

# Behind The Wheel

Newsletter of the Maine Professional Drivers Association



Volume X, No. 4

“Committed to Safety, Courtesy, and Professionalism”

July / August 2000

## Focusing on Our Missions & Objectives

- A. To promote the image of the safe, courteous, and professional driver.
- B. To encourage friendly relations between all drivers.
- C. To assist law enforcement and regulatory agencies in their efforts to promote safe, courteous, and professional driving.
- D. To assist the Maine Motor Transport Assn. in its activities such as, but not limited to, the Maine State Truck Driving Championships.
- E. To promote safety in all fields.
- F. To promote goodwill toward the trucking industry.
- G. To support or oppose legislation that would have a direct effect on the interests of the Assn.
- H. To encourage family involvement through various Assn. Activities.
- I. To provide a forum for discussion and sharing of ideas and information of common interest to members.
- J. To promote safe driving in general.
- K. To upgrade the professionalism in the field of truck driving.

### NEXT MPDA GENERAL MEETING

MPDA'S NEXT GENERAL MEETING FOR ALL MEMBERS WILL BE HELD AT TONY ROMA'S SOUTH PORTLAND, MAINE.

THE SEPTEMBER 17TH MEETING WILL START AT 7:30AM FOR OFFICERS AND 9:00AM FOR ALL MEMBERS.

## Member Passes Away Richard Esponnette dies

It is with great sadness that we report that member Richard Esponnette died June 30. Rick was close personal friend to many of us and a professional driver in the truest sense of the word. And a finer person you would not meet. He will be terribly missed.

Dick, or Rick, as he was known to many of us, was a driver for A-P-A Transport of Scarborough, Maine and died as a result of a yard accident at A-P-A's terminal in New Jersey. It appears that Rick was performing a pre-trip inspection on his unit when another trailer being hooked up moved and crushed Rick between the two units, according to friend and fellow member **Ralph Trempe**.

Rick, who was called “Poor Richard” on the CB and ran the road for A-P-A was well known on the highway as he has driven for Sanborn's and then A-P-A for over 30 years. He was active in the MPDA, having served as a judge in the State Truck Driving Championships and filled in as Secretary in the early days of the Assn. Rick was a founding member of the Maine Professional Drivers Association.

He was also active in the Seacoast Riders Motorcycle Club, riding with his wife Laura to many motorcycle events throughout New England. He was Secretary and Vice-President of the Club and was a key organizer of many charity events that the club held to benefit Sweetser Children's Home. He was also a member of Teamsters Local #340 for over 30 years.

Rick is survived by wife **Laura Esponnette** of Scarborough, Maine daughter Tammy Esponnette of Standish, Maine and son Dr. Peter Esponnette of Auburn, Maine.

The funeral was held on July 7. Interment took place

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THIS ISSUE OF “BEHIND THE WHEEL” SPONSORED BY KRIS-WAY TRUCK LEASING

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at Brooklawn Memorial Park in Portland, Maine. Please join us in keeping Rick, wife **Laura**, and his family in our thoughts and prayers.

As a tribute to Rick, it was decided by MPDA to name it's annual scholarship award after him. It will hereby be known as the *Richard Esponnette Memorial Scholarship*.

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## Our Hero

Clayton MacDonald of Glace Bay, Nova Scotia was recently honored with a Carnegie Medal for heroism. Clayton was the driver who pulled Lynn Wiley of Kennebunkport out of her car as it burned on the Maine Turnpike after it collided with his truck last fall. Clayton will receive a \$3500 grant along with the award. He was honored by the Maine Professional Drivers Association last October as our Driver of the Year in recognition of his actions.

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## President's Report Fred Thompson

It was with sadness we accepted the resignation of our President Doug Pickard. Doug has served this association with vitality and commitment for the last three years. Due to an increase in his trucking business and other considerations Doug has stepped down for the time being.

As Vice President of the MPDA it is my job to move into that position. I will do my very best to replace Doug until a new President is elected. I will be depending on all of the other officers and want all you to know our mission is still the same. That mission is to promote Safety, Courtesy, and Professionalism on our highways.

We have an important membership meeting coming up on Sunday September 17, and I hope all of you that possibly can will attend this meeting. It will be at Tony Romas Resturant in So, Portland. The time is 7:30 am for officers and 9:00 am for the general membership meeting. A breakfast buffet is available.

There are a number of things I could write about but I'll leave them for the meeting. I'll see you on the Boulevard.

