



# *Driving Freedoms*

NMA Foundation

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The NMA Foundation is a non-profit group dedicated to finding innovative ways to improve and protect the interests of North American motorists



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**Mobility Vs. Safety**  
**A Balancing Act (page 8-9)**



*Driving Freedoms*  
NMA Foundation

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**COVER**

"Elderly Driving: Mobility Vs. Safety"



**Elections 2006**

by James J. Baxter, President, NMA

The 2006 elections have come and gone and they leave an illusion that "change" is on the horizon. Most of the change will be perception rather than substantive. The Democrats will set the agenda in Congress and the Republicans will assume the role of obstructionists, just the reversal of the current situation.

I don't mean to imply that this is necessarily bad, a Congress or state legislature that does nothing, or better yet is out of session, is much easier on our wallets and personal freedoms. Neither party can lay claim to being the "friend of the motorist." Second only to terrorists, drivers are typically the "whipping boy" for legislators and local officials when it comes to laying the blame for society's ills, and being given the privilege to reduce public treasury deficits.

In the past, I have made the observation that, for better or worse, our elected officials are simply a reflection of our society. They are not perfect, not uniformly honorable, bright, moral, or honest. Some are and some aren't. There will be a sampling of alcoholics, pedophiles, and drug addicts just as there will be solid thinkers, wise prophets, and courageous advocates who will stick to their principles. And then, in the case of Congress, there are the 420 other members that fill in the rest of the spectrum, just like the society around us.

It's easy to get cynical about our elected officials and the institutions in which they work. The press doesn't help ease that cynicism. We all know about a certain Representative that had a fondness for young boys. We don't hear much about other Representatives that privately aid people in need or devote great energy to worthy causes. In the end, in this country, we generally get what we

collectively want for public representation. We haven't demanded or supported people who tell the truth, because they don't tell us what we want to hear. We don't support candidates that tell us the entire citizenry should share the burden of supporting government services. Rather, we favor someone who says that various unpopular minorities should pay for the services enjoyed by the majority. (It seems the government would collapse if everyone quit smoking!) We overlook or ignore elected officials or political parties who promised one thing in a campaign and later did the opposite. The litany could go on for many more pages; the bottom line is the populace has chosen the representation it desires.

However, before you trundle off looking for a strong rope and a thick branch, let me add a recent reflection that was brought to mind by a non-member who was explaining why he wasn't joining the NMA. He said that we had "lofty goals," but no chance of achieving them. That this Congress was totally corrupt and before long the new Democratic Congress will be equally corrupt. And, that the country is in a death spiral and our political institutions are nothing more than a device for the powerful to extort resources from those who are less powerful. Not exactly an optimist!

Like most of you, I read the newspaper and listen to and watch the news. I see evidence of entire national populations with little to eat, and without reliable heat, electricity, or water. If they have work they are afraid to go to their jobs. They live in constant fear for their welfare and that of their families. Forget decent medical care, basic education, free speech, or due

*continued on page two*



## NMA Washington Report

by Robert Talley, NMA Lobbyist

### 2006 Election Implications

Washington has changed—there can be no doubt about that. In November, the American public sent the Republicans a message and it appeared to be "Get out!" As a result, the Democrats now control both the House of Representatives and the Senate.

A Democratic takeover of Capitol Hill will not result in a significant shakeup in transportation issues. However, there may be more of a focus on environmental issues and an increase in hearings to keep tabs on industry and regulatory agencies. Several initiatives will likely see a jump in prominence as a result of the power switch. These include an increase in the Corporate Average Fuel Economy, greater reliance on domestic renewable fuels for automobiles, and more focus on funding for transit solutions to ease road congestion. One initiative that may fall out of favor is exploration as a means of increasing domestic supplies of oil.

Corporate Average Fuel Economy

(CAFE) standards are expected to be contentious. Recently, EPA decided to revise the current procedures for determining automobile efficiency. What will be of interest to Congress is that the new testing procedures will have no effect on the CAFE program, which is administered by the Transportation Department and uses a different set of rules. However, the public perception of lowered auto efficiency will likely increase the pressure on Congress to impose new restrictions on manufacturers.

In addition to CAFE, Congress will likely be pushing for more incentives for biofuels. Members from agricultural states will have an opportunity this year to push increased production of fuels such as ethanol to both stimulate farm economies and to increase domestic fuel supply. Last year, U.S. refineries produced roughly 4 billion gallons of mostly corn-based ethanol. Refiners are expected to hit the 11 billion-gallon production mark by 2012 and, even without additional expected incentives, the 15 billion-gallon

production mark by 2030.

Funding for transportation will also become more contentious under a Democratic majority. The federal gasoline tax—18.4 cents a gallon—funds highway construction and other projects. It has been unchanged since 1993. Some have urged Congress to re-examine the tax because at the current rate it will not be sufficient to maintain the nation's transportation infrastructure. But the issue has received scant attention on Capitol Hill under a Republican Congress because of an aversion to raising taxes. Instead, the funding mechanism of choice in recent years has been the expanded use of tolling such as High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes. Though the politics of raising the gas tax in the face of current high prices remains a challenge, the truth is that there will be a need for increased funding.

