



President's Letter - Fall/Winter 2009

Hey, look at you! You are probably working up to the coming holidays, planning events and homecomings. Now is the right time to alert you that the most dangerous time of the year to drive, is November and December. *A study covering 13 years, indicates that early darkening in the Winter entry months, combined with extensive business and family parties, get-togethers and homecomings set the scene for both binge drinking and driving, which also involves driving other peoples' children who may not be familiar with your car or seat belt arrangement. Please take the time to orient young passengers before driving them.

Many of you have to get over the holidays without a child, or partner, or best friend. I have included some suggestions made in letters and phone calls to me over the years working with DWI victims' families and friends. (Pg.3) Let me know if you have had other helpful ideas or experiences to offer. (Please use the enclosed return envelope to respond).

**Source: Malik, U of MI /Trans. Inst. 1994-2006*

DISTRACTION = DESTRUCTION

Cars now have many built-in distractions such as lightened mirrors to facilitate combing hair, adding lipstick and powder, even electric shaving via the (hopefully) unused cigarette lighter outlet. Then there is changing the radio dial, hand held cell phone calls (banned in 7 States & D.C.), texting (now illegal in 18 States and D.C.) and several cities. including Schenectady NY, Chicago IL, Oahu HI, Cheyenne WY and Waupaca County ,WI. New York was the first State to ban hand held phoning in 2001.

The bottom line of this 13 year research project by NHTSA showed that hand held use dropped 24% in NY, and 65% lower in



RID-USA Safety Booth October 2009 Crossgates Mall, Albany, NY (left) Julia Holcomb, Volunteer & High School Teacher, (right) Doris Aiken, RID-USA President

CT, and 43% lower in D.C. However, any phone use while driving resulted in a rise in crashes.

Source: Published IIHS Status Report Vol.44, #9, Oct.13,'09.

TRENDS: Women Emerge As Catching Up With Men In Delivering Fatal Crashes

A ten year study finds increases of young women in alcohol-related fatal highway crashes similar to young men. This was an unexpected significant shock, to those of us who were accustomed to women not causing such trauma. Women are catching up to the men. What happened? Researchers studying this shock wave opine that women are the most distracted of drivers; they drive other people's children, put on makeup, use cell phones, eat breakfast , drink coffee while driving, and adjust the radio more than men.

More women are now licensed to drive than two years ago, often are the bread winners when the men are laid off, and are still responsible for getting the children to school on time, and then to work.

Also the research indicated that women take more risks than men, react more emotionally when family problems occur. Women who reach the age of 21 tend to rush to bars to socialize, drink like the guys once there, play bar games and drinking games with the guys, not knowing the stark fact that women being smaller with less blood, cannot drink with the guys and remain able to drive home safely.

**Traffic Injury Prevention,V.9, #1
ICADTS (Intl.Council on Alcohol/Drugs)*

A six year study by the WHO (World Health Org.) found that 3000 people died daily in alcohol-related. crashes and 30,000 are seriously injured, daily. In the U.S., more young females die as a result of motor vehicle crashes, than any other cause. **IBID*

Ed. Note: Education is part of the solution to aberrant drinking. Curtailing alcohol ads that suggest that a young women's successful entry to the good life via bars, would help. Ladies Nite offering free drinks to women should be dropped. The U.S. (FCC) now provides no protection against liquor ads which now regularly appear at times when children are watching TV. This is a new development, since the spirits industry used to voluntarily not air liquor ads.

*all best,
Doris*

Safety Measures For Party Hosts

There are some protections against the invasion of flu viruses at parties. Food, like nuts or candy should be offered in small, individual holders (paper muffin baking cups) not in large bowls. Drinks can be poured from pitchers, rather than from a self-serve punch bowl. Kleenex tissues should be readily available, as well as covered waste cans. Alcoholic beverages should be served by one person, rather than an open bar.

Know who the designated drivers are, for those who are drinking alcohol. Have name tags available for them as a badge of honor and safety.

Enjoy the comfort of knowing that you have done your part as party host, to keep your guests safe.



The Safety Tree is a permanent billboard showing visually, the number of DUI fatalities in the County. Red lights are added for each death. The Safety Tree shown here is located at the Ellis Hospital campus in Schenectady, NY.

Ed. Note: Those interested in establishing a permanent safety billboard, should contact me: Aikendoris@yahoo.com.

