

Traffic Toll May Be State's Worst

By ELMER E. WHITE
Michigan Press Association

What was feared early in the year is now becoming a daily nightmare to State Police officials. This year's highway death toll is very likely to be the worst in the state's history.

Traffic fatality counts seem to follow patterns of high incidence interspersed with a low death toll. This year another peak will undoubtedly be placed on the charts.

The last peak occurred in 1955 when 2,016 persons were killed. Rapid action by the Legislature in bolstering safety efforts that year dropped the toll in 1956 and decreases were recorded the two succeeding years also.

SINCE 1958 however, charts have showed relatively steady, but minor rises in the fatal accident count. This year a sharp change has occurred.

By mid-year, the traffic death toll was nearly 100 ahead of the count at the same time in 1962 and climbing steadily. Multiple

death crashes have contributed greatly to the toll.

State Police Commissioner Joseph A. Childs blamed part of the current year's bad record on the fact that his department is lacking manpower.

In addition to legislative refusal of the bulk of his request for additional troopers, the Civil Service Commission has now put into effect a maximum 48-hour week for State Police.

Under the previous 60-hour work the troopers covered 20 per cent more area.

LACK OF appropriations for the traffic safety center at Michigan State University and other safety programs initiated after the 1955 crash consciousness, according to the experts.

Add to these factors the increased number of motorists on the road and the facts that better roads and more powerful cars lend themselves to greater speeds.

The predictable result of these factors is exactly what has happened.

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Motorists, with less enforcement in proportion to their numbers, have tended to become more careless.

Placing more confidence than caution in the machines they drive, Michigan motorists are committing suicide and murder on the highways!

ACCIDENTS ARE also an increasing problem on Michigan's waterways. With this in mind, the Legislature last year enacted a comprehensive boating law. With nearly 500,000 boats of various sizes registered in the state, enforcement of the law is a problem just as it is on the roadways.

Enforcement of the water safety law is left largely to county sheriff patrols on the inland lakes.

On the Great Lakes the U. S. Coast Guard maintains control because federal laws are in force.

One of the most important sections of the new law specifies that all motorboats must be equipped with a Coast Guard-approved life preserver, vest, ring buoy, or buoyant cushion for each person aboard.

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FIRE EXTINGUISHERS are also required on all water vehicles of closed or semi-closed construction. The number depends on the size of the boat. Good boating dictates the presence of a fire extinguisher on open vehicles too.

The new law also spells out requirements for whistles, horns, lights and mufflers. Additional sections deal with "rules of the road," safety precautions for water skiing and diving, and accident reporting requirements.

Spelled out in a booklet called "What Every Boater Must Know," being circulated by the Secretary of State, the new law is designed to protect lives while at the same time assuring the most pleasant and comfortable use of Michigan's many lakes and streams.

Another effort to enhance industrial development in Michigan's northernmost regions has been accomplished.

The Small Business Administration recently open a branch office at Northern Michigan University in Marquette to serve the 15 Upper Peninsula counties and eight counties below the Straits.

Previously businessmen seeking SBA loans for expansion or other activities had to make all applications by mail or telephone. Glenn G. Potter, formerly in the SBA office in Detroit, was sent to Marquette to manage the office.

THE MORE CONVENIENT availability of advice on SBA programs and procedures is expected to encourage business development in the North.

In addition to providing loans for plant construction, expansion and conversion, the Small Business Administration assists businesses in selling products to and buying property from the government.

Funds also are available through the SBA to small business investment companies, which in turn duplicate the Administration's services to some firms which might not qualify for SBA programs.

Happenings

(Continued from 1-B)

Two youths who are said to have set fire to a home in Bloomfield Hills so they could serve as paid volunteers in helping to put it out were in the toils of the law today.

The youths are Arnold Parks, 17 years old, of Quanton road east of Lahser road, and Jack Warren, 19 years old, who lives on Lahser road near West Long Lake road.

James Gilhula, the outstanding free style swimmer in the United States today, will be the headline feature in a gala swimming program being planned for Birmingham sport fans, to be held Friday night at the Barnum pool. His appearance here will mark the first time that a world's champion has exhibited in the water of the local tank.

15 YEARS AGO
Aug. 5, 1948

Birmingham city commissioners, not satisfied with a Michigan State Highway Department letter which "begs the question" of traffic signals at the Woodward-14 Mile road intersection, Monday night determined to send a strongly worded resolution to the highway department demanding that a copy of the actual traffic survey made at that spot last fall be sent to the commission so it could be looked over.

Bernard E. Fowler, 1595 Oxford road, for the past 8 years a delegate from Oakland county to the Michigan Democratic state conventions, Monday assumed the duties of acting postmaster of Birmingham. He succeeds Joseph A. Byrne, who retired on that date after 15 years' service as postmaster.

Any gravel or dirt street in the City of Birmingham which prior to this summer was oiled by the city carried absolutely no guarantee as to the length of time it would hold up under traffic conditions. This announcement was made this week by City Manager Donald C. Egbert by way of explanation to a large number of local residents who have appeared before the city commission in recent months to claim such a guarantee for their particular street.

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such entertainments as flagpole sitting and marathon dances?

Why not 7,000, I don't know. But it's a start, you can bet. Now that the country fair season is under way, you can expect reports to come in from all over the country; 7,059 orbits, 8,152 and so on.

Ferris wheel orbiting is on its way, thanks to that adventuresome man in North Dakota.

EVER STOP to wonder who hears the National Anthem more than big league baseball players? Ever wonder what the fellows standing at attention in Tiger Stadium and the other ballparks across the land were thinking each time they heard the "Star Spangled Banner"?

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Praise
(Continued from 1-E)

necessary to continue our work in the numerous fields of aid to others.

All profits from our fund-raising projects are used to assist The Leader Dog School for the Blind, local youth work, public and parochial safety patrol, Camp Oakland, the Welcome Home for the Blind at Grand Rapids, the Pinkerton pre-School Nursery for the Blind in Taylor Township and local charitable cases of defective vision.

We also contribute funds to the Boy Scouts, YMCA, Community House and other local community projects.

THE MEMBERS of the Birmingham Lions Club contribute much time and effort as well as money in these projects, but most of all is the generosity of those who support our efforts.

All of the members join me in sincerely thanking you for your support.

T. RALPH ALEXANDER
President
Birmingham Lions Club

Reading Up At Bookstore In Summer

To the Editor:

Noted with interest the comments on "summer chance of pace at the library . . ." (Page 4-B, July 25 issue).

With the slow-down in reference requests at the library, we have a noticeable increase in summer student reading. Our "Recommended Student Reading" paperback shelves are very busy.

Hardly a teen comes in without a summer reading list. Our impression is that many of our area young people are really putting in the idle hours profitably and pleasantly.

ONE OF OUR real pleasures is when they come in, having completed the required reading, and

select more books; for then we know they're happy and will remain good readers throughout their lives.

Of course, to offset these, are also the ones who check the books for thickness and page count, to get the shortest one possible! We think of them as short-changers—and it is sad because they don't realize how they are short-changing themselves.

THE LIBRARIES, schools and teachers who provide these lists for summer reading should be commended for their interest and local charitable cases of defective vision.

No bookstore can ever offer the tremendous wealth of material found in our Birmingham library, but the paperback boom is also interesting and we thought you might be interested in local summer reading as we find it.

ELAINE NAGLE
The Village Bookshelf
790 N. Woodward
Birmingham

City Beat
(Continued from 1-B)

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