

An Editorial

You, The Drivers, Have 'Written' This Edition

TODAY'S ISSUE of The Battalion is dedicated to the deadliest killer in our nation—the American driver.

At that, Mr. Motorist, is you. We've tried our best to make it worthy of your time and attention. We feel that you've earned it. In fact, you're the one that made every word of it possible. You've co-operated wholeheartedly.

You've given us all the facts and figures we could use. We even find that we don't have room for them all.

Some of your number were even kind enough to "model" for our pictures. Take, for instance, that crumpled mass of steel—it used to be a car—wrapped so artistically around a tree. You'll find it on page 6. Beautiful piece of handiwork.

And notice, if you will, the two occupants. You may have to look close, but they're there. One has his head wedged between the car and the tree. The other is staring at the splotch of blood on the tree. That arm sticking out there, incidentally, used to belong to him.

We could have gotten a really gruesome picture—you've given us thousands to choose from—but we thought this one would be good enough for our purpose. After all, our two young friends (they were both under 25-years old) did a creditable job. All by themselves, too. It took only a few bottles of beer, a bit of speed and a carefree twist on the steering wheel.

But perhaps our charges are too blunt, our subject too unpleasant and our remarks

a little too careless.

Perhaps you're not a killer—yet. But you hold the power to kill every time you flip that ignition switch. You, an intricate framework of steel and iron and a powerful gasoline motor—the deadliest combination yet conceived by man. It killed 31,800 Americans last year. It promises to kill 2,400 Texans this year. In one day—Christmas Eve—it's expected to account for 19 of that number.

But, of course, you're not trying to kill anyone. You're not trying to have an accident.

How hard, though, are you trying NOT to kill someone? How hard are you trying NOT to have an accident? You'd better be trying pretty hard. The people who know—the safety experts—say that, in all probability, you will be involved in a traffic accident at least once in the next ten years. Perhaps it will be fatal to someone—even you.

How strictly do you observe speed limitations? Not that it's too important. Only 10,100 persons, 44.9 percent of the total number of traffic victims, sped to a date with death last year. And how about such trivial things as passing on hills and curves—when it's "safe" of course? One hundred and eighty Americans might tell you that it's never safe—but they died last year finding out.

And how about you of college age? Do you realize that you're included in the famous "teen-ager group,"—that frisky clan be-

tween the ages of 16 and 25 that chalked up more than 10,000 names on its bloody scoreboard in 1949.

Naturally, you've never "floorboarded" it. You've never tried to set a record for that trip to Dallas. You've never been "just a little reckless" to see if it would frighten the girl-friend. Or have you?

About our subject being unpleasant, we are afraid that it is. Apparently, though, it's not unpleasant enough. Every media of public information in the country has told America about the same subject in various ways year after year. But our traffic deaths rose last year.

That picture we referred to—we're sure some of you are a bit squeamish about looking at such things. How squeamish are you, though, about violating an occasional traffic rule or speeding or driving with "just one

or two" tucked under your belt.

Now about the careless remarks—we figured it might be appropriate. You, the average citizen, seem to consider traffic tragedy in a careless attitude. You register the expected shock when you read of violent highway death, then oftentimes go out and repeat the formula that meant death for others. You applaud campaigns like ours as great public service efforts then forget them and go on in your carefree way of living and driving, failing to profit from the mistakes of others.

Yes, this issue is dedicated to you. Our money and the money of our advertisers is spent on you today. After all, those of you in Texas spent \$79,514,700 last year while providing us with our facts and stories. We thank you for everything.

We're overwhelmed by your generosity.

D. Serabino Runs Red Light, Tells Tale of Woe In Verse

OUT of the darkened steam tunnels of Dorm 8 yesterday emerged Dominic Serabino, poet laureate of A&M for many moons.

Dom, who had just been evicted from his Walton Arms apartment for hazing bedbugs, was a bitter man when he approached the second floor of Goodwin Hall.

"Why the somber setting for your usually cackling countenance?" queried a freshman Battalion major, breaking away from his duties. He had been polishing thumb-tacks on the bulletin board with a Blitz cloth.

"Ah, bambino, you getta da free look at da mos' mournful man ofa dis college," replied the saddened Serabino.

