

The United States Air Force Journal of Occupational,
Recreational and Driving Safety

Road & Rec

Volume 18, Number 1

Winter 2006

- **Bjorn, The Safety Viking**
- **ORM Wheels on the Minivan**
- **An Electric Experience**



Road & Rec

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Winter: An Ouch Waiting to Happen

ZACHARY WAKEFIELD
332 ECS/SCMM
Balad AB Iraq

Hello, and welcome to the Safety Viking's "Winter Rant," brought to you by whomever you like; I'm not getting any commercial endorsements here!

Another season is upon us, and this one brings with it a different endless variety of harmful things that strive to slay you, and therefore, need to be watched out for. Some of those things I will mention here, and others I will hope you already know about. For some, the details are long and boring and based solely on common sense, so because I'm awarded limited space, those subjects will be lucky to get even so much as an honorable mention.

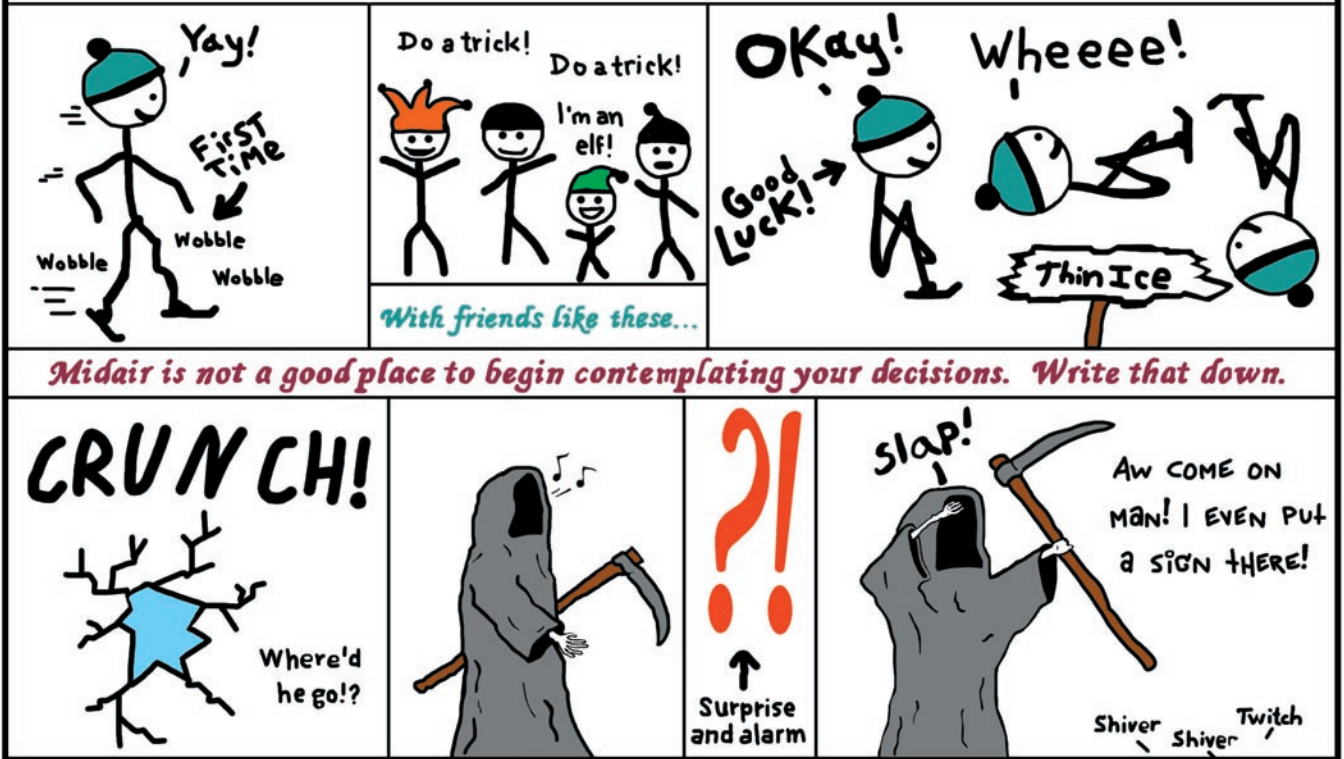
If you find yourself driving with your chin on the dashboard and your eye pressed to a peephole in the windshield the size of a jellybean, prepare for your insurance payments to increase. Those mornings where you mosey outside and find the windshield coated in what looks like frozen snot are unpleasant, to say the least. Skimping on the scraping only irritates you more in the long run, when

you get T-boned by a cement truck. There is nothing fun about that; ask anybody. Scrape your windshield! Haul yourself out of bed early enough to let your hoop-tie warm up! Need motivation? Keep that cement truck in the back of your mind.

Unfortunately, most of the fun activities involved with winter are massively unsafe at almost every level. Skiing is a great example. Where else but a ski resort can you find grown men and women jettisoning themselves down mountains at break-neck speeds through trees and moguls and kids, riding waxed boards and wearing stylish goggles and spandex pants? It's fun! Unless you're not a very good skier, in which case you must suffer the embarrassment of the bunny slopes until you get the hang of it. Maybe you will fall off the J-bar a few times and get dragged up the hill by your suspenders. Then everyone else will have fun laughing at you! You see? Practicing is multi-purpose, and can prevent you from getting run over by the groomer.

Ice skating shall suffer the brunt of this paragraph's ire. Studies show that there are few things in life that suck more than having both your feet shoot out from under you and having the back of your

AN EXPERIMENT WITH PAIN, FROSTBITE AND MASSIVE CRANIAL TRAUMA, CLEVERLY DISGUISED AS ICE SKATING.



Midair is not a good place to begin contemplating your decisions. Write that down.

Illustration by Zachary Wakefield

head whack the ice and pop back up like a bouncy ball a few times. It will ruin your romantic ice-skating experience on that moonlit pond pretty quick. Ways to prevent this? Go to a movie instead. Or at least, take lessons before you try the back flip combo with the double twist, jack-knife, midair iron-chef skillet trick. Also, observe and obey signs. "Thin-Ice" signs aren't there for you to use as goal posts for hockey. Should you forget, you will soon remember when you're looking up through the ice and thinking that "ice-cold beer" really isn't, compared to this.

This is the last paragraph; don't give up now! My last bit of Vikingly advice for you is to keep an eye on the folks who weren't lucky enough to read this. If you spot somebody about to jump into an unscrapped hooptie, remind them of the cement truck. I won't say smack them on the back of the head for attempted stupidity, but there are a lot of things I don't say.

The Moral?
Don't do dumb things!!

Sincerely,

*Bjorn, your Friendly Neighborhood Safety Viking
 Spreader of safety knowledge
 User of excess sub-text
 Wearer of crappy tennis shoes*

AEC (AW) KENNETH R. HICKS

Maintenance Control Supervisor, VQ-3
Tinker AFB OK

In the pre-dawn hours of a typical drive to work, an unexpected event shattered the morning silence, and almost ended my career and my life. My trusty Toyota and I have made the 32-mile drive safely through the Oklahoma countryside for a few years now, and this summer morning, with light traffic, appeared to be no exception.

The state highway I travel has a speed limit of 65, and county roads cross it at various points. Those roads all have stop signs giving the right-of-way to the highway. That morning, I was almost halfway to work when out of nowhere, the road in front of me displayed a familiar sight that was strangely out of place: the large white-and-orange cargo box of a U-Haul truck. The driver had pulled out onto the highway from the county road, right in front of me. I only had time to step on the brakes and slow down about 15 mph before hitting the 26-foot "Super Mover," the largest truck U-Haul rents, square in the middle.

I struck the double steel-reinforced cargo floor of the truck head-on. The force of the accident spun the truck 90 degrees, while it slid through the intersection, finally coming to rest in the adjacent ditch, more

than 30 feet from the impact point. My car followed the truck into the ditch and narrowly missed an oncoming semi-truck.

Amazingly, I survived the accident with little more than sore muscles and a totaled car. What kept me alive was wearing my seatbelt. Because the car had no airbag, the seatbelt alone kept me from departing my car on impact.

A Good Samaritan helped me from my car, just in time to watch the driver of the U-Haul get out and start to run away from the now-disabled truck. The police caught the driver hiding in a field a short time later. He was 17 years old, driving with a suspended license, and had actually stolen the truck earlier that morning.

