

Solution to Safe Roads Beyond Engineer's Scope

THE ABSENT solution to make highways safe has troubled engineers through these many years.

They have removed curves, hills, blind spots, dips, made wider and smoother and straighter roads, but accidents continue to occur at a consistently rising rate.

Many persons fear that the highway has been made so safe it's more dangerous than ever before.

Perhaps this is true. Examples to substantiate such claims are seen among the best and newest dream highways.

The 118-mile New Jersey Turnpike, which has been in operation since last January, used the most advanced ideas of highway and traffic engineers and promoted travel by offering "safe travel at 60 miles an hour." But in the 11 months the Turnpike has been in use, 44 persons have been killed driving on it.

A recent two-day period included accidents on the turnpike which killed four persons, injured 40 and damaged 60 automobiles. A heavy fog contributed to the accident, but drivers failed to heed the caution of emergency warnings and slowing down. Only 12 officers were patrolling the turnpike during the time of the accident.

This shows that somewhere more improvement is needed. Are more officers needed to patrol the road, or should the speed limit be reduced from 60 miles an hour? This would help some but not enough.

Safety engineers say they have done everything possible to make the turnpike safe. Throughout Texas, the counties, and cities, and in other states, engineers have tried to make roadways safer.

Month by month, year by year, however, deaths caused by automobile collisions have increased steadily. This year is no exception.

To make the roads free of death, driver education is needed to emphasize to the traveler that his car must be in good condition and he himself must be working properly before the safest highway in the world will benefit him.

"Duties are ours, events are God's."—Cecil.

City Accidents Have Two Main Causes

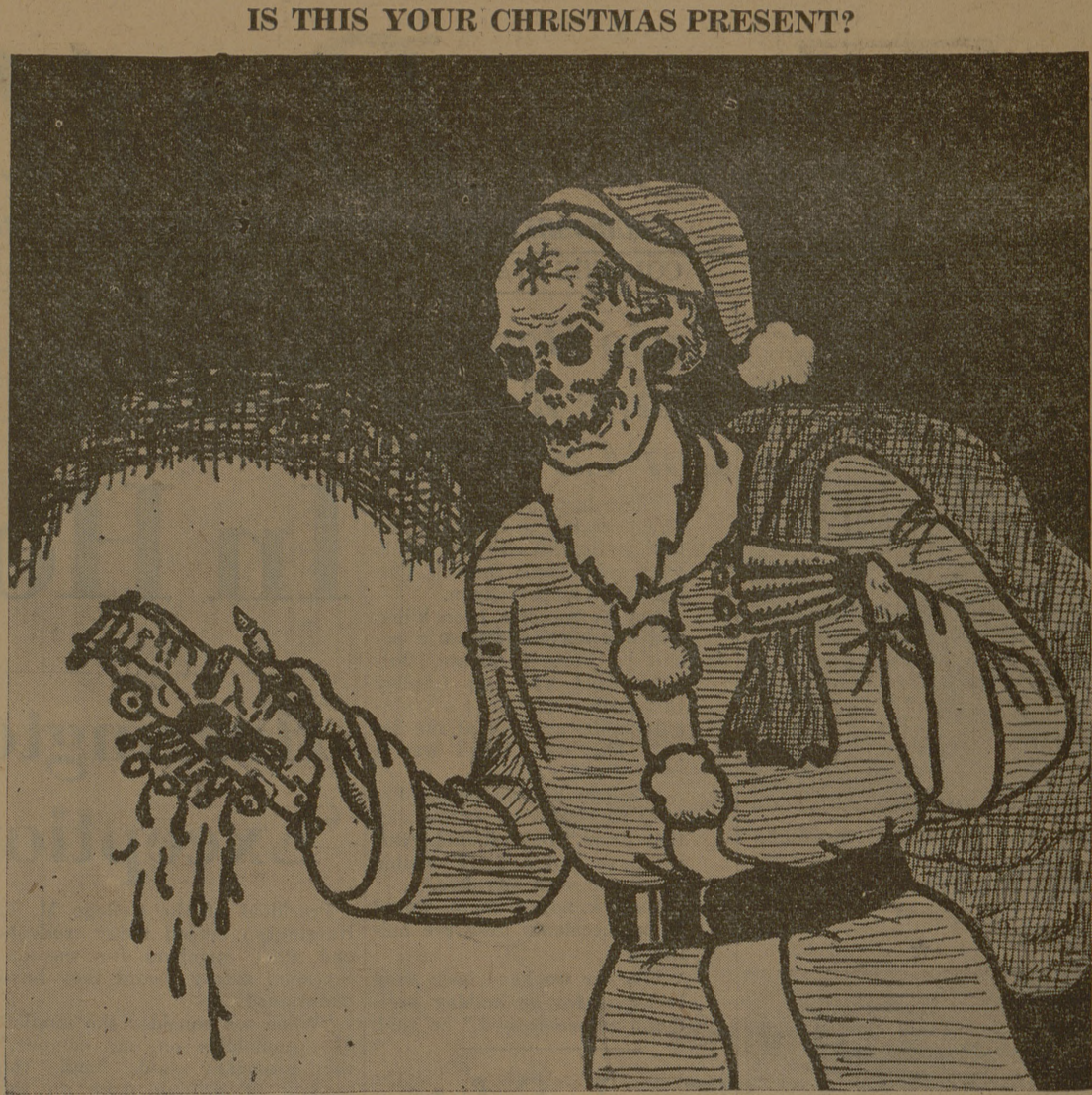
INTERSECTION accidents are more numerous than any other point in any city. Many of these accidents in the downtown traffic are caused by the pedestrian.

