



Behind the Wheel

Newsletter of the Maine Professional Drivers Association

Volume XVI, No. 4

“Committed to Safety, Courtesy, and Professionalism”

May 2006

LAST CHANCE

2006 Maine State Truck Driving Championships

Time Is Getting Short

If you haven't gotten the needed material and registered yet, you need to ASAP. Even if you are not going to compete, and would like to help with the competition, there is still time to get involved.

If you are going to compete, your company should contact Cliff Gray for registration materials @ 207-623-4128. If you want to help with the event you should get in touch with Dave Stuart @ 221-3198 or Cliff Gray.

May 20th is coming up quick so don't delay - get that needed material ASAP.

Memorial Service Planned

Saturday, June 3 at 1:30 pm

A Memorial Service is planned for those who would like to honor two great icons in our industry.

The service will be held in the Suzanne W. Cole Conference Room at the Cole Land Transportation Museum, 405 Perry Road, Bangor, ME 04401

Phone: 207-990-3600

All attendees will be guests of the museum for the afternoon.



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Presidents Report

~~ Last Call ~~

As you know, the calendar says we are only about 1 week away from the 2006 Maine State TDC. If you, for some reason, have not sent for or received your material needed to compete, there still may be time if you act fast. On the front page of this issue you will find the contact information. Give Cliff Gray a call at 623-4128 and I am sure he will do his best to get you registered.

As always, volunteers are needed to help set the course up, judge the course, and other things that go on in the background to make this event a success. So if you would like to help, give me a call at 207-221-3198 and I will make sure you get any needed information.

~~ 'tis the Season ~~

Warm weather has sprung. With warm weather comes an increase in traffic. With an increase in traffic comes more congestion. With more congestion comes shorter patience levels. With shorter patience levels comes "The Test". A test of how much of a professional you are.

With most every professional truck driving job, tourists and increase in traffic affect how busy we are, and our paychecks are affected. Some driving jobs are affected more than others. Such as myself, I deliver gasoline, so needless to say the increase in traffic affects my paycheck more than others.

For example, **Ryder Transportation** gets busier because of the need for more trucks to rent and lease. **Hannaford Trucking** and **Shaw's** gets busier because there are more mouths to feed. **Sysco of Northern New England** gets busier because there are more people eating at restaurants. I think you get my point here - without the tourists and the increase in traffic, driving jobs can be affected in a negative way. So please be patient!! Fall will be here before you know it.

~~ As Usual ~~

If you have any question about anything I have talked about here, or anything else for that matter, I encourage and welcome your calls at 727-3704 or 221-3198 and your email at dstuart@mainepda.org.

Until next time, be safe, be courteous, and by all means, be professional !! It does reflect on you, your company, and our industry.

Dave Stuart, MPDA President

Eyes on the Road

New Data Suggests That Distracted Drivers Are Bigger Problem Than Had Been Thought

Most of us don't start our morning commutes filled with dread. But perhaps we should, given the risks posed by the sleep deprived, cell phone-yakking, makeup-applying drivers around us.

If you want some sobering reading, try the big study of driver distraction released by the National Highway Traffic Administration, then follow that with preliminary findings that traffic deaths edged up in 2005 -- both in absolute numbers and in terms of 100 million vehicle miles traveled. In terms of highway safety, it appears that the oft-quoted line from Pogo, the classic Walt Kelly comic character, is right on target: "*We have met the enemy, and he is us.*"

Researchers at the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute rigged up 100 cars with video cameras and other data

recording devices to chronicle 42,300 hours of data and images of people driving in the general

vicinity of Washington, D.C., and the Virginia suburbs. The study captured video of a total of 241 drivers ranging in age from 18 to over 55. Over the course of a year, the test cars got into a total of 82 accidents (69 of which were fully recorded), 761 near crashes and 8,295 "incidents," defined as events requiring an evasive maneuver.

The study, available from VTTI or on NHTSA's Web site, is full of nuggets guaranteed to make you paranoid about fellow travelers on the highway. It may also cause some critical self-assessment among multi-tasking commuters.

