless times, and I know he's a careful driver, aware of what's going on around him, and properly cautious when he gets behind the wheel. Unlike some drivers I've seen, he doesn't talk on a cell phone while he's driving, read the paper, smoke cigarettes, drink coffee, shave, or style his hair.

He says that the drivers in his city are notorious for running red lights, and that it's a wonder more people aren't T-boned at intersections every day. My friend, who's normally quiet and laid-back, gets quite animated, and surprisingly loud, when he sees other drivers doing unsafe things. It's pretty entertaining, listening to his colorful expressions of disbelief at how other people drive. There was a time when I didn't know he even knew some of those words. I blame society.

Knowing how he drives, I was amused to hear about what my friend did one day recently, on his way home from work. It seems that he became

one of those unsafe "idiots" he rants and raves over. Because he knows that I work at the Safety Center, he had to tell me all about it.

His daily commute is 10 miles one way, which usually takes half an hour, barring traffic tie-ups. His wife works nearby, and one afternoon he was driving them home. Roughly two-thirds of the way there, his wife asks a question ("Do you have any money?"), or makes a statement ("Somebody in this town must want to cook our dinner."), causing him to go into deep thought, so he can come up with the proper response. (You married people know what it's like.)

Normally, driving while thinking is manageable, but apparently not this time. There they are, rolling along at 35 mph on a major north-south street, approaching a junction with a road that starts there and goes west. A traffic signal controls the intersection, so if everybody plays by the rules, this should be just another uneventful part of the trip. No sudden moves, and nobody gets hurt.

At that moment, the light was solid red, which sometimes happens in a properly functioning urban trans-

portation-management system. It wasn't the cautionary yellow that means "prepare to stop," or the mythical orange (yellow going to red) that impatient drivers try to tell the cops about—it was a big, fat, ripe tomato sitting up there on that pole. You couldn't miss it. People for miles around could see that shining beacon, and know exactly what it meant. Not my friend, though. He blew through there like somebody was chasing him. Even his wife was temporarily stunned into silence.

There's a very short list of legitimate reasons to run a red light. Police officers, firefighters, and ambulance drivers sometimes need to do that, to save lives or protect property. My friend doesn't work in any of those professions, so he doesn't have that justification.

Fortunately, no other cars were trying to go through that intersection just then. The closest was a '70s-vintage Camaro that just a moment before had

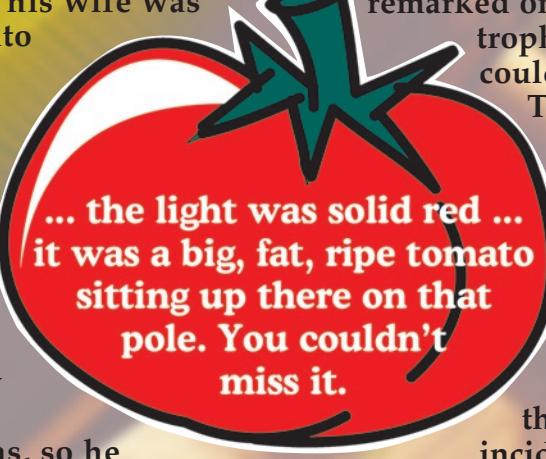
made a left turn from the west, entering the street and going north. If the driver saw in his rearview mirror that my friend's car seemed to come up behind him too close and too quickly, he probably uttered a few choice adjectives of his own. After all, a collision could have caused tens of dollars worth of damage to his car, which had seen better days.

When my friend and his wife regained their senses, they both remarked on the potential catastrophe his inattention could have just caused.

This time she was the animated one, while he was his usual low-key self. "No harm, no foul," he thought, but he knew he'd dodged a bullet.

My friend told me that now, after this non-incident that could have been disastrous, he's more aware than ever of his focus while driving.

I'm glad that he and his wife (and the Camaro driver) are still around to tell the story. ■



... the light was solid red ...  
it was a big, fat, ripe tomato  
sitting up there on that  
pole. You couldn't  
miss it.



# Air Force Implements New Cell Phone Restriction

**SSGT MATTHEW ROSINE**  
Air Force Print News

The Air Force has implemented a new cell phone restriction for drivers.

As of February 27, drivers are not allowed to talk on their cell phones while driving on Air Force installations, without a hands-free device. This policy is part of the Department of Defense's Joint Traffic Guidance.

This restriction also applies to all government-owned vehicles at all times. No GOV drivers are permitted to talk on a cell phone while driving without a hands-free device on or off base.

"This is really a cooperative effort for everyone, from the base populace to the base leaders," said MSgt Gloria Ornelas, the superintendent of law enforcement for Air Force Security Forces. "I think it is long overdue. The DoD recognized that, and we are now in line with what some states and municipalities are doing to create a safer environment for drivers."

Joint Traffic Regulation, Air Force Instruction 31-218 (I), *Motor Vehicle Traffic Supervision*, will restrict the use of cell phones while driving. Only cell phones with hands-free devices will be allowed for use by drivers. This guidance also allows the Air Force to use portable breath-screening devices that meet National Highway Traffic Safety Administration standards.

The Defense Department's joint traffic docu-

ment states:

"Vehicle operators on a DoD Installation and operators of Government-owned vehicles shall not use cell phones unless the vehicle is safely parked or unless they are using a hands-free device."