"But—why, kind sir?" shot back the first-year man, politely genuflecting as a co-editor entered.

"Dom cannot explain dissa sorta thing in prose, young one. So, he musta use dat immortal medium of communicacion—a pome."

That's the way it came about, just as Isaac begat Abel. Follows Serabino's pearl of poetry, a hybrid sonnet: "Dom's demise canna not be expressed, In lines of '25 words ora less."

She'sa take a coupla pair o' graphs,
To putta dis lad back where he laughs."
"Dissa problem, she'sa got alla da trimmin',
Because—you guessed it! It'sa connected
widda wimmin'.
Datta 'root of all evil,' dat'sa fora da
schmoe!
Causa' da femme maka trouble, where-
eva she go."
"I hadda da date, just ago a few day;
I still got pains froma dough I pay.
Neva again willa Dom be so dumb,
Not watch red light, just beata da gum."

"Mucha horrible crash did Dominic hear;
It bruisa da body and crusha da gear.
But she'sa coulda been, many many times
worse,
My ride back to college mighta been in
da hearse."
"Taka dis advice; pasta inna dat hat.
'When behinda da wheel, watcha where
you are at.'
Forra da girl, justa her days to enliven,
'Holda on to your youth, but not when
he'sa drivin'."

—Dean Reed

Drunken Driving Will Cause . . .

6,000 Fatalities In 1950

By JOHN WHITMORE

"Here's one for the Road. Who ever heard of just one little drink making you too drunk to drive."

These words are repeated daily over the United States. What are the effects? According to National Safety Council estimates, 6,000 men, women, and children won't be around to pay taxes next year because of drinking and driving.

At first the potential killer does not feel the effects of a "Quick One." He feels as if he had a tremendous boost in energy.

Scientific tests conducted by the National Safety Council prove, instead of giving a boost in energy, a drink dulls perception and body movement. In many cases senses are dulled enough to slow reaction time several seconds—fatal seconds.

These lost seconds are enough for a "One Drink Doesn't Bother Me," driver to cause an unsuspecting family to have an unscheduled funeral expense.

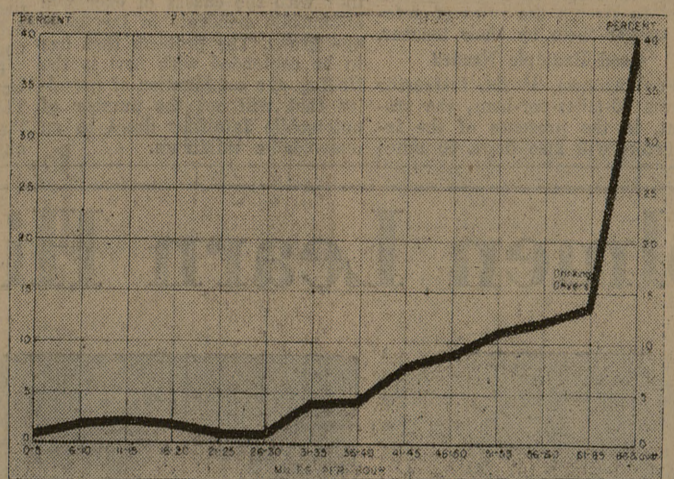
Drinking has another effect on drivers—the heavy foot.

According to the State Highway Department, intoxicants and speed are partners—in Death. Forty per cent of the drivers involved in fatal highway accidents were driving over 66 miles per hour.

As shown in the graph at the right the percentage of accidents increased as the speed increased. Accident investigations during the first six months of 1950 show 30 per cent of drivers involved in fatal highway accidents had been drinking. Forty per cent of this group were driving in excess of 66 miles an hour—that is before many of them found themselves wrapped around a tree.

To combat Driving While Intoxicated the state's law enforcement officials have gone on the

offensive. Drivers licenses are being revoked from DWIs. Science also has taken a step forward to make it easier to secure a conviction for drunken driving. Law enforcement officers are using a machine to check the alcohol content in the system. This evidence is admissible in court. With this concerted drive to stop drunken driving, offenders are learning it doesn't pay—monetarily or conscience-wise to play the 19th hole.



