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News from TSC

TSC at TRB 2009:
[Researchers, staff and student to participate in the annual meeting of the Transportation Research Board](#) in Washington, D.C., January 11-15, 2009.

[Child safety seats save lives, study confirms](#), author **Dr. Thomas Rice**, of the **Traffic Safety Center at University of California Berkeley School of Public Health**, told Reuters Health.

American Journal of Public Health Highlights: for February 2009 edition: ["Child safety seats help to reduce the risk of death during severe traffic collisions and generally outperform seatbelts."](#)

TSC at APHA: [Traffic Safety Center staff participation at the 2008 Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association Annual Meeting](#), October 25-29, in San Diego.

[TSC Director David Ragland and TSC Assistant Director Jill Cooper present at Pedestrian Safety & Advocacy Conference](#), September 19-20, in Sacramento.

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Toward a Culture of Traffic Safety

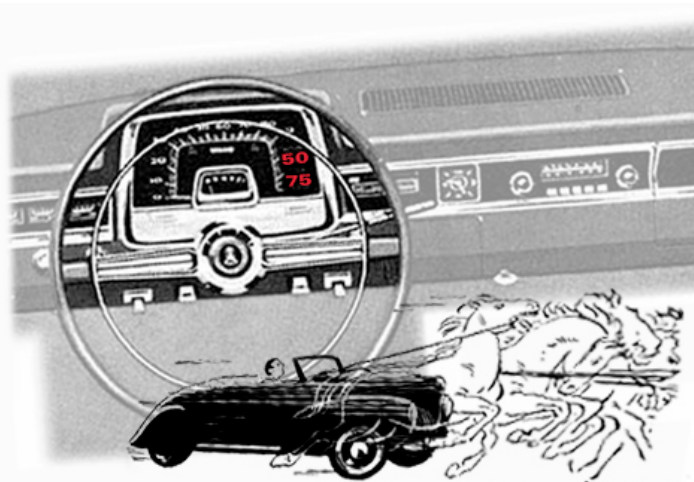


FIG. 73. Power! Its mastery marks the expert driver.

Today, an average of 87 percent of the people of driving age in the U.S. have licenses, and in many states that figure is close to 100 percent. Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for

children adolescents, and young adults, and a major cause of death for all other ages. But in an AAA survey, road safety ranks well behind the number one worry, which was the price of gas, among motorists polled in late 2007 and early 2008. Safety was the fifth out of seven concerns, ahead of pollution and global warming.

As part of an effort to set long-range safety priorities, three years ago, the American Automobile Association Foundation for Traffic Safety asked top safety officials from the Federal Highway Administration and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration how to best advance the cause of improving traffic safety. What kept rising to the top of the list of concerns? "Safety culture." That led to a series of reports and surveys, the start of what the AAA Foundation hoped will be a longer dialog about this question. In this issue of the Traffic Safety Center Newsletter, we explore the subject in the four articles below.

1. Traffic Safety Culture: What is it? (go to story...)

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety formally declared that its top priority would be to work for establishment of an improved traffic safety culture in the U.S. The first step is defining what a traffic safety culture in the U.S. would look like. Examples from other countries that have experienced success in changing attitudes toward traffic safety—and cutting deaths and injuries from crashes—provide some guides...

2. Traffic Safety Culture: What can we do to change it? (go to story...)

[TSC at Pro Walk/Pro Bike 08](#): biennial conference, September 2-5, in Seattle.

TSC Director **David Ragland**: "**Overview of Rural Traffic Safety**" at the **2008 Summer Institute** of the [Center for Excellence in Rural Safety](#), presented by the University of Minnesota in cooperation with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), July 28-29.

Paola S. Timiras Dies at 85. World-renowned aging researcher and Professor Emerita of Cell and Developmental Biology at UC Berkeley participated in the TSC's first course, the spring 2001, "[Advances in Aging: Mobility and Transportation Safety](#)." Read [San Francisco Chronicle](#) obituary of Paola Timiras and [Los Angeles Times](#) obituary of Paola Timiras.

May 2008: From the press release issued by the [Safe Routes to School National Partnership](#): ...the **University of California-Berkeley Traffic Safety Center** and **PPH Partners** team has been selected as our **Health Evaluation Consultant**.

TSC Graduate Student Researchers Rebecca Sanders and Robert Schneider [Win Eisenhower Awards](#).

TSC Graduate Student Researcher Kitae Jang [Wins ITE "Sustainable Living in the Suburbs" Student Paper Grand Prize](#).

[Useful](#)

In terms of traffic safety culture in the U.S., there have been some piecemeal successes. Seat belt use and child safety seats have become ubiquitous in a matter of decades, and the share of drivers in fatal crashes who were found to be alcohol-impaired has dropped. But more fundamental change won't occur until there is broader public awareness of the size of the problem—the 43,000 yearly deaths and hundreds of thousands of injuries—the importance of speed, and the fact that nearly all crashes are preventable if people change their behavior....

[3. Traffic Safety Culture: the role of speed \(go to story...\)](#)

Two decades ago, there was a good chance that someone at a party where alcohol was being served would make a joking reference to driving after having had "a little too much." Because of a substantial cultural change in the acceptability of such behavior, drunk driving is no longer seen as a laughing matter. By contrast, speeding is still often viewed with a wink and a nod. People routinely boast about how they made "good time" on a long highway trip, or how they kept up with faster traffic on the freeway in the interest of being punctual for an important appointment....

[4. Traffic safety culture: Two California traffic safety policymakers' perspectives. Interviews with:](#)

[Chris Murphy, California Office of Traffic Safety \(go to interview...\)](#)

[Jesse Bhullar, California Department of Transportation \(Caltrans\) safety engineer \(go to interview...\)](#)

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