"The wearing of any other portable headphones, earphones or other listening devices (except for hands-free cellular phones) while operating a motor vehicle is prohibited. Use of those devices impairs driving and masks or prevents recognition of emergency signals, alarms, announcements, the approach of vehicles, and human speech. DoD component safety guidance should note the potential for driver distractions, such as eating and drinking, operating radios, CD players, global positioning equipment, etc. Whenever possible, this should only be done when the vehicle is safely parked."

Using a cell phone while driving without a hands-free device will be considered a "primary offense." This means police will be able to stop violators solely for this offense.

Drivers who violate this restriction will have three points assessed against their driving records or an appropriate fine. Drivers should be aware that if they commit two or more violations, even on a single occasion, they may get a ticket for each one.

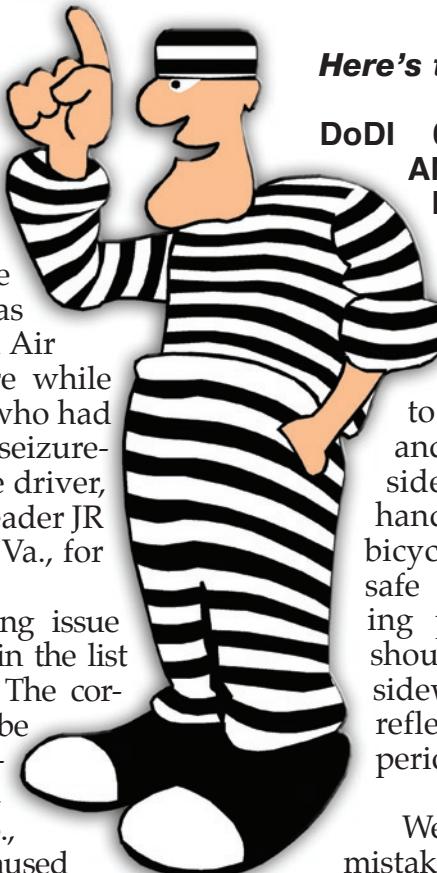
"It was recognized at the DoD level that we needed some changes," MSgt Ornelas said. "The winner here is the base populace. They will have a safer driving environment for all." ■

# Corrections

No, this item isn't about confinement facilities for wrongdoers. This is where we make good on mistakes we've published in previous issues.

An item in the "Snapshot on Safety" feature, on page 31 of the spring issue of *Road & Rec*, was incorrect. The article said that an Air Force motorcyclist had a seizure while riding. It was the civilian driver who had the seizure, not the Airman. All seizure-related information applies to the driver, not the Airman. Thanks to alert reader JR Dunn, 1 FW/SEG, Langley AFB, Va., for catching this mistake.

On the back cover of the spring issue of *Road & Rec*, we made a typo in the list of references for bicycling safety. The correct number of the DoDI should be 6055.4. Thanks to several alert readers, including SMSgt Todd Strickler, 20 AF/SEG, F.E. Warren AFB, Wyo., for catching this mistake. We also caused some confusion when we wrote that "... as a minimum, bicyclists on an Air Force installation must wear reflective clothing ..." We should have said that "bicyclists on an Air Force installation **should** wear reflective clothing."



## Here's the reference:

### DoDI 6055.4 E3.9. PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE SAFETY (HSPG NUMBER 14) E3.9.1.

Pedestrian safety shall be emphasized in the overall traffic safety program. The program shall include separation of pedestrian and motor vehicle traffic to the maximum extent possible and shall provide for adequate sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, handicapped access ramps, and bicycle paths to ensure maximum safe traffic flow without jeopardizing pedestrian safety. Participants should be educated to use paths or sidewalks along roadways and wear reflective outer garments during periods of reduced visibility.

We regret these errors. If you see mistakes in *Road & Rec*, or if you have a safety story to tell, let us know. E-mail the managing editor at [john.cochran@kirtland.af.mil](mailto:john.cochran@kirtland.af.mil), or call DSN 246-0983. ■



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Wear  
A  
Helmet

Use  
ORM

Plan  
Ahead

Obey  
the  
Rules

Wear  
A  
Helmet

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# Davis-Monthan Leads Way with Motorcycle Mentorship



## MSGT BRIAN BLANGSTED

Motorcycle Advisory Council Vice President  
Davis-Monthan AFB AZ

**D**avis-Monthan's Motorcycle Advisory Council (MAC) has spent a lot of sweat equity over the past two years, producing a leading-edge product designed to curb the rising death rate of motorcyclists.

The Commanders' Motorcycle Mentorship Program has become a focal point for riders across the Department of Defense who want to start a mentorship program.

Recently, Navy Chief Daniel Gamet, from Naval Air Station North Island, San Diego, Calif., informed us that his duty station has

started their program.

"Our progress from the original conversation a few months ago, when I was briefed by the D-M MAC on the whole process, to where we are now, is awesome. We were able to stand up our program in record time, because of the hard work D-M has done in regard to real motorcycle safety improvements, and the step-by-step process of assuring mentorship. The Navy needed to do something, and without reinventing the wheel, we are now coming quickly up to speed with our sister services, with an outstanding product. We are already graduating our first class of certified Motorcycle Mentors. I recently briefed the Navy Southwest Region Safety Office command reps on the program, and we are looking to adopt this across our



region shortly," Chief Gamet said.

Our program has three tiers to complete mentorship. As with the old program, new riders must complete the Motorcycle Safety Foundation's Basic Riders Course. Only now, instead of giving the new rider a base decal and hoping for the best, a motorcycle mentor is assigned to the new rider and the new rider is issued a temporary pass in lieu of a base decal.

