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# Road & Rec

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Spring 2006



# Road & Rec

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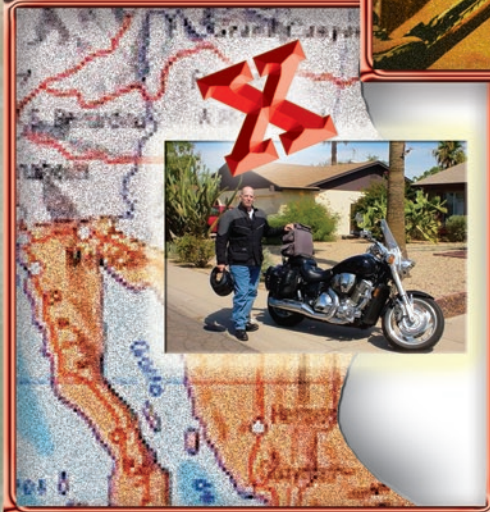
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## Episode III: *The Spasms of Spring*

**ZACHARY WAKEFIELD**  
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Balad AB Iraq

**A**h, what a refreshing time of year is the spring! Just when you thought the drudgery of winter would never end, with its endless chilliness and unpleasant periods of being trapped in your house with keys to a car that won't start and a fridge full of nothing but microwaveable speedy-burritos for those days when the snow drifts won't let you open your door, on comes spring and makes it all better! Time to get off the couch, rub those hibernation crusties out of your eyes, and make your way back outside into the world.

Spring is associated with a variety of things, such as cleaning, for example. This annual frenzy makes the dusting seem frighteningly important, as people scurry around like mice in their attempts to tidy up after a winterload of slovenliness. This activity presents a good opportunity to fall backward down the attic stairs in a heap of '50s-era Christmas decorations. Groaning in pain will not

help you get your spring cleaning done faster, so do yourself a favor and take it easy. If nobody ever sees that big plastic Santa again, it won't hurt anybody's feelings—especially the police officer who made you take it down.

With the temperatures rising and the snow melting, you can certainly expect a variety of creative, interesting and dumb things. The roads may not be icy anymore, but there may be an abundance of slush next to the curb, much to the chagrin of friendly old ladies out walking their dogs. Avoid blasting these elderly citizens with half-frozen water. Not only is it considered to be generally rude, but you don't know how fed up they may be from getting blasted previously, and the last thing you want to have to explain to your friends at work is how you got the stuffing beaten out of you by a tiny old woman with a hand-knit purse full of bricks.

Some people seem to enjoy physically exerting themselves, like by running or rowing the longboat in circles for hours on end. It is easier for the mind to get excited than for the muscles that barely remember the last time they were used, so go easy on them until they wake up

THE SAFETY VIKING PRESENTS THE NON-AWARD-WINNING SHORT:  
A LESSON IN GETTING BEATEN DOWN IN AN EMBARRASSING WAY

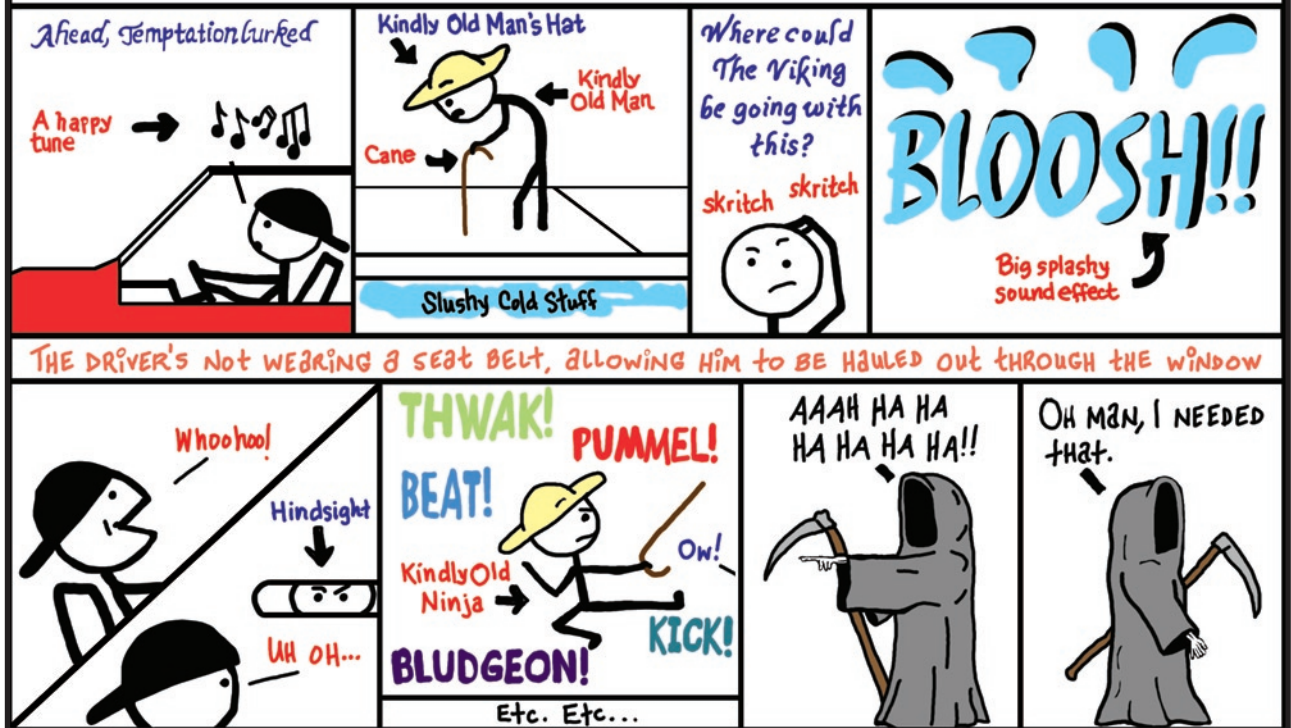


Illustration by Zachary Wakefield

from their slumber. There are distinct differences between running on a treadmill and running outside on bare earth. For example; you won't be thrown from the earth in one violent, embarrassing instant if you lose your rhythm staring at the runner on the machine in front of you. On the other hand, you may find yourself with a mouthful of gravel, should you neglect to step over the roots and rocks. The gravel will most likely NOT be barbecue flavored, unless you're in the south.

All told, spring is good, provided there is no overabundance of dumb things. With the coming of warmer weather, beards will be trimmed (only slightly, of course), jackets and furs will be stashed, voyages to uncharted lands will commence, and the temptation to smack bicyclists with car doors will rise anew. Avoid succumbing to this temptation, as the cyclists are probably in better shape than you and will no doubt throw you a beating. If you ARE a cyclist, watch out for those car doors! ■

Bottom Line?  
**Don't do dumb things!!**

Sincerely,


*Bjorn, your Friendly Neighborhood Safety Viking  
Conqueror of Entire Civilizations  
Expert Longboat Helmsman  
Survivor of the Common Cold*

# When Bikes & Cars Mix

**CAPT KRISS HINDERS**  
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I recently started riding my bike to work. While the rising cost of gas was a factor, I was more concerned that I wasn't doing all I could to reduce emissions and conserve our limited natural resources. So a recent move closer to my job prompted me to start putting on my helmet a few mornings a week and hitting the streets. It's been a great experience: good for the environment, good for my conscience, and good for my health. At least, it has been so far.

One morning, I had my first real, "That-guy-almost-killed-me!" run-in with a motor vehicle. I was on a dark stretch of a fairly major road. A



big truck was stopped at the stop sign on an intersecting smaller road. As I approached the intersection, he pulled out. I assumed that he was turning onto the road I was on, and slowed a little to let him merge in front of me. But he didn't turn left, but went straight across the road, directly into my path. I slammed on my brakes and tried to turn, didn't get my foot out of my clip in time, and ended up lying on the road just short of the truck as he roared by. Luckily, I only had torn pants and some bruises to show for it, although it took a while for my heart to slow back down to a somewhat normal pace. The truck didn't even slow down.

This is not the only experience I've had with cars coming too close for comfort, but this was the first incident that really scared me. I did some

research and discovered that run-ins between cars and bicycles, including cars running bikes off the road, occupants throwing projectiles like beer bottles and rocks at cyclists, and collisions that injure and kill, are much more common than we'd like to believe. Each year in the U.S., more than 600 cyclists die and more than 540,000 cyclists visit emergency rooms with injuries. Many incidents are not reported or tracked by official statistics, and some cycling advocates suggest as many as one in every 20 cyclists is injured annually.