The investigating Highway Patrol officer concluded that, based on the length of my skid marks to the point of contact (my car did not have ABS brakes), I hit the U-Haul at about 50 miles per hour. Had the truck been any other vehicle, the outcome of this accident could have been quite different. The truck's reinforced deck helped absorb and dissipate the collision force, and kept me from going either under or through the vehicle.

A seatbelt saved my life, and it can save yours, too. It's not just the law; it's the right and smart thing to do. Again, if I wasn't clear, seatbelts save lives! ■

Early Morning Surprise

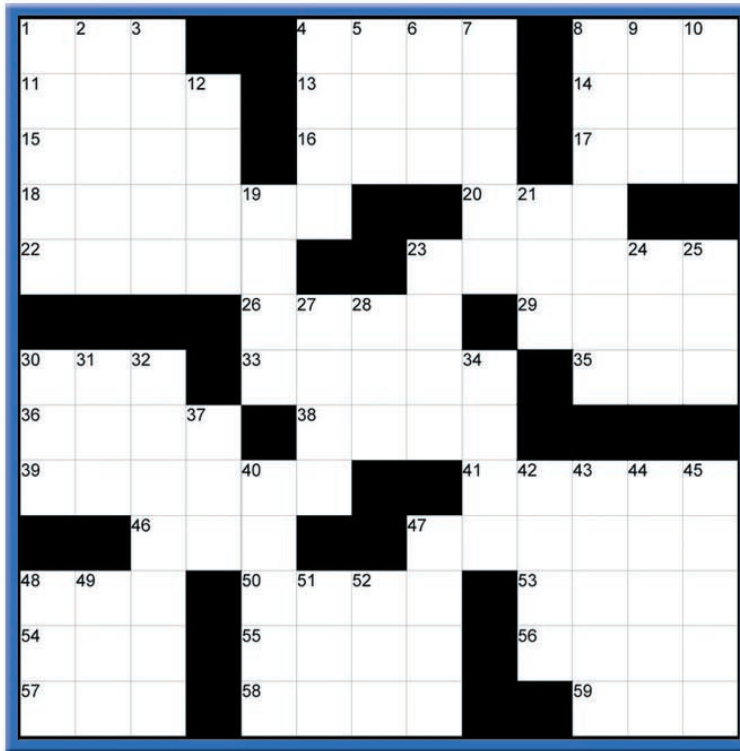


Checking the Car



CAPT TONY WICKMAN
ALCOM/J08
Elmendorf AFB AK

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ACROSS

1. Gauge or instrument display
5. Visage
9. Bert's pal on Sesame Street
10. Sluggard
12. Containing the univalent group NO₂
13. Acquire knowledge
14. Adam & _____
15. Concorde jet, in short
17. Post-war duty status, if not POW
18. Santa's helper
20. Arizona town
22. Cognizant
24. Big fish (plural)
26. Unused
29. Engine need; check before driving
30. Minor hockey league
32. Type of seat belt
34. Tools to change flat tires
36. Angry
38. Trick or ____
39. European length measurement
40. ____ deco
41. Happily ____ after

DOWN

1. Type of belt on auto
2. "____ Inside"; computer processor
3. Tire-pressure substance
4. People born under fifth sign of the Zodiac
5. Oil or air ____
6. Lemon ____
7. Radiator item to check before driving
8. Creepy
9. Compass dir.
11. Cellular material, in short
16. Hide
19. Type of engine cooling belt
21. 2000 film ____ of Honor
23. Narrow part of the abdomen
24. Crown
25. Stomach problem
27. Make proud
28. Radiator material
29. USAF learning method
31. Citrus fruit
33. Each
35. Kit ____
37. Gun the motor

Recreational Risk Management



ANONYMOUS

For outdoor enthusiasts, living near or in the mountains in the winter can be extremely rewarding. Good snow brings with it a slew of activities that we wait impatiently for throughout the rest of the year.

Unfortunately, the snow also brings a few inconveniences and a great deal of risk, that if unaccounted for, can turn a seemingly mundane outing into a disaster. An unexpected heavy snow can leave you stranded at a campsite, if you forgot to bring along snowshoes. Higher-than-normal temperatures can turn snow into rain, and soak through your clothes just in time for the temperature to drop again. A simple injury like a twisted ankle can turn into a very dangerous situation when you're 12,000 feet up a mountain, planning to ski down.

In my opinion, the rewards of being up in the mountains in the winter generally far outweigh the risks involved, but that is only

assuming a reasonable amount of "recreational risk management."

This concept was recently drilled back into my brain during an experience I had while on a TDY to Kirtland Air Force Base in March. I was stationed at Hill, so I was very disappointed to be leaving when there was still great skiing in Utah. However, a good friend who was permanently stationed at Kirtland assured me that the mountains down there, offered some pretty good snow and that this winter had been a very good one.

Having never skied in New Mexico, I was pleasantly surprised by the quality of the skiing I found down there and ended up getting in three good days with him in the first two weeks of my TDY. The lesson I relearned didn't come until the third week of my stay and was, fortunately, a lesson that I was able to relearn without any negative consequences.

The event was almost entirely in my head.

My friend tried to convince me to wake up at four in the morning to hike up one of the local mountains, to get in a single backcountry run before going to work. Getting up at four in the morning to hike an hour or two for a single run didn't appeal to me, so I said no, but we agreed to meet at the gym in the evening at 5:30. This was a normal thing for him to do and I didn't think much of it. He's a very experienced skier and climber, in great shape, with all the necessary gear. He had taken a four-day class in avalanche safety and was carrying a beacon. I didn't think anything of it until the following evening, when he didn't show up at the gym.

After waiting for an hour and calling his cell phone several times, my mind began to wander. I started to think about all the possible things that could go wrong with a guy out skiing in the backcountry by himself. I realized quickly that a beacon is useless unless somebody sees the slide, and realizes somebody was caught in it.

It was after 6:30 in the evening at this point, the sun was down and the temperature was dropping. If he had twisted something or broken an ankle, the dropping temperature would become an issue very soon. Or maybe on his way to the trailhead he had slid off the road in his car and no one had seen the accident, so no one reported it. I kept working out for another 30 minutes calling his cell phone off and on. I was never really that worried, but in the back of my head I kept thinking how lousy it would be for me not to do anything if there was even the slightest chance that he was out there stuck on the mountain, freezing to death.

So, I left the gym and went into action. To make a long story short, my search ended about an hour later, when he called me from the road on his way back down the mountain. That morning after packing his car, he had had the same thoughts and reservations about the trip that had occurred to me that evening. He made the decision to wait until after work and go up with someone else. He had done the conservative thing. Although the likelihood of the solo trip turning out bad was still pretty low, it was much higher than the alternate trip in the afternoon with another person. Unfortunately, he had not called me to let me know about his change in plans.

One outcome of this was that I wasted a couple hours trying to figure out how to get in touch with him or someone he worked with, who could verify whether he was at work that day. The more important outcome for him was that a 19-year-old Security Forces airman had left alarming messages on three of his coworkers' answering machines. They were all very happy to see him alive after his non-ordeal.

He did everything right in this situation in terms of "recreational risk management." He was well-prepared and well-trained. He notified me of his plans (although he regretted that the following day at work) and actually had told some of the people he worked with what his plans were. If something had gone wrong, people at work would have realized he was not there, and would have started the process of locating him. But, finally and most important, he made a smart decision by not going alone.

This little episode reminded me of how the thousands of seemingly small choices we make on a daily basis each have the potential to cause a mishap, or to be another link in the chain of decisions that ultimately ends in a mishap. By practicing this kind of decision-making on a daily basis, we can significantly reduce the odds of encountering a bad mishap. ■



The (ORM) Wheels on the Minivan



GO 'Round and 'Round

MAJ BRIAN LEWIS
AF/DPDO
Pentagon

“Ah, those tires will make it home just fine,” I told my father-in-law, as we rolled out of Oklahoma City, bound for Washington, DC, with almost two weeks of stops in between. I knew they were getting short on tread, but planned to replace them just before winter. I was sure they had enough life left in them to handle anything Mother Nature might throw at me between August and October.

Sure, one of them had been flat already, but

I’d found the piece of glass, and had it plugged.

