



LOOKING DOWN THE ROAD

Researcher/ Analyst, Dr. Dinh-Zarr uses the science of data to persuade lawmakers to do the right thing.

By William S. Aiken Jr.



Dr. Bella Dinh-Zarr

Nothing But the Facts!

With today's sophisticated algorithms, complex analytics and more data than one could ever imagine, Dr. Bella Dinh-Zarr makes sense of it all for the lay person. An NTSB (National Traffic Safety Board) Board Member, PhD and MPH, Dr. Dinh-Zarr has travelled the world studying issues surrounding alcohol and drunken driving. She's testified as an expert witness to make the case for lowering the BAC (Blood Alcohol Content) to .05, among other policies that enhance road safety. So I was thrilled when she agreed to be interviewed for my column.

1). Many people have become advocates against DWI after they've experienced having a loved one injured or killed by a drunken driver. What was your inspiration to get into this field?

As a student, I got into the field of public health because I wanted to work on something (although, at that age, I was unsure of exactly what!) that would help people live healthier, happier lives. Injury prevention was then, and is now, still a less known field of public health. Chronic diseases like diabetes or infectious diseases like HIV are usually what people think of when they think of public health. I thought this was strange since injuries have a huge effect on our lives. During this time, I was volunteering at Ben Taub ER, the Level One trauma center in Houston, Texas, and I saw first-hand the terrible aftermath of motor vehicle crashes.

I saw the devastation to people and their loved ones. And I saw that these deaths and injuries could have been prevented, often by actions that seemed logical to me, like wearing a seatbelt or by not drinking after driving. So, I decided that I wanted to work on preventing road traffic injuries.

I also had an old but vivid memory of when I was about 10 years old and my family's station wagon was hit by a driver who had been drinking. As a kid, I remember being mad at that man who hit us because he injured my mother. When I think about it now, though, I know that his intention was not to hurt anyone, certainly not a family in his own town. He probably thought he was OK to drive, but our laws and policies had not given him the message, the truth we all know now, that he should have separated his drinking from his driving.

2). You've analyzed drinking and driving data and its trends all over the world. Many European countries have adopted stricter laws to curb their DWI issues, while our country has been more resistant to change its laws. How significant are factors such as America's drinking culture and the ubiquitous advertising that promotes drinking on every occasion?

Looking Down The Road...

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Many countries around the world have a drinking culture as strong or even stronger than ours here in the U.S.. But they do not have as many deaths and injuries due to drinking and driving. What's the difference? The difference is that they all also have a culture of not driving after drinking. These countries have per capita drinking rates as high or higher than in the United States, but their laws promote a culture of never, ever getting behind the wheel after drinking.

I was just recently in Australia for the excellent Australasian road safety conference. As you know, Australians proudly enjoy their beer, wine, and other spirits. But Australia, many European countries, and in fact, a total of nearly 100 other countries around the world, have an .05 percent illegal BAC law. Unlike Americans, it is common knowledge among Australians that judgment, vision, and steering are affected at 0.5 because drivers have laws and policies which reflect that common sense.

One other difference between the United States and these other countries is that we have certain anti-safety lobbyists who make money from fighting good alcohol policies and are misinforming their clients (restaurants, bars, alcohol manufacturers) about the benefits of good safety laws such as .05. There are lobbyists in every country, and some are good, but these unethical lobbyists are instilling unfounded fear into their clients - fear of sensible policies like .05 BAC - and as a result, thousands of Americans are being killed and injured unnecessarily.

3). President Trump lost his oldest brother to alcoholism. He has publicly spoken out how destructive alcohol abuse was in his family and that the death of his brother had a profound effect that led him to take a zero tolerance toward alcohol. How would you rate President Trump's handling of the issue of intoxicated and impaired driving since he's taken office?

I think that every President, and indeed every person, knows that alcohol-impaired driving is simply bad for our country and for our communities. Fortunately, we now have solid scientific evidence to act on. NHTSA funded an independent study by the National Academies of Sciences and Engineering to look at the most effective methods of reducing injuries related to alcohol-impaired driving.

