

Figures Show All Age Groups Nearly Equally Responsible for Road Deaths

Editor's note: Traffic accidents last year killed 36,000 Americans. President Eisenhower's Committee for Traffic Safety is promoting the second annual safe driving campaign in the hope of reducing the toll. The month-long campaign culminates with Safe Driving Day Dec. 1. Following is the second of three dispatches on causes of traffic accidents and suggested cures.

By JOSEPH L. MYLER
United Press Correspondent
Washington —(U.P.)— Who are the worst violators of traffic safety rules? The figures on street and highway killings supply the answer:

The young and the old
In 1954, the traffic death rate on a population basis for the 15-24 age group was 36.9 per 100,000 compared to 23.3 for all age groups.

This 15-24 death rate showed the greatest increase of any age group—a jump by 1954 of 625 per cent over the 1913-17 base period. The increase for all other groups was 233 per cent.

The death rate for the age group 65 and over was 38.6 per 100,000 in 1954. This was a bit larger than the 15-24 rate, but it represented an increase over 1913-17 of only 188 per cent.

Suggested explanations: More youngsters are driving than ever before. Among them are the hot-rods. The young could be the best drivers from a standpoint of natural skill and reflexes. But they are the worst from a standpoint of training, psychological maturity, common courtesy, responsibility, and ability to hold their liquor.

The death figures for persons 65 and older reflect a large number of pedestrian killings. More than one-third of pedestrians killed in traffic accidents are over 65. As people age, their "reaction times" slow down and their eyes become less able to adjust to glare. Having survived so long, the elderly become careless.

What were cars doing when fatal accidents occurred? Safety Council surveys show 18 per cent, the largest single category, were exceeding the posted safe speed limit.

Another 12 per cent were speeding in a relative sense—i.e. going faster than safety permitted under the specific circumstances.

In nine per cent of accidents that left somebody dead, a driver failed to keep to the right of the center line.

In eight per cent, the killer

car or truck did not have the right of way.

Seven per cent were lumped under the heading "Other improper driving."

Traffic authorities are not satisfied with statistics, based on spot surveys and inadequate reporting, which show that only

six per cent of fatal accidents involving driving while drunk. They believe drunk driving causes a considerable higher per-

centage of street and highway deaths.

They also blame walking while drunk for a big share of pedestrian deaths. A study by

Dr. S. R. Gerber, coroner of Cuyahoga county, Cleveland, Ohio, showed that of 992 pedestrians killed in traffic 40 per cent had been drinking.

When do most fatal traffic accidents occur? They zoom at night. Thirteen deaths per 100,000 vehicle miles occur at night compared to five in daytime. Of pedestrian deaths, 63 per cent happen after dark.

What is the role of speed? The figures say 68 per cent of vehicles in fatal accidents were going less than 50 miles an hour. The moral: you're not safe just because you're not exceeding the posted limit.

For one thing, as a veteran motorist said, "There is always that so-and-so behind you with the bad brakes and bum reflexes or that other so-and-so coming your way on the wrong side of the line on a hill."

And in the long history of motorism there never has been a vehicle with so little horsepower and speed that it couldn't smash or crush the life out of you.

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Second Section

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INTERVIEWING ADA NASH, "World's Strongest Woman," has its pitfalls for reporter Dick Harmon of Los Angeles. Ada shows as well as tells about her strength. (International)

Wealthy Man Freed On Defraud Charge

Beverly Hills — (U.P.) — A wealthy New Yorker was with- in his rights in trying to get "an adjustment" in a nightclub check which charged him \$28 for a bottle of scotch at Ciro's, a jury has decided.
Richard T. Shubert, a fishing tackle manufacturer, was acquitted of charges to defraud an innkeeper. The jury deliberated about 45 minutes.
The innkeeper was Herman Hover, owner of the swank sunset strip niter, Ciro's. Hover made a citizen's arrest of Shubert Sept. 13 when the New Yorker refused to pay a \$48 bill because a \$28 charge was made for a bottle of scotch whisky.

CIO Woodworkers Reelect Officers

Portland —(U.P.)— A. F. Hartung and other present officers of the International Woodworkers of America (CIO) were re-elected in ballot counting which started Oct. 25 and ended last night.

Other reelected officers were J. E. Dicey, first vice-president; Claude Ballard, second vice-president; William Botkin, secretary-treasurer, and Herbert Irving, trustee. Irving is from Hoquiam, Wash., and the others are from Portland.

Infanticide Charge Brings Prison Term

Portland — (U.P.) — Earl R. Johnson, 30, Portland, was sentenced to two years in the state penitentiary yesterday for fatally striking his baby son last May.

Johnson was allowed to plead guilty to a reduced charge of manslaughter but Circuit Judge James R. Bain turned down defense pleas for probation. J. Raymond Carskadon, Johnson's attorney, said that the child was slapped while the father was overwrought by caring for the baby and for Johnson's wife, a polio victim, at the same time.

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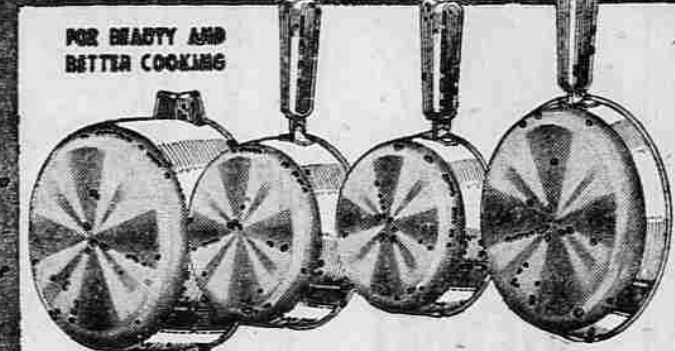
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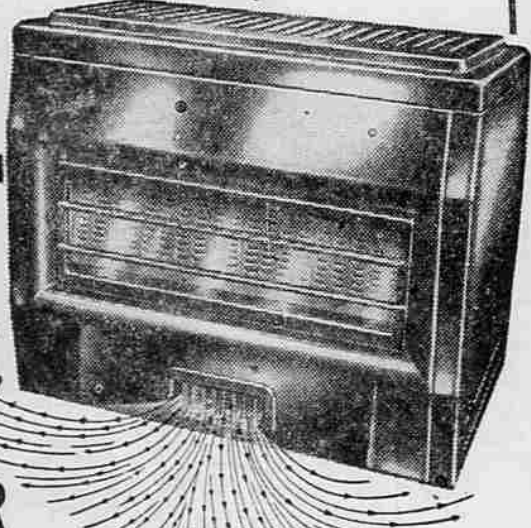
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