When that same one went flat,

I was relieved to find that there was simply another piece of glass that I’d missed the first time. It, too, got plugged. As the miles rolled on, the hum from the wear bars on the back left seemed to intensify, but I still couldn’t see the top of old Abe’s head in the tire tread, indicating I had more than 1/16th of an inch of tread left. Plenty to get home with.

In the back of my mind, memories were churning of my Operational Risk Management (ORM) class. I felt sure that I knew the risks, and had made a good decision about mitigating the risk. Those tires

were sure to last until fall, at least.

A thousand miles later, perhaps five hundred miles from home, in Jonesboro, Tennessee, I got a little too close to the granite curb, and when I inspected the tire, I could see right through the tread to the inner tube. Hmmm, I wondered. Could I drive 500 miles like that? Would it hold up? Could I really wait until fall?

As I tried to sleep, the ORM wheel was literally spinning in my mind. Well, no, I didn't remember the EXACT words ... I hadn't memorized the slide. But I had already identified the hazards ... one tire with visible wear bars, one with two plugs in it, and a third with a gouge out of the tread. I couldn't help but assess the risk ... my wife, two sons, and I were going to be home tomorrow, me winding down from two weeks off from the Pentagon, my wife and boys from almost a month on the road. Was I risking their lives and mine to wait until fall? What was I really waiting for? A good deal on tires? Time in my schedule to take care of it? I didn't remember the matrix, but realized that the catastrophic consequences of a high-speed tire failure coupled with the increasing probability that it WOULD happen weighed on my mind.

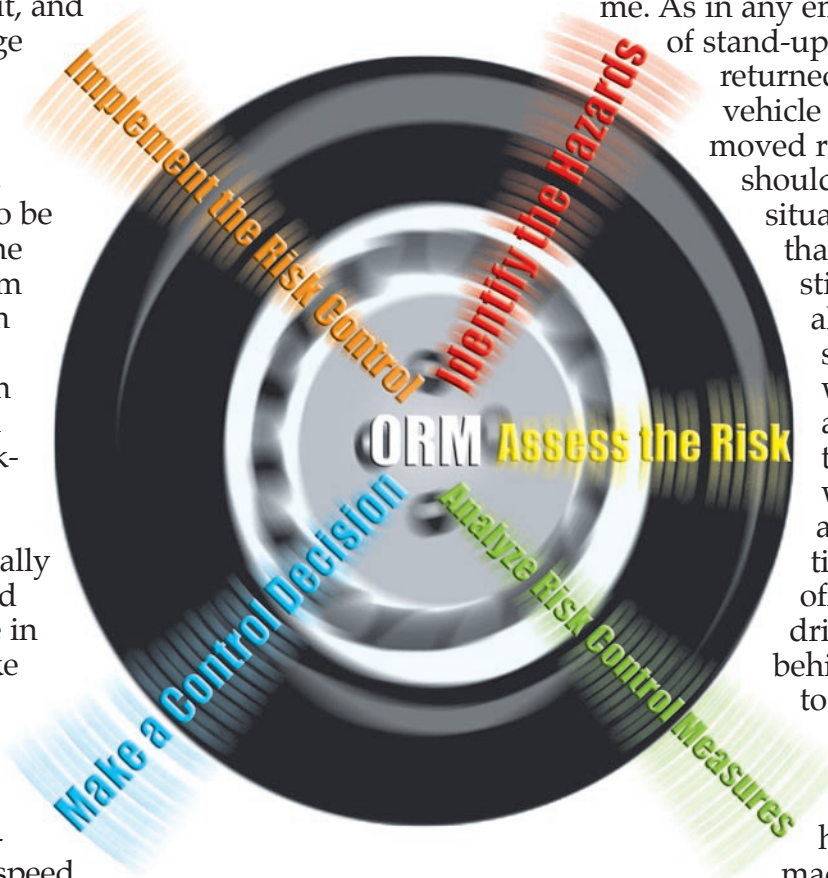
When I realized I needed to eliminate this risk, that the risk was needless and foolish, it turns out I had analyzed my risk control measures. I told my wife that night that we needed four new tires in the morning and would delay our arrival home. She agreed, and supported my decision wholeheartedly. It was settled ... I made a control decision.

After an agonizing three hours at the tire store implementing the risk control, we were finally

en route. I just wanted to be home, but realized I needed to pace myself ... I had seven hours to go and traffic was getting heavy.

On the interstate, just 90 minutes into the ride with four new tires, the car in front of me swerved and nicked a large piece of tire tread from an eighteen-wheeler. As that nearly seven-foot-long piece of tire landed squarely in front of my fully loaded minivan, I had no room and no time to swerve ... I just hit it straight on, with all four tires. As that tire tread came out the back of my car, it flipped up and shattered the windshield of the small truck behind me. As in any emergency, months of stand-up at pilot training returned, and I maintained vehicle control. I steadily moved right toward the shoulder as I analyzed the situation, determined that all systems were still functioning and all four wheels were still turning, all the while taking the appropriate actions to get off the road, where I stopped as soon as conditions permitted. The off-duty firefighter driving the pick-up behind me turned out to be fine, and after exchanging information with him and dropping him off at home, we made our way home, safely.

I am convinced that, in addition to my personal belief in the divine and that He was looking out for me, Air Force training in ORM saved the lives of my family and me. Had I hit that tire fragment with four worn-out ones, the results were sure to have been catastrophic. But because of ORM training, the realization that I was taking an unnecessary risk, and a system to more methodically assess the situation I had put myself in, I ultimately implemented a good risk control decision. Just in time, too. ■





Snow-Dogged!!

JAMES D. LEACH
AFRL/HEDM
Brooks City-Base TX

Early in my DoD career, I was stationed in Omaha, Nebraska, with the Army Corps of Engineers. This was definitely the farthest north I ever lived. Previously, I had spent several years in St. Louis, so I figured I had adapted somewhat to cold-weather driving.

After more than a year, I moved and was sharing a house with a coworker. He had a well-trained dog that mostly lived outside.

One winter day, as is not unusual, we had a good six inches of snow on the ground, with drifts at least a foot deep. I was outside with the dog and my roommate when I got the idea for a new game to play. Take one snow shovel, lots of snow on the ground and one medium-

sized, energetic and frisky dog, and you have a game I like to call "Snow-Dog."

Scoop up some snow and chase the dog around the yard and see if you can toss some snow on him. More often than not, I was missing completely. This dog was fast and had quick moves! At first, I thought he was going to wear me out. As the game progressed, I got better at making some partial scores on my target. Then after a few direct hits, he went and hid out under the house. Game over—I won. (If you ever play this kind of game, be sure to take your dog inside and dry him off completely, before the snow in his fur melts. I hope I won't get any bad comments from PETA! [People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals].)

This memory helps me to recall a time

I got snow-dogged while doing some winter driving. I was living in the same city, but in an apartment complex with no covered parking. There had been a good snowfall the previous night and all the cars in the parking lot, including mine, were covered with snow. I decided to go out to run a Saturday errand. The streets were in fairly good shape, so I figured it would be OK. I carefully worked at brushing the snow off all the windows, windshield and rear glass. There was some snow on top, but I didn't think it needed to be removed, because I was planning a

short trip. This trip turned out to be a lot shorter than expected.

As I came to the exit of the parking lot and stopped, some of the snow on the roof slid off and covered the driver's side window. I could still partially see, checked for oncoming traffic, and moved into the street to turn. I took another look out the window, and to my horror, saw the front end of another car coming straight at me. There was no time for the other driver to stop. I could hear that sickening sound of crunching metal as I was hit. Then I watched with disbelief as the front bumper and grill of the other car fell into the street. It was a slow-speed accident, so there were no injuries. Fortunately, there was a restaurant on the corner, so we had a warm place to stay while we waited for the police to show up. My car was drivable, but after that I wasn't going anywhere. So much for my errand! My next trip would be scheduled for the body shop—a lesson learned the hard way.

However, as memory serves me, it is not all that unusual to see cars driving around with snow on the top after this kind of weather. So, if you are ever in this situation, keep my story in mind so you are not "snow-dogged!" ■



Perceptions of a 101 Critical Days Survivor

COL BILL MALEC
HQ AMC/A36A
Scott AFB IL

The big “101 Critical Days of Summer” clock had barely started ticking when I became an early statistic. As is my custom, I had read the summer safety articles and messages from the senior leaders, cautioning on the dangers of summer and encouraging one and all to “be safe.” Somewhere in the back of my mind I probably thought, “... but not me!”