The mentor and rider then spend time together to build on the basic skill-set learned in the BRC, and the mentor takes time to get into the rider's head in regard to safety-mindedness.

Once the rider and mentor agree, the rider is enrolled into the MSF Intermediate Riders Course, which is wing-funded.

With completion of the IRC, new riders are eligible to obtain the base decal. Also, all volunteer mentors are ready for the task of mentoring new riders.

"This program is much like the flying program," General Keys, Commander, Air Combat Command, said. "We don't simply graduate A-10 pilots and send them into combat. We continue training with the pilots until they are combat ready, and for motorcyclists, this program is training riders for the combat of the street."

"We worked together to resolve the issues experienced by new riders and also to assure our ability to continue to ride without undue hardships placed on D-M motorcyclists. Working together, we have been proactive instead of reactive to problems plaguing motorcyclists as a group," said Tech. Sgt. Derrell Willson, MSF Rider Coach and MAC member assigned to 612th Air Communications Squadron. "We are our best Wingmen."

The complete program would not be successful without the teamwork of the Wing Commander, Wing Safety, Pima Community College MSF programs, the Military MSF Rider Coaches, Pass and Registration, volunteer Motorcycle Mentors, and the Motorcycle Advisory Council.

To get involved, e-mail the MAC at [dmmoto@dm.af.mil](mailto:dmmoto@dm.af.mil) or visit on the Web at <http://www.dm.af.mil/pa/mac>. ■



# **2005 Safety Award Winners**



## **SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE SAFETY AWARD**

### **CATEGORY I:**

*United States Air Forces in Europe  
(USAFE)*

### **CATEGORY II:**

*Air Force Operational Test Center  
(AFOTEC)*

## **COLONEL WILL L. TUBBS MEMORIAL AWARD FOR GROUND SAFETY**

### **CATEGORY I:**

*Air Combat Command  
(ACC)*

### **CATEGORY II:**

*United States Air Force Academy  
(USAFA)*

## **CHIEF OF STAFF INDIVIDUAL SAFETY AWARD**

*Lt Col Tracy Dillinger  
Headquarters  
Air Force Safety Center  
Kirtland AFB NM  
(AFSC)*

**SAFETY CAREER PROFESSIONAL  
OF THE YEAR  
AWARD**

*SMSGT Stephen Benoit  
435 ABW  
Ramstein AB GE  
(USAFE)*

**AIR FORCE CHIEF OF SAFETY  
OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT  
AWARD  
FOR  
GROUND SAFETY**

**CATEGORY I:**  
*Ogden Air Logistics Center  
Hill AFB UT  
(AFMC)*

**CATEGORY II:**  
*48th Fighter Wing  
RAF Lakenheath UK  
(USAFE)*

**CATEGORY III:**  
*33rd Fighter Wing  
Eglin AFB FL  
(ACC)*

**CATEGORY IV:**  
*353rd Special Operations Group  
Kadena AB JA  
(AFSOC)*

**CATEGORY V:**  
*724th Air Mobility Squadron  
Aviano AB IT  
(AMC)*

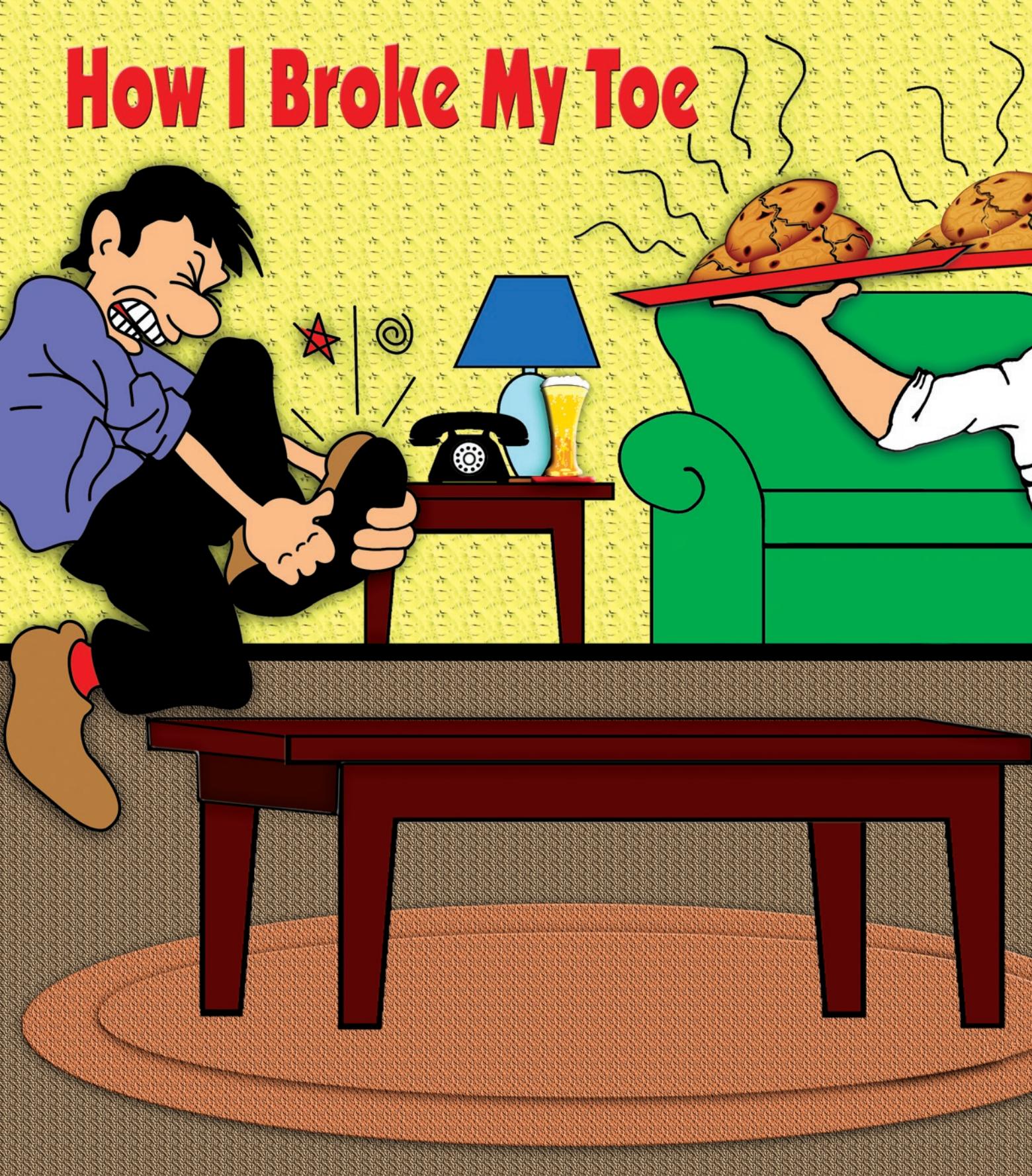
**AIR FORCE CHIEF OF SAFETY  
SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT  
AWARD**