The basic thrust of the study's data, including the grainy videos of people nodding off or looking over their shoulders just before rear-ending a car ahead, is that most drivers behave as if driving a car is a task that can be delegated to the reptilian regions of the brain that regulate such automatic behaviors as breathing and blinking. Thus, the

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motorist is free to process information or perform tasks that aren't related to the driving chore, including using a phone, having lunch, or, in the extreme, taking a catnap.

The study's findings make a persuasive case that

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drivers are wrong to think they can get away with this. The VTTI's work shows that any distraction, including getting behind

the wheel when you should be getting more sleep, greatly raises the odds of an accident or a gut-wrenching near-miss. NHTSA released a reminder of the stakes, saying that 43,200 people died in highway accidents last year, up from 42,636 in 2004. The fatality rate also rose to 1.46 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles traveled from 1.44 in 2004, which NHTSA says was the record low.

That said, the VTTI study data suggest not all drivers are equal -- some are really bad. A chart included in a long version of the study shows that two drivers were responsible for a disproportionate share of accidents. One 18-year-old woman was involved in three crashes, 53 near-crashes and 401 "incidents." A 41-year-old woman was involved in four crashes, 56 near-crashes and 449 incidents.

Pause and take that in. In the space of a year or so, two people were involved a total of 116 crashes or near-crashes, and a combined 850 incidents that involved some sort of swerving or emergency avoidance maneuver. Consider that this track record of bad driving was compiled even though the motorists knew that they were being watched by a camera. This makes you wonder what the world would be like if really bad drivers could somehow be taken off the road. This study (which, to be sure, is limited) suggests that targeting and revoking the driving privileges of the very worst drivers -- say, anyone who gets into three at-fault accidents in a year -- would make a big difference to overall highway safety, avoiding who knows how much injury, death and economic pain.

The data about what people do in their cars, and how it contributes to crashes, near-crashes and erratic driving is also discouraging. Fiddling with a "wireless device," usually a mobile phone, was by far

the biggest contributor to near-crashes and evasive-maneuver incidents. Talking on a cellphone was blamed for 466 bad driving incidents, and more than 35 near-misses. Dialing a hand-held cellphone was linked to 87 incidents of erratic driving.

The study concluded that using a mobile phone or handheld device made it nearly three times more likely that a driver would have a crash. Applying makeup raised the odds of a crash even more, to just above three times more likely. Reaching for a moving object -- a flying coffee cup, say -- made a crash nearly nine times more likely. Drivers had accidents and near-misses when they took their eyes off the road ahead to glance at a roadside distraction or a passenger.

Based on data gathered from police reports, researchers had thought that 25% to 30% of accidents involved some kind of driver distraction. But the Virginia Tech study suggests that 80% of crashes involve some kind of driver distraction or drowsiness within the three seconds prior to the crash, the NHTSA said in a statement.

The automatic response to all this is, Something should be done. But there doesn't appear to be any clear consensus on what -- other than to finance more studies.

Acting NHTSA Administrator Jacqueline Glassman expressed disapproval during a press conference of motorists who use wireless devices behind the wheel *"merely for convenience. We see people on the roadway talking on the phone, checking their stocks, checking scores, fussing with MP3 players, reading emails, all while driving 40, 50, 60, 70 miles per hour or even faster."*

But a NHTSA spokeswoman said Friday that the federal agency doesn't have jurisdiction to enact rules against specific driver behavior. The Governors Highway Safety Association, a safety group that has been vocal on issues like reducing speeding, responded to the Virginia Tech distraction study by urging states and local governments not to rush out and pass new bans on using cellphones behind the wheel.

 <p>Maine Motor Transportation Assn.</p> <p>You have trucking industry questions. You have trucking industry concerns. You can get trucking industry answers by giving us a call today at 207-623-4128</p> <p style="text-align: center;">or visit us at www.mmta.com</p>

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"We haven't seen any evidence that these laws are effective," says Jonathan Adkins, a spokesman for the Governors Highway Safety Association. "We don't think you can have a law to ban every bad driving behavior."