The current administration and the past administration should both be commended for supporting this important study, which echoed the NTSB's 2013 "Reaching Zero" Report recommending interlock devices, increased enforcement, .05 BAC laws for every state, and DUI courts to prevent recidivism, to name a few. The current administration could save many more lives and prevent many more injuries by encouraging the full implementation of all of NTSB's safety recommendations.

4). Last year, you testified at hearings that helped Utah become the first state in the nation to pass a .05 BAC threshold into law. At those hearings, what were some of the questions voiced by Utah's elected officials, who were opposed to the .05 bill? And how did you address their concerns?

I was invited by Utah legislators to testify twice, before both their House and their Senate Committees, about the proposed .05 BAC law. Utah officials wanted to know the science behind the effectiveness of .05, because many of them had been misinformed that .05 was not very effective or that it only affected a small group of drinking drivers. They were concerned that it did not affect high BAC drivers, but I was able to reassure them with good scientific evidence that a .05 BAC law is a broad deterrent that discourages drivers at all BAC levels, high and low, from getting behind the wheel.

Lawmakers were also concerned that a .05 BAC law would hurt the restaurant industry. But, there is no evidence that lower limit laws have hurt business in other countries nor have such laws reduced drinking. The only thing the .05 law did do was reduce drinking and driving crashes, thereby saving lives and preventing many injuries. Utah legislators did the right thing and now they should feel good that they did something that will prevent people from dying and getting injured in their state.

5). While there has been a tremendous improvement in changing the cultural attitude toward the crime of DWI, as well as significantly lowering the DWI fatalities in the 1980s and 1990s, there is still a long road to hoe. The NHTSA estimates that about 18,000 people died in 2006 from "alcohol-related" collisions, representing 40% of total traffic deaths in the U.S.. Over the decade 2001-2010, this rate showed only a 3% variation and no trend. Given your extensive knowledge of America's history with drunken driving, are you optimistic about the future for passenger safety on our roads and highways?

We know that at least 10,000 people die every year in our nation due to alcohol impaired driving. It is likely even more but 10,000 people is terrible! Our nation should be in an uproar about this preventable loss of life, not to mention the many debilitating injuries, but I am still optimistic about the future. We have made great gains in the past, saving thousands of American lives, and we can do it again. We need to band together to fight for good lifesaving policies.

I'm optimistic because Utah passed the first .05 law last year, despite concerted expensive opposition by these lobbyists. I'm optimistic because there is movement in states such as New York, California, Hawaii, Washington, and others to support a life-saving .05 BAC law. We all know that .05 is not the only solution, but it certainly is a strong first step towards a future of zero deaths, a future where everyone comes home safely.



AN OPEN LETTER TO SURGEON GENERAL ADAMS



Surgeon General Jerome Adams

I am writing to you to urge your support of a policy that will save hundreds of lives. Two major studies by NTSB (National Traffic Safety Board, 2013) and NASEM (National Academies of Science, Engineering & Medicine, 2018) both found that lowering the BAC (Blood Alcohol Content) to .05 would significantly reduce DWI fatalities.

Lowering the BAC to .05 is a necessary measure that would significantly reduce the number of DWI injuries and fatalities.

U.S. Surgeon Generals have a history of making recommendations that have helped millions of American citizens to lead longer and healthier lives. The Public Health Cigarette Smoking Act was one of the major bills resulting from the 1964 report (1) from Surgeon General, Luther Terry. The report found that lung cancer and chronic bronchitis are causally related to cigarette smoking. Soon after Terry's report, Congress passed the Cigarette Labeling and Advertising Act in 1965, requiring that all cigarette packages sold in the United States carry a health warning. Then, after a recommendation by the

Federal Trade Commission (2), the Public Health Cigarette Smoking Act (3) amended the 1965 law so that the warnings were cited under the name of the Surgeon General.

The report by SG Terry was the beginning of a rejection of tobacco being socially acceptable, which led the way to an eventual FCC ban on tobacco advertising. More specifically to the issue of lowering the BAC, Surgeon General C. Everett Koop came out advocating a .04 BAC in 1984. Unfortunately, his boss, President Reagan, didn't share Koop's opinion, so the movement for .05 went nowhere.