Admittedly, 101 Critical Days was not the first thing on my mind as I set out for an early Sunday morning bike ride on the largely deserted streets and roads around O’Fallon, Illinois. A long bike ride is a great way to clear your head and contemplate the day and week ahead.

Fortunately for me, over the years I’ve picked up some of the planning and organizing skills that are key to effective operational risk management (ORM). I didn’t actually pull out and run my ORM checklist during my pre-departure phase, but I did run down a mental list of what to take on my ride.

I had figured out long before the Air Force and the DoD mandated it, that a bicycle helmet was essential to any bike ride. I added biker gloves and safety glasses to keep dirt and bugs out of the eyes. The mouth tends to get pretty parched out there, so I took along a bottle of my favorite sports drink and a washcloth for occasional brow wipes. Last, but not least, I hooked my cell phone to my waistband just in case I needed comm connectivity while out and about.

As I pedaled away, I had no inkling of the adventure that waited just ahead. It’s funny how stuff can happen so quickly and have such a potential long-term impact.

One minute I was pedaling contentedly down a quiet, paved country road and the next ... “trouble.” Trouble came in the form of three dogs that came running through an open area off to the right, headed toward me. This was quite unexpected since I had been down this same road the day and week before with no dogs sighted.

“Danger, Will Robinson!” Personal risk management kicked in, and the acronym A-C-T with it:

- **A**ssess your environment for hazards;
- **C**onsider your options; and,
- **T**ake action to live.

It was a pretty tranquil environment until Fido and his pals showed up. The trio consisted of one large Lab-like mutt and two smaller white and black bundles of fur still headed my way, barking as they came. I immediately reviewed my options.

I never considered stopping, as I wasn’t feeling the love, and

Assess Your Environment for Hazards
Consider Your Options
Take Action to Live

figured I had the superior speed and agility necessary to make a successful escape. I shifted into overdrive and pedaled my old Schwinn for all she was worth. The dogs gave chase! As I transitioned into super drive, I must have looked like a modern-day Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow.

Once I reached warp speed, I never saw two of the dogs again, but one of the white-and-black mutts was persistent and kept up an impressive pace. He positioned himself just forward off my left handlebar in the center of the road, periodically glancing back and yapping as he raced all out.

Even at this point, I thought I was home free, thinking I was just seconds away from leaving the pooch in my dust. What happened next still causes me to wake up at night with cold sweats. Instead of breaking off the chase, Bowser abruptly angled right and slid up under my front tire in a canine "hara-kiri."

SPLAT! One second I was cruising along in getaway mode like Bonnie and Clyde, and the next I was sitting in an ugly heap. "Take action to live" kicked right in. Bowser beat feet back where he came from and left me screaming like a banshee in front of his neighbor's farmhouse.

It happened so fast that I still can't replay the tape in my mind with any detail. I must have landed pretty hard on my left shoulder because when I stood up, my whole left side seemed to be compressed down about six inches lower. Even with adrenaline

pumping my breathing was labored and my left side from ankle to shoulder was reminiscent of the old Beatles' tune, "Strawberry Fields Forever."

My "brain bucket" had done its job ... it shattered into pieces, but there was nary a scratch on my cranium.

It was obvious that I needed to get to a hospital real soon, and wasn't going to be riding my bike there. Despite my loud wailing, no one ever emerged from the farmhouse to see what was the clatter or call 9-1-1. Fortunately, my wife was just a cell phone call away.

Bless her heart, within a few long minutes she swooped down on me like Florence Nightingale in our Ford Explorer turned "Jolly Green." She quickly loaded bike and me, and hustled without delay to Scott AFB Hospital ER.

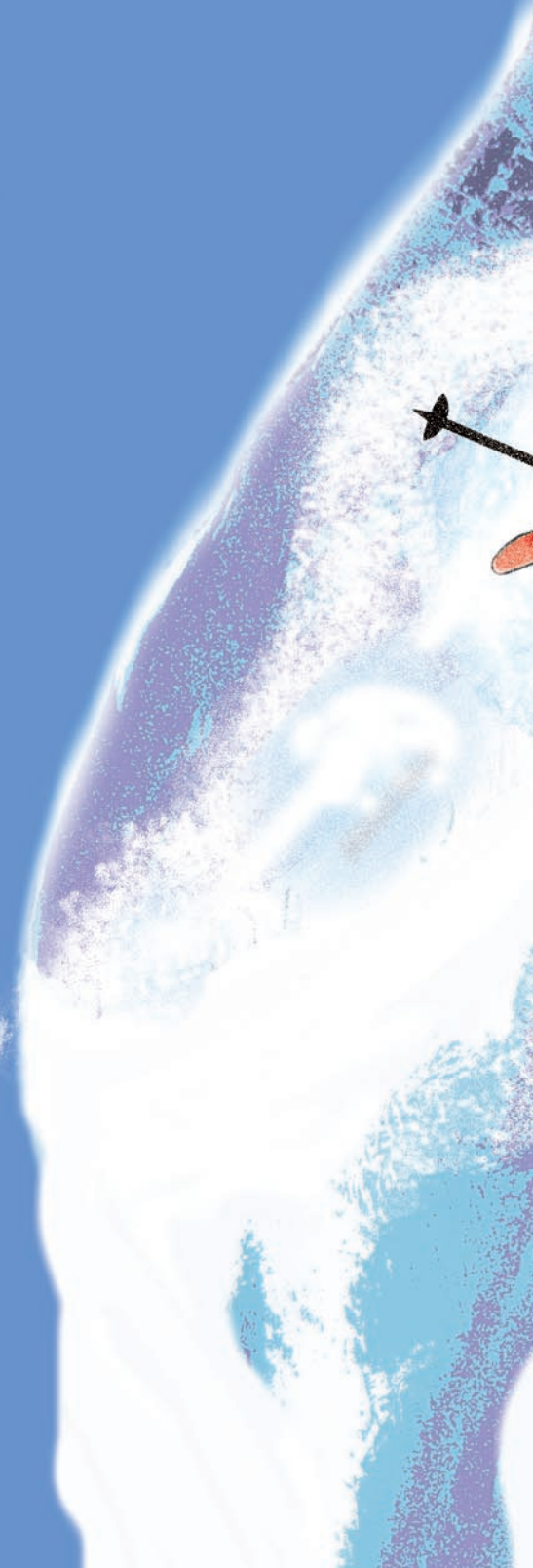
My left lung was collapsed, probably pierced by one of my two broken ribs. The left clavicle was broken right through in two places, necessitating two surgically inserted stainless steel screws to get the shoulder lined up. They put a drain tube in my chest cavity that stayed in place three days, and a brace around my neck that hampered my movement and vision for two weeks. No skull damage in a testament to helmet wearing. Five days post-accident, I went home.

The moral to my story ... plan for the worst. Bad, life-altering, things can happen P-D-Q, so you've got to be ready. A little attention to detail up front can save a lot of pain, agony, or worse later. Your very life could depend on it! ■



**Give yourself more
than a snowball's chance ...**

Make smart choices.





Digital Illustration by Felicia Moreland
Produced by HQ AFSC Media Branch
<http://afsafety.af.mil/AFSC/posters/postermenu.htm>



Driving Me ...



JENNIFER BURDETT
AFSVA/SVT
Randolph AFB TX

Winter driving adds a layer of potential distractions to drivers already bombarded with items, such as cell phones, competing for their attention. Even without snowy, slippery roads, drivers have four times a greater chance of having an accident while talking on the cell phone, because talking on the phone slows their reaction time.

“Distractions” is a topic I know well. I’d like to say that my only distractions while driving are my two boys; however, I learned how to distract myself while driving long before the boys came along. When my older brother taught me how to drive with my knees while eating breakfast on the way to high school, I thought that was talent. Dumb! On the list of distracting things that some drivers (not me) do are: changing radio stations or CDs (may include rummaging to find the right one), taking notes, putting on makeup,

to Distraction!

having conversations and reading.

Then there are the children. Here we have a topic I know well (distractions), and a topic I love to talk about (my children).

