

# Behind The Wheel

Newsletter of the Maine Professional Drivers Association



Volume XI, No. 4

*“Committed to Safety, Courtesy, and Professionalism”*

July / August 2001

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*by Fred Thompson*

Before I write anything else, I want to offer my prayers and condolences to the families and friends of the victims of the tragic events of September 11, 2001.

I am so proud to see so many truckers out there displaying the American flag on their vehicles in some form or another, as a sign of their support and patriotism for the United States of America. The coming months and years will certainly be a time of testing for the people of this great nation. I know all of you my fellow truckers out there will be ready to do whatever it takes to offer your support in any way you can.

In this newsletter you will find the registration form for our annual banquet, to be held at the Ground Round restaurant in Augusta, Maine. I want to encourage all of you that possibly can to attend this evening filled with fun, food, door prizes, and socializing with other MPDA members.

You will also find a ballot with the names of those nominated for the many offices of this association. We elect new officers every two years and this is the year for that to take place. Please, Please take the time to return your ballot with a vote for those nominated or the name of someone you would like to see in a given office written in the space provided. The names of those elected will be announced at this years banquet. There is also another form to nominate people for special recognition in a number of different categories, which are explained elsewhere in this newsletter.

The winner of the \$500.00 MPDA scholarship will also be announced at our annual banquet. The directions to the Ground Round in Augusta can be found with the registration form.

Remember to drive safely, courteously, and professionally out there. I'll see you on the boulevard.

*Fred Thompson*

## COMPETITION NOTES

### Associated Grocers

**Roger Sproul** reports that the Driving Competition held at Associated Grocers headquarters in Gardiner, Maine was a great time, with a DJ from radio station B-98.5 WEBB providing music. He adds, “Nelson Pendexter and I were such scary looking judges, three drivers refused to even try backing into our alley dock problem. That helped keep the scores low, but not low enough to prevent declaring a winner, who I understand will be given a trip to the NAWGA nationals in Houston.

*(EDITOR'S NOTE) - We are sorry to say we did not have the results of AG's competition at press time. We will include them in the next issue of Behind the Wheel.*

### Northeast Truck Drivers Charity Challenge

On Sunday, September 16th, the 5th Annual Northeast Truck Drivers Charity Challenge was held at Devens Commerce Center in Devens, Massachusetts.

This event was put on by the following Drivers Associations:

- \* Maine Professional Drivers Assn.
- \* Massachusetts Professional Drivers Assn.
- \* Champions Council of New York
- \* Connecticut Assn. of Professional Truck Driving Champions
- \* New Hampshire Professional Drivers Assn.

The day was a huge success as 160 drivers participated in the competition. Registration was held from 7:30 to 8:45 and the driving started promptly at 9:00am. The last drivers was on the course at 3:15 pm, at which time the raffle was held and awards were handed out.

Over \$26,000 was raised for St. Jude's Children's Hospital

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**WE HAVE SUFFERED A TRAGEDY LIKE NO OTHER IN OUR GREAT COUNTRY'S HISTORY... AS WELL AS THE WORLD'S.**  
**THE EDITORS OF "BEHIND THE WHEEL" ASKS YOU TO SAY A PRAYER FOR THE HEROES AND LOVED ONES OF THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2001 TRAGEDY... WHILE MAKING SURE WE NEVER FORGET.**

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and an undetermined amount was raised for the Red Cross after the September 11, 2001 tragedy.

Winners in each class were as follows:

- \* Straight Truck – Tony Gemma
- \* 3-Axle Van – Frank DeGeorge
- \* 4-Axle Van – Bob Partridge
- \* 5-Axle Van – Tim Sweeney
- \* 5 Axle Sleeper – Warren Lewis
- \* 5-Axle Tank – Bob Lyman
- \* 5 Axle Flatbed – Brent Cassanara
- \* Twin-Trailer – Andy Wooster
- \* Auto Transporter – Al Charbonneau
- \* 5-Axle Dump Truck – James Rigney

**Pre-Trip Inspection**

- 1) Tony Spero
- 2) Roland Bolduc
- 3) Everett MacMaster

**Top Retired Driver**

Al Charbonneau

**Top Father & Son Drivers**

Warren Lewis

Nathan Lewis

**Top Management Driver**

Fred Nordloh

**Set-up Team Award**

Bob Darling

**Team Award**

CCX

**Top Fundraiser**

Ozzie Bartlett (\$3515.00)

Thanks to all who came and participated, raised funds and sponsors, that helped with organizing and set-up. A special thanks to Rob Fernald for the extra trip to Maine the morning of the competition.