*119th Fighter Wing  
Fargo ANG ND  
(ANG)*

**AIR FORCE CHIEF OF SAFETY  
MEDICAL ACHIEVEMENT  
AWARD**

*Human Performance Training Team  
509 MDOS  
Whiteman AFB MO  
(ACC)*

# How I Broke My Toe



**SSGT REUEL ATTWOOD**  
512 CMS/MXMVE  
Dover AFB DE



**I**t was the turn of the millennium, December 31, 2000. I was in the Navy Reserve back then, living in St. Joseph, Mo. For a vacation, the wife and I and our two daughters went to McConnell AFB in Wichita, Kan., and stayed at the Inn on base. We got a Space-A room, which was essentially a one-bedroom apartment with all the extras, for an excellent price.

Let me tell you about the Air Force and their temporary lodging units. The Air Force believes in quality. They don't get the cheesy assemble-it-yourself heavy-duty cardboard furniture. The coffee table was made of solid wood, which is usually a good thing. This day, it wasn't.

My wife was baking cookies. My girls and I kept eating them as she pulled them out of the oven. She finally told us that we could not have any more until after dinner. This was around 5:30 or so. I had about two drinks in me at the time, but I really can't say if that was a factor in what was about to happen.

My wife opened the oven to remove the last batch of cookies. I was sitting on the couch, watching TV, and my girls were playing with their Game Boys. Wife says, "Who wants a broken cookie?" My immediate thought was that broken cookies taste just as good as their unbro-

ken counterparts. My next thought was that my girls were going to try to get to that cookie before I did. So, I jumped up, turned left, and attempted to take my first step of what would have been a mad dash for the cookie, except that the coffee table was in the way. Being of high-quality, solid wood, the coffee table did not move. I heard and felt a loud crack. I immediately came to the conclusion that I didn't really want that cookie so much after all, and turned around and sat back down.

Looking down at my right foot, I noticed that the toe next to my pinkie toe was turned at a very odd angle. My wife, who has professional nursing skills, came to my rescue, and quickly straightened out my toe. It hurt like heck, but my toe was straight. It didn't really hurt that much after that, so I decided it wasn't worth going to the emergency room.

The next day, I did go to the hospital to get it checked. I had a spiral fracture of the third bone from the tip of that toe. The doctor told me that he couldn't do much with it, and that my wife had done an excellent job of straightening it. He taped it to my middle toe to keep it stable. It healed nicely, and doesn't bother me at all. It is fully functional, but slightly crooked, and just a bit shorter. I haven't broken anything since. ■

# Bumbles Fumbles & Stumbles

**T**he following short articles are derived from actual Air Force Class C mis-haps. Our intent is not to make light of anyone's pain, even if it is sometimes self-inflicted; it's the questionable decisions and behavior we're pointing out. This is just a different approach to getting people to read about safety. Check 'em out—you just might get a laugh, and learn something, too.

## 10 p.m.: Bad Time For Beer & A Boat Ride

Here's a recipe for nighttime fun: Take five guys, two of whom have never been on a boat, and one who can't swim, add liberal amounts of beer, and spread generously on a lake using a 17-foot bass boat. Omit life-preservers all around. Did I mention that the boat has seating for three, including the operator? This minor point will become important

later in the story. Being that the boat driver and two passengers had claimed the "official" seats, the two other guys—one a non-swimmer and both new to boating—park themselves on the front of the deck, facing aft. About 10 minutes into their voyage,

Cap'n Crunch shouts "Look alive, mateys!" and makes a sharp turn to port, going 19 knots (that's about 22 mph for you land-lubbers). Responding to the laws of physics, one of the un-battened-down passengers slid into the other, and then both enjoyed a bracing dip in the lake. The setting for this dramatic scene is about 100 feet from the bank, in nearly



20 feet of water. After suddenly sinking, one of the unexpected swimmers discovers he has a couple of damaged flippers, so his buddy keeps him afloat for a minute, until the rest of the crew can pull them aboard the boat. That's when they notice severe cuts on Aquaman's elbow and thigh. Skipper zips the boat back to the bank, a bystander calls 911 for an ambulance, and a helpful game warden drives the mangled mariner seven miles to a service station to meet the meat wagon. At the off-base hospital the next morning, dude man has surgery on his severed tendons, fractured elbow and lacerated leg. The good news is that the doc says he should regain full use of the arm.