For now, Congress is busy organizing itself into new committees, giving out assignments and responsibilities, and showing newly elected members where they will spend the next two years working. It takes awhile for these moves to shake out, but once they are complete we can begin the work of trying to pursue our objectives in this new political landscape. ■

## Elections 2006

*continued from page two*

process rights. Their societies have disintegrated because their governments have failed. When I compare our political system and our government to these alternatives, it is obvious that while we may not have perfection and there are many disappointments, our political system and our government have a history of accomplishments and successes that far outshine their blemishes and weaknesses.

Our greatest food issue is obesity. Hundreds of millions of us go off to

work or play and never give a thought to roadside bombs, snipers, or kidnappers. Our medical care can be inconsistent, but even the worst-off receive basic medical attention. And, the greatest threat to our constitutional rights is our failure to exercise them.

Our goals may appear "lofty" to those with a short-term historical perspective, but in the context of 230 years of our country's progress, they are simply logical steps toward a better and fairer society. For all its imperfections, our republic still provides the opportunities and the means for peaceful positive change. That's not something to take for granted. ■

## A New Addition

The NMA would like to welcome the newest member of its staff, Aaron Quinn.

Aaron, the new Communications Director for the NMA, has joined us in the fight for driving freedoms.

Aaron is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison business school with a degree in marketing.

In his spare time, he likes to watch the Green Bay Packers. He also travels around Wisconsin as a standup comedian.

You can read more about Aaron and the rest of the NMA staff at [www.motorists.org/join/staff.html](http://www.motorists.org/join/staff.html) ■



## Help The NMA Grow!

When it comes to advocating on behalf of motorists, there is strength in numbers. Our members allow us to impact laws on subjects ranging from red-light cameras to speed limits, and from black boxes to roadblocks. We need you to give us the necessary clout to bring about positive changes for all drivers.

Please join us in a special campaign to grow our membership. **We are not asking for money.** We just want you to tell your friends why the NMA is important to you.

Members getting members isn't a new idea. Many organizations run similar programs because it is such an effective way to gather new supporters. It may not be easy to approach your friends, family, or coworkers about something like this, but word-of-mouth is the best way for us to recruit new members. Chances are, you already know someone you


think would really like the NMA.

If you hear a family member complaining about a traffic law or a coworker talking about receiving a speeding ticket, reach out to those people and let them know the NMA can help.


As part of our special Members Getting Members promotion, the new members you recruit can join for just \$25. Plus, both you and the new member(s) will be entered for a chance to win one of four terrific, motorist-themed trips.

We hope these trips give you more leverage when you speak with others and encourage you to do your best to recruit more members. After all, **you'll receive an entry to win for each new member you sign up before January 31st.**


For more information about the trips and complete contest rules visit [www.motorists.org/mgm.html](http://www.motorists.org/mgm.html).




**Pebble Beach**  
The Concours D'Elegance is the most prestigious car show in the United States and you can be there!



**Las Vegas**  
We'll fly you and a guest round-trip to Vegas for the UAW-Daimler Chrysler 400, a premier NASCAR event.



**Washington D.C.**  
You and a guest will enjoy four nights in D.C and a special tour of the Capitol with the NMA's lobbyist.



**Indianapolis 500**  
You and a guest will receive two tickets to the 2007 Indianapolis 500, the most famous race in the world!

**Yes!** I want to help the NMA be more effective so we can help motorists get a fair shake. I've signed up the following member(s):

**Your Information**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Member Number \_\_\_\_\_

Canada - Credit Card Only

**REMEMBER:**

Each new member you recruit by January 31st earns you another chance to win your choice of four great trips. Plus, every new member you recruit will also be entered to win.

**New Member Information**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Info: Special Membership Cost: \$25

Check enclosed (payable to NMA)

Credit Card provided below

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ Name On Card \_\_\_\_\_

**New Member Information**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Info: Special Membership Cost: \$25

Check enclosed (payable to NMA)

Credit Card provided below

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ Name On Card \_\_\_\_\_

Sign up additional members at [www.motorists.org/mgm.html](http://www.motorists.org/mgm.html) or call 1-800-882-2785



## Voters Reject Ticket Cameras

The town of Swampscott, Massachusetts has abandoned plans to install red-light cameras. First, a town-commissioned report on the devices was released. It looked at a variety of studies that investigated camera usage and the result was a recommendation against the cameras on public safety grounds.

The committee's recommendations bolstered opposition to the cameras leading up to a special Town Meeting. It also shifted support for the cameras among town selectmen. Selectman Daniel Santanello, who had previously favored cameras, changed his mind because of the document. "It was a quality report and I have to give it my backing," he said.

The NMA also played a key role in helping oppose the ticket cameras in Swampscott. NMA members testified

at the meeting and material provided by the NMA was quoted in the report on which the selectmen based their decision.

Finally, at the November 13th meeting, voters rejected an article authorizing cameras by a comfortable margin, roughly 60 percent to 40 percent. Even though two votes were taken on the issue, the result did not change, and the pro-camera measure was "indefinitely postponed."

Swampscott voters were not alone in rejecting the use of photo enforcement. The issue was also on the ballot in Steubenville, Ohio. An overwhelming majority (76.2 percent) of voters in that community voted "no" on a proposal that would allow the city to keep operating cameras.