Fred Thompson, MPDA President

## ROADTEAM

### Mike Conroy meets the kids

MPDA ROADTEAM member **Mike Conroy** of **Pottle's Transportation** has been seeing a lot of kids lately,



and not his own. Mike has been involved with the Trucker Buddy program, interacting with a class of middle school kids in Haverhill,

Mass. This spring he finally met them. And were they happy!

Mike, as part of the National Trucker Buddy program, was paired with this class of 6th graders and writes to the kids every week, letting them know where he is traveling and a little information about the area. They write back and ask him questions about the places he goes. Meanwhile they keep a map on the wall of their class and put pins in all the places he checks in from. He has been doing this since October and finally got the chance to bring his truck to school and meet the kids. They were amazed to find a bed and a television in his truck, and even a teddy bear.

Mike has been a member of MPDA for awhile and has taken on the added responsibilities of becoming part of the ROADTEAM. Under this program, he goes to drivers education classes and other places to talk to people about sharing the road with trucks and the importance of the trucking industry. Mike drives for Pottle's Transportation and also competes in the State Truck Driving Championships. It was learned that he lost a friendly wager this year about who was the best driver at the competition to co-worker **Paul Barnes** and had to pay off by washing the windows on Paul's truck.

A heartfelt thanks to Mike from all of us for representing us well at these various functions. We applaud and encourage him as he sacrifices his personal time to make us all look a little better in the eyes of the public.

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## Legislative New Laws Available

The Laws of the State of Maine as enacted by the Sec-

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ond Regular Session of the 119th Legislature are now available on the Internet. These session laws contain the Public Laws, Private & Special Laws, Resolves, Constitutional Resolutions and Joint Study Orders. The Laws of Maine may be accessed either through the Revisor's Office homepage at <http://www.state.me.us/legis/ros/> or directly at the following address: <http://janus.state.me.us/legis/ros/lom/LOM119th/LOM119Directory.htm>.

The Laws of Maine for both the 118th Legislature and the 119th Legislature are now available on-line and are fully searchable using either the subject index for each specific legislative session or using a global phrase search for each legislature.

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### Elections

Don't forget to vote on November 7. Not only are there national and state candidates to vote for, but many towns are holding elections for local offices. Don't neglect to exercise your rights by voting. Your vote does make a difference.

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### Turnpike News

Did you know that...

The Turnpike Authority prohibits widening contractors from closing lanes on Friday, Saturday or Sunday. Lane closures on the southern section of the Turnpike are also prohibited Monday-Thursday during morning commuter hours (6 to 9) and evening commuter hours (3 to 6). Occasionally Turnpike Authority crews must close a lane within these hours to perform emergency repairs.

Did you know that...

Weekend traffic volumes have increased as much as 8% over the summer of 1999, and last summer was an all-time record breaker.

Did you know that...

The Maine Turnpike's Web Site [www.maineturnpike.com](http://www.maineturnpike.com) has been a hit. In June, 11,000 travelers visited the site. Everything you ever wanted to know about the Maine Turnpike is available on this site, but the real attraction is the traffic information. The **Weekly Project Update** provides a five-day forecast of construction activities and potential traffic delays. The **Weekend Summer Forecast** provides useful traffic information for Friday, Saturday and Sunday. And the latest feature, the **Traffic Alert** flashes on the home page whenever a major

incident or backup occurs on the Turnpike. By clicking on the flashing alert you can learn where the incident has occurred and how it is affecting traffic. It's a great idea to check the site for traffic alerts before starting your trip.

Did you know that...

The Maine Turnpike Authority is considering joining the E-Z Pass System that is now available in many states, including Massachusetts and New York, as well as other states along the eastern seaboard. The good news is also that New Hampshire is also considering joining the system. They are now in the studying stage of determining what system would be the best to be compatible with other states' systems. The decision in Maine will likely come in October at the Turnpike Board of Directors Meeting, while it is not known how soon New Hampshire will decide to implement an electronic toll collection system. Most truckers are looking forward to one system that can be used for billing through all the states that tolls are required to save time at the tollbooths, and save time with bookkeeping.

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### Hours of Service

There are so many factors working against the proposed hours of service changes that it appears that it will not be happening in the near future. The U.S. Senate has cut funding from this year's budget to put it through and it appears that the House may do the same, effectively killing any chance that a change will take place in the near future. There are also so many people and organizations who have testified against the rule changes that it will face a long uphill battle to implementation. Even those who enforce these rules have testified that they are unworkable in our industry. There is even an effort by Senator ..... to kill the proposal outright.

In a quote in OOIDA's Land Line Magazine FMCSA's acting deputy, Clyde Hart, conceded that it was not a possibility that the rule would get out by the end of the year. "We'd rather do it right than do it quickly," he said.

