



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Spring is nigh and with the welcome fair share of rain we have enjoyed this season, the immediate future for the state's flora and fauna looks favorable. However, the dark clouds that bring the welcome rain may also herald problems ahead, including the state's fiscal situation, the certainty of future water shortages, and our federal government's seeming propensity to fiddle with lowered taxes.

The present spike in gasoline costs may be with us for some time and eventually may result in some changes in our transportation habits. When I was wearing my multimodal/environmental/planner hat at Caltrans, I often spoke out for indexing the state fuel taxes so that as the price of gasoline and diesel increased so would the tax. I wish we had been successful in implementing that concept. We would now be able to maintain and improve our state transportation system easily if we had.

We, the general public, haven't really paid much attention to the costs of auto transportation. Now that the cost of fuel per mile is about the same as insurance costs per mile, we may be more interested in cost reductions. Auto operating costs (full-size passenger car) now approaches about 38¢ per mile, with SUVs noticeably higher than that. It will be interesting to observe the insurance rates as that industry recognizes the results of SUV accidents. One of the times I rankled H.Q. was when, in about 1969, I reported in the District 11 house organ data developed by **Wally Wasser** covering the high injury/death rates for compact cars versus standard autos. Little did I expect that the standard auto would have the same pattern when impacting with SUVs.

Recently **Don Gray**, retired Caltrans R.E., contacted me with a 16 mm movie he had of one of the I-8 Devil's Canyon projects. I haven't viewed the film yet – we are having it reproduced in video format – but I urge any of you that have similar items to contact either me, **Norm Root**, or the H.Q. Transportation Library (**Sherleigh Brannon**, Historic Librarian) to discuss possible action for preservation of your item also.

Not long ago **Helnz Heckeroth**, as Executive Officer of the California Transportation Foundation (CTF), sent a letter to Quarter Century Club members urging financial contributions (continued or new) to the Foundation. I would like to add my support to this solicitation. I have been the liaison between the CTF and District 11 for a number of years and have been impressed with the work of the organization. It is eminently deserving of our support. Friends of District 11 may wish to specify their contribution be for the Dekema scholarship, although there are other special funds equally deserving.

**GEORGE GRAY, President
QUARTER CENTURY CLUB**