Cyclists can't control the "crazy" drivers out there, but we can minimize the chances that we'll be involved in a car-related incident. The most important thing we can do is learn the laws regarding bicycle use on public streets and roads in our state and follow them. Equip your bike with the lights and reflectors required by state laws. Even if your state doesn't require them, buy them anyway! Surely, your life is worth the \$20 it costs to put a headlight and taillight on your bike. I wear my yellow Air Force-issue reflective "disco" belt on every ride, even in broad daylight. A yellow or orange safety vest works, too. Yes, you're making quite a fashion statement, and yes, your friends will make fun of you, but at least you'll be around to hear their comments. Above all else, situational awareness of the vehicles you encounter is the key to staying out of their path and out from under their tires. A great Web site to learn more about what cyclists can do to prevent accidents is <http://bicyclesafe.com>.

Drivers should read that Web site, too. While it's important that cyclists know the rules of the road, it's equally important that motorists know those rules so they know what to expect from the cyclists they encounter. Please, motorists, stay at least five feet away from any bicycle you pass. You probably don't realize that when you pass my bike with only a few inches to spare, you leave me nowhere to go if I'm suddenly confronted with a pothole or broken glass on the road that I have to go around. If you're not sure you can keep five feet away from my bike and still stay in the same lane, don't! Switch lanes to pass, or wait until you can cross the middle yellow line and pass the bike like you'd pass a car. This might seem overly cautious, but isn't that better than finding out the hard way that you couldn't get past me? As the one who will end up in an ambulance if you're wrong, I certainly think so! Remember, cyclists have just as much right to be on the road as you do, so please, share the road.

I asked myself what I could have done differently that morning. The road was dark leading up to that intersection, but the intersection itself was lighted. I had on reflective clothing, including my yellow Air Force issue reflective "disco" belt, and I have a headlight and flashing taillight on my bike. I was following all the

rules and paying attention to the other vehicles on the road. Did the driver of the truck not see me? Did he see me and think he could beat me through the intersection? Did he see me and just not care? I'll never know. But my awareness and ability to react may have saved my life.

For now, I plan to continue to ride to work whenever I can. I hope as I'm joined by others affected by the rising cost of their commute, motorists will become more aware and learn to share the road with everyone, and I won't be taking my life in my hands whenever I buckle on my helmet. ■

### *Here are examples of the traffic laws in Texas regarding bicycles.*

1. Cyclists have all the rights and the duties that apply to drivers of vehicles. This includes stopping at signs and signals, yielding the right of way and obeying posted speed limits and one-way street signs.

2. No bicycle shall carry more persons at one time than the number for which it is designed.

3. For night use, a bicycle shall have a lamp on the front with a white light visible from a distance of at least 500 feet to the front and a red reflector on the rear that is visible when directly in front of the beams of motor vehicle headlamps from 50-300 feet to the rear of the bicycle, or a lamp that emits a red light visible from a distance of 500 feet to the rear of the bicycle.

4. A bicyclist moving below the speed of other traffic shall ride as near as practicable to the right curb or edge of the roadway, except when:

— The person is overtaking and passing another vehicle going in the same direction.

— The person is preparing to turn left at an intersection or onto a private road or driveway.

— Conditions of the roadway, including fixed or moving objects or vehicles, pedestrians, animals, surface hazards or substandard lanes, make it unsafe to ride next to the right curb or edge of the road.

— The person is operating a bicycle in an outside lane that is less than 14 feet in width and does not have a designated bicycle lane adjacent to that lane, or it is too narrow for a bicycle and a motor vehicle to safely travel side by side.

Bicycle laws are similar in most states, but check with your state's transportation department for the laws that apply to you. For summaries of those laws go to: <http://www.massbike.org/bikelaw/bikelaw.htm>.

# If I Were C.O. Again

## KURT GARBOW

Director, Aviation and Operational Safety  
Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the  
Navy (Safety)

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*Editor's Note: The author is a retired U.S. Navy officer. Although this article is written for a Navy audience, and contains some terms unfamiliar to Airmen, the basic safety ideas and themes apply to all of us.*

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**T**he Services have been nibbling away at the PMV fatality problem for decades, yet despite our efforts, the rates continue with little to no sustainable improvement. Privately owned motor vehicles, and the 18-25-year-old driver, remain the number one cause of death for our Sailors and Marines. Of all the causes of accidental Navy deaths in FY02, 58 percent of our Sailors died on the highway. At the end of FY05, following a two-year initiative to cut mishap rates in half, 57 percent of all accidental Sailor fatalities were the result of PMV mishaps.

First, the good news: Because of our collective efforts during the FY04 and FY05 mishap-prevention campaign, at least 17 Sailors are alive today who would not be

had we maintained our campaign's FY02 baseline PMV fatality rates. Now the bad: Nine Sailors have been killed in PMV Mishaps during the first two weeks of FY06. This is nearly three times worse than the previous five year-to-date averages. If Navy PMV fatality rates continue at their current trend, FY06 will be WORSE than each of the previous 24 years.

If ever there were a need for change in the way we attack this epidemic, the time is NOW. It is apparent that our ALLSAFE and ALNAV messages, our Drive Safe lectures and our posters, are not having an effect. Our on-base mandatory seat belt laws are not being adequately enforced. Our requirement for formal motorcycle training and correct PPE before bringing one's 120+ mph motorcycle on base is not curbing the problem off base. The state trooper with his horrific movies at the base theater, and the demolished vehicle on loan at the main gate, are not getting through, either. It is obvious, or should be, that if we continue to fight the battle with the same tactics, we will merely achieve the same results.

Several years ago, as the father of 18- and 14-year-old boys, I took an excellent







series of parenting classes. I learned that the person in the best position to fix a problem is the one who takes ownership of both the problem and the solution. One can lecture (scream, rant and rage), but until the owner of the problem is given the responsibility to find its solution, the problem merely gets worse. While our efforts have been well intentioned, Navy leadership has failed to lead or mandate a change in the way our 18-25-year-old target population behaves behind the wheel of a car or on a motorcycle. When it comes to their off-duty driving behavior, they do not listen to us, nor do they hear our message. What average teenager truly listens and comprehends, when their parents lecture over and over, for them to change their behavior? While it is true that our PMV fatality rate is somewhat better than the 18-25-year-old civilian population, losing more than 400 Sailors and Marines every three years should NEVER be considered the cost of doing business, nor should its impact on our unit morale and our combat readiness be taken for granted. Ask any C.O. who lost a member of his/her command in PMV mishap if, in hindsight, there were anything he/she could have done differently to prevent such a senseless loss of life. Ask how long it took the command to regain the same level of readiness they had before the death of one of th Sailors.

All X.O.s and C.O.s have one exceptional E-4 or E-5 in their commands who stand out among their peers—the Sailors others go to for advice and assistance, the ones respected by both peers and leadership for their professional expertise, dedication and ability to lead. If I were a C.O. again, I would call this Sailor, along with his Department Head, DIVO, CPO, LPO and the CMC, into my office and discuss the Navy's PMV fatality rate. I would explain to them how each night I go to sleep praying that I don't get a call from the Duty Officer that one of

*continued on next page*

my Sailors had been killed behind the wheel. I would tell them that I'm not convinced we are doing all we can do, and while our efforts have been well-intentioned, I don't think we are getting through to our younger Sailors. I would then inform this Junior Petty Officer that, based on the level of respect he has earned among his peers, I was selecting him to be Officer-in-Charge of the command's new Peer Advocacy Group (PAG). The PAG would be made up of our youngest Sailors and have the job of reviewing, revamping and revitalizing our PMV and Off-duty Safety Programs. I would ensure that he knew he and the PAG had the CMC's, the X.O.'s and my full support and whatever resources I could make available. I would also ensure the PAG was afforded the full support of my Wardroom, the Chief's Mess and the First Class Mess. I would tell him that his PAG was responsible for initiating all new off-duty safety initiatives, and developing new training opportunities to elevate our PMV and Recreational/Off-duty Safety Programs. The PAG would work closely with our Safety Office, and the PAG would APPROVE all new PMV Safety initiatives (POD notes, Safety lectures, Presentations at Quarters) to make sure the message being generated was appropriate and that it was being presented in a manner that ensured it was heard loud and clear by our target population.

One of the first initiatives I would ask the PAG to accomplish would be creating a comprehensive list of all the negative AND the positive consequences involved if/when they make one or more of the following decisions:

1. NOT to wear a seat belt when behind the wheel.
2. NOT to make everyone in their car wear a seat belt.
3. NOT to stop a Shipmate from driving drunk.
4. To get behind the wheel after drinking.

