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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The May 26, 2003 issue of *Time* states in the "Numbers" column that there are 1.26 million traffic accident deaths worldwide each year; there are 310,000 deaths worldwide each year caused by wars and conflicts. The death rate in the U.S. from traffic accidents is among the world's lowest; however, it is obvious, from a worldwide perspective, much more can be done. Furthermore, it is still true that in the U.S. we lose many more young (18-25) people from traffic deaths than from military action. We need to improve our public information efforts so that these facts lead to public pressure for remedies.

Some obvious efforts that would result in improvements:

- strengthen/implement helmet and seatbelt use laws (motorcycle accident deaths., for instance, are presently climbing alarmingly).
- address the large auto (SUV) vs. small auto problems (the same *Time* issue reports that car insurance rates rose an average of 9% from April 2002-April 2003 I believe this is mainly because of the damage caused by SUVs to smaller autos).
- work to minimize auto vs. truck accident problems (bumper heights, etc.).
- accelerate traffic management safety features such as red light intersection camera systems and other automated enforcement systems.
- intensify programs to discourage unnecessary personal vehicle travel.

Another area of importance should be continued focus on construction safety issues. This is especially of interest to me as the reach of the I-15 between Victorville and Barstow is under reconstruction. I was the District 8 Associate design squad leader that produced the original contract plans for that 1957-1958 project and it is disheartening to read of the high accident rate on the current project.

The latest issue of *Traffic Technology International* contains a broad spectrum of Advanced Traffic Management (ATM) programs to improve safety and mobility. If you're interested in this subject, I would suggest you seek out that publication.

Incidentally, I found it disturbing that input from Caltrans was lacking in that magazine. There were several references to Caltrans programs and two articles on the San Francisco Bay area SMART I-8/I-880 corridor project, but none authored by Caltrans. In my opinion, a significant improvement in our public relations could be achieved if we "toot our own horn" more often and louder. Some of the *California Transportation Journal* articles are well presented and worthy of better marketing. I know, for instance, that several of the Caltrans traffic operations programs would be of national and international interest. I'll get down off my soap box now—at least until the next issue.

My personal thanks to the District QCC representatives. We all appreciate your efforts to keep the members aware of the activities in your areas



GEORGE GRAY, President
QUARTER CENTURY CLUB