## Log Toss

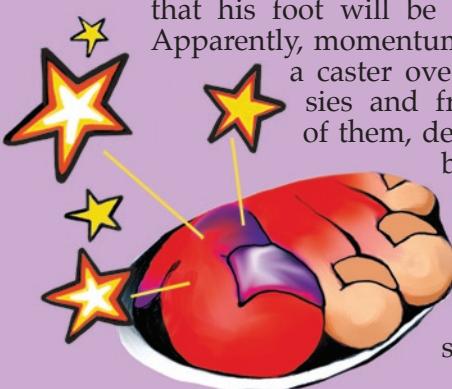
Fans of strong-man competitions have seen an event called the Caber Toss, in which burly athletes, often named "Magnus," heave massive telephone poles as far as they can. Although that might be a challenging way for giants to have fun, the guys in this story are just trying to get a job done. Their task seems simple enough—load a pile of pre-cut logs into a truck and haul them away. No chainsaws, no axes, no power tools of any kind—just a couple of guys gathering a load of wood. One guy on each side of the truck bed, chucking wood until it's full. As they near the end of this chore, one of the guys climbs up into the truck bed to rearrange the load more efficiently. In a move he comes to regret, he doesn't tell his partner he's going to do that, so the other guy keeps on keepin' on. Then comes the fateful toss, in which hand and log try to occupy the same space at the same time. Once again, the laws of physics prevail (that's why we call them "laws"), resulting in a fractured phalange. The trip to the ER results in a spiffy new cast and three days on quarters.



## Steel Toes, Organic Brain

Four Airmen are moving a wheeled aircraft-pylon storage rack about half a mile. Each takes a corner of the rack, loaded nearly to its max weight of 5,600 pounds. About halfway to their destination, one of the guys goes from pushing to pulling, and thinks that his foot will be good for steering.

Apparently, momentum disagrees, rolling a caster over his planted tootsies and fracturing a couple of them, despite his steel-toed boots. The docs give him painkillers and three days on quarters. We can only guess at what his supervisor gives him.



### Tennis Clavicle?

We've all heard about tennis elbow, but that common malady isn't good enough for this inventive player. He's the creative type, an innovator. He goes to return a low volley and somehow wedges his racket against the player-hating court, sending him tumbling and stumbling. Naturally, he reaches out to brace himself for the impending fall. Not so naturally, he gets up with a fractured collarbone.



### The Tender Tendon

In Greek mythology, the mighty warrior Achilles could only be hurt by a blow to the heel. We don't know whether the subject of our story had any other weak spots, but he did share the same vulnerability in the largest tendon in the human body. Orthopedic surgeons say the Achilles tendon can withstand a force of 1,000 pounds, but our subject found a way to overstress it. During a friendly racquetball game, he swung at the ball, struck his heel on the wall behind him, and fell forward, rupturing his Achilles tendon. We can only guess that in performing this amazing athletic feat, he missed connecting with the ball by at least a foot.



### Unhappy Camper

Ah, the joys of being out in nature! Having the weekend freedom to drive out to the wilderness with a buddy after work, where you can pitch a tent in the campsite of your choice. There you are, having dug your fire pit, and now you're chopping firewood. Next thing you know, your attention wanders a bit, and suddenly you've stopped chopping wood and have moved on to chopping your lower leg with a hatchet. A little too late, that turns out to be a great way to focus the mind. Your companion, trained in self-aid and buddy care, slaps a patch on your limping limb, and drives you to the hospital for your stitches. Back at work Monday, you visit the base hospital for pain meds and get a day on quarters, giving you time to think about how you'll never again use the phrase, "Bury the hatchet."



### Dog-Gone Truck

Let's say that after work one night, you drive over to a friend's place for a barbecue. You go out back to where the meat is roasting over an open flame, but you neglect to close the door behind you, and the host's dogs slip out, too. This development answers the musical question, "Who let the dogs out?" Now you notice the canines capering away from the property, so you jump over the fence in hot pursuit. However, your nemesis—a parked truck—waits on the other side. Your rapid descent ends where the truck begins, sending you stumbling back and down to the ground. In the man vs. machine fracas, you get a compound fracture of your forearm. After your fun ride in the shiny ambulance, the docs set your arm and stitch up a few reminders, then give you a couple of weeks on quarters. Maybe now you'll remember to close doors after yourself, mister.



