

**In the Day's News**  
By FRANK JENKINS

This year's death toll on our nation's highways over the four-day New Year week-end holiday was smaller than expected.

The all-time record for a four-day New Year week end is 409. This grisly total was run up two years ago.

THIS year's drop is a hopeful sign. It must be assumed that this year more cars were available to go on the roads than ever before, for car saturation in America is proceeding steadily. In addition, this year's weather was universally bad.

Theoretically that increases the hazard. But bad weather also increases driver caution. Only a madman can be expected to go roaring into a storm at high speed on slippery roads. The bulk of our people are sane, so it may be that the bad weather increased driver caution.

AT ANY rate, it sounds like drivers may have become more cautious this year. That's about the only way, short of having a highway cop on the roads every 100 yards, that the highway death toll can be reduced.

If the roads are to become safer, DRIVERS must become safer. The highway safety problem is largely an INDIVIDUAL problem.

NOT unexpectedly, California has the highest death toll among the states, with more than 40 persons killed in traffic up to the time this is written.

That sounds bad. But it isn't quite as bad as it sounds. California is the second largest state. It has more automobiles than any other state. Its normal weather at the New Year season is such as to tempt more people to take to the roads.

The more cars, the greater the traffic hazard.

JUMPING from automobiles to space ships, Russia reports that its cosmic rocket, which missed the moon, is beginning to slant off into its orbit around the sun, thus becoming the first MAN-MADE planet.

Question: Will it go whirling around the sun FOREVER?

In Washington, U.S. space consultant Homer J. Stewart says PROBABLY NOT. He thinks it will return eventually to earth, although it may take HUNDREDS OF YEARS to get back. When (and if) it does get back, he says, its return to earth will be marked by a big flash in the sky - just like any other big meteorite.

Somehow that interests me very little.

THE Russians are prouder than Punch of their achievement - as they are entitled to be.

Sending a rocket into orbit around the sun takes some doing.

It also takes some brains. IN WASHINGTON, where the congress is beginning to reassemble, there is much talk of what WE must do to keep up with Lizzie, in this case being the U.S.S.R.

Most of the talk has to do with SPENDING MONEY.

Personally, I can't help feeling that more than throwing money around will be required.

**Hope Wanes for Chionchio Infant**

New York (UPI)—Hope waned today for the possible return of tiny Lisa Rose Chionchio, kidnaped from a hospital nursery last Friday less than 2½ hours after her birth.

Police, admittedly without substantial clues or leads, searched sewers, cellars and the Coney Island beachfront in their intensive hunt for the seven-pound infant.

Detectives planned today to question a New York City woman, regarded as one of two suspects in the mystery. The woman, said to match the description of the heavy bleached blonde believed to be the kidnaper, was located Wednesday in an Albany, N. Y., hospital, where she was taken after allegedly swallowing an overdose of aspirin.

The woman, a former mental patient, was reported missing from her home on Sunday by her husband.

The only other "suspect" has been identified as Mrs. Betty Jean Benedicto, 31, of Stockton, Calif., who is wanted by San Francisco police for parole violation. Mrs. Benedicto served a year in prison for kidnapping a newborn infant in 1955.

California authorities say she, too, resembles the woman nurses saw surreptitiously enter and leave St. Peter's hospital about the time of the kidnaping.

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