President Trump lost his oldest brother to alcoholism at a young age. He's expressed an awareness of the damage alcohol can reek on society. With this experience, the President might approach the idea of a .05 BAC differently than President Reagan. It's a conversation that needs to be had.

Currently, bills to lower the BAC threshold to .05 are pending in California, Delaware, Hawaii, New York and Washington. Your endorsement could be a significant factor in moving forward the legislative process of those bills.

Drunken driving has been such a persistent problem for so long; it's created a sense of hopelessness and demoralization. The recommendations cited in the studies by the NTSB and the NASEM have provided lawmakers with a blueprint for a solution.

You are in a position to make a difference. We all owe the countless victims of DWI and their families to do the right thing and make .05 the law of the land. The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over while expecting a different result. Let's stop the madness by urging our legislators to take action.

Sincerely,

William Aiken, Vice President

Remove Intoxicated Drivers

(1) *History of the Surgeon General's Report on Smoking and Health. Centers for the Disease Control and Prevention. 2007-05-03.*

(2) *42 USC 207. Grades, ranks, and titles of commissioned corps.*

(3) *Public Health, Commissioned Corps Uniform and Ranks. Archived from the original on 2008-05-13.*

RID

CALIFORNIA'S RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA LAW SPELLS DISASTER FOR PERSONAL & ROAD SAFETY



This headline from Forbes.com says it all:

While California's recreational marijuana market is projected to rake in a whopping \$5.1 billion in 2018, some parts of the state say the payoff is murder. In Sonoma County, which is around 100 miles outside San Francisco, some officials are complaining that all of this legal weed business has done nothing but spawn "home invasions, violent crimes and robberies," according to a report from the *Cloverdale Reveille*.

California has lots of rules and regulations to implement the new billion-dollar industry. Below is but a snapshot of the activities that may be coming to your state, soon. (1)

Who can grow: Individuals can cultivate up to six plants per residence. Some localities have allowed Medical Marijuana licensed persons up to 99 plants. You can obtain your grower's license in California online in about 10-15 minutes.

Businesses need a state license to both grow & sell. More than 2,500 cannabis operators, from Shasta Lake to the City of San Diego, now hold state licenses in the largest cannabis market in the country. Mendocino County has received over 700 applications to grow marijuana. This is but a fraction of the thousands of growers in the area wanting to cash in on the new industry. Indian tribes (over 100 in CA) want to grow without CA regulations & may grow on their own.

Who can sell: Businesses need a state license to grow & sell. If you sell medical marijuana or related items in California, you are required to apply for a Seller's Permit. Temporary CA licenses are now in effect; **high taxes on pot, maybe 35%**. This high tax on the sales of marijuana is expected to fuel black market sales.

Who can buy: Anyone 21 and older with an ID can now buy because recreational sales are now legal. Only shops with both local permits and state licenses to sell recreational cannabis can sell to customers who don't have doctors' recommendations. You can buy 1 ounce of cannabis per day, a medical patient can buy up to 8 ounces per day. If you are under 21, you can still buy medical marijuana if licensed. More than 90 dispensaries are now licensed to sell recreational marijuana in California.

You cannot use a credit card to buy marijuana since the sale of marijuana is against federal law. Black market sellers are known to accept credit cards.

Consumption of Marijuana is changing: People are smoking less and using other methods to get high. An internet article documented 10 ways to get high on weed. Eating edibles are growing with marijuana in all kinds of edible products. Corona & other breweries are developing marijuana infused beer.

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California's Recreational Marijuana Law...

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Marijuana pot delivery business: The black market of Marijuana sales is growing through the delivery by courier. It is estimated that only 25% of the Marijuana is being purchased from government sources. In the San Francisco Bay area, there are about 60 unlicensed delivery services. Billboards in San Francisco advertise delivery. Legal delivery requires a local permit that is difficult to get!

Berkeley CA, 10 miles from my house, is a Sanctuary city for Marijuana users: This prohibits city employees from assisting federal officials in the enforcement of federal laws. You can't smoke cigarettes on the street, but you can smoke marijuana.