Although he has the right-of-way, according to the laws, the pedestrian has no law to turn to when he has jay-walked for the last time.

Christmas shopping makes the pedestrian a more conspicuous and more bothersome feature. The pedestrian and the motorist ought to get along well together, for a pedestrian is a motorist who has found a parking place and a motorist will become a pedestrian as soon as he finds such a place. But they both act as if they had nothing common, except, of course, to blame the other fellow.

Standing off the curb waiting for lights to change is the pedestrian's biggest error. Meanwhile the motorist becomes impatient, ready to charge around a corner only to see the last pedestrian has not made it across the street when the light changes. He shows no charity, but honks his way across.

Following the simple safety rules will help prevent many accidents and grumbling on both the pedestrian and driver's part. Looking both ways before each enters an intersection crossway will help.



Try to Save Seconds

Young Couple Ruins Dream By Failing to Observe Rule

(Editor's Note: The following is a true story. Only the names are changed to protect the parties involved.)

By ED HOLDER

Early one morning last month, a young man and his beautiful bride started for town to do some shopping.

They had been married only a few days and were living on a small farm near the city of Centerville. They neared the highway intersection.

Bill Williams paid no attention to the stop sign at the right side of the dirt road. With a casual glance, he darted on the highway. He hoped to get to town before the crowded traffic.

From down the narrow highway came a huge gasoline truck. The driver, sitting high in the cab, honked and started for the edge of the road. It was too late.

Unable to Stop
The six-ton truck hit the side of the tiny sedan. The weight of the

shifted gasoline inside the trailer caused the truck to lean over heavily, hitting the car and the truck skidded down the road.

A service station operator, several yards away, saw the two vehicles locked together coming toward his building. He ran behind the structure and dove into a ditch.

Just then the truck fell on top of the car, rolling completely over it. The truck landed on its side, siding toward the station. The car, being much lighter than the huge truck stopped.

A tremendous explosion. The truck buried itself into the front station pumps, sending black columns of smoke and red-orange flames billowing high into the sky.

Help—Too Late

Ambulances were called from the nearby city. Onlookers crowded in as near as the intense heat would allow. The sight they witnessed was embedded in their minds.

The driver of the truck was pinned behind the wheel and the burning gasoline danced around his frantic body. His screams of death scarcely were heard above the roaring inferno as thousands of gallons of gas were consumed in the fire.

Williams and his wife both lived. The service station owner was treated for shock and minor burns.

Mrs. Williams is crippled from the waist down, deep scars cover her body. She will never walk again.

The young husband got off

lucky; both arms—broken; his neck—cracked, now it juts to the side at about a 45 degree angle; his scarred face—unrecognizable, no longer is he the handsome youth he once was.

Both receive their monthly check from the government, a meager existence which is far below the lofty dreams the two had planned scarcely a week before.

They were in too big a hurry to follow a basic rule of stopping and looking both ways before entering a highway.

A life—a dream—lost in a bet which would have won only a few minutes.

Nation's Drivers Total 64 Million

There are over 64 million drivers in the United States, with Texas housing three million.