Deathless Holidays Make Best Reward For Safety Efforts

By THE BATTALION CO-EDITORS

Today's paper marks the second time in as many years that The Battalion has published its Annual Christmas Safety Edition.

Some of you may remember that our efforts along this line last year won us first place in the annual collegiate newspaper safe-driving campaign contest. We're quite naturally proud of that honor.

But we prefer to remember last year's safety edition from another viewpoint—something we consider significant. Every student and faculty and staff member returned to the campus from their Christmas without being involved in a major traffic accident.

We hope we're right in assuming that our efforts may well have had something to do with that pleasant record. If so, we'll match that accomplishment against any award we could win.

And that's why we're putting much more emphasis on traffic safety this year. We hope we can insure a New Year's return that finds all of us back again. That is the only true measure of the success of whatever work we've expended.

Part of A Continuous Campaign

This special edition is only part of the Thanksgiving holidays, a campaign we intend to continue as time and space permits through the rest of the year.

Today marks the high spot of that campaign. We've spent considerable time and effort to combine in this one issue the full, graphic and tragic portrayal of the enemy we're trying to lick.

We chose this time of the year because it is the most dangerous on the highways of our state and nation. Short daylight hours, bad weather and other factors peculiar to this time of year invariably place it at the peak on traffic death charts.

The fact that highway homicide will decrease as the days grow longer in the next few months does

not mean that any of us can afford to slack off on our own personal safety campaign.

You've seen the number 2,400 repeated on these pages several times since our campaign began. That is our expected traffic toll for this year. It bests last year's total by almost 500 deaths.

That's why none of us can afford to slack up. We can't allow ourselves such a shameful record in 1951. And the only answer lies with the individual driver. He alone must decide whether that toll will rise or fall next year.

Our work means nothing unless our readers take to heart what we say. We have only words at our control on these pages. It's the driver that determines what the automobile will do.

Many Groups Are Working for Safety

Our campaign for safe driving is by no means exclusive. Similar drives are in progress over the country. And full-time agencies such as the National Safety Council and the Texas Safety Association as well as such insurance firms as The Travelers and Lumberman's Mutual continue their never-ending campaign.

Our thanks, incidentally, is due these and other organizations and persons for much of the material

contained on these pages. We want to especially mention the wholehearted cooperation of Governor Allan Shivers; Chancellor Gibb Gilchrist, President M. T. Harrington, President Ned Dearborn of the National Safety Council, Director Homer Garrison of the Texas Department of Public Safety, Lewis E. Berry of the Texas Highway Patrol, The Travelers Insurance Companies, Lumbermen Mutual Casualty Company and the countless others who helped.