5. To get in a vehicle being driven by someone who is drunk.

Because my squadron, and the rest of the Navy, has historically been bombarded with all the BAD things that can happen to Sailors when they don't buckle up or when they drive drunk, I would tell the PAG OIC to file away their list of the negative consequences. Instead, I would ask them to carefully discuss and sequentially attack each of the real or perceived positive consequences—those "good" things that are so powerful that they outweigh common sense and (the now ingrained) "bad things" that often happen when we make bad decisions behind the wheel. Positive consequences likely would include such things as:

- Wanting to look "cool" behind the wheel
- Being able to turn around and talk to those in the back
- Not being viewed as a nerd
- Being able to reach my CDs
- Peer pressure
- Just wanting to have more fun
- Being able to get out of the car quickly before it catches fire in a crash (my favorite)
- Increased self-confidence

Before his reconvening the PAG, I would offer to help my PAG OIC prepare how best to address each of the positive consequences the group comes up with. By attacking each perception individually, the group will likely come to a better understanding of how to help themselves and one another collectively reduce peer-pressure influence and make better/smarter decisions.

The creation of the PAG and my selection of the PAG Officer-in-Charge would be announced at Quarters, 30 minutes following our meeting. I would tell my command and my new PAG OIC that I'd still lie awake at night worrying about my Sailors, but that our newly formed Peer Advocacy Group was my champion for change. ■

# Motorcycle Safety



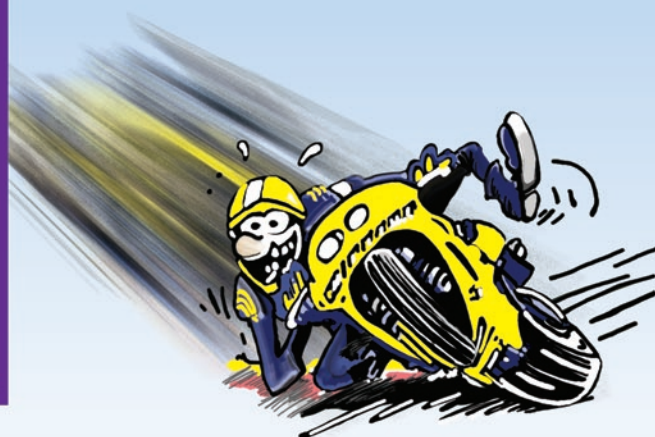
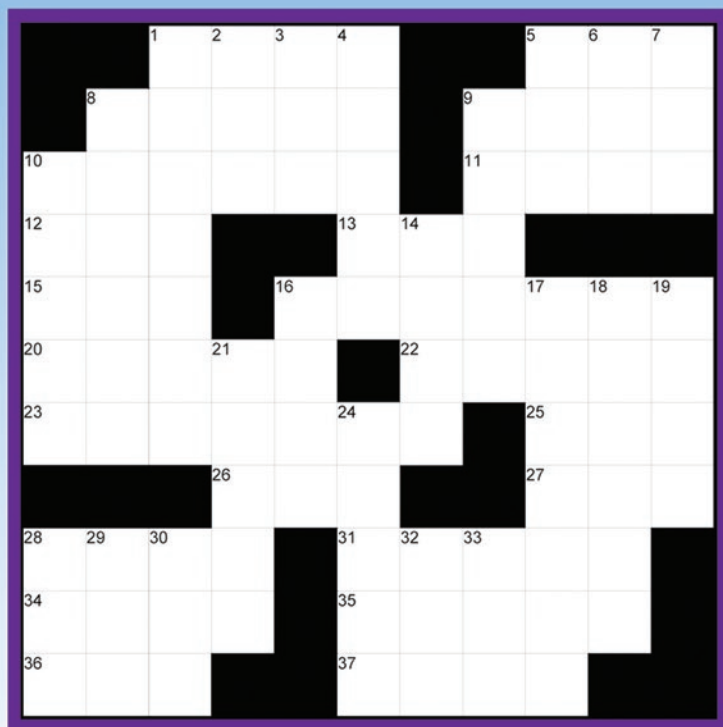
**CAPT TONY WICKMAN**  
71 FTW/PA  
Vance AFB OK

## ACROSS

1. Body part broken with bad riding
5. Golden Girl Arthur
8. Drills
9. Ripped
10. Safety item when riding
11. Compass direction
12. Time to go for Airmen, in short
13. Ram's partner
15. USAF recreation org.
16. Report to watch before motorcycle riding
20. Blockade
22. 70s TV series
23. Scout before riding
25. Hairpiece
26. Vase
27. Greek letter
28. Weather condition
31. Riding safety item
34. Shade of color
35. Lubricated
36. Caribou relative
37. Row

## DOWN

1. Cushion
2. Riders' decision-making aid, in short
3. Formerly, in France
4. Cosmetics manufacturer Lauder
5. Constrictor
6. Medical sites visited by fallen riders
7. Picnic pest
8. Pin-up Page
9. Body parts possibly damaged in mishap
10. Steal
14. Tip off
16. Tire concern
17. Then again
18. Altered text
19. Hindu music
21. Infantryman
24. Gold bar
28. Rural road designation
29. Feeling ill
30. Pen filler
32. 52 to Caesar
33. Bullring cheer





# Mountains & Men

**CAPT JOSEPH D. COX**  
9 ARS/DOIA  
Travis AFB CA

**We** hear about all of these “there I was” shooting-my-watch stories about threats in the AOR. Or for the heavy drivers out there, like me, the “there I was” in the middle of the Pacific, level cruise, auto-pilot on, drinking my coffee, briefing the GRACC workbook with the co-pilot. But for your reading pleasure, I figured I’d tell you a lighter story about everyday fun, and how applying ORM properly can make even our outdoor activities more enjoyable—or in this case, less painful.

So, there I was ... on a Friday afternoon at Kirtland AFB, attending Flight Safety Officer training. After thanking the Almighty that the weekend was here and that our group wouldn’t have to listen to any more classroom lectures until Monday, the fellas and I decided to plan our weekend activities. Albuquerque in the middle of March was beautiful—the skies clear, the temperature just right and forecast to be so for the whole weekend. Wow! How lucky could one get? The rest of the ‘crew’ and I figured that a trip to Outdoor Rec would serve us well, so we piled into the rental cars and headed on over. It just so happens that with \$3.50 (with club card) you can rent a nice mountain bike with helmet, replacement tubes, trail map and a first aid kit. Since one of our crew was a mountain biker, we felt that we were in good hands, because most of us hadn’t ridden in terrain, or at least hadn’t done it in some time.

After a thorough read-through of the trail map, we felt we had grasped the general scope of each trail with regard to length, duration, aerobic level and technical difficulty. We also studied the route to get to the trail and compared that route with a local map. We covered all the bases.

We picked a route that had a moderate technical level and aerobic workout that the book recommended for beginners looking for some easy, yet more technical work. We were all pilots who had passed the fitness test, so we figured we were up for the challenge. Our ORM model was working to our advantage—we were willing to accept a little more technical challenge to get a good look at some Albuquerque mountainous terrain as our benefit.

We had followed the ORM steps so nicely in our planning phase: we had Identified the Hazards. We knew that mountain biking was inherently dangerous because of the terrain, and we knew that most of us were over thirty, which is a hazard in itself. We had also Assessed the Risks. We had realized that mishap potential, such as minor scrapes and bruises existed. We knew there was a possibility of a blown tire. Also, we knew we weren’t in shape like we were back in those good ol’ days. With all the risks assessed, we Analyzed the Risk Control Measures. We decided on a trail that wasn’t too technically difficult to mitigate the cuts and bruises, and brought along a first aid kit to treat if necessary. We brought with us some extra tire tubes to cover the possibility of the blown tire. We chose a trail that wasn’t too long or too aerobically challenging (according to the trail guide) so we could finish and not be



too whipped physically.

Everything appeared to be going well. Our ORM model was working great for the events that would be occurring Saturday. I pause here in my stroll though the steps because I want to make sure that everyone remembers what night it was. Did I mention that it was the end of the FIRST week of training? That's right! We failed to include the risks of a hard night out on the town with the 'crew' in our little model. The bar scene is decent in Albuquerque, even if the cabs are expensive. So when it comes to Making Control Decisions, our process got a little more complicated.

First, the late-morning bike ride we planned turned into an early afternoon bike ride for obvious reasons (see "going out" comment above). Due to the time, the temperature was slightly warmer and the greasy Sonic burgers were still bouncing around in our stomachs, but we were still up for it. We made the decision to go, realizing that the ORM model had to be updated. We made another control decision to include more water for the ride because we had "accidentally" dehydrated ourselves the night before. We also decided to take a lighter, just-in-case something happened and we need to strike a fire, to signal somebody or to get warm.

As we Implemented the Plan, we enjoyed the mountain scenery and smells as we cruised through the trail. It was a nice ride for the first several miles, which equated to the first hour and a half. Things were going well in our group, as everyone was performing well despite our late-night transgressions the night before. We were proving to be the athletic, in-shape guys we thought we were. Not even the large paw prints with nails about two inches long embedded in the mud frequently crossing the trail scared us.