Since January 1, persons 21 years and older can buy cannabis for recreational use at the three authorized dispensaries in Berkeley. No medical card necessary. This is happening all over the state where they have authorized dispensaries.

Marijuana Potency is increasing: In 1969, when we did the first legal marijuana study with government furnished marijuana, published in Science, the THC content was about 1%. Today it is at least 20% or higher. (2)

Marijuana is a "Growing" Traffic Safety Problem in CA: We hate to throw cold water on the "budding" pot business and increase the smoke that everyone sees and smells in cities like San Francisco and Berkeley, but here are some facts. In CA in 2016, the latest year that data is available, 19.6% of the drivers had marijuana in their system and 227 were killed by known MJ drivers in a state in which only 20% of the drivers were tested for drugs. (3)

This compares to 27% for drivers known to be DUI. (4) We project that marijuana will soon equal or exceed DUI as a major factor in fatal vehicle crashes. These facts are almost never mentioned in articles about marijuana. Nor is data from emergency rooms and hospitals about the medical problems associated with marijuana use in CA.

1) http://www.canorml.org/california_cannabis_laws

2) *Science*, Vol 164, May 1969

3) <https://www-fars.nhtsa.dot.gov/Main/index.aspx>,

Al Crancer has written research analysis for Science, the Journal of the American Medical Association, Northwest Medicine & the American Journal of Psychiatry. Crancer has developed and implemented highway and road safety programs in California and Virginia. He is also the creator and publisher of Bureaucat, an on-line cartoon and reflection on cultural, policy and political issues.



STOP DWI

THE EMERGING DANGER OF DRUGGED DRIVING

By Jane Aiken

The annual STOP DWI Traffic Symposium took place in the lovely village of Lake Placid, NY this fall. RID members attended to stay on top of new developments. The conference was well attended with police officers, STOP DWI officials, policy experts and others participating in a variety of workshops on keeping the highways safe. One of the main subjects addressed this year was the increase and prevalence of drugged drivers, as well as the problem of preventing these offenders from driving drugged.

The chemist, drug expert and educator from Colorado, Lynn Reimer, painted an alarming picture of the dangerous drugs currently being widely abused among the public. Most of us are familiar now with the Opioid epidemic, which showed up among drivers who were tested for drugs. In addition, there is Fentanyl mixed into many street drugs, which is 100 times as strong as morphine and often causes immediate overdose. Heroin is also still widely abused and now, with marijuana legalized in several states, there are many mixtures of drugs affecting drivers, including a multitude of designer drugs made in Chinese factories and shipped here.

Police are now being trained to recognize drug induced symptoms among drivers during traffic stops, including sedated affect, constricted pupils, poor coordination and other signs. Both opioids and strong marijuana result in impaired driving by slowing reflexes, impair judgment and altered perception. Street drugs in combination with medications or alcohol produce

even worse results. Police are hiring DRE (Drug Recognition Expert) officials in assessing traffic stops to help identify and charge drugged drivers.

As Ms. Reimer lives in Colorado she described the emerging problem marijuana legalization has caused there both in emergency rooms and on the streets. She told us the perception among the public is that ingesting marijuana and driving is not a dangerous practice. Reimer reminded us that the edibles and inhalation products sold in legal outlets today are much stronger than the marijuana that was consumed fifty years ago.

The THC component, which is the psychoactive ingredients in marijuana, was only 2-3% in the past, whereas today the THC composition runs closer to 18-45% in products made for the medical and recreational markets. Countries outside the U.S. allow legal levels of THC to be only 15%. The American stronger product is widely present in states where it is legal and affects drivers much more than alcohol. It is also consumed in many states nationwide as citizens buy it online or when traveling.

To illustrate the rising problem in Colorado we were told there were 55 drug related crashes in 2013 which rose to 138 drug related fatal crashes in 2017. All of this information was presented to help educate police, law makers and the public about these dangers and the necessity to develop new practices to curb them.

ELDERLY DRIVING ON STOP DWI'S AGENDA

By Jane Aiken

Stop DWI's symposium put on a workshop to address the growing population of aging drivers to offer several helpful suggestions for citizens worried about a senior driver. Statistics show that by 2030 one in five drivers (20%) will be over the age of 65.

