SUMMER MOTORING

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Tolerating accidents as social problem

tolerate thousands of needless traffle 'accidents' every year? Somehow we do - and think little of it unless we really are blame. . .that equality and fraternity really can exist. . .

society in the British House of Lords a few years ago, a member pointed out to the assembled peers that they each ran a dozen times more risk of death or injury from auto accidents than from all other forms of aggression.

"The remainder was timely" commented The Guardian, "since to talk about violence without mentioning cars is rather like discussing 'Macbeth' without mentioning blood."

It may feel strange to the average driver to have his car thus looked upon as an instrument of aggression, but the fact is that the motor vehicle has killed and maimed more people in its brief history than any bomb or fire arm ever invented. The yearly toll of blood and tears exacted by unsafe driving is incomparably greater than by murder or any other

So the relentless carnage on the roads may properly be regarded as a critical social problem. It is hardly overstating the case to call it, as a safety official once did, "another manifestation of man's inhumanity to man " For much of the blood on the pavement flows essentially from the refusal of drivers to respect the legal and moral rights of others. Those was would dispute this statement on the grounds that "accid ears are bound to happen." should contider the following

- Most so called traffic accidents are avoidable Most happen in fair weather and under Load road condliona. Some areidem expertaspecimale that most occur as result of people disregars. ing enther the law or wellanowa sade v rules

ir Caraga where traffic appropriat take the liver of 1,000 people ampually, the use of astober is involved in up to half of toese lata, mergente

Accident researchers an that most people who trive dargerously defective cars and trucks are aware of the defects and are gambling often with the liver of

trangers and family or friend: at passengert - un no navno trouble Mechan ical defects are responsible for an estimated 20,000 serrose accidents in Canada every year

I' has been observed that in the western world today. there is no longer such a thing at a "motorist" So prevalent has the use of cars and trucks become that traffic is simply the public at large on wheels.

It follows that a person operating a motor vehicle has the same social obligation to keep the peace on the streets and highways as a person in any other public area. The only difference is that one's capacity to inflict injury on others is magnified enormously when one is behind the steering wheel of a potential juggernaut weighing a ton and a half and capable of hurtling through space at more than 150 kilo-

metres an hour. Yet the enemies of society on wheels are ordinarily rather harmless people. They are the respectable working man who takes a chance on driving home after he has had a few drinks; the housewife preoccupied with a famlly problem as she tailgates the car in front of her; the young fellow who says, "let's see how fast this thing will go on the struight atretch"; the salesman with thousands of driving hours behind him who feels it is beneath his dignity to signal; the vacut toner who sets out on an overnight run to his deaths

Must a civilized society ation when he hasn't had enough sleep. Driving as if everybody

else is crary - as some ourselves become victims. Just ordinary people act-Here we view the carnage on ing carelessly, you might the road as a social problem. say. But it is principle both of

And clear 'the other guy' of law and common morality that carelessness is no excuse when one's actions are In a debate on violence in liable to bring death or damage to others. Sins of omission and commission are equally reprehensible if they cause human grief. A minority of the killers

> and mutilators of the road go beyond carelessness to wanton recklessness Some - not all of them young, by any means - get a thrill out of wilfully breaking traffic laws Some bully their fellow road users by facing down pedestrains, forcing their way into traffic flows, and cutting perilously close in front of other vehicles when passing Some lose their tempers and employ their vehicles as weapons to threaten the objects of their anger Terrilyingly enough, some persist in driving while under the influence of alcehol or other narcotics. Drivers likes these are public meraces.

> "Always drive as if every body else is crazy," runs the old taxi driver's maxim That some taxi drivers behave in traffic as if they were crazy themselves does not detract from the fundamental soundness of this advice And, in fact, it has been established that many other wide same and sensitive percent ie di suffer è form of marity. when they set her his trathe section where the section of it fotbatio take entitioned that is many is at or that of all automobile and dents can be attributed to critery phy-

encognosi galina

and they should be publicly

condemned as such

The goirk that makes peop in combine drinking and dri ving it all too are. Fromt. though it is difficult to deal with limit conspicious at a name of armsterits are the passer, waves of irrationality that come over perfectly soter people when they are driving their cars. Emotional upaets can impoded drivers reactions hamper their susament and blind them to nazards trait might otherwise be evident A fit of anger when driving can easily mean not only a loss of control over one's emotions.

but over the vehicle as well "The worst guy of the lot," a traffic investigator told The Imperial Oil Review, "is the man who tells himself he's a good driver and has no quirks. This is the very attitude that may eventually cause an accident." The exof the hidden tensions imposto make a conscious effort to laws. keep one's emotions in

check to impreving driving habits A gign outside of a little town in Japan pleads: requiring constant care and Please drive carefully. Our ers, pedestrians and cyclists rules. The responsible driver must assume a degree of responsibility for their act-

ions in addition to his own. This may be unfair, but, as Maurice Chevaller remarked of old age, it is better than the alternative. To insist on your rights when you are on a collision course can be downright suicidal. A driver who practises forbearance is like ly to live longer than one who