*Continued below*

**ATA National Truck Driving Championships**

The 2001 ATA National Truck Driving Championships held in Minneapolis from August 22nd through the 25<sup>th</sup>. Following are some of the results:

**Maine Drivers:**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Company</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Place</u>
Randy DeVault	Roadway	3-Axle	6th
Mark Morrow	BOC Gases	Tank	12th
Denis Litalien	Shaw's	4-Axle	12th
Harold Sherwood	Pottle's	Straight	35th



**National Winners:**

<u>Class</u>	<u>Driver</u>	<u>Company</u>	<u>State</u>
Straight Truck	Daniel Poole	Boeing Co.	Washington
3-Axle	Gerald Cudmore	Yellow Freight	South Dakota
4-Axle	Raymond Simon	Yellow Freight	Minnesota
5-Axle Van	Joseph Obregon	Ruan Trans.	Georgia
Flatbed	Mike Hanson	Sysco	Minnesota
Tank	Norman Melanson	Exxon/Mobil	Virginia
Sleeper	Ricky Pledger	Wal-Mart	Texas
Twins	David MacDonald	Roadway	Kansas
Auto Transporter	Steve Davey	Hadley Trans.	Region 1 (CA, NV)
Vehicle Condition Award	Gary Ott	Roadway Express	Montana
Team Award			Minnesota
Rookie of the Year	Randy Pehrson	Wal-Mart	Colorado
Professional Excellence Award			
(formerly Sontheimer Award)	Joe Gonzalez	H.E. Butt Grocery Co.	Texas
Grand Champion	Raymond Simon	Yellow Freight	Minnesota

**BOC Gases by Steve Bayse**

On Saturday, September 22nd, BOC Gases in Kittery held their 11th "Truck Rodeo". Drivers competed in the competition

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**NEXT MPDA OFFICIER'S MEETINGS**

**NOVEMBER 2 AT 6:30PM – PAM ROGER'S HOME - YARMOUTH, MAINE**

**NEXT MPDA GENERAL MEETING**

**GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING – 8:00AM – TONY ROMAS – S. PORTLAND, MAINE**

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which included a written test, pre-trip inspection, and a seven event driving course. BOC combines the competition with a family day BBQ lunch.

On the written test, in addition to questions on the trucking industry and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs), BOC also included questions based on the safety, HAZMAT, and specific product training that the Drivers have received through the year.

Four of the competing Drivers had never competed in any type of driving competition before. Set-up of the driving course was done by **Denis Litalien** and **Rob Fernald** and the course equipment was provided by the Maine Professional Drivers Association. BOC Gases Driver **Barry Mullen** worked with Denis and BOC Distribution Manager Steve Bayse to coordinate all aspects of the event.

Local companies contributing to the success of this event were: Cummins Northeast, Coastal Truck and Trailer, Hallamore Corporation, and Liberty International.

And the winners were:

**1st Place: Mark Morrow**

**2nd Place: Mike LaMontagne**

**3rd place: Aaron Seibert**

**Pre-trip High Score: Mark Morrow**

**Written test High Score: Mark Morrow**

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## LEGISLATIVE

According to an article in Transport Topics, no new hours-of-service proposals will be issued for at least a year while the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration awaits the results of an independent cost-benefit study, according to FMCSA spokesman David Longo, who said the cost study would take at least a year to complete from the time the contractor is selected. He said the contractor would be selected "soon".

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### CLAPP AS FMCSA CHIEF

Joseph M. Clapp has been confirmed as head of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration by the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation

Committee. For more information, you can log onto the web at <http://www.ttnews.com/members/topNews/0007868.html>

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### NATIONAL TRUCK DRIVER APPRECIATION WEEK

August 25 through September 1 was designated as National Truck Driver Appreciation Week by the American Trucking Associations. Many companies used this opportunity to thank their drivers for the outstanding job they have done over the past year.

One company who came to our attention as doing something for their drivers was **Pottle's Transportation** of Bangor, who hosted cookouts on 2 days at their terminals in Bangor and Bilerica, Mass. On Saturday of that week, they sponsored a company outing at Funtown/Splashtown amusement and water park. This outing included admission to both parks free of charge along with a company barbecue.

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## MAINE TURNPIKE NEWS

The **Maine Turnpike Authority** recently announced plans to make the next generation of electronic toll collection in Maine compatible with systems operating in at least eight eastern states, including Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and eventually in New Hampshire.

Under the plan, the Maine Turnpike will replace all Transpass transponders and activate the updated system by the fall of 2003. Interstate compatibility, however, will not be available until spring of 2004. The Turnpike Authority is switching to the new transponder months before offering compatibility to avoid investing additional money in the purchase of current generation technology, only to phase it out in a matter of months.

