



(Continued from page 1)

So by now you're probably thinking that's all well and fine but what about educating the public? December through February is always a little slow at the driver-ed schools. We have been doing a few though in Bangor, Ellsworth, Hampden, Gardiner, Richmond, Hallowell, Hollis, and Standish. **Dave Stuart** is getting ready to do another program on the Public Access TV channel with the troopers down in Hollis. **Jim** and **Mona** are getting things organized for the Boston Truck show in May.

We will be starting up and going full tilt at the driver-ed classes by spring. I had a chance to speak at the Gardiner Lions club in January. I talked about truck safety and gave them some tips on sharing the road with a large truck. I had to make a quick getaway when they tried to recruit me into their club. The Lions really are a great bunch of people, who do a lot of good things in the community. I also had a chance to teach a Driving Dynamics course at Lewiston High School in February.

Now as an added feature of the ROADTEAM report, and I hope to be able to do this each time I submit this report, here is a safety tip for all you drivers out there.

1 How often when you are driving do you check your following distance from the vehicle in front of you?

- You should constantly monitor your following distance to be sure you are not creeping up on the vehicle in front of you. Quite often drivers end up too close to the vehicle in front of them or find they are actually tailgating the vehicle in front of them because they were not paying attention to this important detail of driving. Most rear-end collisions are caused because people are following too close to the vehicle ahead of them.

2 What is the minimum safe following distance, in seconds, you should be from the vehicle in front of you at highway speeds?

- Four to six seconds is the recommended safe following distance at highway speeds under ideal conditions. When driving in any type of inclement weather you need to increase that distance even more depending on the road conditions.

Tailgating in any vehicle is not a safe practice nor is it legal. All too often the trucking industry gets a black eye because of 18 wheelers tailgating and intimidating smaller vehicles.

Lets all try to be more aware of our following distance, don't tailgate, and promote safe driving habits by our own example. If you drive a truck remember people are watching your actions so make us all look good and be safe out there on the boulevard with the rest of the motoring public. **Lets Share the Road Safely.**

That's it for this issue of *Behind the Wheel*. Speaking of on the boulevard, I'll see you out there in the Macomber 'One Stack MACK with the sliding window in the back'.

*Fred Thompson Manager MPDA ROADTEAM*

## LEGISLATIVE

### LEGISLATIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

\* LD 599 An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Task Force on Rail Transportation includes a provision that fines for violations of the weight limits on tri-axle trailers would go into a railroad fund.

\* LD 576 An Act Concerning the Use of Safety Rear View Mirrors clarifies that a vehicle hauling a load must be equipped with rear view mirrors on both sides.

*This does not say what a vehicle hauling a load is. Is that a load of kids in a minivan or 3 sacks of potatoes in the back of a pickup? The law the bill seeks to "clarify" already says any vehicle not allowing the driver a view to the rear must be equipped with mirrors. The proposed amend-*

*ment, in my opinion, does not clarify anything!*

\* LD 571 An Act to Improve the Safety of Public Roads would give the Secretary of State authority to suspend drivers who had driven at an imprudent speed or exceeded the maximum speed limit by 30 mph and caused an accident resulting in death.

*Before taking a position on this bill, I would want to know the legal definition of "imprudent speed". Does it include speed too fast for conditions such as in snow storms. Often, under such conditions, too fast for conditions may be below the posted speed limit. Would a person driving below the posted speed limit, yet too fast to control the vehicle on (let's say) unrecognized black ice be subject to losing his license?*

\* LD 412 a Resolve to Require Reports from the Maine State Police Regarding Commercial Trucks would require MSP to provide monthly reports to the Legislature's Transportation Committee regarding the number of trucks stopped by MSP and the defects found.

*It is sponsored by a Representative from Hodgdon who is not on that committee and does not say why these monthly reports are needed.*

\* L.D. 0244 Resolve, Directing the Department of Transportation To Conduct a Feasibility Study as Required by the Federal Government To Increase the Weight Limits on Interstate 95 from Augusta to Houlton, Making the Weight Limits Equivalent to Restrictions South of Augusta (Sponsor: MARLEY)

\* L.D. 0318 Resolve, To Direct the Department of Transportation To Develop Rules To Control Wheel Spray from Large Commercial Vehicles (Sponsor: COWGER)

\* L.D. 0322 Bill "An Act To Set Limits on Fines That May Be Assessed for Nonhabitual Offenders under Maine's Truck Weight Laws" (Sponsor: MILLS P)

*Roger Sproul, Legislative Officer*

## PUBLICITY OFFICER'S REPORT

I was pleasantly surprised the other day. I received a call from one of our stronger supporters – **Bud Sawyer**.