Now, we were at the easy part of our ORM process, Supervising and Reviewing. As the map-reader, I figured that the group was doing well and we made it to the halfway point with only

one minor screw-up. We zigged when we should have zagged and ended up doing the route in reverse, which we thought wouldn't be too much of a factor, since the route made a big loop. After taking a break in the action at the halfway point and seeing that we still had more than half of our water supply, we were feeling pretty good about ourselves as rookie mountain bikers.

As for the Reviewing part of the final step, I must say, the trails are designed to go in the direction that they dictate, and not in reverse unless the trail map specifically says so. For instance, as we hit the 3/4 point on the trail, we came to a pretty long, rocky ascent. This rocky part wouldn't have been too much of a problem if you were to hit it going in the right direction—it would have been fun. Going in reverse required a little too much pushing the bike instead of riding it. After the CLIMB (note I didn't use the word RIDE) up the rocky portion, the natives in the tribe were starting to get a little restless. I even heard comments about mountain lion tracks, the sun hanging low in the horizon, references to the lighter, and the most disturbing of all—a reference to "Piggy" from the Lord of the Flies, with me being "Piggy."

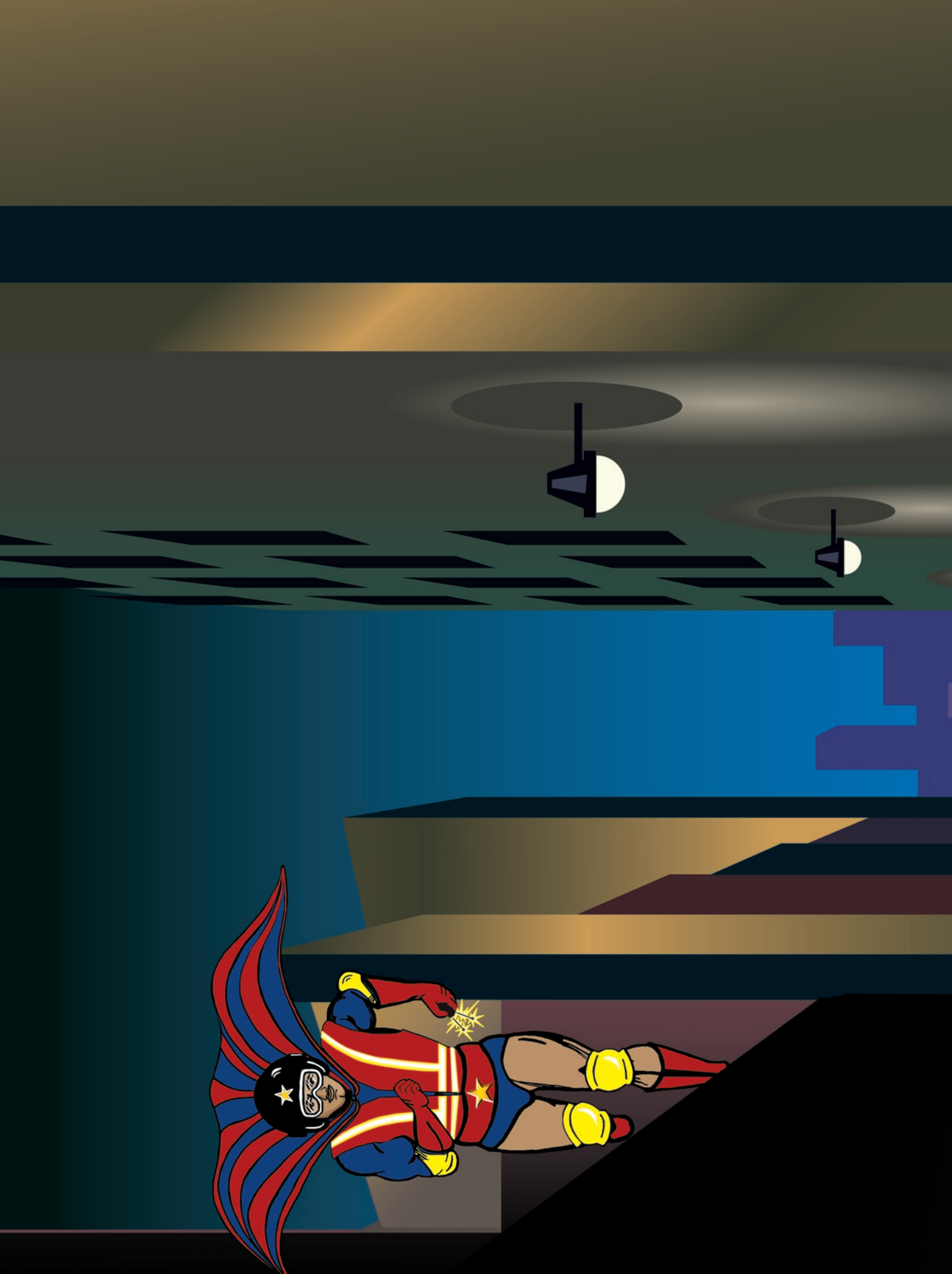
It gets worse. We were starting to get desperate to find any sign that directed us to our campsite, where the car was parked, and at the first sign we saw (notice I said the first sign and not the right sign), I decided that we should take it. It just so happens that the trail was pretty good ... at first! Then the new trail began to turn back toward the west, which was not the direction we wanted to go, and furthermore, it had a pretty muddy downhill portion. Both not good! When we finally realized that we had taken a loop that took us back to the main trail and backtracked us a half mile, we had to make another decision. We decided it would be more beneficial to finish the loop instead of traveling up the muddy hill portion. The verdict is still out on whether or not this deci-

sion was a good one, for it did return us to the original trail at a point that looked very familiar, which was good.

Unfortunately, it returned us to the base of the rocky ascent that we had already suffered through once. OUCH! At this point, the natives were very restless, and I had made them that way with my poor map reading. (Maybe Navs are good for the Air Force.) I had to get the troops back to the car, the hotel, and then the bar (since the drinks were now on me) as quickly as possible. All in all, the loop had added another hour-and-a-half to the trek. Most of us were low on water and having to share the last of the extra bottles. Eventually, I was able to get us back to the parking lot, which was difficult because nobody trusted me anymore with the map and the directions. All in all, our one-to-two-hour trek took about four-and-a-half hours. We were tired, and the emotions we felt were not of fun, but of satisfaction that we were not going to have to make camp in the mountains, or become wild animal appetizers.

So, in Review and to put this back into the ORM model, we decided that maybe mountain biking wasn't for us. Our input to our personal ORM models was that bikes should stay on roads. We also decided that the trails, while fun, aren't marked too well, and that if attempted again, our trek would be on a less-technical and well-marked trail. The duration of the ride was about right, because none of us were too sore the next day.

Finally, if you are going to enjoy the activities of your TDY area, I suggest activities related to food/beverage consumption, like the Fiery Foods Festival, which I attended the next day and is another non-flying ORM story. ■





**Before  
You Leap Over Tall  
Buildings In A Single Bound**

*(or whatever it is you do for fun) ...*

**Put On  
Your Personal  
Protective Equipment.**

*Just in case your landing is less than "Super".*



# 6000-Mile Road Trip

**GREG PEARY**  
56 SVS/SVR  
Luke AFB AZ

**E**very motorcyclist looks forward to hitting the road, whether for the commute to work, or in my case, a two-week vacation to visit family in Maine. I knew the 6000-mile round trip from Arizona and back would be a road trip of a whole different magnitude; especially solo.

I planned my route keeping to the interstate highway system. Following is some information I developed as a result of my trip, and some lessons learned from the experience.

## Pre-Trip Musts

Be VERY familiar with your motorcycle, its capabilities, handling characteristics and idiosyncrasies. I had logged more than 24,000 miles on this motorcycle before this trip.

If you have never taken a rider course, or if it's been several years since your last class, sign up for a refresher. It will help re-establish good habits and eliminate some potential bad habits you may have developed.

Have the motorcycle checked by an experienced mechanic, making sure the oil has been changed and the drive mechanisms (chain, belt or shaft) are in top shape. If the bike is water-cooled, have the cooling system serviced. Ensure the tires are in good condition. Replace the brake pads and brake/clutch fluid, if needed. Replace the spark plugs and have the air cleaner serviced or replaced. If the battery is more than a year old, replace it. Bottom line: Your motorcycle is your life-line. You take care of it, and it will take care of you.

Plan your route thoroughly. Write down all major route changes, and highway loops around major cities. Review the plan daily, to know what is coming up. I recommend a membership with a national agency, such as Rand McNally, that provides up-to-date information regarding road construction.

Obtain emergency road service coverage. I use the Honda Riders Club of America. For a nominal annual fee, I can obtain emergency road service and towing nationwide. Other agencies such as AAA offer similar services.