Joe Farren, a spokesman for CTIA-The Wireless Association, argues that "it may even provide drivers with a false sense of security when we design distraction laws or even education efforts that are narrowly focused on wireless devices."

"If you think your phone is going to distract you from driving," Mr. Farren says, "please do not use it. Period."

It's not surprising that a group that represents the cellphone industry would oppose bans on using mobile phones in cars: The mobile-phone industry gets substantial revenue from calls made on the road. The VTTI's conclusion? There should be a larger-scale study of distraction, big enough to capture 2,000 crashes. That's not a surprise, either.

But it seems clear enough what the problem is. The choice confronting the government, and individuals, is whether the solution is more regulation or a concerted effort to change social and cultural norms without giving police new grounds to write tickets.

I use a cellphone, now with a hands-free setup, to make calls at the end of my work day while I am driving the 40 minutes or so to my house. Perhaps I wouldn't do it if I was more conscious of the risk this behavior posed to me and my fellow citizens -- the way I am of the risks of smoking or excessive drinking. Perhaps I wouldn't do it if I knew that my insurance wouldn't cover damages caused in an accident tied to my failure to pay attention to traffic while on a call.

Of course, we should be careful what we wish for. We could all have cameras in our cars.

from the-Wall Street Journal, by Joe White,

HOS Update

ATA Can Intervene in Public Citizen's HOS Challenge

As of 4/12/2006

The United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit has granted the American Trucking Associations' request to intervene in Public Citizen's latest challenge to the FMCSA hours of service rules, ATA announced Tuesday.

Public Citizen is expected to challenge the new rules' 11-hour daily driving time limit; the 34-hour restart; and the agency's decision not to immediately mandate EOBRs.

Also granted intervention in support of FMCSA was NASSTRAC Inc.; The Health and Personal Care Logistics Conference Inc.; and United Parcel Service.

The interveners will file a joint brief in support of the challenged aspects of the HOS rules, focusing on how they advance public safety while meeting the operational needs of the trucking industry. A briefing schedule has not yet been set and final resolution of the case is expected to take until at least spring 2007.

- from truckinginfo.com

TDC Updates

On April 8, 2006, **SYSCO of Northern New England** had their competition. We would like to thank Todd Belanger for having us. It was a pleasure working with him and the other people at Sysco. Thank you Todd!!

On hand to help with the event was **Andy Reed, Denis Litalien, Alan Paradis, Ryan Stuart, Terry Stuart, Dick Brown, Rob Fernald and Dave Stuart**. There was a threatened with a few rain drops at first, but it stopped and we all stayed dry.

MPDA would like to congratulate the following winners that competed in the annual NNE Roadeo:

Warehouse

Pallet Jack

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| 1 st Place | Jeff Sweeney |
| 2 nd Place | Scott Cogswell |
| 3 rd Place | Trevor Goforth |

Forklift

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1 st Place | Jamie Irish |
| 2 nd Place | Chris Lappin |
| 3 rd Place | Scott Wilson |

Transportation

3 Axle

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1 st Place | Hayri Berberoglu |
| 2 nd Place | Dean Stitson |
| 3 rd Place | Jason King |

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5 Axle

1 st Place	Bill Butland
2 nd Place	Pat Anna
3 rd Place	Eric Berry

Management Driving Competition

1 st Place	Dain Thomason
2 nd Place	Greg Otterbein
3 rd Place	Richard Euler

MPDA Legislative Report "WB-62 for Me"

If you have been a commercial driver more than a day or two, you know as well as I do that the Dept. of Transportation doesn't do us any favors when it narrows driveway entrances so much that we can't make right turns into them without swerving over the centerline on the left and running over curbs on the right. Swerving over the centerline poses the risk of a headon collision. If we wait until oncoming traffic is clear, we have impatient drivers passing us on the right. If we try to avoid these problems by just turning right in from the right hand lane and blow a tire going over the curb, the company safety officer jumps us. It seems we just can't win no matter what.