When my first son was born, I placed his car seat directly behind the driver's seat, so I could reach back and play with him, feed him and comfort him. Yes, these are all distractions. When he turned two, his brother was born. Nicholas and his car seat were moved over to the passenger side of the backseat, and his new brother was strapped securely into his car seat directly behind the driver's seat. So I could reach back and play with him, feed him and comfort him, too.

Now, instead of just the cell phone, CD player, radio, taking notes on things I think of or hear on the radio, putting on makeup (or just staring into the mirror on my visor to assure myself that yes, I am beautiful), having conversations and reading, I now have two children to distract me with fighting, crying, runny noses, bloody noses, and hmmm ... how do I put this delicately? Well, you know ... the variety of high-velocity, somewhat fluid stuff that comes from noses, mouths and UuuUmmms (all while you are driving and unable to bring control to the situation.) Then there is the ever-distracting "Mommy," followed by "MOMMY," then by "MOMMY!!" (Please insert the word "Mommy" or "Daddy" as many times as needed to fit your own situation.) These are just the distractions inside the vehicle.

Beyond the bug splatter on my windshield, there are the distractions caused by looking at billboards or watching other drivers doing things that are distracting them from concentrating on their driving. Road construction, accidents, and airplanes flying by, trailing banners that you really have to focus on if you hope to read their advertisements for a cell phone service or a sale at a shoe store.

All of the above were just examples of what a really distracted driver might do. I, myself, practice safe driving. I set my radio before I leave the driveway. I don't put on makeup while driving. I can't imagine reading while driving, and if my cell phone should ring while I'm driving, I make

sure to concentrate on my driving while talking and I keep my conversations very short. All that stuff the kids do? I just let it happen (ever try to stop high-velocity, somewhat fluid stuff?) and pull the car over as soon as I find a safe spot to do so. And the only thing I concentrate on outside my windshield is the road and the cars around me. My point is that if you allow them to be distractions, just about anything can be a distraction. We must not allow these things to distract us from concentrating on our driving.

Shortly after my oldest son's car seat was moved over to the passenger side of the car, I gave him the excuse that I couldn't reach for whatever toy he had dropped to the floor, because drivers should ALWAYS have two hands on the steering wheel. Nicholas is now six. For four years now, if I should do something as dangerous as removing a hand from the steering wheel to reach for a tissue, then Nicholas says "Mom, drive with both hands." Needless to say, I drive with both hands. And as far as reaching back to play with, feed or comfort the baby? His brother did what he could from the safety of his car seat, and the rest had to wait until we got where we were going. Now that the boys are older, they know that everything has to wait and they have to behave, because it is very important that Mom concentrates on her driving.

When I was a teenager, my father imparted to me the importance of always wearing my seatbelt in the car, and I have made certain that my children know it, too. Both of my sons are very adamant that I not drive until they both have their seatbelts on. As parents, we want our children to be safe, so when my son tells me to drive with both hands, I thank him for reminding me and I do it.

The moral of my story? Instill in your children, through your example, the importance of ALWAYS wearing your seatbelt and of ALWAYS concentrating on driving, and not doing things that will distract you. Keep your children safe now by using seatbelts and driving safely and, we hope, through your example, when they become drivers, they'll keep themselves safe by using seatbelts and driving safely. ■



oo



Year of the Grim ... Reaper, That Is



The Grim Reaper

Man is truly a creature of habit, and it sure is a pleasure to see him revert to his old ways. Why, in just the past twelve months, I visited Air Force installations and I have to say, it's better than I first thought. Just watching the vehicle operators coming and going home at night delights me to no end. No matter what corner I watched, I could see someone disregard the stop sign. They're always doing a rolling stop, and trying to get around the corner or across the street before the cross traffic gets into the intersection. And seat belt use? I saw a lot of non-use.

Another favorite is all the things that they hang from their rearview mirrors. The fuzzy dice are cute, but I just love the handicap placard left hanging there 24/7. It makes it so hard to see pedestrians crossing the street. As a matter of fact, I almost had one a few weeks back, but that's another story.

But my best ones yet are the motorcycle operators—what a joke! Out of all the operators observed during the years, I've seen them speed through curves, fail to wear proper protective equipment (a big Grim thumbs up for that!), and even pop wheelies in traffic (way to go, dudes!). And get this—the cops didn't even cite the drivers! Is this a win-win setup for me, or what?

OK, so there was a time when people cared. They wore their seatbelts, watched over their children and even watched out for their co-workers (what a pain!), and motorcycle operators actually cared about their well being. I'm happy to say, that's all changing. More than ever, people are (to my delight), out for themselves. Nobody is going to take away their right to over-indulge, play hard and take risk. I mean, after all, isn't that what the Operational Risk Management Program (who dreams those things up, anyway?), is all about—taking risk, right? What's life without a little risk, anyway? Take it from good old Grim, you deserve it!

I can't wait for the big holidays, you

know, Veterans' Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas and the all-important New Year's. All that drinking and driving, lack of seatbelts and other protective gear, and let's not forget that wonderful inattention. Throw caution to the wind. Why, I just bet with the help of a few friends, the drunk driver, the careless speeder, and the accident gawker (just to name a few), I can make a big score this holiday season. Yep, from all I've learned since my vacation, if I put in just a little more work on getting the rest of the people to be careless, this can truly be the Year of the Grim. ■



Think
About
It!!!

Airman on the Edge



Going my way?

Grim Reaper

Airman on the edge; my brothers of the sickle, by now I'm sure you are as tired of hearing the old "be safe" and "don't forget to use ORM" as I am. I mean, after all, what is life with out the risk, right?! Believe me, from the bottom of my heart, uh, a void where a heart would be, I feel your pain.

It seems like not a day goes by that some leader or supervisor isn't harping over some safety issue. Even your SECDEF

jumped on the bandwagon wanting a 50 percent reduction. Please ... are these people trying to ruin the only good times you can have, on what little time off you get? Take heart, because your old buddy Grim has some inspiring things you can do to recapture that feeling of freedom.

My newest recruits, (did I mention I'm holding a position open for you?), have some truly excellent examples of living life on their own terms. Take for example Billy-Bob (name changed because I like to pick on people named Billy-Bob). We'll call him Billy. Good old Billy was a fun-loving and



Digital Illustration by Felicia Moreland

adventurous soul, who lived life his way. Sure, his lifestyle caused high debt, but you can't have fun without the toys, right? Yes, and I know that his supervisor and co-workers completely misunderstood the concept of rights of the individual, because they said his attitude was bad. Probably a bunch of safety do-gooders.

Let's not forget that albatross called a spouse, always telling him to get his act together. Pressure, pressure, pressure; from all sides to the point that he stopped getting those important toys to reduce his debt and he started to do the "safety thing" at work, and even started to work on a real relationship with his

wife. Does anyone see personal freedom go right out the door here?

One day he cracked completely and decided to take his freedom back. After a day of partying with friends (with lots of drinking), the old boy jumped on his motorcycle for a spin down the road. At last, freedom! Speeding along well over the posted speed limit, cool wind in the face and a roadhog slowpoke just ahead. He thinks, "No problem, I'll just go around him," and off he speeds. Oops, there's a car coming in his direction from around that blind curve and Mr. Roadhog won't open

a space for him to get back into. He thinks, "No problem, I'll ride the (#*%&#!) on the left shoulder." Oops, now who put the ravine and cliff face on the other end of the shoulder? (As if we didn't know, Hee! Hee!) No problem, good old Grim was there to help him out. Now, no more debts or problems—just freedom.

OK, I admit this guy took years to see the light, but you needn't wait so long. We're coming up on the holiday season really fast. You know, be thankful for this and that, Ho! Ho! Ho! Good will to men, and all that jazz. So listen to old Grim—avoid the rush and start your party planning early. First, scout out all the hotspots with the best happy hours. This will mean a lot of bar hopping, but you can do it, right? Beware of the people who say they're your friends, who want to take your car keys because you've been drinking and have a BAC twice the legal limit. I mean, what is this BAC business, anyway? Some pansy pulls a number out of his, uh, hat, and calls it a legal limit? Real men (and women) know their limits, so don't listen to these so-called friends. They just want to take away your right to drive your gas-guzzling vehicle.