The problems associated with older drivers include general frailty, medication use, declining eyesight, hearing loss and dementia. Although everyone would like to continue to drive and keep their freedom, it is a problem which needs to be confronted, usually by family members who are aware of these declines in a driver's ability. Many times elderly drivers self-regulate by driving less, driving only during the day or on familiar routes, but they can still be supported in safer driving with classes or possibly in making the decision not to drive.

Michael Sweeney from the AAA organization presented several steps anyone can take if there is an elderly family member who

seems to be growing less safe as a driver. Family members, doctors, or DVM officials can file a DMV report alerting them to the problem driver. At that point, the driver in question can undergo retesting at the DMV to be able to drive again. This may include testing eyesight, hearing and a general driving test.

There are also several programs to refresh drivers on best safety practices which enhance their ability to drive safely. AAA offers a "Car Fit" program which focuses on making sure the elderly driver knows how to adjust mirrors, the steering wheel and the height of their seat for optimal vision and driving function. There are defensive driving classes at the DMV, which can enhance safe driving among elderly populations.

SYMPOSIUM

AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES PAVE THE WAY FOR ROAD SAFETY

By William Aiken Jr.



Presenter Sheriff Michael Lewis, Wicomico County, MD, Jane Aiken & William Aiken at the STOP DWI Symposium at Lake Placid, NY, last week

Autonomous Vehicles or driverless cars were a subject addressed at the STOP DWI Symposium in Lake Placid, NY, last week. Trooper Terence McDonnell, New York State Police and Cathie Curtis, Director of Vehicle Programs, American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators presented an overview of where we are currently, where we're going in the future and the challenges that face each of us.

Trooper McDonnell gave the audience a historical recap of AV (Autonomous Vehicles) technology and development. In 2004, the military wanted a safer method to transport supplies during the Iraq war. The government offered a million dollar prize to the entrepreneur who could develop the best autonomous vehicles to operate the terrain of the desert. Trooper McDonnell showed a video of vehicles plotting along and banging into other vehicles. In 2009, the government offered a 3.5 million dollar prize to create an AV to operate in an urban setting. The technology at that time seemed primitive by today's standards.

McDonnell explained how through the expansion of AI (artificial intelligence) and GPS software, the driverless technology has accelerated at breakneck pace. Today, in Michigan corporations use AV shuttle services to transport their employees to different office locations. In Florida, several school districts are using AV shuttle services to transport our most precious cargo, young children.

On the administrative side of implementing AV technology, Cathie Curtis has been working with 32 states in navigating and

crafting policies for this future transition toward AV transportation. Curtis stated there will be a huge investment in driver education as well as educating the general public.

She also outlined three major components of these policy guidelines are that the occupants of the AV aren't required to be licensed drivers or that they have to be sober when they are in the vehicle. It would be the responsibility of the owner of the vehicle to be registered, have insurance coverage and that the vehicle passes the new rigorous inspection standards that ensure the AI and GPS sensors are updated and in full working order.

The sobriety issue is a concern for law enforcement, but as Trooper McDonnell points out according to the most comprehensive study (the Tri-Level Study of the Causes of Traffic Accidents) 94% of all crashes and accidents are due to human error or deficiency. He is quite optimistic about the potential impact AV would have in lowering injuries and deaths on the highway.

There are five levels of AV ranging from partial autonomous operation to complete autonomous operation free of human input. These differences complicate the guidelines as to how each level would be governed. But with the speed of technology's progress and the vast resources invested by major industries, fully autonomous vehicles will be the norm sooner than we think.

"When you break it all down," Trooper McDonnell asserted, "Everything that we (law enforcement/law makers) do has little effect on the risk associated with road travel. AV is by far the most significant development to ever come along in road safety. The efficiency and lower costs are benefits that are secondary to the many lives this technology will save. It's a silver bullet." Then he paused a second to emphasize the magnitude of AV "This is truly a game changer."

When one considers the resources, time and planning the government has already devoted in the anticipation of interfacing the public with this innovative technology, Trooper McDonnell's assessment of AV appears to be spot on, which is great news for road safety.