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### Vermont Allows Longer Trailers

Units up to 72 feet in overall length are now allowed on designated routes in Vermont without a permit. This includes trailers up to 53 feet in length. The units will also be allowed off the network of routes with permits.

For more information, contact MMTA.

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## Officers Meeting Held Highlights of Officer's Meeting of August 26, 2000 (Edited for space)

### ROLL CALL

Six Officers present.

Doug Pickard has handed in a resignation previously to this meeting. A motion to accept his resignation was made and accepted. Thank You to Doug for all he has done for the Assn. in the past few years. His work has been greatly appreciated.

In the event of a resignation by a current President the bylaws state that current Vice-President will automatically become the new President with approval of the Board of Directors. The new President has the option of choosing a new Vice-President with the approval of the board of directors as well. Fred Thompson accepted the Presidency and will reflect on a choice of Vice-President. Fred will greatly appreciate help from the membership in his new position. "Regroup, Focus and Moving Forward" is the consensus with all present at the meeting.

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### TREASURER'S REPORT

by Pam Rogers

Dues are still trickling in for this year. We have another Lifetime member.....David Weeks. Calendars on order for the banquet. Discussed approval of payment to Bangor Daily News for Ad for Drivers Appreciation Week. Approved sponsoring a trophy for St. Jude's Charity Event. The financial report was read and approved but as stated in the Standing Rules, is not published in the newsletter. It can be obtained by contacting Pam Rogers.

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### ROADTEAM REPORT

by Fred Thompson

The second Training Seminar held this summer went well. There are new people interested in taking these classes. The next seminar will be held this fall. Mike Conroy has been working hard, representing us well in the classes he has been doing as part of the ROADTEAM.

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### OLD BUSINESS

There was an Hours of Service update given by Cliff Gray.

The date of the MPDA Annual Banquet has been changed to November 4th, 2000. The Banquet Committee is working on all the details of this event. (It will be

held at the Cascades Restaurant on Route 1 in Saco). It was agreed to keep the previous awards for 1) Driver of the Year, 2) Good Samaritan, 3) Special Recognition, 4) Sportsmanship. An officers meeting will be held one week before the banquet to vote so there will be time to have names engraved on the awards. The next newsletter to go out will include the nomination form, as well as the invitations to the banquet. **Pam Rogers** is to be put down as the response person so she can manage the money sent in for banquet reservations. Pam will also handle the scholarship. This information will also be sent out with the newsletter and a vote will be held a week before the banquet. In the newsletter there will be a note about changing the name of the scholarship to the Richard E. Esponnette Scholarship Award. A request to the membership for donations to make this scholarship a little bigger this year will also be in the newsletter.

Denis reports that we are still scheduled to receive one of Shaw's old trailers.....The trailer has been earmarked for us and is awaiting the paperwork. He will keep us posted in this matter.

### NEW BUSINESS

The Augusta mail box will now be handled by **Cliff Gray**. He has offered to have the phone installed in his office as well as changing the message on the answering machine. We will be keeping the Augusta address. Fred and/or Diane will be stopping by MMTA once or twice a week to collect the mail and forward it to the appropriate people. A Thank You was made to **Ron Hutchins** for all he has done in the past to benefit MPDA, mail, use of his office, mailings, printing, etc...

The printing of the newsletter will be at **Hannaford Bros** in So Portland for the next few issues. **Dick Brown** will help with this.

Fred talked about the future of the Assn. and discussed Article #1, Section #2 of the bylaws, (as printed on the front page of this issue) which state the objectives of the MPDA. This will be our future focus and on the agenda for the annual banquet with a printing of it in the banquet program and a possible poster on display there as well. The Article is printed elsewhere in this issue. A meeting will be held sometime after the banquet, possibly the January meeting to discuss the future focus of the Assn.

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 12:30.

NATIONALS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

## Nationals

### National Truck Driving Championships Report

The 63rd annual National Truck Driving Championships were held on August 9th through the 12th in New Orleans, Louisiana. There were 387 drivers from 50 states in the competition, sponsored by Exxon-Mobil Corporation, vying for prizes of up to \$10,000 along with plaques, trophies, belt buckles and other prizes.

The competition consisted of a Pre-trip inspection test, an interview to determine attitude and knowledge, a written test of industry rules and regulations, and a driving course. The semi-finals course, which everyone got to drive through, consisted of an alley dock, side park, right front tire scale stop, right turn, straight line and front stop, with a rear stop problem thrown in for twin trailer drivers instead of the alley dock. In the final driving competition, in which only the top three drivers from the semi-finals competed, the course was rearranged to incorporate a "grease pit" straight line, and alley dock inside a confined area, a parallel park, a front stop, a left turn and a right rear wheel scale stop.