Steubenville's program began last year and the cameras issued nearly

7,000 tickets. Last March, Jefferson County Court of Common Pleas Judge David Henderson struck down the city's camera ordinance. Since the city could not get out of its agreement with German camera contractor Traffipax, it defied the judge's order and continued using cameras after it superficially changed the relevant ordinance.

This vote will hopefully put an end to the traffic cameras in Steubenville for good. It is also a victory for attorney Gary Stern who won a class action lawsuit to return the money that had been illegally collected from motorists. Steubenville is the fourth community to reject a pro-camera ballot measure. Voters in Batavia, Illinois; Peoria, Arizona; and Anchorage, Alaska have all done the same. ■

## Taking Cameras To Court

The NMA Foundation is helping to fund a legal challenge to Knoxville, Tennessee's ticket camera program. The case is in its very early stages, but we are optimistic that the end result will be similar to past courtroom successes.

Elsewhere in the United States and Canada, other lawsuits against cameras are beginning.

In Sioux Falls, South Dakota, I.L. Wiedermann is alleging that state law was not followed when the city installed its cameras and that the city conspired with the camera contractor to maximize the number of tickets. His suit also argues that the system in place for contesting the tickets is fundamentally unfair. "There's more to this than a red light," Wiedermann said, "Your constitutional rights are being trampled on."

Sioux Falls' cameras have issued almost 17,000 citations and brought in more than \$1.2 million in fines. Wiedermann's attorney, Aaron

Eiesland, said that the lawsuit's ultimate aim is to return these fines to the motorists who paid them.

In Saskatchewan, several of Saskatoon's biggest auto dealerships are contesting the law that makes vehicle owners liable for tickets issued by red-light cameras. Northtown Motors and Auto Clearing Ltd. don't think they should have to pay for tickets incurred by customers who run red lights while test-driving vehicles. The two businesses are supported by six other dealerships, which are all pitching in to help pay the costs associated with the case.

The dealerships' attorney, Grant Scharfstein, plans to argue that Section 93 of the Saskatchewan Highway Traffic Act is contrary to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which says that one must be presumed innocent until proven guilty. A hearing on the matter is scheduled for January 24th in

Saskatoon provincial court.

Meanwhile, concerned parents in Wilmington, North Carolina are considering filing a suit against that city. They are seeking to compel Wilmington to turn over millions in camera ticket fines to the local school district. They say city leaders are violating the constitution by not handing over the money.

The city says it won't give up the ticket money until the North Carolina Supreme Court settles an appeal on this issue. However, several parents are not interested in waiting, and they are seeking a lawyer to represent them.

Their potential suit is motivated by a State Court of Appeals ruling in mid-2006, which held that cities running red-light cameras must give 90 percent of the ticket proceeds to schools. In Wilmington alone, this would mean an extra \$3 million for schools and a definite end to ticket cameras for motorists. ■

# Speed Vs. Gas Mileage Vs. Value

by Steve Carrellas, NMA New Jersey State Chapter Coordinatator

Having read "The Cost of Speed" in the last issue of *Driving Freedoms*, I thought I would share the results of some gas mileage tests I performed using a 2006 Saab 9-3 Sport Sedan loaner car. The 9-3 is equipped with a 210 horsepower, 2.0 liter 4-cylinder turbo engine and the tests were performed with cruise control under similar weather and road conditions. Here are the results:

Speed	Mileage	% Loss From 60 Mph
60 mph	42.2 mpg	-----
65 mph	37.0 mpg	12.3 %
70 mph	36.2 mpg	14.2 %
75 mph	32.0 mpg	24.2 %

I almost found it hard to believe that I was getting 42 mpg at 60 mph. After all, the EPA estimated mileage on the sticker is 22 city and 31 highway. Although I can't absolutely vouch for the accuracy of the fuel-mileage computer, it seemed to be correct. The most interesting thing to note was the small difference in fuel mileage between 65 and 70 mph.

So what happens to the 9-3's fuel mileage when you drive it very fast? My high-speed test had variable speeds because of traffic. I'm talking 80-110 mph, but mostly in the middle of that range. The resulting fuel mileage: 29 mpg! Not bad when compared to 32 mpg at a steady 75 mph.

What does this mean to you when you're trying to save on gas? The first table below looks at how many gallons of gas the 9-3 would use per hour (gph) given its fuel consumption at a given speed. Assuming a \$3 per gallon cost of gas, the table shows the cost of gas per hour to travel at the various speeds.

Speed	Rate	Cost
60 mph	1.42 gph	\$4.27 per hour
65 mph	1.76 gph	\$5.27 per hour
70 mph	1.93 gph	\$5.80 per hour
75 mph	2.34 gph	\$7.03 per hour

As expected, it costs more per hour to drive at a higher speed. Now, let's assume you have to drive 60 miles on the highway. The next table shows the time, fuel cost, and value of your time to make the extra fuel cost of exceeding 60 mph worthwhile.