Autonomous Vehicles are currently being Utilized in Florida and Michigan

BOTTOM LINE, DWI PREVENTION OFTEN AT ODDS WITH EACH OTHER

By William Aiken



In 1984, while attending an anti-drunken driving conference, RID founder, Doris Aiken heard Surgeon General C. Everett Koop emphatically make the case for lowering the nation's BAC (Blood Alcohol Content) level to .04. She instantly bought into Koop's message as lowering the BAC level became a major tenant of RID's platform. She soon discovered that lowering the BAC posed a threat to some powerful entities, namely the broadcast and restaurant industries.

Her repeated efforts to lower the BAC threshold went nowhere.

Aiken would later admit that she underestimated the influence the restaurant lobby had on our elected leaders. The Fairness Doctrine had just been repealed by President Reagan, which changed the rules of broadcasters giving equal time to different points of views. Doris often complained that this change in the FCC regulations hindered her ability to get on the air to advocate for tougher drunken driving laws. But even if the Fairness Doctrine had remained in place, I don't think it would have made any significant difference in getting .05 enacted into law. The advertisers against the policy were too powerful in Washington and among the broadcast networks. The nation's attitude toward drunken driving was still evolving and just wouldn't accept such a dramatic change.

Today, the vast majority of the public is in favor of holding drunken drivers accountable for their crimes. Yet, when it comes to the question of preventative measures such as lowering the BAC, the polls show support for that law dramatically drops off. Toughening BAC laws the restaurant industry will argue would have negative ramifications for small businesses.

However, many European countries have passed stricter BAC laws without having an adverse impact on alcohol consumption. There is another notion pushed by the alcohol industry that a

.05 BAC would criminalize having a single beer. Both of these concerns will require an educational campaign to correctly inform the public. Raising awareness on the actual facts presents one of the challenges of lowering the BAC.

With the advent of ride sharing services, Uber and Lyft widely available to the public, people who want to drink at an establishment have more options than ever. Yet, there is still stiff resistance toward passing .05 legislation. A slight infringement on personal freedom shouldn't trump saving lives. Studies from the National Traffic Safety Board, NTSB (1) and the Academics of Engineering, Medicine and Science (2) both concluded that lowering the BAC would save hundreds of lives annually in the USA. Both of these research groups recommended adapting a BAC of .05 nationally.



When one considers the ripple effect in the community of a single life taken by a drunken driver, changing the BAC would have an enormous impact on road safety. Unfortunately, the lobbying arm of these research groups is practically non-existent compared to the political influence of their counterparts in the alcohol and restaurant industries.

Phil Abitabile, who owns and runs a driver safety school, believes technology can provide effective solutions to road safety. Installing ignition interlock devices (IID) on cars where the driving demographic represents a larger percentage of those who might drink and drive. Implementing such a law would have to be done in conjunction with car insurance companies. But then these additional costs would fall on the car manufacturer, who would undoubtedly pass along the cost to the consumer.

According to Abitabile, the cost to install an IID is about \$1,000 to \$500 and a monthly charge of \$100 to monitor and recalibrate the device. Of course, if the installations were done at the level of the auto assembly line, the cost would be significantly lower than if an auto shop installed the IID. The cost would be transferred to car buyer.

RID has been a strong advocate for the installation of IIDs where the courts have shown there's a proven need. But mandating that drivers of a certain demographic (ages 16-24) be required to install IIDs would be extremely tough to pass. I have come to understand that proactive measures for road safety are met with the most resistance.

There would be tremendous pushback by the auto manufacturers. Similar to the alcohol and restaurant industries, they have the ear of our elected officials. These lobbying groups are well represented in Washington. These industries pay millions to their lobbyists to craft laws that bolster and protect their bottom

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BOTTOM LINE, DWI PREVENTION OFTEN AT ODDS WITH EACH OTHER

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line. So if I've learned anything working at RID, it's how hard it is to change a law that impacts the cost or profit of a business.