As some of you may know, I am working on producing some Public Service Announcements to be broadcast on radio and TV stations and Bud has again, so graciously, offered to help us get this endeavor off the ground. I am anxious to start working on this with Bud and others who would like to be involved or help.

I see a real need to let non-CDL drivers be aware of what the Professional Driver goes through each and every day, as well as let the public know and realize what MPDA is all about.

If you would be interested in helping with some of these PSA's, please feel free to contact me. I would also like to hear your ideas and suggestions. I can be reached at 207-727-3704 or via email at dstuart@mainepda.org.

On another note. As you all know, **Pete Mortensen** has done a superb job as Membership Officer and I have no doubt that he will do as good a job as he has offered to help me with the MPDA website.

I'll be getting together with Pete in the next couple weeks, and we will be going over the MPDA website. Our goal is to give it a new look, and at the same time, integrate it more tightly with Public Relations.

Now that we have our website on a more reliable server, with more capabilities, we can stream audio and video from it for our visitors.

For example – The PSA's I mentioned earlier – we will be able to make those available to visitors to the MPDA website from all over the world.

I am excited about this, but bare with us, this won't be able to  
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be done overnight. It will take a few months to get it all up and going. I will keep you all posted and may call on some of you to help me test it.

One last thing – I received a call from MPDA member **Randy DeVault** a few weeks back. He was very concerned about all the email messages he has received with file attachments containing a virus. And it seems he has been getting several of them from other MPDA members. He is not alone so I have found out since I talked to Randy.

So I did a little research. It seems there is a computer virus running rampant that attacks a users address book, especially an Microsoft Outlook address book, but other email program's address books as well. This virus, in the background – and transparent to the user, sends itself to everyone in the address book(s). These emails are roughly 120-130 kilobytes in size, but the giveaway is there is nothing showing in the message – it is blank. If you get an email like this... delete it... **DO NOT OPEN OR RUN THE FILE!!**

The bad thing about this whole thing – These MPDA members, or anyone else for that matter, most likely don't even know these email messages are originating and being sent. That's how sneaky this virus is.

So, without getting into an in depth explanation, my recommendation is this. If you have a virus program, update the virus definitions and do a complete system scan. If you don't have a virus program, get one and protect your system. Most virus programs are able to scan incoming and outgoing email as you send and receive it. (My personal favorite – Nortons)

If you have any question or concerns, please feel free to get in touch with me and I'll be more than happy to give you a hand.

*Dave Stuart – MPDA Public Relations Officer*

## **MPDA ADMINISTRATIVE NOMINATION OF OFFICERS**

Current Officers terms expire on October 31, 2003. Nominations are being taken for all positions. The positions open are:

- President
- Vice President
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Legislative Officer
- Membership Officer
- Publicity Officer
- TDC Officer

If anyone is interested in serving in one of these positions or would like to nominate someone, please contact Terry Stuart at 727-3704, or via email [tstuart@mainepda.org](mailto:tstuart@mainepda.org)

## **SECRETARY'S REPORT MEETING HIGH LIGHTS**

The term for the position of Executive Director ended on February 28, 2003. After much discussion at two meetings it was decided that the position of Executive Director would be left unfilled, until when, at a future date MPDA can explore this option again. As in any business or organization, it is time to tighten the belt and make sure the association will be able to continue for a long time. MPDA is as busy as ever and in need of any help that is given. As you can see from the calendar of events that is posted in each newsletter, there is plenty to do. The calendar does not include all the behind the scenes work required to fulfill the obligations of MPDA. The officers have currently taken over all the responsibilities that have always been handled by an executive director. This will make their loads a little heavier. An executive

director is an important position in the day to day running of MPDA. This current board of directors is committed to moving forward and to everything that MPDA has stood for since its inception.

Most recently, Rhonda Nicholson held the position of Executive Director. Previous to that, **Denis Litalien** was the hub for the entire organization for many years.