The cause of all this calamity and frustration is that the Dept. of Transportation is still living in the 1960s. Back then, tractors were smaller and trailers were both shorter and narrower (42' x 96"). Now almost everyone is using 48' x 102" trailers and some are using 53'. But, the highway designers are still using the same 42 ft. wide entrance standard they used in 1960 and it doesn't work unless drivers drive on the wrong side of the road or run over curbs or both.

As we enter the 21st century, drivers should demand wider commercial driveway openings. Every commercial entrance should meet the AASHTO WB-62 turning radius standard. In most cases, that would be an opening of about 48 – 50 feet. However, in some cases, if the driveway comes back at more than 90, an even wider opening will be required.

I encourage every MPDA member to contact his legislator and ask him or her to require MDOT to update its design standards for the 21st century by making WB-62 turning radii the minimum standard for commercial entrances.

Roger Sproul

SUPPORT FOR THE WIVES IS OUT THERE

There exists a group of women who are like no other. They face struggles and stereotypes that would deter many women from their chosen lifestyle. Their husbands may be gone for days or weeks at a time. Outsiders question the strength of their marriages. Many manage households, marriages, jobs and children while their men are miles and miles away from home. Some see their husbands every day, some every few weeks and some every few months. These women are among the strongest, most resourceful and most empowered women on earth.

These women are truckers' wives. Overcoming obstacles that many would find unbearably difficult is a regular thing for these women. As a result, they have learned to be independent and flexible. These women are able to keep their home running smoothly while their men are away. Some have children they are raising, grass they are mowing and dryers they are fixing.

In response to these daily challenges, one trucker's wife had a brilliant idea. Kelly Livingstone decided that truckers' wives needed a place to go to find resources and information about the industry in a woman-friendly environment. These women needed a place to go to check the weather and road conditions, to find out more information on brokers and trucking companies, find articles that were relevant to them and a place to go when they were feeling alone, overwhelmed or just in need of a friend.

Thus, atruckerswife.com was born! Whether you are a wife, girlfriend or significant other, you are welcome on the site. Come to share, learn and to find a warm place in your day where others know what you are going through. You are not alone. Wives of retired truckers, those of you who are new to this life and everyone in-between, will find trucking resources, tips on what to send with your driver, poems, stories, articles, personal thoughts and lots more.

Visit www.atruckerswife.com today - the membership is free and the friendships are priceless.

-from Tenfourmagazine.com

We would like to thank Wagon Master of Scarborough, Maine for helping with maintenance and sticker on MPDA's southern trailer.

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DIABETIC TRUCKER HELPING PUT SPOTLIGHT ON DISEASE

THURMONT, Md. — Jeff Mather is doing all he can to put national focus on the plight he and countless other truck drivers share: diabetes.

Mather, 37, has been invited by the American Diabetes Association to participate in the organization's National Leadership Meeting and Call to Congress in Washington next month.

Mather was one of only three diabetes sufferers in his state to receive the invitation.

"I never expected it and I'm deeply honored," Mather told *The Trucker*. The event is scheduled for June 7-9 and he and his wife, Ginger, will spend "three days learning to talk to people on the Hill, something I've been wanting to do for a long, long time."

Mather said he has made several guest appearances on radio talk shows and been the subject of a number of print-media interviews since his story appeared in *The Trucker* issue of April 1-14.

Mather, who lives at Thurmont, Md., was sidelined last September after his malady was diagnosed. He was a driver-trainer for an Alabama trucking company at the time, but was soon discharged.

He said he was bitter at the company at first, but that "as it turns out, it was probably a blessing in disguise that they let me go. If they hadn't I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing now - getting out the word about how wrong the trucking industry treats drivers with diabetes."

In addition to relying on the media, Mather has his own Web site at www.myspace.com/jwm29. And he has been grinding out at least one e-mail a day to President George Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney advising them on what they could be doing to help those who've experienced loss of employment because of diabetes.

"If anyone thinks I'm going to be quiet or just lie down and die without a fight, they're badly mistaken," Mather said. "What has happened to me and probably hundreds and hundreds of other truckers is an injustice that sorely needs correcting. And no one's going to do anything about it if everyone keeps quiet."