When the system is in full operation in 2004, Maine subscribers will be able to pay their tolls electronically on more than 40 toll roads, bridges and tunnels in the eastern United States, most of which operate under the brand name of *E-ZPass*. The Massachusetts Turnpike operates a like-system, but markets it as *FastLane*. Once compatibility is achieved, Maine Turnpike officials say that they will likely adopt the *E-ZPass* brand name to promote consistency.

Launched in September 1997, the Maine Turnpike's Transpass system was one of the first highway electronic toll paying systems in the northeast—the first in New England. The New York Thruway was the only other highway in the region collecting tolls electronically. No technology or brand dominated the industry and compatibility between states was still a distant vision.

*E-ZPass* is wildly popular in the states where it is offered. More than 5 million *E-ZPass* transponders are currently in use in New York and New Jersey. More than 3 million have been issued in Massachusetts.

The Turnpike will also significantly upgrade its customer services by making account information directly accessible over a secure, interactive web site and automated phone system. The total cost of transitioning to *E-Z Pass* is estimated to be \$9.25 million. Violette said that the costs have been budgeted and can be paid for without increasing toll rates.

When Maine's version of *E-ZPass* comes on line in 2004, it will be linked with at least 16 toll agencies, operating more than 40 toll roads, tunnels and bridges in seven other states; New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland and West Virginia. These states have joined together to form the Interagency Group (IAG), which develops guidelines for achieving compatibility between agencies. The Maine Turnpike Authority has applied for membership in the IAG.

# MPDA Calendar of Events – 2001/ 2002

(As of September 30, 2001 – Including events that MPDA or its members are involved in, or are of interest to our members)

## October

- 3 **Meeting for Southern Convoy** – Old Country Buffet Rest., Maine Mall – 6:30pm – contact Kevin Battle at <trucking4kids@aol.com>
- 6 **Convoy Set-up Day**, Maine Mall Festival Lot, So.Portland – 8:00am - contact Kevin Battle at <trucking4kids@aol.com> or 623-1396
- 7 **Maine Trucking for Kids Convoy**, Portland/South Portland - contact Kevin Battle at <trucking4kids@aol.com> or 623-1396
- 25 **So. Convoy Wrap-up Meeting** - Maine Mall Office - 6:00pm - contact Rhonda Nicholson at 828-2060 or <Rhonda.Nicholson@srweiner.com>
- 20-21 **NAWGA National Truck Driving Competition** - Houston
- 27 **MPDA ROADTEAM Training (Defensive Driving Course)** – MMTA office, Augusta - contact Ron Hutchins at <ronh@mma.com> or 623-4128

## November

- 2 **MPDA Board of Directors Meeting** – Pam Roger’s House, Yarmouth – 6:30pm - contact Fred Thompson at <Tfthomp5349@aol.com> or 582-1343
- 10 **12<sup>th</sup> Annual MPDA Banquet** – Ground Round Restaurant, Augusta – contact Terry Stuart at 727-3704 or <stuarterry@yahoo.com>

## December

- 3 **7<sup>th</sup> Annual Truckers Drive for Kids** – New Hampshire Professional Drivers Assn. Convoy Concord, NH - contact Mickey Rafeal at 603-435-6366 or <micrafeal@aol.com>
- 6 **MMTA Shipper’s Night** – Holiday Inn by the Bay, Portland - contact Cliff Gray at 623-4128 or <grayc@mma.com>

# 2002

## January

- 12 **MPDA Board of Directors Meeting** – 9:00am - Hannaford Trucking Co. Office So. Portland - contact Fred Thompson at <Tfthomp5349@aol.com> or 582-1343
- 19 **MPDA General Meeting** – 8:00am – Tony Roma’s Restaurant – So. Portland –contact Fred Thompson at <Tfthomp5349@aol.com> or 582-1343

## February

- 16 **MPDA Board of Directors Meeting** – 9:00am - MMTA Office - Augusta - contact Fred Thompson at <Tfthomp5349@aol.com> or 582-1343

## March

- 16 **MPDA Officers/General Meeting** - MMTA Office, Augusta - 7:30/9:00am - contact Fred Thompson at <Tfthomp5349@aol.com> or 582-1343

## April

- 13 **MPDA Officers/General Meeting** – Location TBA, Bangor - 7:30/9:00am - contact Fred Thompson at <Tfthomp5349@aol.com> or 582-1343

## August

- 13-17 **ATA National Truck Driving Championships** – Milwaukee, Wisconsin

## October

- 6 **Maine Trucking for Kids Convoy**, Portland/South Portland - contact Kevin Battle at <trucking4kids@aol.com>

(Please send any additions or changes to: Denis Litalien at 282-6346 or e-mail at [mpda@mpda.maine.org](mailto:mpda@mpda.maine.org))