There is the slight potential that some officer of the law (those busy-body do-gooders) may want to offer you a free night's lodging, but don't accept it! It's your Grim-given right to sleep in your own bed, right?! You bet it is, so the best thing to do is to avoid talking with any officer. Remember, the longer you're on the road, the more likely you are to run into one, so by all means, speed home as fast as you can. Sure, you can get into a fatal accident, but what are the odds? Even if you do, old Grim will take care of you. As for your loved ones, you won't be worrying about them anymore, but you can be sure that good old Grim will be working hard to reunite you with them as soon as possible.

So, party on, dude, and Grim will be back with more inspiration to help you through the holiday season.

Grim will be back in "Safety Do Gooders—Scourge of the Macho." ■

Bumbles & Fumbles & Stumbles

landing fractures a vertebra. Tough way to get six days off work.



Take



A Seat

The subject of this story is relaxing on the back of the sofa, when suddenly, without warning, he falls over backward, hits the floor, and fractures his hand. Who knew you're supposed to sit on the seat? There's something to contemplate while on quarters for two days. Maybe even make a note on the cast.

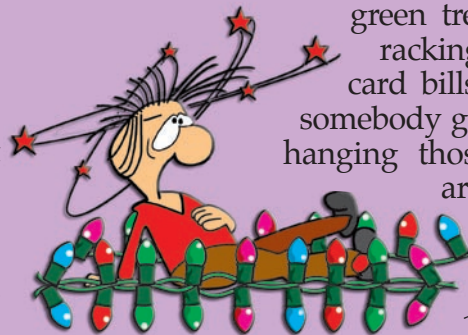
Answering The Call

Hurrying to make a play, this contestant disregards a determined defender at her peril, and in the ensuing contact, suffers a torn knee ligament. Football? No, training day for the office staff. The play? A ringing telephone. Defensive player of the game? A chair that "was not impeding the path to the telephone," according to the mishap report. Might have to check the replay on that call. The player goes on the disabled list for four days.



The Most Wonderful Time

What holiday tradition is as firmly entrenched as sledding down a snowy hill, bringing evergreen trees indoors, and racking up high credit card bills? That's right—somebody getting hurt while hanging those festive lights around the house. Larry Lightfoot is clambering around on his 10-foot-high roof,



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 get people to read about safety. Check 'em out—you just might get a laugh, and learn something, too.

Toboggan? Check. Noggin? Optional.

Slick Sledder is zipping down a sizable hill in his plastic toboggan. A foot-and-a-half of packed powder is making for smooth runs. Trouble is, the snow also covers some big rocks at the base of the hill. That explains Slick's airborne adventure on his final glide, when his ride slides up and over one of the boulders, grabs some air, and plows him into the white stuff. A fractured femur is nothing that surgery and seven weeks of convalescent leave can't fix.



I'm Stumped

Two snowmobilers go for a ride one fine day. One has been riding for 20 years. (Not all at once.) After a couple of hours, the less-experienced rider takes a break, while his buddy rides on. Unfortunately, he rides onto a buried stump, sending him airborne without his trusty mount. The flight's not so bad, but the

stringing the shiny things along, when the decorative molding he's holding for balance comes loose, sending him on a one-way trip with a sudden stop. That's a highly effective way to break a forearm.

Three-Way Horseplay

Here's a recipe for fun: Take three Airmen enjoying some downtime, add a few brews, and before you know it, you're halfway to being a guest star in this column. Airman 1 bodily picks up Airman 2 for some reason, prompting Airman 3 to come to the rescue with a diving save. The force of the fall results in a pain in the neck for Airman 2. She pops some pills and tries to sleep it off. Neck feels worse in the morning, and a sick call visit leads to a hospital referral and an MRI. Diagnosis: a slipped disk, complete with muscle and ligament damage. Ten days of convalescent leave is plenty of time to think about finding new friends who are less prone to using her for body-slam practice.



Warm Car, Cold Curb

When cold weather sets in, warming up the car is a good idea. Stepping on an icy curb on your way back inside can be tricky, as our subject learns the hard way, when she slips and falls. Severe pain in the leg ensues, a kindly neighbor assists, and a diagnostic X-ray reveals a fractured fibula. Three days of convalescent leave follow.



The Bump That's Not In The Road

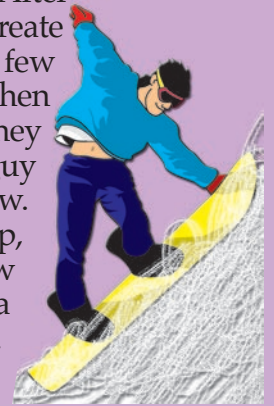
The unlucky star of this drama is opening the door of his car, when he slips on an icy patch in the driveway. As gravity drags him down, the door swings open. His noggin and the door collide, apparently without ill effect. He goes on about his business until the next morning, when he



wakes up feeling "under the weather." The docs diagnose a slight concussion and put him on quarters.

Mr. Helper ... Not!

Sometimes, it's possible to have too much help. Take the case of two experienced snowboarders, who are smoothing and packing a jump that a third party is building up. After the two boarder buddies create their masterpiece, they try a few slow-speed test runs, and then hop aboard the lift. While they climb to the top, the other guy keeps piling up more snow. Boarder 1 and 2 reach the top, then start aiming for the new jump. B1 gets diverted by a skier, so B2 is the first to fly. Unfortunately, he loses his balance as he glides 12 or so feet over the man-made monster, and makes a hard landing on his shoulder. Bouncing and tumbling, he manages to right himself and continue the ride to the base of the hill. Then he pops into the ski patrol office in the lodge for some first aid, sympathy, and a sling. X-rays at the base ER show a fractured clavicle, leading to a day on quarters.



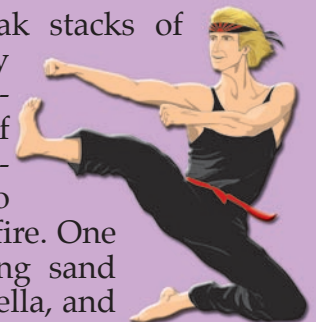
Bowler's Back (And There's Gonna Be Trouble)

Bowler Bob is on the approach for the final frame of his second game. He goes to release the ball and feels a sharp pain in his lower back. A slightly torn muscle and three days on quarters is what he gets for compensating for a sore knee.



Aiiieeee-Owwwww!

Martial artists can break stacks of wood that seem impossibly thick. However, their technique is better than that of our subject, who is stepping on a sizable branch to break it down for a campfire. One false move on the shifting sand leaves her with a torn patella, and 48 hours on quarters. ■



An Electric Experience



CAPT MATTHEW C. HANDLEY
384 ARS/DOA
McConnell AFB KS

This year's PCS move went just about as smoothly as I could have hoped. I left Anchorage in the early spring, pulling a trailer

behind my 4x4 to take advantage of a DITY move. The ALCAN (Alaskan-Canadian highway) was treacherous but passable. Over the course of 11 days, I was forced to make several key decisions that accounted for my safe arrival in Altus. Good for me—I passed people in more than a few vehicles

in that nearly 4000-mile journey who weren't so lucky. Maybe they hadn't heard of ORM yet.

Similarly, flight training went by uneventfully, with safety emphasized more now than I remember in the past. If I recreated, I did so like an adult (mostly).

I went through the house-hunting/buying routine, and that all turned out as well as I could wish. However, I was surprised that the new house didn't have any electrical outlets in the garage. It also had an unfinished basement, which I had high aspirations of completing myself. No problem, thought I. I had every confidence that I could educate myself, and complete the work just as safely as I completed all the other missions during my hectic summer. I planned to warm up with the outlets in the garage.

I imagine you can guess where this is headed, but I'm still alive to tell about it, so don't mind if I do.

Goal number one: Not learning about electricity the hard way. I was marginally successful. After some tenuous research online, I bounced down the block to my friendly neighborhood Lowe's and picked up an overpriced book on home electrical projects. It's not the kind of book one leaves lying around in plain view or, God forbid, admits to owning. Real men are born knowing this stuff, or we learn it from the lightning bug on School House Rocks. Anyway, I had to read up on the subject so I wouldn't sound like a twit when I went back to Lowe's and asked for help with purchasing supplies. I also didn't want to give the impression that I might accidentally kill myself.

Goal number 2, after all, was: To avoid hearing the words, "You should get a professional to handle this." You say "cheap," I say, "frugal."