Mather said there is "one truly wonderful thing that has happened because of all this. It has brought me close to Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior. Without Him, I wouldn't be able to do anything. With Him, there's no limit."

Mather encourages other truckers with the disease to contact the American Diabetes Association, National Call Center, 1701 Beaufort St., Alexandria, VA, 22311. The toll-free phone number is 800-DIABETES (800 342-2383) or visit them online at www.diabetes.org.

- from thetrucker.com



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MPDA's 2006 Calendar of Events

May

- 11-12** **Region 9 Student Driver Competition** – Mexico, Maine - Contact Dick Dolloff at <rdolloff@maine.rr.com>
- 19** **TDC Set-up Day** – Dysart's Truck Terminal, Hermon – Noon - contact Cliff Gray at <grayc@mmta.com> or 207 623-4128
- 19** **MPDA Hospitality Get-together** Room 230 (for everyone involved in competition), Bangor Motor Inn – Contact Everett MacMaster at 797-6330 or <emac@maine.rr.com>
- 20** **Maine State Truck Driving Championships** – Dysart's/Bangor Motor Inn – 5:30am - contact Cliff Gray at <grayc@mmta.com> or 623-4128

June

- 3** **Memorial Service for Gerald Cole and John Thut** – Cole's Land Transportation Museum, Bangor – 1:30pm - contact Dave Stuart at 207-221-3198 or <dstuart@mainepda.org>
- 10** **Conn. State Truck Driving Championships** - Somers, CT – contact Roland Bolduc at 413-525-0764 or <roadeo@charter.net>
- 10** **New Hampshire State Truck Driving Championships** – CCX Terminal, Manchester, NH - contact Vera Tucker at 603-224-7337 or <vera@nhmta.org>
- 15-18** **Trek Across Maine Lung Assn. Rally**, Sunday River – contact Denis Litalien at 468-7373 or <dentruck@hotmail.com>
- 25** **Mass. State Truck Driving Championships** – Chicopee, Mass. – contact www.mass-trucking.org

August

- 15-19** **ATA National Truck Driving Championships** – New Orleans, Louisiana - contact Cliff Gray at 623-4128 or <grayc@mmta.com>
- 27** **H.P. Hood Driving Competition** – NHDOT Facility, Concord, NH - contact Andy Reed at 603-433-5880 or <Andrew_C_Reed@ryder.com>

Sept

- 9** **Charity Challenge Set-up Day**
- 10** **8th Annual Northeast Professional Truck Drivers Charity Challenge** – Devens, Mass.- contact Fred Schenk at 508-453-3632 or <charitychallenge@comcast.net>
- 17** **Wishes on Wheels Convoy** (Charity Fundraiser) – Willington, CT. – contact Roland Bolduc at 413-525-0764 or <roadeo@charter.net>
- 23** **2006 Charity FunDrive** (Charity Fundraiser) Lehigh Travel Plaza, Lexington, VA (I-81, Exit 195) – contact Larry Davis (336) 924-1751 or <info@maptda.org>
- 30** **Trucking 4 Kids Convoy Set-up Day** - 8:00am - Old Country Buffet Rest., Maine Mall - contact Dick Brown at 318-7395 or <rbrown9@maine.rr.com> or <trucking4kids@aol.com>
- 30** **Trucker's Day** – Cumberland Fairgrounds, Cumberland - Contact Pam Rogers at - 848-4853 or <Progers@CrossAgency.com>

October

- 1** **Maine Trucking 4 Kids Convoy**, 7:00am to 4:00pm – Scarborough Downs, Scarborough, Maine contact Dick Brown at 318-7395 or <rbrown9@maine.rr.com> or <trucking4kids@aol.com>
- 22** **11th Annual N. H. Truckers Drive for Kids** – New Hampshire International Speedway contact - Linda Rafeal at 603-435-6366 or <LndaRfl@nhpda.com>

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Dave Stuart Terry Stuart

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