MPDA has come a long way. There is more to do. I encourage members to come to a meeting. Get involved. This is a family oriented organization. As a member of MPDA your spouse/companion is automatically a member also, with the same privileges as an associate member. Come to one of the company competitions or a general meeting to see what we do and how much fun it can be. Please consider volunteering one day this year to a good cause.

*(Editor's Note – Please see the final article from Rhonda as Executive Director of MPDA following this report from the Secretary)*

You will see in another article of this newsletter that this is an election year for Officers of MPDA. Anyone who would like to step up and run for a position on the board or make a nomination is welcome. Come, help to make a difference.

It's that time again! The Maine Truck Driving Championship will be held on May 17, 2003 at Dysart's in Bangor. If you are planning on staying at the Bangor Motor Inn that weekend please call and reserve your room soon as they are filling up fast. The number to call to make reservations is 207-947-0355. The website for Bangor Motor Inn is <http://travel.yahoo.com/p/hotel/330638>.

For more information or if you are interested in lending a hand at this event, please contact Cliff Gray at [grayc@mmta.com](mailto:grayc@mmta.com) or 623-4128.

Some agenda items for the upcoming General Meeting to be held on Saturday, March 15, 2003 are:

- A bylaws change to articles II and V will be put to the membership for a first vote. These articles deal with the qualifications for becoming president of MPDA.
- A second vote to change bylaws article Article II, Section V. This article change stipulates the privileges of spouses and companions of paying members in MPDA.
- A second vote proposing an increase in the dues beginning in 2004. The first vote passed at the January 2003 meeting.
- Formation of a committee to conduct an audit of the association at the end of the fiscal year in November. Anyone with experience in this area is welcome to join this committee.

The meeting will be held at the MMTA Offices in Augusta and will begin at 9AM. For more information you may contact Dick Brown at 799-1030 or [rbrown9@maine.rr.com](mailto:rbrown9@maine.rr.com)

*Terry Stuart – MPDA Secretary*

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE**

*"I am sad to report that on Saturday, February 22, 2003, the Board of Directors of The Maine Professional Drivers Association terminated the position of Executive Director"*

*"As we all know the membership numbers have come down in the last few years and the Board of Directors believe that it is in the best interest of the membership to save what monies they have coming in and not spend it on this position. I commend the Board of Directors for making this wise decision"*

*"I am writing to inform the membership that I will still be active in the Southern Convoy and will continue to be a member of this committee. I also wanted to thank all of you for making me*

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feel so welcomed and friendly. I will be leaving with an empty space in my heart. I hope to see you all soon".

Rhonda Nicholson

## NOTES FROM UP & DOWN THE ROAD

### NEW ENGLAND TRUCK SHOW

The 2003 New England Truck Show will be held May 8, 9 and 10<sup>th</sup> this year at the Bayside Auditorium in Boston. Volunteers are needed to help in the booth for all 3 days. For more information please contact Jim Costa at <jcosta@sacoriver.net> or 727-5349.

### 2003 CONVOY NEWS

Just to update the members on the Northern Convoy. MPDA members, **Stan McLaughin** and **Raymond Rogers** are attending regular meetings with the Bangor Lions Club planning the upcoming convoy which will take place on Sunday June 1, 2003.

Lineup will be in Brewer, Me. (location to be announced later) and the convoy will end up at Bass Park in Bangor, Me.

Stan tells me that he was asked to be the guest speaker at the Bangor Lions Club meeting that took place a few weeks ago to talk about the MPDA and the MMTA and to give the Lions Club members some idea what it is we do. Stan also talked about how important it is for the MPDA and the Bangor Lions Club to work together to raise funds for the Kid's charities that will benefit from the convoy.

Not only did Stan do a great job as always, but he did a good enough job speaking to prompt the Bangor Lions Club to make a \$1,000 grant to the Northern Convoy Committee.

Good job Stan and Ray – keep up the good work. Members like you two make all of us look good.

Thanks again,

Dick Brown President MPDA

### GROUP SUES TO STOP USE OF ROAD FUNDS FOR RAIL WORK

The New Hampshire Motor Transportation Association sued the state of New Hampshire Dec. 5, seeking to block the use of highway funds for commuter rail projects, the Nashua Telegraph reported.