Holiday Party Drinking Games Contribute To The Menace Of Swine Flu

RPI (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute) in Troy, NY has 21 cases of swine flu, including 7 students who are quarantined in isolation rooms. Union College in Schenectady, NY has 30 students who have reported flu-like symptoms. The State U at Albany, NY spokesperson Karl Luntta said the school advises students to practice good hygiene, not share eating or drinking, not sneeze on people. Skidmore College in Saratoga, NY has a policy prohibiting drinking games, even if the students are of drinking age. Skidmore has 41 students who have exhibited swine flu symptoms.

Collectively, the colleges are advising people to wash hands, sneeze into their elbow or not to share drinking bottles, utensils or cosmetics. Drinking games are prohibited at Skidmore. *Source: AP/Daily Gazette, 10-14-09.*

AOD OBITUARIES

These binge-drinking deaths “are just the tip of the iceberg” Henry Wechsler, Harvard Univ. health researcher said.

All of the following died in October, 2004 allegedly due to AOD:

Samantha Spady, 19, found dead at a Colorado State University Fraternity House, Fort Collins, CO

Blake Hammontree, 19, found dead in a fraternity at the Univ. of Oklahoma

Lynn Gordon Bailey, Jr. 18, found dead at an Univ. of Colorado fraternity house.

Thomas Ryan Hauser, 23, a Junior at VATEch, found dead in his apartment.

Bradley Barrett Kemp, 20, found dead at home at the Univ. of Arkansas.

Corey Domingue, 19, found dead at home, LSU student off campus apartment.

“The schools that have the greatest problems take the easiest solutions...They have educational programs, but they don’t try to change the system. These deaths are just the tip of the iceberg.” **USA Today,10-7-04*

Since 2004, current studies find that 1700 on college campuses die every year from AOD and that an estimated 30,000 people of all ages die annually of AOD in the U.S.

Source, Keith Stroup, Founder, NORMAL, C-SPAN Book Interview

Ed. Note: A RID study from the files of the Division of Mortality Statistics by Dr. George Gitlitz, RID Board member, Ret., indicated that there were 4,625 deaths where alcohol was a contributing factor, or an underlying factor, in 1998. This excludes deaths from alcohol dependency and motor vehicle accidents.

A RID study of 12 counties with RID active chapters showed an average of 4 AOD annual deaths.. There are 3072 counties in the U.S, which would make our extrapolation on the survey results of at least 4625 AOD victims, as highly conservative.

Vodka Is The Big Killer On Campus

Now vodka is the big killer among college students. It can be carried in empty water bottles, in back packs, with no tell-tale aroma or color. It is readily available at home, or a friend’s home and is among the least expensive drug at the liquor store. Ergo, vodka must share the responsibility for the binge drinking among youth, that often leads to AOD (alcohol overdose) and death.

Anheuser Busch Urged To Drop "Fan Can"

A-B's marketing campaign to connect beer cans with specific college colors to encourage sports fans to drink their "COLORS" imprinted on the Bud Light cans, meets with opposition from several national groups concerned with projects that link sports with alcohol. Alcohol-related deaths among college students hit 1,825 in 2005, according to the NIAAA (Nat'l Institute on Alcohol Abuse & Alcoholism).

45% of LSU students self-report engaging in binge drinking; the LSU (LA State U) campus newspaper wrote an editorial calling the FAN CAN approach "a slick profiting scheme that could tarnish the school's reputation if students misbehave while holding the A-B LSU colors."

*Source: ACAP newsletter 9-1-09
American Council on Alcohol Problems*

Sobering Numbers On College Drinking

National Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week in October elicited national numbers on college drinking: Seven out of 10 college students (1.4M) minors imbibed alcohol this month. A million of them met the criteria for binge drinking (consuming 4-5 drinks in a two hour period).

This translates locally to 28,000 underage drinkers in the four counties in the Albany Capitol District who are drinking illegally, and 20,000 of them have been binge drinkers. Alcohol is the top drug of choice for young people, according to Karen Carpenter-Palumbo, Commissioner of the NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services. She stated that the cost to New York State is about \$3.2B a year. *Source: Times Union News, 10-22-09*

Ed. note: The federal government spends about \$71M a year to curb underage drinking compared to billions to stop illegal drug use, according to George Hacker, director of the Alcohol Policies Project at the Center for Science in the Public Interest. Jeff Becker, President of the Beer Institute was quoted as saying that some recommendations of lawmakers who want to curb underage drinking, "stem from biased and misleading findings rather than from solid research" and that the nation has already made "tremendous progress" in the fight against underage drinking. Becker also opined that efforts to conduct more research on underage drinking is "woefully misguided." Source: Times Union Washington Bureau, 12-26-04

Ed. Note: What tremendous progress has been delivered in the past five years? All the above studies clearly show that underage binge drinking is on the rise.