### Fired Up

One of the great things about owning a piece of property is being able to do just about whatever you want to do on it. Freedom brings responsibility, though, and it can be too much for some folks to handle. One day, Darwin is at home, tidying up the grounds of his estate after a recent thunderstorm. He's cutting up the remains of a tree that had blown over, and stacks the wood in a neat pile for disposal by fire. The property has a natural low spot that's good for a fire, he's done this chore several times before, and he has a water hose at the ready. He gets the fire going, and adds more tree parts as it burns. Unfortunately, he's unsupervised, and therefore, able to reach a can of charcoal lighter fluid. How is he supposed to know that the stuff is highly flammable? He sees that the rate of consumption is not as fast as he would like, so he decides to speed things up. As the mishap report puts it: "He failed to use personal risk management." Did he ever! It's amazing what a highly flammable liquid can do when you squirt several ounces of it onto a pile of burning wood. Before you can count to "10 Mississippi," the fire blazes up and latches onto Darwin. He thinks quickly enough to stop, drop and roll, putting out his personal flames, then he takes a few minutes to put out the wood fire, before walking back to the house. After one look at him, his alarmed spouse suggests a quick visit to the hospital, where he's treated for second-degree burns to both forearms, hands, face and forehead. The doctors say his outlook is good, and that he shouldn't need skin grafts.



# Richie's Rides



**RICHARD E. CUNNINGHAM**  
88 ABW/SEG  
Wright-Patterson AFB OH

**T**he 2004 Chief's Sight Picture pushed Motorcycle Safety forward in my mind. Precluding or mitigating the severity of motorcycle mishaps is worth our effort. As a rider, the Chief of Weapons Safety and subsequently Ground Safety Manager, I had some mentoring ideas. I started an e-mail journal for base riders and safety representatives. Sort of a rambling recount of road exploits and lessons learned during the 2004 and 2005 riding seasons. I joined Wright-Wriders, our base Motorcycle Mentoring Organization. As one of their Safety Representatives, I participated in a ride to Washington, D.C. We attended the HQ AFSC/SE-sponsored Motorcycle Safety Breakout at Andrews AFB in May 2005, and joined the crowd at Rolling Thunder. But in 10 years of riding, I'd never counted direct participation in a motorcycle accident as a mentoring opportunity.

Riding to work August 4, 2005, I felt normal—no worries. I'd entered a familiar S-turn from a two-lane state route onto a secondary road. I shed 15 mph and rolled right at 35 mph through the blind portion of the ramp. Rolling left and looking for the usual line to the stoplight, I noted the ramp was full of cars. I was out of space and time. Instinct overrode training; I grabbed both brakes and locked the rear before getting the bike straight and upright. The back swiveled around the front and I hit the road. The tally for that mistake was 15 minutes of unconsciousness, scrapes, bruises, loose teeth and a broken left hip. Costs for this off-duty mishap include seven weeks of convalescence, physical therapy, \$4500 in bike repairs and a projected \$26,000 in medical expenses.

The joint is fully healed now, but the hardware is permanent. I've completed physical therapy and am nearly limp-free. (Doc says the limp is mostly memory/unconscious protective action.) There is still some weakness in the left leg, from muscle loss, and I'm still working toward full range of motion.

Recently, I sat on a couple of 800cc cruisers at the dealership, just to see what it felt like. I experienced minor discomfort in the left hip, a much-heightened sense of anxiety, and insufficient strength to hold the bike while leaning left. So, my 1500cc scooter remains pickled, and a decision to ride/not ride remains on hold.

Regularly practice and influence your peers concerning basic ride skills, because ability fades all too quickly. Otherwise, you face increasing risk of a mishap. Get out and complete the Basic and Experienced Rider Courses more than once. If you're in a club offering skills development opportunities, attend. At the very least, find a mentor and a clear area to practice turns, stops, turns with stop, figure eights—you name it. I failed to keep my skills honed enough to manage the risk.

Wear a helmet all the time. I started in Pennsylvania in the early '90s, and the law used to require helmets. Moving to Ohio found me entrenched in the helmet-only-for-work club; civilians don't have to wear one off duty. That is, until January 2005, when I was verbally flayed by a coworker. One serious argument later, I admitted defeat. Have the guts to lead and mentor by example—we're all Wingmen. When I did fall eight months later, it was with a well-fitting helmet on my head. Since then, I'm often upset with friends or strangers who ride without helmets and reasonable gear. They have mothers, fathers, spouses and children, too. Helmet-less is selfish gratification and potential suicide.

Before you take that first ride, consider your insurance policy. I've carried the minimum and now find it's not nearly enough. Having never had surgery, I couldn't imagine how much money would be invested in recovery. Acquiring \$100,000 or more in medical coverage doesn't seem unreasonable. My insurance company suggests it is not unusual for a vehicle accident to ring up three times as much. A stout insurance policy can mitigate risk if you do get laid down.

There's not a lot of green grass on this side of the mishap fence. I'm lucky—I'll get to jump back to the other side. Lead and mentor by example, ride well and ride safe. ■

# Safety Shorts



## Back Away ... From The Job

In 2003 (the most recent year of available data), the back was the body part most frequently involved in lost workdays in the United States. For the year, 303,750 back injuries occurred in the workplace. Of these, 73,950 cases involved at least 31 missed workdays. Another 19,630 missed 21-30 days, and 35,660 lost 11-20 days. The leading cause of back injuries is overexertion while lifting. Employees can prevent many of these injuries by using safe lifting techniques, such as bending at the knees, not the waist, and keeping the load close to the body.

*Source: National Safety Council*

## Hang Up and Drive

Drivers using cell phones are four times more likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves. Eighty-nine percent of the crashes involved other vehicles. Gender, age, weather and phone type (handheld or hands-free) were not factors.