A large contingent from Maine attended the competition along with the eight drivers who qualified to compete as a result of their State Championship. Thirty four people from Maine got together for dinner in New Orleans at a Cajun style restaurant. A great time was had by all.

Maine drivers did well with Denis Litalien getting into the finals and finishing 2nd in the 4-Axle Class. He was in the lead after the semi-finals but was out-driven by Mark Ritter of Wal-Mart of South Carolina in the finals, missing the Championship by 17 points. Following is the finishing order for the Maine Drivers:

- David Gagne (Clifford Perham/Shaw's)**  
Five-Axle 31st
- Samuel Hake (Hart Transportation)**  
Flatbed 45th
- Denis Litalien (Clifford Perham/Shaw's)**  
Four-Axle 2nd
- Charles Nadeau (Hannaford Trucking Co.)**  
Sleeper 10th
- Richard Worster (Hanington Bros.)  
Str. Truck 17th
- Matthew Wood (J & S Oil)**  
Tank 47th
- Everett MacMaster (FedEx)**  
Three Axle 45th

Malcolm Covey (Parallel Transport)  
Twins 35th

Other winners in the competition included:

Grand Champion:

Tom Turner of Martin-Brower Co., Georgia

Sontheimer Award:

Roger Lanham of Overnite Transportation,  
W. Virginia

Rookie of the Year:

Walter Cream of J.R. Christoni, Inc,  
Connecticut

Team Award:

Colorado

There are still some souvenirs available of the Nationals at reduced prices. If you are interested in the Penjoy toy commemorative truck, t-shirts, hats, pins, programs or video of the competition, American Trucking Associations for an order form at 703-838-1931.

The issue of eligibility for next year's competition as discussed in the last of issue of *Behind the Wheel* has not yet been resolved. Or at least in some people's minds it has not been. As of right now, if you are to compete in the 2001 Nationals in Minneapolis next August, your company must be a member of American Trucking Associations (ATA) by then. The only exception is that if this is your first competition, you will be allowed to compete one year, after which, your company must join ATA to continue your eligibility. (MMTA has no such restrictions on competing at the State level.)

It was talked about frequently at the competition with many voicing their opinions that there should be a National competition without regard to membership in the ATA. It was presented by some officials at the competition that the issue may still be discussed and changed before the 2001 Nationals, but likely only if they heard from many in opposition of the present policy to include only ATA members in the Nationals. It was suggested that anyone wanting to voice their opinions should contact their State trucking Assn.'s representative to ATA and let them know how you feel. Maine's representatives at Maine Motor Transport Assn. are Barry Pottle of **Pottle's Transportation** in Bangor and Mark Hutchins of Hutchins Trucking in South Portland. For more information on this topic, contact Denis Litalien.

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### Southern Convoy Report....

Northeast Truck Driving School will be offering a career fair before the parade starts on Marginal Way beginning at 8AM. They will be making a substantial donation to the convoy and are also going to put in some major advertising for it and include the convoy information with their ads, both radio and TV. There will possibly be a truck driving competition for a donation with trophies to be awarded. MPDA will bring the equipment and set up the course at the Marginal Way location. The Ireland Family will be cooking the food like last year. The next meeting of the Convoy is scheduled for Wed., Sep 13th at the Old Country Buffet at the Maine Mall. The parade begins at noon at Marginal Way ending up at the Maine Mall parking lot out behind J.C. Penney. 2 lots have been given to the event for that day. Food will be set up and the awards are scheduled for 2:30. There will be a committee to choose the winners of the awards for the various trucks. 4-5 kiosk spots in the Mall have been given to the convoy as well as the middle spot under the clock for rental for the whole week before the convoy. Signs will be made and distributed in various places in the mall. Publicity.....Fox TV will be making promos and cover the whole event with live coverage spots throughout the day. 2 radio stations will also be covering this as well. WTHH 107.5 being one of them. **Bud Sawyer** from WLAM 106.7 has been invited. Applications for the convoy will be mailed out with the newsletter. This may be downloaded from the website also. Food vouchers will be made up for whoever works on this event. Denis will get an estimate for a banner for the lead vehicle. Proceeds from the event will be presented at the Lions Annual dinner on November 2nd and all MPDA members are invited.

### Are You CPU ?

Now I know what you are thinking... 'There he goes again talking about those darn computers', or 'What is he doing talking about computers again, I don't even begin to understand him when he says all that stuff'. Well... Surprise !!!