In my defense, I had worked with electrical sockets in my last home, and it's not rocket science. That being said, one still must respect the authority of the volts and amps. I do, but I also like learning new skills. The part of the job I was most looking forward to was figuring out how to connect the electrical wires to my breaker box (the thing in the basement with all the

danger warnings and stuff). But I had some preparations to make first, and my re-qualification training was in full swing at work, along with my new flight commander job and upcoming TDYs. So, I was pressed for time.

Despite all that, I wanted to do things right, and I needed some outside advice. I definitely did not want my garage to be underpowered, so I tried out some newly learned electrical lingo on my cousin. I wasn't going to debase myself in front of the disdainful Lowe's crowd. That's what family's for, and incidentally, my cousin can fix anything with a little duct tape, and maybe some JB Weld. I regaled him with my ideas for the perfect garage shop—the flying sparks and tangy smell of sweat and motor oil. He said I was a weirdo, but I discovered that a guy couldn't get that kind of high-powered handyman porn with a measly 15 amps. You need 20, at least. 220...221, whatever it takes.

Fast forward—another trip to Lowe's for all the necessary supplies and equipment. Now I'm back at home, and I've run the wire from the basement to the garage, but haven't hooked it into the main power yet. I'm 98.3 percent confident that I haven't missed anything until this point, so the only thing remaining is to sock it to it. Sorry, couldn't resist. I flip open my reference book to the required pages on connecting wires to circuits.

Keeping safety first, I switched the main power breaker OFF and confirmed "no power" with a circuit tester. I found out later this is an excellent idea if you don't want to die horribly. But as luck would have it, or maybe Murphy, the pictures in my book didn't match what I was seeing in the breaker box. What to do, what to do? I brainstormed with myself and decided to turn the power back on, so I could find a picture on the computer that matches my setup in the basement. After a quick 10-minute search, I found the necessary last bit of information I needed to complete the job. Impatient that things never go right the first time, I trotted back downstairs to overcome the odds and finish the job.

continued on next page

I had already run the wires I planned to connect into the breaker housing, and I reached in to maneuver one into an appropriate slot, so to speak. As I did so, my arm brushed against a main power source guard, and I could feel the electricity in it tingling just a slight bit. I had read in my handy book that those cables remain hot, and one should never touch them. My first thought, after yanking my arm back, was wow, the book was right. That was a lot of power for me to be able to feel it through the guard with the main breaker OFF. Then I got that sinking in the pit of my stomach. I had turned the main breaker ON when I went upstairs to use my computer, but in my eagerness to finish the job, I never turned it back OFF. After that, I needed to sit down and reflect on things for a bit.

Scrap your Darwin stickers, because Somebody was looking out for me. If I hadn't accidentally brushed my arm against that safety housing, I would never have felt that telltale tingling. I would have attempted to connect a wire to a powered circuit. One might imagine my girlfriend's trauma when she came over that evening. "Umm, what's for dinner? Smells delicious!" Oh, that's just me. I was too impatient and eager to get the job done, and it could have cost me everything. Saving a few bucks was

definitely not worth that.

My cousin, in the back woods of East Texas, now doubts that we come from the same gene pool. How can I fly an airplane or drive all the way from Anchorage through ice and snow, but nearly kill myself installing a simple electrical loop? I failed to maintain the proper attitude of respect for the dangers involved with the project. How many times has something distracted me in the cockpit, causing me to lose focus on the job at hand? I don't know, but often enough that I have techniques to maintain situational awareness when it does happen. We've all learned to mark checklists so we might return to the proper place, or we double- and triple-check things. The point is that I already had good habit patterns for the problem I encountered in my basement, but I didn't think to use them outside the cockpit. So, I lost SA.

From now on, you can bet I will treat that circuit box like a loaded gun, and double- or triple-check my work. But the real challenge will be to anticipate future risks and mitigate them before they become a problem. The only way I know how to approach that is by remaining vigilant and not hurrying through potentially dangerous situations. I think some samurai said that once. ■

Park It If You Pour.

Even a little alcohol can affect your judgment, balance and coordination. The fact is, almost half of the riders who die in solo motorcycle crashes have been drinking. Play it safe. Don't start drinking until you've finished riding.



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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.

Can You See Me Now?

A review of 25 Daytime Running Lights (DRL) studies of cars and motorcycles showed that DRL reduced the number of multi-party daytime accidents in the European Union by 5-10 percent.

(Source: *Institute of Transport Economics*, 688. Oslo, Norway, 2003. Copyright© 2003, Institute of Transport Economics.)

Simulated Driving; Actually Sleepy

Swedish researchers used a driving simulator to study the effects of driving home after working the nightshift. The results indicate severe post-nightshift effects on sleepiness and driving performance. Ten shift workers participated after a normal nightshift and after a normal night's sleep. The results showed that driving home from the nightshift was associated with an increased number of incidents (two wheels outside the lane marking, from 2.4 to 7.6 times), decreased time to first accident, increased lateral deviation (from 18 to 43 cm), increased eye closure duration (0.102 to 0.143 s), and increased subjective sleepiness.

(Source: *J Sleep Res* 2005; 14(1): 17-20. Copyright© 2005, Blackwell Publishing.)

Sleep-Working

In a survey of nearly 3000 Japanese workers about their sleep habits and occupational injuries over the previous year, one-third reported being injured at work. Those who had difficulty falling asleep, slept poorly at night, had insufficient sleep, and insomnia, were significantly more likely to sustain injuries. The findings suggest that poor sleep habits are associated with occupational injury.

(Source: *Ind Health* 2005; 43(1): 89-97. Copyright © 2005, National Institute of Industrial Health.)

Moms-To-Be In Car Crashes

A study of nearly 600 women injured in car crashes in Washington State showed that pregnant women hospitalized after motor vehicle mishaps are at increased risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes, regardless of the presence or severity of injuries, compared with pregnant women who had not been in crashes. Compared with women not in motor vehicle crashes, severely and non-severely injured women were at increased risk of placental abruption and cesarean delivery, and their infants were at increased risk of respiratory distress syndrome and fetal death. Uninjured women were also at increased risk of preterm labor and placental abruption, compared with women not in motor vehicle crashes.

(Source: *Am J Epidemiol* 2005; 161(6): 503-10. Copyright© 2005, Oxford University Press.)

Motorcyclists: Wear PPE, Be Visible, And Practice

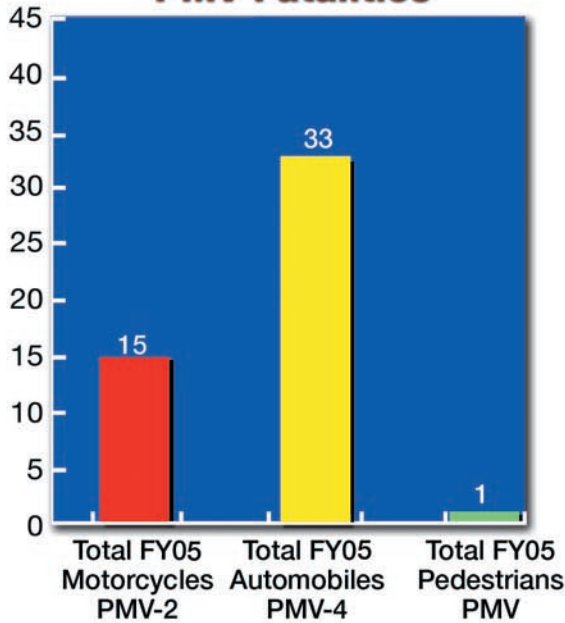
Norwegian researchers studied motorcycle safety issues and reached several conclusions. Although the risk of being involved in a traffic accident is the same for motorcyclists and other road users, the injury risk for motorcyclists is much higher. Because it's unrealistic to assume that all accidents can be avoided, the study analyzed actions to reduce the severity of injuries in crashes. They found that compulsory licensing programs reduce accident risk, there's clear evidence for reduced injury severity for a rider who wears protective clothing and a helmet, and they believe that anti-lock brakes will prevent accidents and reduce injury severity. They found no evidence for a relationship between accident risk and motorcycle engine size/effect. However, a lack of proficiency seems to increase the risk of an accident. Increased motorcycle/motorcyclist visibility, such as using daytime running lights, reduces the risk of collision with another vehicle. Impact with crash barriers can result in severe injuries for motorcyclists, and they recommend improving such barriers and fences.