*Source: National Safety Council*

## Speeding

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reported that in 2002, 13,713 fatalities—about one-third of all motor vehicle deaths—were related to speeding. Driver-related factors contributing to crashes are mostly behavioral, including impaired driving, aggressive driving (including speeding), and distracted driving. Crashes in which at least one driver was exceeding the speed limit, or driving too fast for conditions, cost more than \$40 billion in 2000—about 20 percent of the total economic cost of vehicle crashes in the U.S. In 2002, about 40 percent of speeding-related fatal crashes occurred while negotiating a curve.

*Source: National Safety Council*

## My Eye!

Movable machines, tools, equipment, and chemicals can cause eye injuries at work. Common injuries include lacerations, abrasions, burns, contusions, and embedded particles. In the United States, more than 1,000 unprotected workers sustain eye injuries every day. Ninety percent of these injuries are preventable, with safe work procedures and proper eye protection.

*Source: National Safety Council*

## Injuries On and Off the Job

Nationwide, about 35 percent of employee injuries happen away from work. In 2003, 4,500 employees died in the workplace. The same year, 54,400 Americans died from non-work injuries, and 45,000 more people died in traffic mishaps. Vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for workers, on and off the job. The rate of vehicle crash injuries on the job is 1.45 per 1,000 working adults, while the off-the-job rate is more than nine times higher, at 13.25. In non-vehicle mishaps, 15 million people suffered nonfatal disabling injuries. Off-the-job injuries cost U.S. employers \$425 million each year, and the total cost for non-motor vehicle injuries was \$230 billion in 2003. Falls are the second-highest cause of death, claiming nearly 16,000 lives outside of work in 2003. In 2001, 14,000 people died of unintentional poisoning. Nearly half involved illicit drug use. Poisoning from gases and vapors, including carbon monoxide, killed 656 people—about 10 percent of them from exposure to fumes from solvents, fuels, petroleum products and pollutants. Alcohol poisoning caused 303 deaths in 2001.

*Source: National Safety Council*



## SAFETY RESEARCH UPDATE

The following information is courtesy of SafetyLit, a free service of the Center for Injury Prevention Policy and Practice at San Diego State University, in collaboration with the World Health Organization. SafetyLit summarizes copyrighted reports on safety research. SafetyLit staff and volunteers regularly examine more than 300 journals and scores of reports from government agencies and organizations. We've included these summaries in *Road & Rec* for their interest to the Air Force community. For more, go to this link: [www.safetyleit.org](http://www.safetyleit.org).

### Road Crashes Far Exceed Terrorism in Deaths

Researchers in New Zealand compared the number of deaths from road crashes to deaths from international terrorism in the member nations of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (including the United States, Canada, Japan and most of Europe). In the 29 OECD countries for which comparable data were available, the annual average death rate from road injury was about 390 times that of international terrorism. The ratio of annual road to international terrorism deaths (averaged over 10 years) was lowest for the United States, at 142 times. In 2001, road crash deaths in the U.S. were equal to those of a September 11 attack every 26 days.

(Source: Wilson N., Thomson G. *Inj Prev* 2005; 11(6): 332-3. Copyright © 2005, BMJ Publishing Group.)

### Riders As Drivers

Italian researchers found that car drivers who also had motorcycle licenses caused fewer car-motorcycle crashes than drivers who do not have one. The riding experience of such drivers may help them better anticipate motorcyclists' maneuvers.

(Source: Magazzù D., Comelli M., Marinoni A. *Accid Anal Prev* 2005; *Pub. Volume, issue, and page range not yet available*. Copyright © 2005, Elsevier Publishing.)

### Young Men: From Mountain Bikers To Trauma Center Patients

Canadian trauma surgeons analyzed mountain biking injuries from 1992-2002. Of 1,037 patients identified as having bicycling-related injuries, 399 patients sustained 1,092 injuries while mountain biking. There was a threefold increase in the incidence of mountain biking injuries over a 10-year period. Young males were most commonly affected. Orthopedic injuries were most common (46.5 percent) followed by head (12.2 percent), spine (12 percent), chest (10.3 percent), facial (10.2 percent), abdominal (5.4 percent), genitourinary (2.2 percent), and neck injuries (1 percent). Thirty-eight percent of injuries and 66 percent of patients required surgery. One patient died from his injuries. The study concluded that mountain biking is a growing cause of serious injuries. Young males are principally at risk, and serious injuries result from intended activity and despite protective equipment.

(Source: Kim P.T., Jangra D., Ritchie A.H., Lower M.E., Kasic S., Brown D.R., Baldwin G.A., Simons R.K., *J Trauma* 2006; 60(2): 312-318. Copyright © 2006, Lippincott Williams and Wilkins.)

### New Workers = Increased Risk

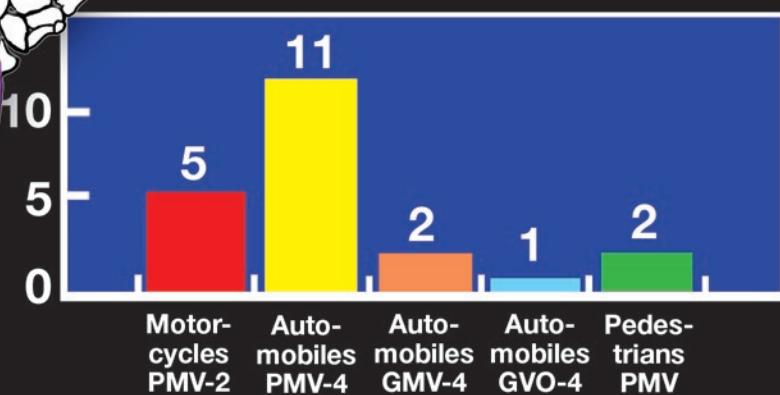
A research study indicated that new employees are more likely to sustain injuries on the job that require time away from work than their more experienced counterparts. Regardless of age, the claim rates decline as time on the job increases. For example, workers in the first month on the job were more than four times more likely to have a lost-time claim than workers with more than one year on the current job. The job-tenure injury associations were stronger among males, the goods industry, manual occupations, and older adult workers. The results suggest that all new workers show increased risk. Recommendations for improving this situation include earlier training, starting workers in low-hazard conditions, reducing job turnover rates, and improved monitoring of hazard exposures that new workers encounter.