In it too much to ank that some day all drivers will drive responsibly? Probably, But we can hope nanethelens. for a pronounced improvement on the grisly alluation.

that prevalls at present. fares us nate as humanly possible is one that encorntunner the fields of law.

education, and public attitudes. Not until society makes a broad and determined commilment to improve mass driving habits will the needless injury and loss of life

On the legal front, the case is not helped by the seeming reluctance in some jurisdictions to enforce the standing traffic laws. Bearing in mind that undisciplined drivung is a major cause of accidents, it is scarely salutary to see cars whizing past a 90 kmh speed hmit sign at 110 kmh while poheemen sit idly in their cars and watch

The argument for such tacit toleration of illegality is that the laws are unrealistic. If this is the case, it is the duty of the governments con cerned to render them realis he and then to ensure that they are strickly enforced

Improved accident statisfics have safety experts wor-

This is not to say, however. that the law has been lax in all respects or in all jurisdictions. On the centrary, signif icum legislative advances more teen made towards safer driving in North Amer ica in the past few years. Safety standards for vehicles have been raised bein at the point of manufacture and through periodic road worthiness inspections. Speed limits have reen lowered although it is a forlorn commentam on our social priontim that the need for energy provinces not road safety

tie for the latter move Reduced speed limits, sterper permit es for impaired orders and the compulsory are of soliety restraints have peed introduced in some Canadian provinces. Mainly because of these measures, the national traffic accident rate. declined by an estimated 13.2 per cent in 1976, a year which saw a 3 per cent increase in driving as measured in veh-

has been primarily responsi-

Paradoxically, this statistical improvement has accident experts worried The Canada Safety Council says hat the moderation in the figures is almost wholly due to legislation, and that there has been little or no improvement in the way Canadian drivers behave

The Council fears that the lower statistics will engender complacency and so obscure the real problem. People may tend to forget that a total of nearly a quarter of a million people killed or serrously injured in auto accidperts caution that it is vital ents each year is still a for every driver to be aware - national scandal in a country of good roads, modern equiped by the act of driving, and ment and enlightened traffic

The only real and lasting Society must commit itself solution, say the experts, is to get it into people's heads that driving is a skilled task concentration. A driver in shildren might be disobeying today's traffic is called upon us "It is a regrettable fact of to perform a complex range life that far too many driv- of functions simultaneously - not only operating the disobey the law and safety vehicle itself, but surveying the entire fast-moving traffle picture and anticipating potential problems. A driver must assess the actions of others, make decisions while in motion, and exercise acute timing. Those who fail to do all these things present p menace to those with whom

> Practically everyour feels immune from the responsibl-

they share the road.

An exhaustive study designed to get to the roots of the traffle accident problem in the United States established that "inadequate driving skills" fligure much more prominently in accidenta than bail been previously Imagined Poor driving not only gives rise to innumerable accidents, but adds to

their severity. It was found that many drivers, when faced with a crisis did not know the correct way to steer or stop their cars.

fromcally, another study conducted in the U.S. at about the same time showed that nine-tenths of the people covered by a broad survey rated themselves as "above average" in driving skills and safety awareness. Even those with a record of convictions for traffic violations felt that public exhortations to safer driving were not applicable to them.

This was a vivid illustration of what policemen call "the other guy syndrome" whereby "the other guy" is always a bad driver and always to blame for an accident This mythical figure stands as a formidable opponent of any general improvement in driving habits. The difficulties inherent in promoting safer driving can be clearly seen when one considers that practically everyone concerned feels immune from responsibility for the appalling accident rate

In an age of mass secondary education, the long-term remedy for the obvious lack of driving skill and knowledge would seem to be in driver education at the high school level. Still, education can be expected to go only so far as iena as people persist in defying their social obligatcon to their fellow users of the

The core of the problem is unclyil behaviour

The irresponsibility that accounts for much of the problem is not confined to drivers Pedestrians regularly violate traffic regulations; they are at fault in most vehicle-pedestrain accidents. Many cyclists appear to believe that they are not subject to the basic rules of the road

The core of the problem is uncivil behaviour. The courtesy, consideration, forbearance, telerance and respect for human rights which go to make up civilization are disgracefully lacking in the traffic stream.

This incivility applies as much to the state of equipment as to driving habits. A person in charge of an unsafe vehicle is putting others in jeopardy. The prevalent attitude that the individual is in some way entitled to imperit others by driving unsafely must be fought

"The old challenge of physical distance has been transmuted into a new challenge of human relations between drivers who, having learned how to annihilate space, have thereby put themselves in constant danger of unnihilating each other," says A Study of History. The facts about traffic accidents plainly show that this challenge of human relations has not been

On the whole, the motor vehicle has been a boon to mankind. If this blessing has been turned into a curse for the millions who have suffered from senseless accidents over the years, it is because men and women have rejected their duty as civilized human beings. The automoblie has wrought great changes in society, but the rule of the civilized individual is changeless, whether in or out of the driver's seat.