So to work with these industries to pass .05, the focus should be on two areas: transportation alternatives for someone who chooses to drink outside their home and credible research that proves a lower BAC wouldn't have an adverse effect on alcohol consumption. It's taken decades to gather this data and it should be at the center of the discussion in changing the law.

It's vital that anti-drunken driving advocates address this dynamic. However, to be successful, it's important to highlight facts that show profits wouldn't be impeded to the degree claimed by the opponents of changing the law. Businesses are in business to make a profit. It's something that RID has dealt with since our inception. The political reality is we have to work within the framework of a capitalistic system. A .05 BAC limit can exist without crippling the restaurant business. But it's a difficult negotiation.

For the past three years, RID has worked hard to pass ABNY2302, New York State's version of a .05 BAC threshold. In my conversations with the staff of Senators' that sit on the transportation committee, financial concerns of businesses remain a stubborn stumbling block in moving ABNY 2302 forward in the legislative process.

One of the most important components of persuading someone is showing respect for your opponent. This rule is especially true when you are up against a formidable and powerful adversary. It's not politically shrewd or savvy to simply ignore these issues of commerce that are often central to the debate. We have to directly address these concerns with an honest and respectful dialogue. Demonizing or impugning the motives of those we disagree with won't bring us to the finish line.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RID is Going Green

After Remove Intoxicated Drivers celebrates our 40th year anniversary as the nation's longest serving Anti-DWI organization, RID is taking a step toward making a smaller carbon footprint. Beginning for our Spring 2019 newsletter, we will be offering the RID newsletter via E-mail. So please send us an E-mail noting the address you would like us to send your newsletter to electronically. If you would rather continue to receive the newsletter in its paper format, notify us at ridusa@verizon.net or send us your request in the enclosed return envelope and you will continue to receive it in the snail mail.

RID greatly appreciates the support we've received over the years. If you no longer receive the newsletter via snail mail, you can continue your support of RID by going to www.rid-usa.org and clicking on our PayPal link to make a donation or purchase books and DVDs. We are able to continue the mission Doris Aiken set out to do 40 years ago, due to civic minded people like you that want to make a difference. We couldn't fight this fight without you. You are part of the solution that makes the roads and highways we share safer for everyone.

Kudos to Joyce Bascom and John Morse

RID would like to give a shout out to Joyce Bascom and John Morse for their years of dedication as news clippers of DWI stories. I get most of my news from the internet. Due to Joyce and John's committed efforts, it's quite apparent that the stories concerning DWI are often omitted from the websites of newspapers and television stations.

As more people get their information from their smart phone or I-pad, they might get the false impression that drunken driving isn't such a big problem. This lack of reporting can allow DWI cases to slip through the cracks. Having a hard copy of a case makes it possible to follow up on the outcome of these cases.

The ubiquitous amount of reports Joyce and John send to RID are overwhelming and demonstrate that drunken driving remains a serious problem. Despite years of our efforts to educate the public on the importance of driving sober, there are many selfish people driving on the road that don't heed our message.

The silver lining of this lack of on-line media coverage is that its clear law enforcement is taking DWI seriously. The number of arrests and convictions are proof of their commitment to the problem. Thank you, Joyce and John for your diligence in keeping us informed. Your work is greatly needed and appreciated.

Looking Down the Road is now in Video Format

In May of this year, I began producing a video version of "Looking Down the Road" for SACC TV (Schenectady Access Cable Channel). So far, guests I have interviewed include; Schenectady District Attorney Robert Carney, Educator/Entrepreneur, Phil Abitabile and Mary Tanner-Hill, Chief of the Vehicular Crimes Unit for the Albany District Attorney's Office.

For several years, I have been have writing "Looking Down the Road" as a column in the newsletter where experts and activists share their insights and experience in government, education and law enforcement.

The shows are 30 minutes in length and allow my guests to elaborate on their answers and provide further detail on drunken driving issues. If you have any suggestions for guests you'd like to see interviewed for "Looking Down the Road", please send your requests to ridusa@verizon.net. You can view my TV interviews by going to our website at www.rid-usa.org.



A SURVIVOR'S STORY

By Kaarina Jager

When her husband was killed by a drunken driver, it marked the beginning of a journey of heartache and hardship. Yet, Kaarina Jager never gave up.