(Source: Breslin F.C., Smith P. *Occup Environ Med* 2006; 63(1): 27-32. Copyright © 2006, BMJ Publishing Group.)

# Snapshot on Safety

## 2nd Quarter FY06 Update

### Motor Vehicle Fatalities Total FY06

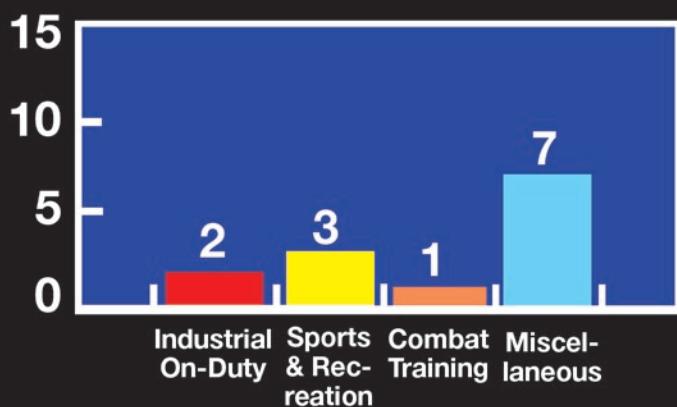


This quarter we suffered 10 automobile deaths and no motorcycle deaths. Automobile causal factors are driving at the posted speed limit in adverse conditions or beyond recommended towing speeds, fatigue coupled with alcohol, and lack of seatbelt use. As you can see from the chart above, 34 of our Airmen have died so far this FY. Without exception, all mishaps were preventable. Risk management cannot be overemphasized and is critical to the

safety of our Airmen. All of us must make our role in protecting fellow Airmen, both on and off duty, a top priority.

An Airman prepared to leave his duty location by clearing the icy windows of his PMV and allowing the engine to run, to warm it up. After just a half hour on the road, the Airman's vehicle encountered a bridge covered with slush and ice. Although operating the vehicle at the posted speed limit, the airman was unable to maintain control of his vehicle,

# Non-Motor Vehicle Fatalities Total FY06



which struck a guardrail and became airborne. The airman died as a result of his injuries.

#### Lessons learned:

(1) Speed limits are established to identify the maximum speed to drive on clear, dry roads. Drivers must adjust their speed to accommodate less-than-perfect conditions.

(2) Due to their exposure to cold air from all sides, bridges can expose drivers to frozen roads, even when the surrounding surfaces are not frozen.

An Airman was towing a utility trailer when she started a descent down a long, gradual grade. The road was clear and the Airman was driving at the posted speed limit, with her seatbelt on. As she entered the downhill grade, the trailer began to "fishtail" violently, and broke off from the vehicle. The vehicle went out of control, then rolled, became airborne, rolled again, and became airborne again, finally coming to rest some distance from the point where the driver first lost control. The Airman was pronounced dead at the scene. While she did not exceed the posted speed limit, the recommended speed of the utility trailer was more than 20 mph less than her speed at the time. Also, the Airman had borrowed the tow vehicle and was unlikely to be familiar with its handling characteristics, especially while towing.

#### Lesson learned:

Know your vehicle and know your equipment.

After drinking an unknown number of alcoholic beverages (but sufficient to cause a BAC well above legal limits), an Airman was driving at 5 a.m., after having been awake for 18 hours. It is believed that the airman fell asleep at the wheel of his vehicle, which left the road and traveled more than 70 feet before striking a tree. Nearby neighbors heard the crash and called for

assistance. Although there was minimal damage to the occupant compartment of the vehicle, and emergency personnel were on the scene within minutes, the Airman was pronounced dead at a local hospital. The Airman was not wearing a seatbelt.

#### Lessons learned:

(1) Fatigue and alcohol can be deadly by themselves, and are doubly so when combined.

(2) A seatbelt can only save your life if you use it. ■

# Air Force Fatalities: Top 10 Causes



1. Excessive speed, or driving too fast for conditions, accounts for 16 percent of AF fatalities.

2. Failure to comply with traffic laws other than speed limits accounts for 14 percent of AF fatalities.

3. Driving a vehicle beyond the operator's skill level or vehicle limitations accounts for 14 percent of AF fatalities.

4. Drinking and driving under the influence accounts for eight percent of AF fatalities.

5. Driving fatigued and beyond physical capabilities accounts for six percent of AF fatalities.

6. Distracted by non-driving tasks (passengers, cell phones, tunes) accounts for four percent of AF fatalities.

7. Driving without appropriate protective equipment (seat belts, restraint devices, helmets).

8. Boating under the influence or without proper training.

9. Water-skiers not wearing an approved Personal Flotation Device (PFD).

10. Swimming under the influence or beyond limitations and capabilities.