## Packing Tips

Caution: Don't overload the bike. Too much weight, especially with a high center of gravity, can cause handling problems.

Extra everything. Spark plugs, engine oil, all sizes of fuses, two flashlights, extra batteries, second cell phone,



extra ignition key, and battery charger.

A well-thought-out tool kit. My motorcycle is metric, so I needed a complete set of metric wrenches and sockets, as well as Allen wrenches, spark plug wrench, slip-joint pliers, snips, screwdrivers, adjustable wrench, pocket knife, a tire-patch kit, and duct and electrical tape.

Miscellaneous items: camera, rain gear, tie-down straps, bungee cord, sunscreen, road atlas, sunglasses (two pairs).

### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

This cannot be overemphasized! Riding a motorcycle is one of the most dangerous activities a person can engage in. Protecting yourself and being visible helps keep you safe. A helmet is the single most important piece of equipment you can wear. I prefer a full-face model. A rugged riding jacket made of leather or synthetic material with built-in armor will afford added protection in the event of a mishap, as will steel-toed boots, leather chaps or pants, and full-fingered leather gloves. Bright-colored clothing or clothing with reflective striping help with being more visible. Wearing ear plugs reduces situational awareness when riding a motorcycle. The correct stance ... replace the "loud pipes."

### Riding Strategies

I learned the acronym SIPDE in a riding course I took seven years ago. Scan, Identify, Predict, Decide, Execute. Scan all the time. Identify what is going on; is the vehicle behind you going to pass? Predict what each of the vehicles around you might do next. Decide actions you will take, IF they do as you predict. Execute your plan if they do as predicted. I practice the principle of SIPDE continuously.

Spacing: Try to keep a reasonable distance between yourself and the vehicle ahead. A good rule is two seconds. If you can't see their side mirrors, chances are, they can't see you!

What about passing? I don't spend a lot of time alongside tractor-trailer

rigs. They are big and dangerous. Wind buffeting and debris from a blown tire are potential hazards. I always give vehicles I'm passing a wide berth, moving to the left third of the passing lane.

Bad weather and night riding: I encountered fog, high winds and thunderstorms. When possible, take shelter until conditions improve; however, if you ride it out, stop, put on rain gear, and most of all, SLOW DOWN when traveling in unfavorable conditions! NEVER stop at an underpass—except for emergencies. What about riding at night? Don't override the illumination of the headlamp, and slow down to quickly react to hazards, such as animals, tire pieces and gravel in the road.

### Lessons Learned

Rest often. Riding a motorcycle is not only physically demanding, it's mentally fatiguing. You have to be 100 percent mentally focused all the time. I must stop to refuel every 120 miles, so I got off the bike, walked around, and stretched.

Keep hydrated. Every time I stopped for fuel, I drank a bottle of water.

Eat breakfast AFTER the first 100 miles. It makes the day seem a bit shorter.

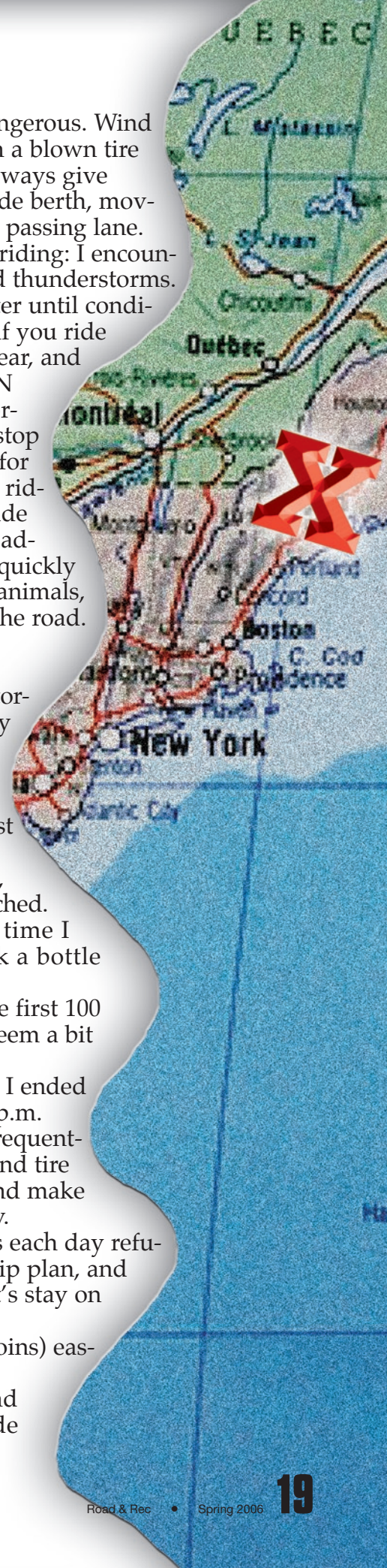
Stop when you're tired. I ended each day no later than 4 p.m.

Check the motorcycle frequently. Check the engine oil and tire pressure at every stop, and make adjustments, as necessary.

I spent about two hours each day refueling. This affected my trip plan, and resulted in an extra night's stay on each leg of the trip.

Have cash (especially coins) easily available for tolls.

Above all, ride safe, and keep your bike shiny side up! ■





# The Last Wave

**TSGT ANTHONY REYNOLDS**  
1 MOS/MXOOP  
Langley AFB VA

**J**uly 25, 2005. Today is going to be a good day. I'm scheduled to roll out this morning and meet some friends for a day of motorcycle riding in Northern Virginia. The plan is to meet Steve in Ashland, head up I-95 toward Quantico, take exit 150, and meet David and Sean at the local Burger King. We pulled up and we were all smiles, because we knew the ride was about to be on. I took the time to snap a few pictures, and then we were off to meet four other guys at the gas station up the street.

Once there, we exchanged names and became motorcycle brothers with Hutch, Barry, and Chris. We filled the

tanks and headed out toward Route 211. David told me he was going to make this ride something to remember, because I had ridden two hours to meet them. I don't know the roads we took, but the smile under my helmet was priceless. I hadn't seen roads like this since I left Germany: tarmac filled with sweepers, off-camber

turns, left and right hairpins, and decreasing-radius turns. A true nightmare for an inexperienced rider. The smile under my helmet had passed both ears, but things were quickly brought back into perspective when I reached the crest of a hill and to my surprise, entered a left turn. Quickly regaining my composure, I looked all the way to the left so the bike would fol-

low my eyes and not run off the road.

I was snapped back into reality, for I know my chosen sport is a dangerous

*I was snapped back into reality, for I know my chosen sport is a dangerous one and we must not become complacent at "ANY" time—the end result could be death.*

one and we must not become complacent at "ANY" time—the end result could be death.

Before I knew it, we were stopping for gas again and I was thanking David for showing me the road and not leaving anyone behind. That's when he told me, "Dude, we haven't even scratched the surface—that was not Route 211." BEEEEEEEEEEEP, please stand by for an emergency broadcast. "What? That's not the road?" He just smiled and walked away.

I looked around, and everyone was having a great time and truly enjoying themselves. I remember thinking, "This is how it should be, riding and having a good time with friends." Finally, it was time to mount up, and David once again took time out to tell everyone about the road we were going to take. He stressed the importance of riding at your own pace and taking your time. He further explained the technical aspects of the road, and cautioned us to be very careful. With this in mind, we rode off, not realizing that David had just saved our lives.

Route 22 was all that and more, constant high-speed switchbacks, and two lanes to boot. We had a great time going up, and then the turn that David warned us about came up. When I realized it was the turn, it was too late and I was already committed. Luckily, I was not speeding, so I was able to control my entry and make the exit. To put things in perspective, the turn was a 180-degree blind decreasing radius. WOW! We all made it to the top safely, and rejoiced about the great ride.

Steve and I headed down the hill and saw some other motorcyclists coming up. They were moving pretty good, and as always, we extended the motorcyclist wave of friendship. But for one of them, it would be his last wave.

Once Steve and I made it to the bottom, we talked for a minute and then decided to do one more run up the hill. We headed up and made it to the turn

that David warned us about. Cars starting flashing, telling us there was an accident ahead. We put our flashers on and headed up the hill until we came upon the accident.

At first glance, I thought it was Sean, but it was someone else.

It was the guy I had just waved to five minutes ago. I got off my bike and ran to where he was, but people were already doing CPR on the guy. I decided to head up the hill to slow traffic down and warn other people.

When Sean came upon the accident, the woman who was giving CPR asked him if he could take over, and he did. Sean gave CPR, but later said he could feel the guy slipping away, and saw him turning blue. We learned later that the rider was an Air Force member out of Andrews AFB, and he leaves behind a wife and two children.