Speed	Time	Cost	Value Of Time
60 mph	1:00	\$4.27	-----
65 mph	0:55	\$4.83	\$6.72/hr (\$0.56 per 5 min)
70 mph	0:51	\$4.93	\$4.40/hr (\$0.66 per 9 min)
75 mph	0:48	\$5.62	\$6.75/hr (\$1.35 per 12 min)

The table continues to show that it costs more to travel the same fixed distance at a higher speed. The numbers in parentheses point out the difference between the 60 mph cost for saving the indicated number of minutes. Normalizing those minutes to an hour gives us a cost per hour that can be used to assess the hourly cost of the time saved. You can use this value of time number to evaluate whether increasing your speed is worthwhile to you or not. For example, if you believe your time is worth more than \$6.75 per hour, you can travel at 65mph instead of 60mph and save yourself some travel time.

Many conclusions can be drawn from the "value of time" column. If you are willing to drive 65 mph, there is no fuel-related reason not to drive as fast as traffic will permit. Traveling at 65 mph is only three cents cheaper per hour than traveling 75 mph. And, traveling 70 mph costs 35% less per hour than traveling at 65 mph, thanks to the small difference in fuel economy between 65 and 70 mph and the 80% increase in saved time.

Of course, your mileage and costs will vary depending on the car you drive, the cost of gas, tire inflation, and how smoothly you can maintain a steady speed. The highway speed you choose to drive also goes beyond the economics of the value of time, but when you consider that aspect, the numbers usually support your choice to drive faster than slower. ■

## Mileage Estimates To Drop

The Environmental Protection Agency recently issued new testing procedures that will cause fuel economy estimates on new vehicles to drop an average of 12% for city driving and 8% for highway driving.

The numbers are dropping because the EPA's new system will take into account such factors as high-speed driving, rapid acceleration, the use of air conditioning and the effect of driving in cold temperatures.

Gasoline/electric hybrids will see the biggest drops in the mileage numbers posted on their window stickers — as much as 30% worse in city driving and 20% worse on the highway.

The new mileage tests don't affect calculations for CAFE (corporate average fuel economy) or the average mileage of all vehicles sold by an automaker. Averaged together, all cars an automaker sells must hit 27.5 miles per gallon or the car company has to pay a penalty to the government. Trucks must hit 21.6 mpg.

The Department of Transportation oversees that program, not the EPA, and it involves different calculations. ■

# Elderly Driving: Mobility Vs.

## How Americans are making a critical-and difficult-decision

By Reed Karaim

Three years ago George Russell Weller, then 86 years old, plowed his Buick LeSabre into a crowded farmers' market in Santa Monica, Calif., killing 10 people and injuring 63. Weller was convicted of vehicular manslaughter in Los Angeles Superior Court.

Across the country in Lake Monticello, Va., Jack Hourihan, 80, regularly drives an ambulance. He handled 100 emergency calls last year, covering about 4,000 miles, much of it with a sick or injured person in the back, and he's never had as much as a fender-bender.

So, are older drivers too much of a risk or not? There's no easy answer. Even statistics deliver a mixed message: Older drivers generally have fewer accidents per driver than the national average—but they have more accidents per mile of driving.

By 2030 the 65-plus population is expected to double to 71 million and make up a quarter of U.S. drivers. By then there will be 9.5 million Americans 85-plus and almost all will have spent most of their lives driving. Many will be fully capable of remaining behind the wheel—even of teaching younger drivers. Yet there is no question that drivers 85-plus have notably higher accident rates.

Weller's accident ignited a national debate, re-ignited by his trial: When is it time for older drivers to give up their keys? Should government play a role in the decision? How can families help?

These issues are huge in a country where driving can be synonymous with independence. They "are only going to get more pressing," says Elinor Ginzler, who oversees AARP's driving initiatives. Public concern "is going to go through the roof when that age tsunami hits us."

The loudest reaction to the Weller tragedy was calls from some politicians and opinion makers for mandatory

testing of drivers 70 and older. At least 27 states now set an age—typically 65 or 70—at which drivers must begin to renew their licenses more frequently or in person, but only New Hampshire, Illinois and the District of Columbia require road tests for older drivers.

In some states, calls for restricting older drivers have faded with recognition of the complexity and expense of written or on-road retesting. Such retesting hasn't "shown to be particularly predictive of who's going to crash," says Lori Cohen, senior program director of driver fitness for the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators.

The issue, experts increasingly say, is not one of age but rather one of physical and mental fitness. "Birthdays don't cause accidents—health issues do," says Joe Coughlin, director of the MIT AgeLab, which conducted a national survey of older drivers in 2002 with the Hartford Insurance Co.

The first stages of Alzheimer's or dementia, glaucoma or other eye diseases, arthritis and muscular infirmities can all interfere with the ability to drive. So can the side effects of many medications.

That's why state DMVs are "paying closer attention to drivers who are medically at risk, and older drivers are a subset of that," Cohen says. In 37 states, medical review boards step in when licensing agencies are alerted by police or family members and question a driver's physical or mental capability. Six states require doctors to report certain health problems to the DMV.

AARP favors all types of periodic retesting of all drivers to assure that they remain capable. "It's important as people get older, but it's important no matter the age," Ginzler says. "If your ability to function has diminished to an unsafe level, you shouldn't be on the road."

As a researcher on safety among older drivers, Barbara Freund has come to support age-based mandatory testing. Studies have found that almost a third of people 65 and older "have some kind of cognitive impairment, and 25 to 90 percent of those people are undiagnosed," Freund says.