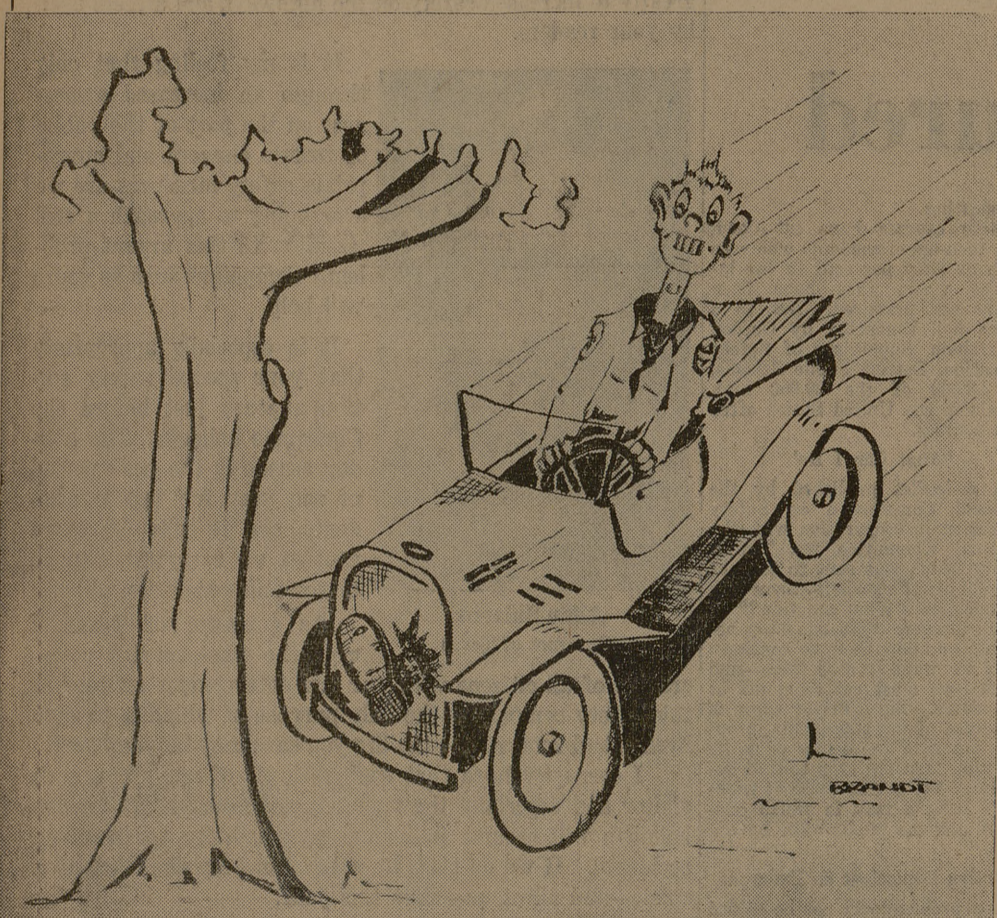
Thanks to Our Own Organization

Within our own organization special credit for this edition is due Roland Bing, manager of student publications; Joe Arnett, assistant manager; plus several cooperative secretaries; and staff members John Whitmore, Herbert O'Connell, Roger Coslett, Andy Anderson, Joel Austin, Frank Manitzas, Chuck Neighbors, George Charlton, Tom Fontaine, and Dean Reed.

on our staff who kept up day-to-day operations while we were engaged in this section. They were led by L. O. Tiedt, Bob Hughson, Sid Abernathy and Jerry Zuber. Cooperation from every source was magnificent.

Now if you, our readers, can cooperate as well in this battle for life instead of death on our highways, our time will have been well Nor do we want to forget those

Home for Christmas



Home for Christmas!

There's a special magic in that phrase—on a college campus or anywhere else. It means the warmth of family get-togethers, home cooking and plenty of it, reunion with old friends, gifts under the tree, maybe seeing the boy or girl friend who will be going home too.

An accident certainly would spoil that wonderful holiday. And it isn't very smart to scoff at that possibility, because the Christmas holiday season, ironically, is one of the most dangerous periods of the year.

The big risk, of course, is from automobile accidents. There are so many cars on the roads these days that deaths are going

up despite energetic efforts to prevent accidents. And to this general trend the seasonal hazards—bad weather, poor visibility, hurry-up holiday travel and considerable over-indulgence in holiday spirits—and you have a clear-cut warning that only the foolish will ignore.

Don't take a chance when driving home—and "home for Christmas" will be something to look forward to for many years to come.

Take it easy—and get there!

Ned Dearborn
President, National
Safety Council

The Battalion

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Think It Over . . .

Recipe for traffic tragedy: mix alcohol and gasoline—and steer! Remember this, the National Safety Council advises, during the festive holiday season.

Traffic Who's Who

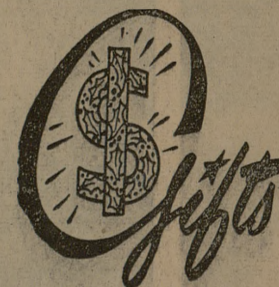
Alcoholic

You all know Joe, a likeable guy,
Hardly a thing he wouldn't try.
A car, some beer, plenty of gas,
The little blue Ford he tried to pass—
Well here's to Joe, the unlucky guy,
So damn young to have to die!

Speedster

Ava Jones was a beautiful dame,
Driving fast was her claim to fame.
Taking a curve going ninety-three,
She ran her car into a tree.
Jones had only herself to blame.
What was her pride is now her shame.

—T. M. Fontaine



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Both Your Taste
& Your Pocket-
book . . .

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SELECTION . . .

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