"Despite its bumps and potholes, America's highway system is the best in the world because of dedicated highway user fees," Todd Spencer, executive vice president of OOIDA, said. "Raids on those funds whether in Nashua or in Washington, DC, should not be allowed, or ultimately, the entire system fails."

In the lawsuit, the group says the plan violates the state constitution, which requires fuel taxes and motor vehicle fees be spent only in support of roads and bridges. In addition, three times during the 1990's, the state Legislature killed bills that would have amended the constitution, allowing highway fund money to be used to support public transit

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### STRATEGIES FOR COMMERCIAL VEHICLE INSTRUCTORS

Northern Maine Technical College is once again offering the "Teaching Strategies for Commercial Vehicle Instructors" course in Bangor.

The 48 hour course will be spread over several weekends between March 28 and May 10 to make it more accessible to potential teachers currently working full time jobs.

It meets all of the educational requirements established by the

Bureau of Motor Vehicles to become a licensed commercial vehicle driver education instructor.

More information is available by calling the Continuing Education Division of NMVTI at 207-768-2845

#### Behind the Wheel Newsletter

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

#### MPDA's Board of Directors

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## **Our Corporate Offices:**

43 Hemco Road  
South Portland, ME 04106  
1-800-544-5747

# MPDA CALENDAR OF EVENTS – 2003 (As of February 15, 2003)

## March

- 15 **MPDA General Meeting** – MMTA Office, Augusta – 9:00am– contact Dick Brown at <rbrown9@maine.rr.com> or 799-1030
- 25 **So. Convoy Committee Meeting** – Old Country Buffet Rest., Maine Mall - 6:30pm - contact Jim Costa at <jcosta@sacoriver.net > or 727-5349
- 29 **MPDA ROADTEAM Meeting** – Hannaford Trucking – 9:am – South Portland, Maine contact Fred Thompson at <TFthomp5349@aol.com> or 582-1343

## April

- 17-18 **Tri-State Transportation Safety Conference** – Fairlee, Vt. – contact 802-655- 7769 or www.aot.state.vt.us/sms/documents/tristatelakemorey.doc
- 29 **So. Convoy Committee Meeting** – Old Country Buffet Rest., Maine Mall - 6:30pm - contact Jim Costa at <jcosta@sacoriver.net > or 727-5349

## May

- 3 **MPDA General Meeting** – Hannaford Trucking, S. Portland – 9:00am– contact Dick Brown at <rbrown9@maine.rr.com> or 799-1030
- 8-10 **New England Truck Show** – Bayside Auditorium, Boston
- 16 **TDC Set-up Day** – Dysart’s Truck Terminal, Hermon – Noon - contact Cliff Gray at <grayc@mmta.com> or 623-4128
- 17 **Maine State Truck Driving Championships** –Dysart’s/Bangor Motor Inn – 5:30am - contact Cliff Gray at <grayc@mmta.com> or 623-4128
- 23-24 **Tentative Coffee Break** – Maine Turnpike & I-95 Locations – contact Dick Brown at <rbrown9@maine.rr.com> or 799-1030
- 27 **So. Convoy Committee Meeting** – Old Country Buffet Rest., Maine Mall – 6:30pm - contact Jim Costa at <jcosta@sacoriver.net > or 727-5349

## June

- 1 **Northern Convoy for Kids** – Bangor/Brewer - contact Stan McLaughlin at <swiftrucker@aol.com> or 827-7209
- 15 **Massachusetts State Truck Driving Championships** – Western Mass location – contact Bob Darling at 508-853-9088 or <bdar66@aol.com>
- 21 **New Hampshire State Truck Driving Championships** –N.H. Dept. of Public Safety, Concord – contact Vera Tucker at 603-224-07337 or <nhmta@tds.net>
- 24 **So. Convoy Committee Meeting** – Old Country Buffet Rest., Maine Mall – 6:30pm - contact Jim Costa at <jcosta@sacoriver.net > or 727-5349

## July

- 19 **MPDA General Meeting** – Cole’s Transportation Museum, Bangor – 9:00am – contact Dick Brown at <rbrown9@maine.rr.com> or 799-1030
- 29 **So. Convoy Committee Meeting** – Old Country Buffet Rest., Maine Mall – 6:30pm - contact Jim Costa at <jcosta@sacoriver.net > or 727-5349