"This is not against seniors, this is pro seniors," says Freund. "A lot of times we can help them stay on the road longer if we treat these conditions early enough."

New high-tech methods could make assessing huge numbers of drivers more manageable. At the Eastern Virginia Medical School's Center for Geriatrics and Gerontology, Freund designed a computerized simulator in which drivers navigate a "virtual" environment, much like pilots in a flight simulator. She has graded the skills of hundreds of older drivers who asked to be tested or were referred by their families, physicians or the Virginia DMV, and found that reacting correctly when several stressful things happen simultaneously can be particularly challenging.

In the Weller case, the California Highway Patrol concluded that he mistakenly believed his foot was on the brake when it was on the gas—so-called pedal confusion. "George Weller's not alone in pedal confusion," says Freund. "I've got a file of them, and see it in the simulator. They recognize they're not stopping, so they press the pedal harder. They can't sort out what's happening."

Until now simulators have served researchers but have been considered too user-unfriendly and too expensive for DMVs. Freund is working with the Raydon Corp. of Daytona Beach, Fla., to develop an affordable simulator that helps screen drivers with declining skills—and allows drivers to safely

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# Safety—A Balancing Act

## Tackling the "Problem" of Elderly Drivers

High profile incidents involving elderly motorists spark discussions about how to address the "problem" of elderly drivers. The most common tactic, frequent retesting of drivers past a certain age, has not been effective. The often used testing criteria overlooks the loss of cognitive skills that affect judgment, which are at the root of most accidents in which the elderly are involved. At the same time, frequent retesting needlessly inconveniences thousands of safe drivers just because of their age.

The NMA Foundation has an alternative. It calls for the flagging of potentially problematic drivers who have an abnormally high rate of accidents or traffic violations during a short period of time. These people, along with others that are flagged by family members, law enforcement, or the courts, would be subjected to a

thorough evaluation that would look for a reduction in their ability to drive safely.

If the evaluation indicates significantly diminished cognitive or critical physical abilities, the person's driver's license would be revoked. To be fair, there would be an appeal process for those who lose their licenses. They could apply to be reevaluated at a later date, although perhaps only on a restricted basis.

Revoking the licenses of motorists who have seriously diminished abilities is only part of the solution. These people still have the need and desire to travel for social, health, and shopping purposes.

Realistic alternatives to driving must be found. This means pursuing creative approaches to make sure that the elderly can still make it to the grocery store, doctor's office, and to

social events with friends and family.

There are several programs out there already that are seeking new alternatives. A Maine-based organization offers rides to seniors round-the-clock for a modest fee. It even allows them to donate their cars to get credit toward future trips. In Atlanta, taxi services accept reduced-fare vouchers from elderly customers. Oklahoma City's approach is far more glamorous. The city has contracted for idle limousines to drive elderly patrons around.

As our population continues to age, the challenge will be to identify and refine the best programs addressing elderly mobility and to expand their reach throughout the country. Our lawmakers' time would be better spent doing that, instead of mandating yet another driving test for older motorists. ■

## Do Politicians Favor Elderly Drivers?

by Ivan Sever, NMA Massachusetts State Chapter Coordinator

Revamping the state's teen driving laws has been one of the Massachusetts Legislature's priorities this year, in part because of a spate of fatal accidents.

- \* In June, an 80-year-old woman crashed her car into the lobby elevator of her Wellesley building while trying to park in the visitor's area.
  - \* In another incident, a 23-year-old woman walking down the sidewalk was struck and killed by an 84-year-old woman who lost control of her vehicle.
  - \* In New London, Connecticut, the Democratic challenger for the US Senate and several campaign aides were in a crowd that a station wagon, driven by an 89-year-old man, plowed into.
- Then in July, the former senator and

astronaut John Glenn (age 86) was hospitalized after causing an accident in Ohio by failing to yield to on-coming traffic. All kinds of politicians called the hospital to wish him a speedy recovery, but none of them filed any bills or amendments proposing changes to licensing age, elderly drivers' testing, or to their car insurance discounts.

And finally, this Fall, George Russell Weller, a now 89-year-old man whose car hurtled through a farmers market in California three years ago killing 10 people, was released on probation. Defense attorneys argued that Weller was a victim of "pedal error."

This case created a unique dilemma: How to punish an ailing octogenarian whose case has created endless sorrow, but few calls for imprisonment. Of

course, it's not Mr. Weller we should be blaming.

The victims' relatives should go after the state governments that have failed to deal with a whole category of drivers likely to suffer from "pedal confusion." It's the politicians, who have no qualms about imposing more and more restrictions on "younger" drivers—but are staying away from any restrictions on drivers whose abilities have been diminished by age. While there are plenty of rules for everything else, there are few effective safeguards that would protect the population at large from people who shouldn't be driving anymore.

Is it because any restrictions would, in the near future possibly, affect politicians personally? ■

## Hermann's Roman Holiday by Herrmann Glochler, NMA Member

My wife, Hilrude, and I are back from seven glorious days in Italy and a self-elected one week extension to Germany on the vacation that the National Motorists Association had so generously afforded us. A very big "thank you" indeed. It goes without saying that we were extremely excited when the tour package, put together by Reise-Profi Service, arrived at our doorsteps.