By now, I'm sure the accident report has made the headlines, detailing how a motorcyclist crashed on Route 211 in Northern VA. I was not involved in the accident, nor did I see it happen. But I do remember waving to a fellow motorcyclist as I always do, never thinking that it would be his last wave. ■

*To put things in perspective, the turn was a 180-degree blind decreasing radius.*

answers to page 11





# Unaware Is Not An Excuse

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**MSGT SAMUEL D. SMITH**  
7 MUNS/MXWR  
Dyess AFB TX

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Reprinted from *Combat Edge*, Aug 2003

**You** may think you are doing all the right things concerning the health and welfare of your energetic young Airmen, but do you really know what is happening during their prized and well-deserved days off? I thought I did.

This Airman had just turned 20 and had been at Dyess just 8 months. She was on her way to becoming a great weapons loader. Her bubbly personality and attitude made her a pleasure to be around and an asset to her section. She confided in me numerous times concerning her per-

sonal life and coordinated trips to Houston to see her relatives. Her family lived just over 6 hours from base, so she had ample opportunity to go home, and see her sister and grandmother. I knew when she was going and returning ... or so I thought.

During the accident investigation after her untimely death, I learned from one of her friends that she had traveled 6 hours after her swing shift one Friday night. She did not return until Monday morning and traveled back just in time to make it to roll call. She was never late for work, so it never occurred to me to ask if she had really traveled to Houston as planned over the weekend. Our squadron has a policy for signing out on Verbal Orders of the Commander (VOCO) with supervisor's knowledge. During your normal weekend pass, you can leave the local area for day or weekend trips and not be on leave. You must



sign out and have it approved by your supervisor. This really works well knowing where your people are, and when they will return, especially in today's world political climate. We need to know where everyone is and must be able to contact them.

This terrible weekend in November started with great weather, sun shining, and everyone looking forward to having a little fun. This Airman signed out saying she would visit her sister and grandmother, and return on Sunday. She recently moved to day shift, and she did not leave Houston until just after midnight on Monday morning knowing she had

to report to work at 7 a.m. Just

35 miles from base on a lonely West Texas country highway, she crossed two oncoming lanes and ran head-on into a pickup truck. The other driver escaped with non-life-threatening injuries. She, however, lost consciousness and expired from her injuries approximately an hour after the accident. The Texas Highway Patrol accident report cited distraction as a possible cause. I believe fatigue played a part.

Knowing this Airman was traveling on verbal orders, and having the route and times down on paper, did not help this situation. I was unaware she routinely had done this trip and pulled in just before her shift. Had I been aware of her past practice of pulling in before the shift, I

would have spent more time talking to her about her plans. These young Airmen need to know that they are not 10 feet tall and bulletproof, and sometimes there can be deadly repercussions to their actions. At work, they wear goggles, gloves and aprons, and watch each other for safety and Operational Risk Management (ORM) even if they are not being watched. Off duty, they may not think twice about driving excessive lengths without adequate sleep or breaks.

This Airman made the ultimate mistake by not doing what she had said on the VOCO letter. When she didn't leave Houston on Sunday, she should have kept her supervisor apprised of her situation. I know it would have been better for her to call and admit she made a mistake by not leaving home in time to be at work after a full rest period. By not wanting to be charged a couple days leave or be counseled on her responsibility, she made a decision that cost this bright Airman her life.

Had I been aware, I could have taken further steps to prevent this tragedy. It

*Had I been aware of her past practice of pulling in before the shift, I would have spent more time talking to her about her plans. These young Airmen need to know that they are not 10 feet tall and bulletproof, and sometimes there can be deadly repercussions to their actions.*

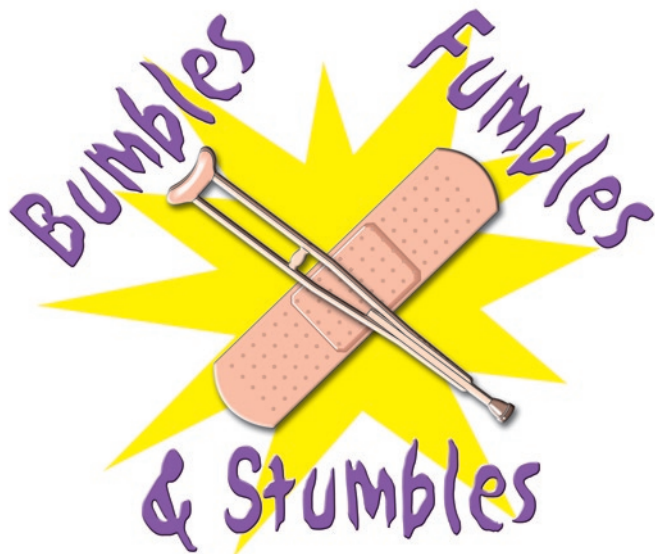
is too late for her, but we can use her death to teach others and prevent a recurrence. Unaware is not an excuse. Become aware ... Now!

Supervisors, talk with your subordinates, and know what they are doing and where they are going. You, your unit and, especially, your subordinates, will reap great rewards by not letting your people

get themselves into trouble and not having to setup a memorial service.

One more reminder—make sure you and your troops have the Emergency Data Card and Servicemember's Group Life Insurance current. It may save your family and others unnecessary grief during an already tragic time. ■

# Bumbles Fumbles & Stumbles



all, it takes an adult to show the youngsters how to really get hurt. Docs diagnose and treat a sprained ankle, and place the Big Person on quarters for three days.

## A Good Walk Spoiled

Few recreational activities are as hazardous as playing golf. Especially that part about staying upright while walking on the course. Tiger is meandering along when he trips and twists an ankle, tearing a ligament in the process. That gets him a day on quarters.



## Four Seconds ... No Bull

Cowboy Bob (not his real name) sidles up to the local rodeo corral and climbs aboard what the mishap report calls "a bull for customers to ride." This model doesn't have the training wheels attached, 'cause Bob only stays seated for four seconds. Not satisfied with merely throwing off his rider, the bull proceeds to go upside Bob's hockey-helmeted head with a hoof while leaving him with a keep-sake bruise and knot. At the ER, X-rays and an MRI of Bob's head come up empty ... if you know what I mean. Along with his commander's order to stop riding bulls, Bob gets a supply of Vitamin M, and 24 hours on quarters to think about a new hobby that doesn't involve livestock.



## Answering The Thermostat

Having a cell phone can be a huge benefit when you're in a jam and need to call for help. However, our next subject gets himself into a jam by using a cell phone. Here's the scene: Shade Tree drives home and pops the hood on his truck, so he can change the thermostat. In a hurry, he can't wait for the engine to cool down. He's looking under the hood for the device when he sees a radiator hose



The following short articles are derived from actual Air Force Class C mishaps. Our intent is not to make light of anyone's pain, even if it is sometimes self-inflicted; it's the questionable decisions and behavior we're pointing out. This is just a different approach to getting people to read about safety. Check 'em out—you just might get a laugh, and learn something, too.

## Slice: It's Not Just For Golf Anymore

Filing down a callus on your foot can help freshen up and beautify your tired old dogs. It can also provide a quick lesson in anatomy and physiology, when you run over a wrinkle and dig deeper than you wanted to go. Unable to cap the resulting gusher, our subject drives to the base ER for treatment. In addition to the souvenir plug, Too Smooth gets some pain meds and a day on quarters.



## The Adult Roll Model

Spending quality time on the playground with the kids is a lot of fun—until somebody gets hurt. First, one of the tots falls down, but no harm done—kids are resilient. Then, demonstrating the Domino Theory of Recreation, a grown-up takes a tumble, too. After





blocking his view. With one hand, he grabs the hose, which happens to be loose. At that very instant, he answers the ringing cell phone in his other hand. That's when the radiator hose comes completely off its connection, spraying hot fluid in his face. After his first trip to the hospital, the docs put him on quarters. The next day, the pain and swelling talk him into another visit. He gets treatment for second-degree burns and some convalescent leave.

### Night Jogger

Of all the things somebody can do at 10:30 p.m., jogging is probably not high on the list for most folks. But then, our subject is not most folks. This fitness fanatic goes out to the track for a few quick laps, but steps on a rock and tumbles forward. Giving new meaning to "breaking the fall," the jogger's left-forearm pays the price for the misstep. After an ambulance ride to the ER, the docs diagnose and treat a compound fracture, and prescribe five days in the hospital.



### A Trip To Remember

Worker A is helping Worker B put new shingles on B's roof. On his way to the work area, A trips over a toolbox and falls off the roof. At the ER, the docs diagnose a fractured collarbone, give him some happy pills, and put him on quarters for two days.



