

Behind The Wheel

Newsletter of the Maine Professional Drivers Association



Volume X, No. 1

“Committed to Safety, Courtesy, and Professionalism”

Jan/Feb 2000

Family Tragedy

By now most of you have heard about the family who lost the triplet children in a fire in Unity.

Below is an excerpt of an e-mail that we received from Kathy Harders of L.O.A.D.S. and wanted to share with you.

Kathy has been helping funnel information from around the country from people who have heard about the tragedy and want to help.

We also would like to decide what MPDA should and could do for the Freyer family, and if there is anything any of you might suggest for us to do as an organization. Please reply with any suggestions to dpickard@cybertours.com or call me at 353-4042.

Carmen Freyer's best friend, Tammie Wingate, is coordinating some of the relief efforts. You may contact her if necessary at 207-948-3007 or her email address is zoya6298@hotmail.com

The information following is for your benefit to act upon as you see fit in this time of need.

Kurt Freyer is a truck driver and was on the road when he got the news about losing his three children. His wife Carmen was at home with their four children when the

(See Tragedy on page 2)

Engine Brakes

A couple of weeks ago I was on a snowmobiling trip in the Eustis/Stratton area. While stopped in town for gas and food, I suddenly became aware of the 'Jake Brake' controversy we have been facing.

As I stood there, about a dozen trucks came through town – some were loaded but most were empty. The speed limit through this section of town is 25 MPH. Every truck used their Jake Brake through this part of town. Now bear in mind that most of these trucks were empty.

As I watched and listened to the trucks roll through town, I also watched the people around me to see their reaction to what was taking place. Some said nothing, while many wondered if it was necessary to use those Jake Brakes in town.

The problem here is not one of intent, but rather one of not realizing what we are doing. From experience, I can tell you it is very easy to become dependent on that engine brake. It can be a habit that is difficult to break. It's almost like trying to quit smoking, we lite up without even thinking about what we are doing.

(See Jake on page 2)

MPDA ROADTEAM

The MPDA ROADTEAM is pleased to announce we are finally getting off the ground with our *5 Levels of A Professional Driver Training* program. Our first session will be held Saturday, March 18, 2000, at the MMTA office in Augusta. Please be watching your mail closely, as the registration form has already been mailed.

I apologize for not getting the registrations out sooner. In the future we will have them in the mail at least one month in advance. A big thanks to ROADTEAM members Ron Hutchins and Cliff Gray for printing and mailing the registrations.

This training session will be on logbooks and pre-trip inspections. ROADTEAM members Dick Brown and Warren Lewis will be the instructors for the March 18 training. I would encourage all MPDA members to take advantage of this valuable training.

ROADTEAM members Jim Costa and Mona Lowell are getting things together for the Boston Truck Show. If you would like to work with them at the Boston Show you may contact them

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fire broke out.

The Freyers have lost everything, not only their children, but their home as well. Kurt is in need of clothing more than the others, even though they all need things badly, most donations have come for Carmen and their surviving child, Elizabeth ... little has come in for Kurt. The sizes are as follows:

Carmen - Pants: 14 Shirts: XL Shoes 9
Kurt - Pants: 36x32 Shirts XL Shoes 12
Elizabeth (daughter) - 4T Shoes 8

If there are any contributions of clothing, it can be mailed/shipped to:

**Tammie Wingate
PO Box 99**

Thorndike, Maine 04986

The Trust Funds that are set up are as follows Per request of Carmen she would like donations sent to:

**Autistic Program/Unity Elementary School
Box 1357
Unity, Me. 04988
C/O Amy Benham**

(This is a program that the boys were part of and Carmen wishes to keep this in place for children with autism. A scholarship will be started in memory of Joshua, Marcus and Brydon White.)

However anyone wanting to contribute funds to the family for personal needs please do so at the below address:

**The Freyer Fund
C/O Pam Myrick
Bangor Savings Bank
Clifford Common
Unity Me. 04988**

Cards of sympathy and encouragement can be sent to:

**Kurt and Carmen Freyer
PO Box
Unity, ME. 04988**

Submitted by Kathy Harders

NEXT MPDA MEETING

**March 11, 2000
@ Hannaford Trucking
South Portland, Maine
See calendar on back page for
more information**

(Jake continued from page 1)

The same goes for Jake Brakes - we need to think before we lite it up.

We are upsetting a lot of people without really meaning to. There is an increasing number of towns that are prohibiting the use of Jake Brake. If we keep going in the direction that we are now, we will no longer have them to use as a safety device.

A good rule of thumb... If you're empty or doing less than 35 MPH, you probably don't need to use your engine brake.