Upon arrival in Rome we took the train to the "Termini" Central Station and a taxi from there to the hotel. The cab driver did her best to demonstrate the type of driving for which Italy is famous.

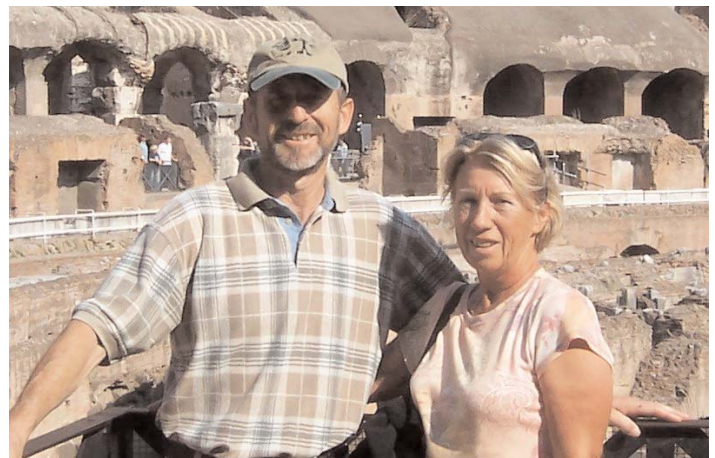
Rome itself was of course phenomenal. We had been there with our kids some 25 years ago, but only for a single day, touching only on the most important sights in that eternal city. On our first day we did not get back to the hotel until after 9pm, with Vatican City and St Peter's Cathedral being the highlights of the day. The next day we wanted to see the Sistine Chapel, but had to change plans, since the visitor line for this sight already stretched for city blocks.



This then was the day to first enjoy an uninterrupted tour of the city on one of the many open-top "double decker" tourist bus lines. In this city of history, fountains and plazas, it is almost impossible to see them all.

On our last day, a Saturday, we got up early and rushed to the Vatican City to get in line for a visit to the Sistine Chapel. The line had already reached St. Peter's Plaza. We also noted a large number of people taking seats on the center of the plaza, where we learned the Pope would hold an audience that day. But the Pope would have to wait for another day, we had plans. After many hours of creeping forward towards the Vatican Museum, we finally arrived at the door. The accumulated art and history was overwhelming.

The next day we picked up our car and headed out for Tuscany and Florence. We did make the recommended side trip to the town of Arezzo, a very nice town, with the obligatory church high up on a hill. From Arezzo, we elected to continue on secondary roads to Florence, rather



than returning to the Autostrada. The scenery was beautiful, with rolling green hills as far as the eye could see.

The roads we drove for the next 20km were hilly, narrow and winding, with tall retaining walls blocking views. Opposing traffic drove fast and routinely cut corners. I like spirited driving, as my wife will attest, but this took some getting used to. At one point I actually pulled in the side mirrors to present a smaller target for opposing traffic.

The center of Florence itself is much smaller than Rome's antique center, but it still took us a full day to see most of the architectural treasures, the Cathedral being the highlight.

The next week was dedicated to visiting familiar spots in Munich and catching up with family most of which we had not seen in five years. Only too soon did the day for departure come for our flight back to the States.

All in all a very wonderful two weeks. Thank you very much NMA. To make sure we are in the next drawing, we will make our contribution to your next funding of our Washington lobbyist, and we'll keep our luggage packed. ■



For Herrmann's complete account of the trip, please visit:  
<http://www.motorists.org/drivingtour.html>



## A Difficult Decision

*continued from page eight*

practice challenging traffic situations.

At five nonprofit senior safety centers, Florida is using the DriveABLE program developed by Canadian neuropsychologist Allen Dobbs, who studied driving errors common among people with dementia or other cognitive impairments. In a DriveABLE test, the subject is guided through computer-based tasks that assess mental and motor skills relevant to safe driving. In some cases, the subject is then tested on a road course designed to reveal errors by drivers who are unsafe because of cognitive problems.

Skills may inevitably decline, but not necessarily enough to force a driver off the road completely. A trend likely to grow for older drivers is the use of restricted licenses, which limit driving to designated places or times—as determined by an examiner. Iowa, which has been in the forefront of the movement, has issued thousands of restricted licenses to drivers 70-plus, says Kim Snook, field services manager for the state Department of Transportation.

"The reaction has been very positive," Snook says. "It does take more time because the examiners have to drive out to these tests, but that's a small price to pay to allow these drivers to stay on the road safely."

Most older drivers stay ahead of their DMVs on that score, the MIT AgeLab study found. They restrict themselves as they age, avoiding situations that make them uncomfortable—driving on interstates or at night, for example. This is particularly true of women, who often stop driving while they're still capable behind the wheel, says Sandi Rosenbloom, a professor of planning at the University of Arizona in Tucson, who has studied driving patterns for years.

Still, drivers can be blind to their own shortcomings. Taking cues from others—including other drivers—can help. "If people are honking or

gesturing at you, it's not just that people have become more rude," Freund says. Older drivers "need to realize that they must have been doing something that other drivers find incorrect."