### Eye Caramba!

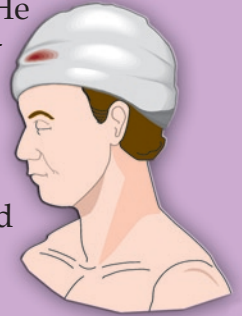
Humans are a creative species. They can take any piece of technology and invent ways to hurt themselves with it. Our subject is in a store, perusing greeting cards, when the cell phone in her purse



rings. With the same hand that she's holding the card in, she reaches up for the purse strap, but the dainty digits can't multitask, and the hand slips off the strap. The corner of the out-of-control card then pokes her in the eye, lacerating the cornea. Is there a "get well" card for that condition? She gets a funky eye patch and some time on quarters to ponder the idea.

### That Mirror Came Outta Nowhere

Maintenance-minded guy goes to check the fluid levels on a GOV bus. He steps up on a front wheel, putting an inch-long slice in his melon, courtesy of an outside mirror bracket. The kind folks at the base clinic clean and patch his cut scalp and send him back to work.



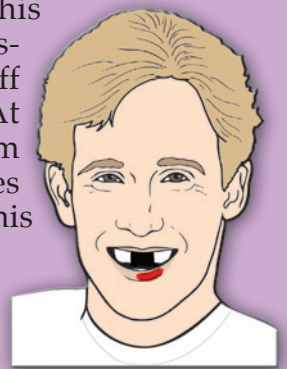
### Two Feet Of Pain

Tree-Trimming Guy (TTG) is 12 feet up on a ladder, cutting off tree limbs with a chainsaw. He's almost done with the job when the ladder starts to walk away. TTG tries to stop the action by grabbing onto the tree trunk, but fails to overcome gravity. The good news is that he's smart enough to push the chainsaw away as he begins his short trip to the ground, and TTG lands upright, with all of his parts intact. The bad news is that the landing fractures the bones in both of his heels. The spouse calls 911 and the EMTs give him a ride to the hospital, where he's admitted for surgery. He's off his feet for the next 12 weeks, followed by four more weeks of physical therapy, and then a full recovery.



### Softball Lesson No. 1: It Isn't

On a play at the plate, this hardy intramural softballer misjudges a throw that glances off his glove and onto his mug. At the base ER, the docs treat him for two broken pearly whites and a cut lip. All he gets for his trouble is a day on quarters, wondering why facemasks aren't required PPE for slow-pitch. ■



PLAYING WITH



## AD2 MARIEANGE PEEL

VQ-3, U.S. Navy

Travis AFB CA

**W**hat happens when you play with fire? Nothing good ... and I have the burns to prove it. What was supposed to be a rather fun day ended up turning into a living nightmare.

We were throwing a going-away party for a shipmate. I spent most of the day preparing my home for the party that was going to start at 5 p.m. As the first guests began to show, we sat around and talked, waiting for the grill to be dropped off. The grill arrived about a half-hour later, and after setting the coals in place, I lit them. By this time, more friends had arrived, and we were at the table getting ready to play cards.

While my shipmates waited for me to finish prepping the meat, I checked the grill one last time to make sure it was ready. I noticed that only one side of the grill had lit, so I went back into the house to get a match to relight the unlit coals. Upon my return, I added a little more lighter fluid before striking the match.

This is where the fun begins. In my rush to play cards, I didn't think to lift the cover to allow for proper air flow. I reached my arm in to light the coals, and a massive fireball emerged. It singed the right side of my face and my entire right forearm. Not knowing how bad my burn was, I continued to gather the meat to put on the grill. After about five minutes, the entire right side of my body began to ache and burn. I went to my room to see what was making my face hurt so much. When I looked into the mirror, I was horrified to see that my face had

started to peel. Not only was my face a mess, but my entire arm had also swollen and began to change to an olive-green color.

I informed a shipmate that I was going to go to medical to get some ointment, and that I would return shortly. By the time I had arrived at David Grant Medical Center at Travis Air Force Base, the pain was unbearable, and blisters had emerged all over my face and down my arm. The doctor took one look and rushed me to the back, where they dressed the burned areas. My burns were so severe that they were not able to treat them at David Grant. I was then referred to the University of California Davis Burn Center, where I was diagnosed with severe second-degree burns to my right arm and hand, and first-degree burns to my face. For the next two weeks, I was in pain day and night. I also sustained an infection, thanks to a pesky little blister on my right hand.

Now that the trauma is over and I am no longer a prisoner in my own home, I can resume a normal life—without the grill! I have definitely learned the hard way that there are a lot of risks associated with grilling. For starters, you have to have adequate ventilation. You also need to be extremely cautious when using lighter fluid; it is more dangerous than most people think. You should **NEVER** put lighter fluid on any already lit fire! This is one experience that I will never forget. ■

# Safety Shorts



## U.S. Seat Belt Use Up; Saves Thousands

Eighty-two percent of Americans wear seat belts while driving or riding in vehicles. At that rate, seat belts save nearly 16,000 lives, 350,000 serious injuries, and \$67 billion in economic costs associated with traffic injuries and deaths each year.

*Source: National Safety Council.*

## Residential Fires Kill Kids And Seniors

The U.S. Fire Administration reported that nearly 2500 children and 2300 seniors were injured or killed in U.S. residential fires in 2002.

*Source: National Safety Council.*

## High Speed = High Risk

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration cites speeding in one-third of the 44,000 annual U.S. traffic deaths, with an economic cost of \$40 billion each year, including wage and productivity losses, medical expenses, legal and insurance costs, police expenditures, and property damage.

*Source: National Safety Council.*

## Lives And Treasure: Costly Off-The-Job Injuries

Nationwide, about 35 percent of injuries affecting U.S. workers happen off duty. In 2003, more than 54,000 Americans died from unintentional injuries away from work, excluding motor vehicle crashes. Additionally, 15 million more people suffered disabling non-work injuries. Falls are the leading cause of unintentional death, claiming nearly 16,000 lives in 2003. Another 14,000 people died of unintentional poisoning. More than 4000 people died by choking, and nearly 2800 drowned. The annual monetary cost to

employers is \$425 million, while the total cost to society for non-vehicle off-the-job injuries exceeded \$230 billion in 2003.

*Source: National Safety Council.*

## Fewer Helmets: More Injuries And Deaths

After declining from the early 1980s until 1997, motorcyclist deaths have increased dramatically in the U.S. Across the country, almost 3900 riders died in 2004, up 89 percent compared with 1997. In 2000, Florida repealed mandatory helmet wear for motorcycle riders older than 18, and rider fatalities went up 81 percent. Head, brain and skull injuries went up 82 percent, and helmet use dropped from nearly 100 percent to 53 percent. Rider deaths went up 21 percent in Arkansas, and even more in Texas, after those states made similar changes in helmet laws. After Louisiana weakened its law on helmet use in 1999, the number of motorcyclist deaths doubled.

*Source: National Safety Council.*

## Put A Lid On It, Kid

Fifty-seven million Americans ride bicycles for recreation or transportation. More than 70 percent of them are five to 14 years old. In 2001, 134 children died and more than 314,000 sustained injuries in bicycle crashes. Head injuries account for more than 60 percent of bicycle-related deaths, more than 65 percent of hospital admissions, and about 35 percent of ER visits. Without a helmet, a fall from as little as two feet can produce a skull fracture or other traumatic brain injury. Helmets reduce the risk of head injury by as much as 85 percent, and the risk of brain injury by as much as 88 percent.

*Source: National Safety Council.*



## SAFETY RESEARCH UPDATE

The following information is courtesy of *SafetyLit*, a service of the San Diego State University Graduate School of Public Health. *SafetyLit* summarizes copyrighted reports on safety research. *SafetyLit* staff and volunteers regularly examine more than 300 journals and scores of reports from government agencies and organizations. We've included these summaries in *Road & Rec* for their interest to the Air Force community. For more, go to this link: [www.safetylit.org](http://www.safetylit.org).

### The Risky Left Turn

Belgian researchers sought to learn why road accidents tend to occur in specific road segments. They identified the types of driving incidents that occur in areas with high mishap rates: Left turns at signalized intersections, collisions with pedestrians, loss of vehicle control (run-off-roadway), and rainy weather. Accidents occurring outside these zones (not clustered in space): Left turns at intersections with traffic signs, head-on collisions, and drunken road user(s).

(Source: *Accid Anal Prev* 2005; 37(4): 787-99. Copyright© 2005, Elsevier Publishing.)

### Fatal Mishaps Down 41 Percent Since '70

A research study of mortality in the United States from 1970 to 2002 examined the six leading causes of death (heart disease, stroke, cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, accidents related to transportation (motor vehicle, other land vehicles, and water, air, and space) and not related to transporta-

tion (falls, fire, and accidental poisoning), and diabetes. The largest percentage decreases were in death rates from stroke (63 percent), heart disease (52 percent), and accidents (41 percent). In contrast, death rates doubled from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease over the entire time interval and increased by 45 percent for diabetes since 1987.