Texas has an average of one driver for each registered vehicle, California has 1.12 drivers per car, and Alabama has 1.58 drivers for each vehicle registered.

Compared with other states, Texas is the lowest in the nation. All other states have over one driver for each car. The national average is 1.26.

Male drivers in 1951 were involved in 90 per cent of all U.S. auto accidents.

Texas Needs About \$2 Billion For Adequate Safe Roads

Present allotment of state and federal funds indicate that a vast highway construction program could be accomplished in most states without additional financing, the American Public Works Association reports.

Texas needs \$1,570,000,000 to bring its highways up to adequate

standard of safety and utility, according to recent studies of the State Department.

This program in Texas would permit completion of the present farm-to-market road system of 35,000 miles, with all gaps and fillers, at a cost of \$228,862,000.

One Billion Needed

This almost equals the \$289,896,000 needed for the primary system. Arterial highways in Texas would amount to more than one billion dollars.

It would take more than two billion dollars to replace the present highway system of Texas, which totals approximately 44,000 miles. Present highway income is slightly in excess of \$100 million annually from gasoline tax and automobile registration fees. Maintenance work requires almost half of that amount, leaving insufficient funds for complete modernization of roads.

Texas has always used a pay-as-you-go system, which means there is no debt against its highway system.

Highway Appropriations

An estimated two billion dollars in state and federal funds already have been earmarked for highway purposes along with another two billion a year being collected by the states in gasoline taxes, the association said.

Last year, 1,362,000 Americans were injured in traffic accidents.

Final Seconds Tell Story Of Death

Ever wonder how automobile accidents happen? what the driver is thinking before the fatal crackup?

Here's the inside story of Harry Jones, one of the persons killed by a car every 20 minutes this year in the United States.

He pushed his sleeve back, held his wrist close to the lighted speedometer, squinted to read the time. A little after nine. Five, ten minutes after. Ought to be home in half an hour. It was Christmas time.

If he'd known he had only 10 seconds to live, Harry Jones might have checked the time more closely. He might have done several things differently.

Ten seconds to live. He massaged his eyes with thumb and middle finger, trying to rub out some of the sleepiness.

Nine seconds to live. He'd driven almost eight hours since stopping last and was beginning to feel it.

Eight seconds to live. Harry Jones thought driving in the rain was lousy. He hated it. Light from the headlights just seem to soak in along with the water.

Seven seconds to live. Probably need a new windshield wiper blade, Harry Jones thought. Old one spreads the water in circles instead of wiping it clean. You can even see the small rainbows and your reflection. Get one tomorrow, or the next time it rains.

Six seconds to live. Somebody just threw a cigarette out of a car. You could see it fizzle out before it even hit the road.

Five seconds to live. Squirring for a better position. Heels dug into the floor, trying to get comfortable.

Four seconds to live. At 65 miles an hour, a car covers 96 feet of pavement every second. In four seconds 384 feet.

Three seconds to live. The rain blurred the windshield momentarily. Something looks wrong.

Two seconds to live. Car coming. Turn to the left. No, embankment. Panic. Can't make it. The crash.

One second to live. He opened his mouth to scream. Harry Jones felt numb. Everything moved in slow motion.

No seconds to live. Harry Jones is dead.

There are a lot of Harry Joneses. They too die in accidents, many times the same way. Drive too long. Get tired. Reactions slacken. Rain. Darkness. A bad windshield. Faulty equipment. Then something in front of you and you can't see it.

It could happen to you—don't let it.

Vehicles Travel 482 Billion Miles—1951

Motor vehicles traveled 482 billion miles during 1951.

Passenger cars covered 208,654 millions of miles in 1936, but in 1951, they traveled the roads of the United States for a total of 382,994 millions of miles.

Trucks and buses joined in this figure to bring the total to 482,369 millions of miles for 1951.

The Battalion

Lawrence Sullivan Ross, Founder of Aggie Traditions
"Soldier, Statesman, Knightly Gentleman"

The Battalion, official newspaper of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, is published by students four times a week, during the regular school year. During the summer terms, and examination and vacation periods, The Battalion is published twice a week. Days of publication are Tuesday through Friday for the regular school year, and Tuesday and Thursday during examination and vacation periods and the summer terms. Subscription rates \$6.00 per year or \$5.00 per month. Advertising rates furnished on request.

Entered as second-class matter at Post Office at College Station, Texas under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.

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