When should family members or friends step in? AARP's Ginzler says the driver's car provides a starting point: "See if there are little dents and scrapes that are indicators that they're having trouble." If there's enough damage to make you suspect that a driver's skills are slipping, riding along is the best way to evaluate a driver's skills.

Though suggesting that a parent or spouse give up driving can be touchy, most older drivers would prefer to hear it from someone close to them, the MIT AgeLab study found. Two years ago AARP and the Hartford published a booklet called "We Need to Talk" that discusses how adult children can best broach the subject with their parents. Next year AARP is planning to roll out "We Need to Talk" seminars that will include tips on the most effective approaches.

"It's all about having these very difficult kinds of conversations," Ginzler says. "We recommend that you lead with the idea of safety, both the safety of the driver and the safety of people around the driver. It's a message people are very receptive to."

When drivers give up their keys because of health, experts agree, society has a responsibility to guarantee them other ways to get around. The lack of alternatives to cars suggests the need for caution when considering how to deal with the wave of older drivers coming down the road.

"The overwhelming majority of older drivers are safe," says Sandi Rosenbloom. "We always want the simple, sweeping approach to solving problems in this country. But this is a problem where we need a scalpel, not an ax."

Reprinted with permission of the "AARP Bulletin." For more info: see [http://www.aarp.org/bulletin/yourlife/when\\_to\\_quit\\_driving.html](http://www.aarp.org/bulletin/yourlife/when_to_quit_driving.html). ■

## Texas Camera Explosion

The use of red-light cameras is spreading rapidly across the Lone Star State in spite of early research which shows that Plano's photo enforcement program has led to an increase in accidents at that city's intersection, not the promised decrease.

Several cities already have cameras, including Plano, Houston, Irving, Garland, and Denton. Some of these communities are already expanding their programs. For example, Houston just added ten new cameras, doubling its photo enforcement program.

Elsewhere, cities are at various stages in the approval process as they all scramble to get a part of the gold-rush-like revenue that ticket cameras can produce:

- \* Lubbock's Citizens Traffic Commission has asked the city council to approve their plan for twelve cameras.
- \* College Station Council members are said to be seeking formal proposals from camera contractors in the near future.
- \* The Austin City Council is poised to begin a two-month pilot program to test the camera enforcement in the capital city.
- \* Dallas is waiting for its equipment to be installed, but has already authorized four times as many cameras as originally planned.

Fortunately not everyone in Texas is thrilled with the growing presence of photo enforcement. State Representative Carl Isett filed a bill that would make them illegal in the state of Texas. "This was something the House has been opposed to from inception because there is no evidence, no credible evidence, to support that this has anything to do about safety," Isett said.

The bill is expected to go before the House and then the Senate. If approved, it would go into effect next October. Last year, Isett wrote a bill banning the use of red light cameras. It passed the House seven times, but died in the Senate each time. ■



## News From Around The Country

### Arizona

Republican state senators in Arizona have chosen Thayer Verschoor to become the state's next Senate majority leader. Verschoor is a vocal opponent of photo enforcement. He has introduced a number of legislative initiatives that would ban or limit the use of ticket cameras, but his efforts have been stymied by camera proponents in the House and Governor Napolitano's office.

### California

Los Angeles' 2007 budget calls for equipping a total of 32 intersections with red-light cameras. This decision was made as part of the budgetary process, not a safety review. The city's original red-light cameras were deactivated in June 2005 after the city declined to renew a contract with Affiliated Computer Services, which provided poor-quality photos that led to a low conviction rate.

### Florida

The cities of Palm Coast and Pembroke Pines are both looking at installing red-light cameras. If approved, these cities would join Gulf Breeze in operating ticket cameras that violate Florida law. Prior to Gulf Breeze installing cameras, they were specifically told they were illegal by then Attorney General (now Governor-Elect) Charley Christ.

### Idaho

Under a joint project by Post Falls, Coeur d'Alene, and the Kootenai County Sheriff's Department, automated license plate readers will be installed along I-90. Each device will focus on a single lane of traffic and alert dispatchers whenever a plate is tied to a potential criminal. The equipment is being paid for with a \$125,000 Department of Homeland Security grant and will be in operation by spring.

### Michigan

Oakland County is lobbying for a partial repeal of Michigan's new speed zoning law. The county wants to keep its speed traps on gravel roads. The proposed amendment would allow the existing posted speed limit on gravel or dirt roads to remain in effect unless the governing body of the village or township in which the road is located requests that it be changed.

### New Jersey

Governor Corzine's administration announced that it will study the "pros and cons" of turning portions of I-80, I-78, Route 440, and the Pulaski Skyway into private toll roads. Fortunately, the idea has already garnered heavy opposition and Corzine has a history of backing down in the face of strong public pressure. For that reason, please call the Governor at (609) 292-6000 and let him know what you think about this plan.

### New York

The Niagara section of the New York State Thruway, I-190, has gone toll free. Huge signs saying, "NO TOLL" have been posted to let motorists know that the barriers will no longer be collecting money. However, the speed limit near the toll plazas remains at 25 mph for "safety reasons."

### Ohio

The Ohio Senate voted 18-13 to limit the use of photo radar and red-light cameras. The bill allows photo radar in school zones during school hours. However, photo radar cannot be used elsewhere unless under direct police supervision. If the House agrees to this bill, red-light cameras will also be regulated: they could only be used at intersections with a mandated yellow-light time where accidents decrease after cameras are used.