There will be times when you will find it necessary to use your Jake Brake in an emergency. However, if we continue with this trend of using it every time we let off the throttle, we may find ourselves operating without one.

*Submitted by Doug Pickard
MPDA President*

Editor's Note -

The Colorado House of Representatives approved bill HB1142 on Feb. 22 this year. This bill requires commercial vehicles equipped with engine compression brakes to have mufflers. Use of an engine brake without a muffler will cost the offender \$500.

Learning of this law being passed says only one thing!! It is only the beginning, if we don't show some courtesy and professionalism that we all pride ourselves in.

If you would like to learn more about Jake Brake noise and have Internet access, stop by this web site – <http://www.jakebrake.com/new/noise/noise.htm> – they have an excellent article about how, what it is, and the results of testing.

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directly, or myself and I will get in touch with them.

Join me in congratulating and welcoming Mike Conroy as our newest ROADTEAM member. Mike drives for Pottle's Transportation in Bangor, Maine. Mike is looking forward to getting into the driver education classed in the Bangor area and presenting our *How to Share the Road Safely with Trucks* program.

Thanks to ROADTEAM member Dave Stuart for the great job he is doing with the newsletter.

Remember to stay, Safe, Courteous, and Professional.

Fred Thompson, Roadteam Captain



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MPDA Calendar of Events

March

4 – Work on MPDA equipment trailer session at Yarmouth Lumber in Gray – contact Doug Pickard at dpickard@cybertours.com or 207-353-4042.

11 – MPDA Officers Meeting @ 9:00am – General Meeting @ 10:00am & ROADTEAM meeting directly following General Meeting – Hannaford Trucking Co., So. Portland - contact Doug Pickard at dpickard@cybertours.com or 207-353-4042

18 – MPDA ROADTEAM Training Seminar - contact Fred Thompson at fthomp5349@aol.com or 207-582-1343.

April

1 – MPDA ROADTEAM Meeting - MPDA/MMTA Office, Augusta - 9:00am (New member training) - contact Fred Thompson at fthomp5349@aol.com or 207-582-1343.

14 & 15 – 5th Annual Maine Truck Show - Augusta Civic Center - CANCELLED

15 – MPDA Officers and General Meeting, MMTA/MPDA office, Augusta - 9/10am - contact Doug Pickard at dpickard@cybertours.com or 207-353-4042.

27 – 4th Annual Maine Transportation Safety Conference - Augusta Civic Center - contact Debbie Dodge at the Maine Transportation Safety Coalition 207-287-4288.

29 – Sysco of Northern New England Driving Competition – Sysco Distribution Center, Westbrook, Maine – contact Charles Gatz at (800) 871-1008.

30 – (New Date) Great Grocery Grudge V - Hannaford/Shaw's Driving Competition – Shaw's Truck Terminal, Scarborough - 9:00am - contact Denis Litalien at dentruck@hotmail.com or 207-282-6346.

May

6 – Northcenter Foods Driving Competition - Augusta - 8:00am - contact Mike Coulombe at oldgranite@juno.com or

4, 5 & 6 – New England Truck Show - Bayside Auditorium - Boston contact Jim Costa jim-mona@cybertours.com or 207-727-5349.

20 - Maine State Truck Driving Championships - Bangor/Hermon contact Cliff Gray - grayc@mmta.com or 207-623-4128.

20 – New Hampshire Truck Driving Competitions

June

3 – Northern Convoy for Kids - Bangor/Brewer - contact Irvin Smith at brianb@hobouchard.com

3 – Douglas Gentle Memorial Truck Rally and Roadeo, Houlton, sponsored by Transport for Christ International. FMI, email rasmpda@hotmail.com or call 207-626-0833.

17 – Massachusetts Truck Driving Competition – FMI, contact Lorrie Shea – snoopystoy@aol.com or 1-800-233-2246.
August

9, 10, 11, & 12 – National Truck Driving Championships, New Orleans, Louisiana – Contact Cliff Gray - grayc@mmta.com or 207-623-4128.

September

10 - 4th Annual Northeast Professional Truck Drivers Charity Challenge – Devens, Mass - contact Fred Schenk at fschenk@rcn.com or 508-453-3632.

16 – Sysco of Northern New England Driving Competition – Sysco Distribution Center, Westbrook, Maine – contact Charles Gatz at (800) 871-1008.

23 - Associated Grocers Driving Competition - Gardiner - contact Jim Widdoes at jimwiddoes@agofme.com or 207-582-6500.

October

8 - Maine Trucking for Kids Convoy, South Portland/Portland contact Jim Costa at jim-mona@cybertours.com or 207-727-5349