(Source: *Institute of Transport Economics*. Oslo, Norway, 2004. Copyright© 2004, Institute of Transport Economics.) ■

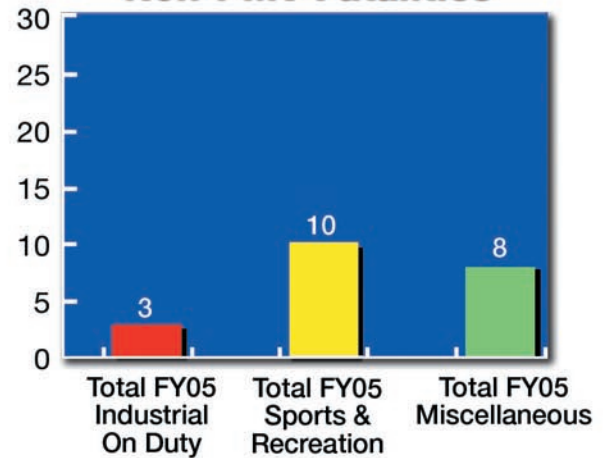


Snapshot on Safety

PMV Fatalities



Non-PMV Fatalities



4th Qtr FY05 Update

In the fourth quarter of FY05, automobile mishaps again are the leading cause of death of our Airmen. This quarter we suffered eight automobile deaths and six motorcycle deaths. As you can see from the chart above, 70 Airman died so far this FY. Every mishap was preventable. There aren't any new ways to get killed. Our folks continue to drive too fast for road conditions, oversteer during emergencies, fail to wear seatbelts, drive while fatigued, and drink and drive. As a result, our Airmen continue to die. Risk management is clearly lacking. Supervisors and peers **MUST** get involved. Be a Wingman.

Risk-Taking Leads To Death

An Airman operating his recently purchased 1000 cc motorcycle died when he struck the rear of a car he was attempting to pass. The Airman was ejected from the motorcycle and slid more than 300 feet from the point of impact with the car. The mishap occurred on a four-lane, heavily congested

divided highway, during daylight. The weather was dry and clear. The speed limit was 55 mph. The Airman had passed two cars before attempting to pass the car he struck. He was observed weaving in and out of traffic at an excessive speed. The tachometer (designed to lock and register rpm) read 11,000 rpm on the wrecked bike. Police estimated the Airman's speed at over 100 mph. The dealership estimated his speed at between 130-170 mph, based on the rpms and which gear the motorcycle was in at impact. The previous summer, the base commander had revoked his on-base driving privileges for two weeks, when he caught the Airman doing wheelies on base. The Airman later received a ticket for speeding off base at 30 miles over the limit. The Airman had been deployed, and did not register his motorcycle on base when he returned. Supervision was unaware of his previous traffic offenses. The Airman wore a helmet and all required riding apparel. He had completed the MSF course and was considered an "experienced" rider.





Lesson learned: Thrills can kill.

The Airman was riding his 1000 cc sport motorcycle on a four-lane divided city street about 11 p.m. The posted speed limit was 45 mph. A tractor-trailer ahead of the motorcycle was slowing to make a right turn into a convenience store. The tractor-trailer moved into the left lane to position the vehicle to make the swing into the convenience store. The trucker had his right turn signal on. The Airman accelerated to about 70 mph in an attempt to pass the tractor-trailer, and struck the truck behind the passenger door as the tractor-trailer was turning. The Airman died of blunt trauma to the chest and head. The only protective gear he was wearing was a helmet. He was dressed in shorts, a sleeveless T-shirt and sneakers. He had completed the motorcycle training course about a year earlier. His friends said the Airman had a reputation as a risky rider, and he frequently engaged in speeding and stunt riding. Squadron supervisors were not aware of his risky driving habits. Tox testing was negative on both the drivers.

Lessons learned: Risky behaviors can be deadly. Friends need to intervene before it's too late.

About 1:30 a.m., three Airmen buddies went clubbing in a town about 90 minutes from their base. The operator was the designated driver and did not consume any alcohol. He was a non-drinker and usually was the designated driver when he and his friends went out clubbing. The other two Airmen drank quite a few alcoholic beverages. They left the club about 6:30 a.m. for the trip back to base. They were in a 1990 BMW on the Autobahn, a four-lane divided highway, with lanes separated by double-wide guardrails and a four-foot grassy median. Inside the median are large metal light poles. The posted speed limit was 120 kilometers (75 mph). The road was wet from a previous rain. About an hour after starting for the base, the Airman driving apparently went to sleep. The vehicle drifted to the left, struck the beginning of the guardrail, traveled up on the top of the guardrail, and collided head-on with a light pole. The vehicle went airborne and landed on the double guardrail, pointing 45 degrees away from its original direction of travel. It next spun off the guardrail and across both lanes of traffic, coming to rest with its rear facing an exit

and the front halfway into the right traffic lane. The driver and the front seat passenger were wearing their seatbelts. The passenger in the right rear seat was not, and died of severe skull trauma. The driver also died from skull trauma. Both Airmen who died had to be cut from the vehicle. The front seat passenger said they were going about 100 mph before the wreck. The driver was known to normally drive the Autobahn at speeds of between 85 to 100 mph. All three Airmen had worked 24-hour shifts with 24 hours off, and once every two weeks had a three-day weekend. The driver had made this trip several times. Investigators could not determine the exact amount of sleep the driver had before the trip.

Lesson learned: Fatigue and speed are deadly.

The Airman was driving his compact sedan on a wet four-lane divided interstate highway. Two Airmen friends were with him. All had on their seatbelts. It was raining heavily. The vehicle hydroplaned and slammed into a dividing wall, then spun across both lanes and down a steep embankment, striking a tree on the passenger side. The two front occupants received minor injuries. The passenger in the rear died from massive head injuries.

Lessons learned: Driving too fast for road conditions can kill. Even brand new tires can hydroplane. Adjust your speed for conditions.

Four Airmen decided to go to a swimming area on a river about 35 miles from their base. After diving off a 25-foot cliff into about 35 feet of water, they thought it would be fun to body-float down the river. They hiked upriver to access the river. The first two floated downriver and climbed out at the cliff. The third Airman was about five feet from the exit point at the cliff when they all heard the fourth Airman yelling for help. He was about 200 feet upriver. They thought he was just horsing around. The Airman panicked and began to thrash the water, then went under. He never surfaced. He was not a strong swimmer and had no previous experience swimming in rivers. The river was marked with signs warning of strong eddy currents. None of the other three Airmen knew CPR.

Lessons learned: Know your limitations. Excessive risks can kill. Look after your buddies and learn CPR. ■





101 Critical Days of Summer Wrap-Up

During the 101 Critical Days of Summer 2005, 29 Airmen died in ground mishaps. This is down slightly from the previous two summer safety campaigns. In 2004, the Air Force recorded 32 losses, compared to 37 in 2003.

Off-duty mishaps continue to be the largest taker of Air Force lives. Twenty-three losses (79.3 percent) happened during off-duty activities.

In 2005, six fatalities (20.6 percent) occurred during on-duty operations, with four in a single mishap. This is an increase of three over last year's results.

Overall, nearly 44 percent of FY05 fatalities occurred during the summer. However, motorcycle fatalities dropped to nine, a decrease of two from the 2004 total.

The grades of Amn-SrA continue to dominate fatality totals, accounting for a staggering 20 of 29 losses (68.9 percent). Accordingly, those between the ages of 21-25 made up nearly half of the summer losses. Airmen between the ages of 18-30 accounted for 25 of the 29 of losses (86.2 percent) suffered during this year's campaign. We must reach our younger Airmen, to help them understand the importance of modifying behavior.



Fatal Facts: Lessons Learned

Here are a few facts tragically learned in the 2005 Critical Days of Summer:

- Two confirmed alcohol-related fatalities
- Driving too fast for conditions remains a trend in automobile accidents
- Eight Airmen were not wearing safety equipment at the time of mishap
- Five losses resulted from drownings (two Airmen failed to use safety equipment)
- In motorcycle fatalities, factors included excessive speed for conditions and operator proficiency
- Nine fatalities resulted from loss of control
- Two Airmen were not wearing helmets
- Most were single-vehicle mishaps