Getting Over The Holidays

Families that have lost loved ones without warning in drunken driving crashes and binge drinking events find various way to get through holidays and cope with the world around them. Here are some of the suggestions reported to us that were helpful.

Penny Money spent the first Xmas holiday after her daughter's unexpected death by alcohol poisoning by changing her environment completely. She and her husband spent the holiday weekend in a hotel distant from home. She hated the idea of being at home, and shopping in the usual places without her daughter.

Anna Slavinski, who lost her son in a drunken driving crash changed the stores she shopped in regularly. Anna lives in a very small town where everyone knows

each other, and where sad reminders of shopping trips with her son, triggered onsets of tears. This change of scene helped her to cope with daily setbacks.

Kathy Brooks, whose 15 year old daughter Vicki was killed by a drunken driver, selects a gift she knows Kathy would have liked, and gives it to a needy family. Others in Kathy's family do the same thing every year.

Friends sympathize and want to help, but don't want to talk about tragic things, thinking it worsens the situation for the surviving family members. Actually, nothing can make it worse. Inviting a grieving friend over for tea, asking how they are and **listening** to the answer, helps a lot.

Victim Support Groups are useful where no one feels bad about crying or venting feelings. Some of these groups arrange for away from home holiday gatherings at a ski lodge, rustic inn or church retreat.

The emphasis is on hope and companionship, and the realization that after something so awful and permanent happens, a person and a family is different in many ways. They are changed. Time to reflect on the changes, and gather strength from the emotional energy involved in changing, can bring a new life focus with its own rewards.

Some outstanding groups are:

POMC (Parents of Murdered Children)
(513) 721-5683

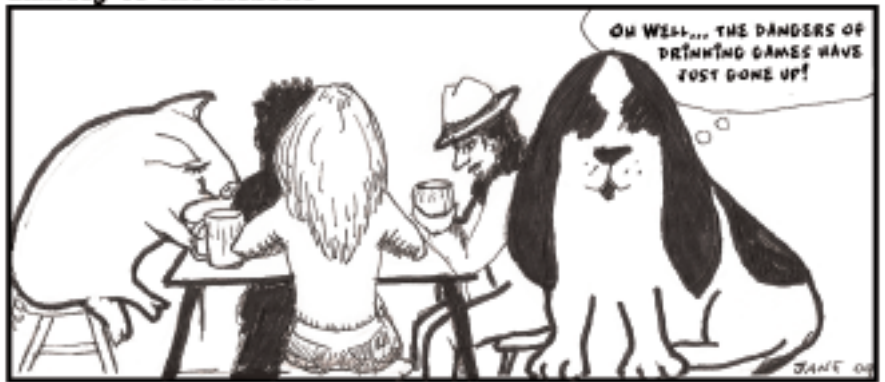
Compassionate Friends (630) 990-0010

Inside this Fall-Winter 2009 issue:

Trends: Fatal DUI Crashes Rise	1
Safety Measures For Party Hosts	2
Drinking Games Tied to H1N1	2
AOD Obituaries	2
Vodka: Big Killer On Campus	2
Budweiser Can Controversy	3
College Drinking - Sobering Numbers	3
Surviving the Holidays	3
Ridley to the Rescue	4

Please help support RID's safety projects and victim support calling for actions like searching court dockets, alerting the media to remember the terrorist driver in our back yard, and how to remove this totally preventable crime that has destroyed four times as many people last year, as were killed by the enemy in the last eight years. RID is the premiere organization to effectively stem the rising tide of of drunken driving in the U.S. and France.

RIDley to the Rescue



Return Information Requested: **Daiken2@nycap.rr.com** **(888) 283-5144** **www.rid-usa.org**

Join or Renew



...and Help RIDley curb DUI/DWI.

- \$20.00 Join as a National Member and enjoy a free subscription to the RID-USA Newsletter. (Fill out coupon or write information)
- \$10.00 Newsletter only.
- \$90.00 "Without Warning" Video on Binge Drinking.
- \$ _____ Tax-deductible donation.
- \$ _____ Memorial Donation for: _____
(enclose name and address of person to notify)

Total \$ _____ check enclosed.

Name: _____

Street: _____

City _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone () _____ - _____ E-mail: _____