Reinhard Jager:

Aug 18th, 1948 - Nov 27th, 1985

Yes it is almost 33 years since my husband, Reinhard, at age 37, passed away. The truck driver, who hit my husband, was found with empty or half empty open containers of beer – it is a long time ago, and I was not there. My husband, sitting in a chair in a parking lot, with a bucket of roses, was fundraising with roses on the roadside at the corner of Paradise Hills and Coors Rd in Albuquerque, NM. The truck, coming on a red light, collided with another vehicle, whose driver was also impaired, but visually. The truck veered

over my husband, an eighteen wheeler, and my husband died instantly. The coroner called me in Roswell from Albuquerque letting me know about his death.

There was a lengthy court case against the insurance company – we did get some monies, but they were gone pretty fast. The truck driver got a license suspended for some time. He appeared in court admitting drinking, saying that he was sorry. Dead is dead, though.

This event drastically changed the lives of our young immigrant family. Our elder son, Risun, was two years old at the time and our younger son, Austhan, was one year old. Thus, our sons grew up without a father, and as Reinhard's wife, I had to fend for the children and for myself alone in a foreign country (I am a native of Finland and my husband was from Austria) even though we visited relatives in our respective homelands during the summers. However, the relatives were not able to help us here in the USA.

The long term effects of the sudden passing of my husband have proven tragic: our younger son missed his father and always ran to the window when a car was passing by waiting for his father to enter the doorway. Austhan contracted cancer several years later adding to our trauma; he died at age 18, not to mention that we lost all our savings in fighting for his life. My husband did not leave any pension or Social Security benefits behind since we had only recently arrived to this country. When the widow has to work till exhaustion, it is clear that the children suffer even though our sons did participate in sports and other extracurricular activities during their childhood and teen years. Research also shows that early childhood/teenage trauma can lead to compounding challenges later in life.

The Bible talks about taking care of the widows and orphans, but that has been all but forgotten today – women can at least work in the Western world, but the moral and financial support of fathers cannot be underestimated for the remaining spouse and especially for the sons in the family. Thus, in addition to the widowed (grieving) mother, there needs to be strong support for the (grieving) sons by the church and extended family to avoid long term trauma. Unfortunately, not everyone is lucky enough to have the much needed support; more often than not, friends and relatives disappear from the picture. There are always, exceptions to the rule, of course! Nowadays we read that in some communities, where sons grow up without fathers, the propensity for drugs/alcohol addiction, gang and criminal behavior involvement is much higher than among the stable two parent families, which we need to build a strong nation. The mandate to educate our youth in relationship/marital and parental skills should be the number one priority for our politicians and priests in our society. Divorce and illegitimacy are unnecessarily rampant today and drain the resources of everyone involved.



Reinhard, Kaarina, Rusin & Austhan Jager

Now, I went back to school to earn my Teaching degree and later a Masters degree in Education and our elder son did the same and has been teaching physics/math in International Schools around the country and world. I am still working & teaching social emotional coping skills in elementary schools through a program called Wings for Life and will continue working as long as I can. There are times, though, when I cannot help but think, what life would have been like with my husband living, us having several more children and grandchildren, us being financially secure in old age and being able to do more for the public good. Our elder son also lost his only sibling. Of course, I am glad that there still are many families that are blessed in these respects. Please do not forget the early widowed and orphaned, though.

Finally, even though widows and orphans are grossly mistreated in much of the world and forgotten by the rest, my faith in God, Our Heavenly Parent, has carried me through the canyons of my at times morose grief, triggered occasionally by hurtful events. In addition, my parents and ancestors in Finland have taught me to survive overwhelming odds: Finland is finally independent after a thousand years of assaults by its more aggressive neighboring countries. I have a daily to do list, depending on the time of the day and year, which tasks help me through moments of sadness. ***Keep going***, is my advice to all of you who have lost loved ones at a young age. May God Bless you all!

Kaarina Jager

What are the issues related to drunken driving in your community?

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A CITIZEN'S PROJECT TO REMOVE INTOXICATED DRIVERS

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