

# Under Cover

By DAVID BURR, '52ba

THE nation observed its first Safe Driving Day in December. The special day was given a nation-wide ballyhoo to focus attention on the highway slaughter that takes place every day.

Because 15 per cent less people were killed on S-D Day, it was proclaimed a success. Slightly less than 50 persons were killed. A successful day with nearly 50 persons dead.

We have become immune to traffic safety pitches. We are still susceptible to alcohol, fast cars and bad highways, but our immunization to caution and courtesy is very high. We are potential killers with devastating weapons and yet we may be the respected members of our communities. There is no social distinction on the highway.

Why do we lull ourselves into believing traffic safety is not our particular problem? Our attitude is easily definable. We are driving carefully already. It's those other fellows that cause the accidents. This theory we cling to until we are dead.

As an undergraduate I wrote an editorial for the *Oklahoma Daily*. Although the figures and situation are somewhat dated, the facts are all as new as when they were written in 1949. Here it is:

This is an invitation to death, my death. And if you like, you may stay and help celebrate my funeral. The time of death has been determined for 8 p.m. December 21. The place is to be between Claremore and Tulsa on highway 66.

I'm leaving school a day early to get home for some real celebrating. The driver

of the car has assured me that if we leave at 4 p.m. we can reach Miami by 9 p.m. in time for a Christmas dance.

That gives us five hours to drive nearly 250 miles. But as you see, the driver is mistaken in his calculations. We are never going to reach our destination. In five hours or fifty. There's no need to rush.

Since, in a manner of speaking, it is to be a farewell party, we're buying a fifth to make the trip seem shorter. Oh, we'll have a great time going out. When we're through there won't be a car on the highway.

The funeral is to be a thing of sheer poetry. The minister will say the usual things about being cut down in the prime of youth. He'll forget to say we were drunk, we were driving recklessly, we killed the occupants of the second car. He'll never mention that these deaths could have been avoided.

Newspapers will report placidly that the traffic death crop is reaching a new record. Or that we helped pass the 1948-49 average winter months' death toll of 265 per day in the U. S.

Americans love to set new records.

Please let me know if you can accept my invitation. I must know. If the idea does not catch on, we'll have to postpone the party and that might cause other parties to be postponed. And there might be no new records.

STATISTICS play an important part in the discussion of traffic safety. But they are just as helpful if you have any point to prove. Here is another set that makes a rather unusual point (borrowed without permission from *Norman Rotary Spokes*, which publication borrowed from someone else without permission, etc.).

## A LITTLE HELP, PLEASE:

### LABOR STATISTICS BALANCE SHEET, PERIOD ENDING JAN. 31, 1954

Population of U. S. ....	155,000,000
People over 65 .....	47,000,000
People left to work .....	108,000,000
People under 21 .....	64,000,000
People left to work .....	44,000,000
People who work for government .....	21,000,000
People left to work .....	23,000,000
People who are in armed forces .....	2,000,000
People left to work .....	21,000,000
People who work for state or city government .....	20,800,000
People left to work .....	200,000
People in hospitals and institutions .....	126,000
People left to work .....	74,000
Bums who won't work .....	62,000
People left to work .....	12,000
People in jail .....	11,998
People left to work .....	2

That's YOU and ME, and you'd better get off your lazy hunkers and get on the ball because I'm getting darned tired of doing all the work myself.

THIS is the time when friends take the time to exchange a greeting of cheer and good will. It is the time when the prevailing feeling is one of hope. A new year brings the promise of a new division of time that gives us a fresh starting point for a more successful life.

Each year at this time, I feel that, while I can not eliminate the mistakes of the past, I can move forward with a little more confidence in my future. A new chapter has been opened and how it reads is a matter that can be decided without recourse to those pages already written.

In the spirit of hope, the *Sooner Magazine* wishes for each of you your most successful year. If money is your key to success, then we wish you more money. If power is your desire, then we wish you more power. If prestige is your goal, then may you gain your end. But our only sincere hope is for a more successful living together of all peoples based on understanding and a belief in the brotherhood of man. Happy New Year.