## August

- 19-23 **ATA National Truck Driving Championships** – Columbus Convention Center, Columbus, Ohio - contact Cliff Gray at <grayc@mmta.com> or 623-4128
- 26 **So. Convoy Committee Meeting** – Old Country Buffet Rest., Maine Mall – 6:30pm - contact Jim Costa at <jcosta@sacoriver.net > or 727-5349
- 29-31 **Tentative Coffee Break** – Maine Turnpike & I-95 Locations – contact Dick Brown at <rbrown9@maine.rr.com> or 799-1030

## September

- 1 **Tentative Coffee Break** – Maine Turnpike & I-95 Locations – contact Dick Brown at <rbrown9@maine.rr.com> or 799-1030
- 6 **2003 Charity FunDrive** – Lehigh Travel Plaza (VA. I-81, Exit 195) - contact Fred Schenk at <StJudeRoadeo4kids@excite.com> or 508-453-3632
- 20 **MPDA General Meeting** – Hannaford Trucking, S. Portland – 9:00am– contact Dick Brown at <rbrown9@maine.rr.com> or 799-1030
- 30 **So. Convoy Committee Meeting** – Old Country Buffet Rest., Maine Mall – 6:30pm - contact Jim Costa at <jcosta@sacoriver.net > or 727-5349

## October

- 4 **US Professional Truck Driving Championships** - Milwaukee
- 11 **Convoy Set-up Day** – 9:00am – Portland - contact Jim Costa at <jcosta@sacoriver.net > or 727-5349
- 12 **Maine Trucking for Kids Convoy**, 7:00am - Portland/South Portland - contact Jim Costa at <jcosta@sacoriver.net> or 727-5349

## November

- 14 – **Annual MPDA Annual Meeting & Awards Banquet** – Location and time to be announced.

## **MMTA Holds it's Annual Shipper's Night**

On the evening of December 12, 2002 the Maine Motor Transport Association held its annual SHIPPER'S NIGHT at the Holiday Inn by the Bay, in Portland, Maine. There was a good turnout for a day that started out with several inches of snowfall.

The guest speaker of the evening was Governor-elect John E. Baldacci. He was introduced by his families close personal friend "H.O. Bouchard" who made sure the Governor-elect was in attendance for the event. The Governor had a real good grip on what the Trucking Industry means to Maine and its economy. He outlined several ideas he had that he couldn't wait to get started on once he was sworn in to Office in January 2003 (he also told some good jokes).

The evening continued with the Great West Casualty awards which were formally known as the Trailmobile Awards given to the Companies who operate in Maine for the miles their trucks log in Maine. Dale Hanington the CEO of MMTA gave a brief run down on how the Companies are selected for the awards and the Grand Champion Awards whereas they have instituted some changes.

The biggest change is the addition of one more Grand Champion Award. Now the Award will have two winners. One for under 3 million miles and one for over 3 million miles.

The winners were as follows:

### **Under 500,000 miles Under 1,000,000 miles**

- 1st place Frank L. Woodworth Inc. 1st place **J & S Oil Company Inc**
- 2nd place Northland Services Inc 2nd place Brockway Smith Company
- 3rd place Jim Gillies Lumber Inc

### **Under 3,000,000 miles Under 6,000,000 miles**

- 1st place Timberland Trucking Company Inc 1st place R. F. Chamberland Inc
- 2nd place **Dysarts Transportation Inc** 2nd place Blue Bird Ranch Inc
- 3rd place Currier Trucking Transportation 3rd place Central Maine Transport

### **Under 10,000,000 miles Over 10,000,000 miles**

- 1st place **H.O. Bouchard Inc** 1st place **R.C. Moore**
- 2nd place **Carlen Transport** 2nd place **Pottle's Transportation**
- 3rd place **Clifford W. Perham Inc** 3rd place **Hannaford Trucking Inc**

### **Grand Champions**

#### **Under 3 million miles**

- Currier Trucking Transportation

#### **Over 3 million miles**

- H.O. Bouchard Inc

The evening was capped off by MMTA's Driver of the Year award which was presented by the Maine State Police to Doug E. Wolfe of the **Emery Waterhouse Company** who took home the honor of being the 2002 Driver of the Year.

Doug and his wife were present for the award presentation. Doug has logged more than 1.7 million miles accident free over his 30 year driving career. Most of which have been in north-western Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and up-state New York.

*By David Littlefield*