### Pennsylvania

Governor Rendell has proposed the adoption of tougher emissions standards for new vehicles. The idea has sparked heated debate at the Capitol, with environmentalists and administration officials pitted against auto-industry representatives and GOP legislative leaders. The proposed rule would require new vehicles in Pennsylvania to be cleaner burning by 2008.

### Rhode Island

A Northeastern University study of vehicle searches conducted by Rhode Island police agencies revealed that the contraband is rarely found. Data gathered by the police themselves showed that on average three out of four searches of vehicles and people in them produce nothing illegal.

### Washington

Bremerton, Washington is considering the use of red-light cameras as a means to increase municipal revenue. The proposed system would issue \$101 tickets to the owners of vehicles that are photographed entering an intersection even a fraction of a second after the light turns red. The city budget for next year projects \$1,036,260 in profit from four red-light cameras and one mobile speed camera.

### Wisconsin

The Milwaukee suburb of Glendale became the first Wisconsin community to pass an ordinance allowing police to ticket people who are talking on cell phones when they are involved in accidents or stopped for other violations. Each ticket would carry a fine of \$96.40. ■

As of this printing, this information is current. For more information on this and other motorist news, visit [www.motorists.org](http://www.motorists.org).





## Members Write

In the November/December issue of *Driving Freedoms*, there was an article about the California Attorney General suing major auto manufacturers for "global warming." I hope the suit is successful and these manufacturers are no longer permitted to sell new replacement vehicles in California. Then, in the future, California will look just like Cuba with 1950s Chevrolets as the primary mode of transportation.

*Tom Kam  
Austin, TX*

I have developed a stunningly effective, yet low-tech, method for defeating those pesky red-light cameras. Even if it's not your "personal style," wear a baseball cap jammed down on your head while driving; also, tilt your head slightly downward. Since the cameras are mounted high on poles all they will photograph is your baseball cap. In most jurisdictions the case will be dismissed because the identity of the driver is unclear. (In some other jurisdictions, the car owner gets ticketed regardless of who was driving, so this wouldn't work there.) Also, it would not be prudent to wear your baseball cap to the court hearing.

*Susan Moore  
Long Beach, CA*

The article on the Village of Maryville (*Driving Freedoms*, November/December) is an excellent example of why we need the National Motorists Association. The Illinois Department of Transportation capitulated to Maryville and allowed the village to remove, at the taxpayers' expense, all the newly erected 45-mph speed limit signs on

the flat and straight portion of IL-159 that goes through their tiny village. This speed limit was based upon engineering studies and was deemed optimal for both safety and traffic flow. In fact, the curvy and hilly portions of the road in the larger adjacent communities of Collinsville and Glen Carbon are correctly posted at 45 mph. Maryville, however, wants to under-post the speed limit at 35 mph so it can snare out-of-town motorists in its speed trap.

When I was a resident of Maryville, the aggressive traffic stops by the poorly-trained and underpaid Maryville police officers resulted in either a pleasant verbal warning or written one, which was never filed or it was discarded by the end of the week. Now that I no longer live there and have joined the majority of motorists who just pass through Maryville several times a week, I am acutely aware that the short stretch of IL-159 through Maryville is patrolled

24/7. In fact, if my radar detector did not sound when I pass through, I would check to ensure its operational integrity.

Since what has been done is clearly all about revenue, rather than safety, I urge any motorist zapped for 49 mph or below, and hence a victim of the trap, to fight his or her ticket. Plead not guilty; obtain and carefully follow the NMA ticket-fighting advice; appear in court in Collinsville when summoned; and cite the under-posted speed limit as out-of-line with the IDOT engineering safety study. Fortunately, Madison County judges are highly protective of the public and, even without hiring an attorney, the case will likely be dismissed. By fighting the ticket, you will be helping others as well as yourself.

*R.A. Robertson  
Belleville, IL*

*Your letters are welcomed and should not exceed 300 words. They may be edited for length or clarity. Full-length articles will also be considered for publication and should not exceed 600 words. Submissions may be emailed to [nma@motorists.org](mailto:nma@motorists.org) or mailed to us.*



## **The Experts' Corner**

If you have a question that only an expert can answer, the NMA can help. The experts here have volunteered to help you. Please mention that you're an NMA member when you contact them.

If you would like to join this list, contact us with your field of expertise, contact address, and preferably a telephone number. This is not intended for listing of commercial business services.

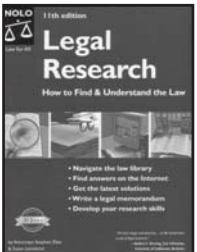
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**Beat Your Ticket**

State and local governments are increasingly relying on traffic ticket revenue for daily operations. This book gives responsible motorists the means to protect their rights by addressing many types of tickets: speeding, reckless driving, defective equipment and more. Author David Brown practices law in Monterey, California. This is the latest in a series of books where he is looking out for the driver.

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## NMA State Chapter Coordinators and Activists

If you are interested in becoming an NMA Activist, contact us at: **(608) 849-6000** or **nma@motorists.org**



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