I won't be talking about computers, I'm going to talk about being courteous, professional, and understanding. What you say ??? !!! Let me explain....

It's that time of year when the roads get really busy, crowded, and hectic. Now that is where a CPU comes into play.

**'C'** - is for being *Courteous* -  
 Courteous because you remember the last time you were lost and confused, or amazed by that

### Behind the Wheel

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<i>ROADTEAM Manager</i>	Fred Thompson
<i>WebMaster</i>	Dave Stuart

Articles of interest to members, advertising copies, inquires, payments, change of address, comments, and newsletter submissions should be mailed to:

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**Augusta, Maine**  
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**Email - mpda@mpda.maine.org**  
**Website - http://mpda.maine.org**

*An affiliate of Maine Motor Transport Association*

MPDA is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting courtesy, safety and professionalism in the field of commercial driving.

beautiful scenery.

**'P'** - is for being *Professional* -  
 Professional because you didn't and won't lose your patience with those that are lost and looking at that beautiful scenery.

**'U'** - is for *Understanding* -  
 Understanding that those busy, crowded, and hectic roads are some of the reason in part you have a job as a 'CPU' Driver.

So, be a **CPU** Driver and drive safe.... See ya on the 'BIG ROAD' ... Dave Stuart

**PLACE KRIS-WAY'S  
AD HERE**

# MPDA CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2000 & 2001

(As of August 31, 2000 & includes events that MPDA or its members are involved in or are of interest to our members)

## September 2000

- 10 4th Annual Northeast Professional Truck Drivers Charity Challenge - Devens, Mass - contact Fred Schenk at <StJudeRoadeo4kids@excite.com> or 508-453-3632
- 13 Meeting for Southern Convoy for Kids Old Country Buffet, Maine Mall - 6:00pm contact Jim Costa at <jim-mona@cybertours.com> or 727-5349
- 16 Sysco Driving Competition - Sysco terminal, Westbrook - 7:00am - contact Andy Reed at 1-800-759-9448
- 17 MPDA Officers/General Meeting - 7:30/9:00am - Tony Roma's Restaurant, So. Portland - contact Fred Thompson at <fthomp5349@aol.com> or 582-1343
- 20 Meeting for Southern Convoy for Kids Old Country Buffet, Maine Mall - 6:00pm contact Jim Costa at <jim-mona@cybertours.com> or 727-5349
- 23 Associated Grocers/ Progressive Distributors Driving Competition - Gardiner - contact Jim Widdoes at <jwiddoes@agofme.com> or 582-6500
- 24 H.P. Hood Driving Competition, Emery -Waterhouse Lot, Portland - contact Andy Reed at 1-800-759-9448
- 27 Meeting for Southern Convoy for Kids Old Country Buffet, Maine Mall - 6:00pm contact Jim Costa at <jim-mona@cybertours.com> or 727-5349

## October 2000

- 4 Meeting for Southern Convoy for Kids Old Country Buffet, Maine Mall - 6:00pm contact Jim Costa at <jim-mona@cybertours.com> or 727-5349
- 7 Meeting and setup for Southern Convoy for Kids, **Please note - This meeting will be at the lot on the Portland side** - 7:00am contact Jim Costa at <jim-mona@cybertours.com> or 727-5349.
- 8 Maine Trucking for Kids Convoy, Competition & Job Fair, Portland/South Portland contact Jim Costa at <jim-mona@cybertours.com> or 727-5349
- 27-28 Baby Daize Truck Display - Portland Expo, Portland - contact Rob Fernald at <rbfclf@aol.com> or 1-207- 767-0633
- 29 MPDA Officers Meeting - Pam Rogers house, Yarmouth - 6:00pm - contact Fred Thompson at <fthomp5349@aol.com> or 582-1343

## November 2000

- 2 Convoy Funds Presentation - So. Portland Lions Dinner - Landry Village Community Center, South Portland - contact Kevin Battle at <trucking4kids@aol.com>
- 4 11th Annual MPDA Banquet - Cascades Restaurant, Saco - 6:00pm - contact Pam Rogers at <progers@uig-me.com> or 1-800-244-4694
- 7 Election Day

## January 2001

- 21 MPDA Officers/General Meeting - 7:30/9:00am - MMTA/MPDA Office - contact Fred Thompson at <fthomp5349@aol.com> or 582-1343

## August 2001

- 22-25 National Truck Driving Championships - Minneapolis, Minnesota

(Please send any additions or changes to: Denis Litalien at 282-6346 or e-mail at [dentruck@hotmail.com](mailto:dentruck@hotmail.com))