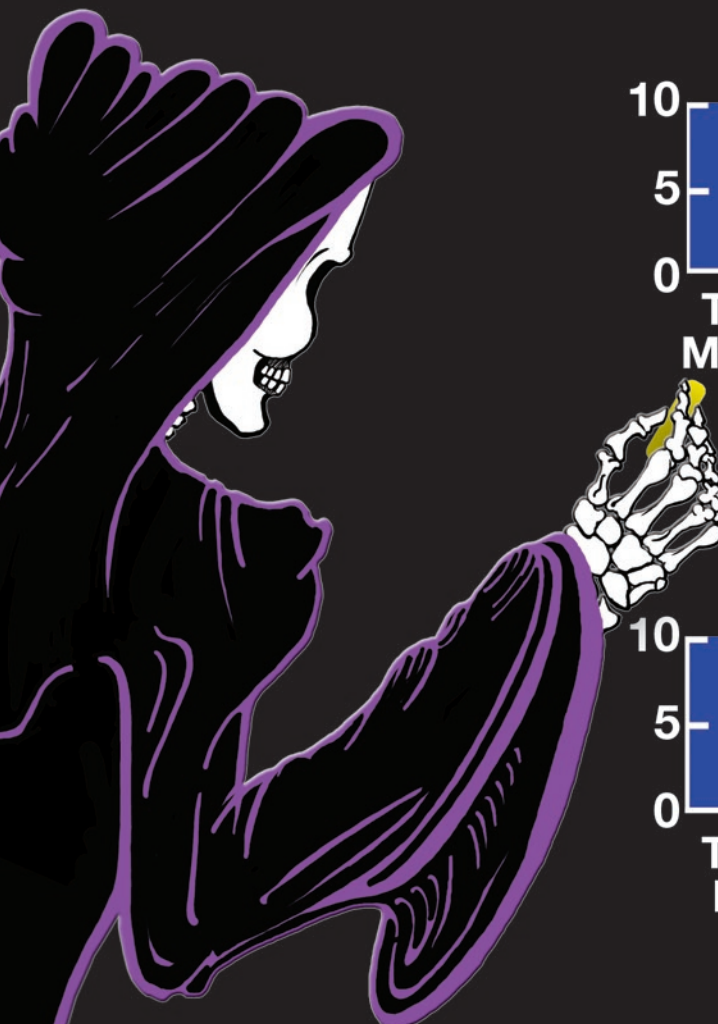
(Source: *JAMA* 2005; 294(10): 1255-9. Copyright© 2005, American Medical Association.)

### Hands Free; Mind Occupied

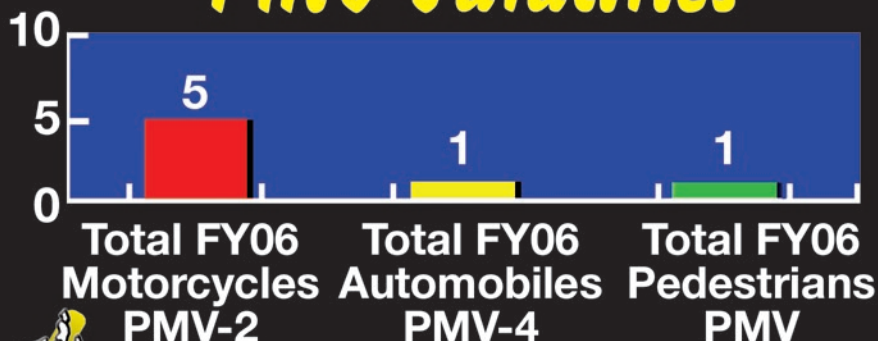
British researchers conducted a distraction experiment with drivers using hands-free mobile phones. They hypothesized that during a normal in-car conversation, both driver and passenger would stop talking when the demands of the road become too great. However, a remote speaker on a mobile phone doesn't see what the driver sees, and would be less likely to pause the conversation accordingly. The test had pairs of participants drive a circuit of rural, urban and suburban roads. One drove, while the other was the conversational partner. The partner engaged in a verbal task with the driver while seated in the same car (with or without a blindfold), or via a hands-free mobile phone. The number of utterances, words, and questions were analyzed for both drivers and passengers across the different settings. Normal in-car conversations were suppressed during the most demanding urban roads. However, the mobile phone use prevented suppression in the passengers' conversations, and even encouraged drivers to make more utterances than usual with a normal in-car conversation.

(Source: *Transp Res F Traffic Psychol Behav* 2005; 8(3): 197-211. Copyright© 2005, Elsevier Publishing.) ■

# Snapshot on Safety



## PMV Fatalities



## Non-PMV Fatalities



## 1st Qtr FY06 Update

So far this quarter, we suffered one automobile death and five motorcycle deaths. Motorcycle causal factors are speeding and experience. As you can see from the chart above, 15 of our Airman died so far this FY. Every mishap was **preventable**. Risk management isn't something you can ignore. It is a "must do" if we are to stop the preventable

deaths of our Airmen. Supervisors and peers **MUST** get involved. We must become better Wingmen.

An Airman took off from a local airfield in his privately owned, fixed-wing, single-engine aircraft en route to Arizona. After delaying his trip a day because of bad weather, he resumed his trip the following day. At departure, the

weather conditions were scattered thunderstorms, rain showers and low cloud ceilings. Halfway into the trip, conditions deteriorated and he made a navigation change that would track through a mountain range, with the highest peak at 10,000 feet. Again, he encountered bad weather, requiring skills beyond his abilities, so he decided to turn around and return to the airfield. The Airman tried to navigate up and down through a cloud ceiling of 7800 feet. He discovered he was flying in a canyon, tried to turn and clipped a tree on the crest of the ridgeline, ripping off the left wing and crashing. The Airman was able to crawl away from the wreckage, but his body was found two days later by an Air Force search and recovery team. The Airman was trained and was considered by his instructor and friends as a good pilot. He had been flying for two years.

**Lessons learned:** Stay within the limits of your qualifications. Thorough risk assessments are necessary.

An Airman got on his motorcycle en-route to the bank. He was wearing all required protective equipment and a full-face helmet. The Airman had just passed through an intersection when he started having a seizure. During the attack, he inadvertently accelerated and veered into oncoming traffic, striking a vehicle head-on. The impact was so great that it snapped the chin strap on his helmet; it came off and he was whirled 100 feet and his head struck a fire hydrant. Bystanders rendered first aid, but to no avail; the Airman died at the scene. The Airman was trained. He had had three previous mishaps from seizures. The state in which this mishap occurred requires license revocation for six months if a person has seizures or blackouts. If they are seizure-free or blackout-free for at least six months, then they are OK to operate a vehicle. It had been 10 months since the Airman's last episode.



**Lesson learned:** Be aware of pathological reasons as causal factors in mishaps.

A couple of Airmen on separate motorcycles went for a 40-mile ride. One was carrying a passenger. All were wearing the required protective equipment. The operator carrying the passenger accelerated away from his friend, toward an intersection, at greater than 100 mph. He passed a highway patrol vehicle, and the officer turned around and immediately gave chase. The Airman tried to pass a vehicle in an intersection and clipped the front end of another vehicle, forcing him into the rear end of a third vehicle. Both operator and passenger were thrown from the motorcycle, and suffered fatal injuries in the mishap. Alcohol

or drugs were not factors. Although the operator was trained, excessive speed caused this mishap.

**Lesson learned:** Excess speed and reckless driving almost always result in death or bad consequences.

An Airman purchased his first motorcycle. Before attending motorcycle training, he

received supervised on-base riding training. After completing his training, he registered his motorcycle and was cleared to ride. The Airman continued to interact with co-workers, talking about motorcycles and motorcycle safety. One day he stopped by a friend's house after having his clutch adjusted. He later departed and entered a two-lane road, where he decided to try out the new clutch. He exceeded the speed limit and lost control when he tried to brake just before entering a curve. The Airman lacked experience in handling the motorcycle under these conditions, and collided with an oncoming vehicle. The severity of the impact separated his skull from his spine.

**Lessons learned:** Excessive speed, experience and judgment are deadly when not managed. ■

***In the old days, people rode bikes like this one, and didn't wear personal protective equipment.***

***Times change ...***

*Now, as a minimum, bicyclists on an Air Force installation must wear reflective clothing, and a bicycle helmet approved by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) or Snell Memorial Foundation. Riders should wear the same PPE off base, too.*

*Additionally, each base addresses bicycle riding in its local "Rules of the Road," or traffic instructions. Local policies usually follow state laws. For more information, consult your local Safety office.*

***References:***

***AFI 91-207***

***DoDI 6655.4***

***AFI 31-204***