John Donne never saw a motor car, but he might have been addressing the driver of tokiny when he wrote these lamous lines almost 400 years ago:

"Any man's death dimishes me, because I am involved in Munkind; And therefore never send in know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for

Royal Bank of Canada

Busted bodies, lights topping Canadian check of car flaws

A neglected car body rates high among automotive safety factors, according to a report just released by Car Care Council of Canada. The information is based on a survey of inspection records from Windsor, Ontario, where Provincial Inspectors examined 809 cars, finding 364 with lighting discrepancies, 216 had headlights improperly

CAR CARE QUIZ

357 cars had body conditions which were cause for rejection, 243 were found with braking deficiencies and 211 with problems in steering and sus-

pension. Reasons for rejecting cars for body deterioration included such conditions as gaping holes in floor pans (one opening was large enough for a child

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to fall through), rusted and improperly secured doors, bumpers or other

parts and dumaged glass Inspectors' concern about body integrity is significant, according to Car Care Council, For years motorists have been aware of the safety hazards of driving with improper lighting, or brakes and steering that are not up to standard. But a

threat to life and limb

the car's body and frame can maintain the strength against rust

neglected body presents a necessary to provide such protection in the event of because this is the protec- an accident. This maintetive shell in which we're nance includes repair and painting of theet metal Properly maintained, damage and preventive measures to protect



THIS BLOWN MITTLER on longer will silence a car, but it could have silenced the car's passengers forever with lethal exhaust fumes, Carbon monoxide, the most dangerous component of exhaust gas, is tasteless, odorless and invisible. When it seeps into a car with closed windows, occupants can become draws; or ill, In all ton many cases, says Car Care Council, the eventual result is asply viction and death.

Kilometers as well as miles on late models

Due to Canada's conversion and pending US conversion to the Metric system, some of the new spredometers are calibrated to show both miles per hour and kilometers per hour





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Here's a quiz where there could be a cash payoff if you know the right answers. Sorry, no one is offering prizes for the top scores. But by knowing and following some of the maintenance and driving practices contained below, you could reap sizeable savings in gasoline bills, Worn spark plugs waste an average of how 6. You should use premium fuels only if

7. Unleaded fuel is necessary if

8. The following is wasteful of fuel

A. Dowing too slewly

B. Driving too fast

converter

A. Your car is over three years old

B You have an eight cylinder engine

B You use a four barrel carboreter

C. Driving with the windows closed

9. According to AAA, "jackrabbit starts" can waste

C. Engine does not perform properly with-

A. Your car is equipped with a catalytic

C. Your engine has a tendency to exerbeat

much gasoline, compared to newly installed plugs? A. Over sia percent

B flearly too percent C. There's tille difference 2 An engine in need of tune up wastes this much

more fuel than a newly tuned engine, on average A. Less than a gatten per tankful 8 Between use and two gallons per tankful

C. Between live and sie gallons per lanklul 3 for best fuel mileage be sure your tires aren't A. Uversnflated

8. Underintlated C. White sidewalls 4 The following is a notorious fuel waster A Warn Aindshield Aipers

C Chagged an cleaner 5 Brakes can have an adverse effect on fuel economy if

A They are this brakes B. They are not properly adjusted

A. 10 percent of your fuel B 25 percent of your fuel B Fraged battery cables C. Up to 44 percent of your fue:

10 To save luct, when you are waiting at a rail road crossing for several minutes A, heep transmission in neutral

B Put engine in reverse but foot on brake C. Shut off engine

C. They are drum and shoe types ONIX YNZMERS: 1. A.; 2. B. 3. B. 4. C. 5. B. 6. C. 7. A. 8. B. 9. C. 10. C.



Of ALTTY PAYS Among the best investments a mutorist can make in making sure his car gets top salue on trade-in e attention to lands appearance. A quality paint job in a well-equipped shop will likely pay for fiself in increased worth of the ear, Sloppy reconditioning is easy to spot.

Do-it-yourself gassers should have maintenance know-how too

"The Lord helps him who helps himself." If the above seems to be ing this requires a little

(Photo Courtess of DeVillass)

the motto of a greater number of gasoline retailing outlets, then the facts of life are becoming more apparent. There is a growing trend toward self-service gas stations where the customer pumps his own. Expensive fuel is a little

cheaper to buy under the system. But the car owner who has counted on attendants to do simple maintenance Jobs Is out of luck. Car owners who habitu-

ally buy gas at self-serve outlets should make sure they know how to check -vital "life signs" of their

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