

# --- AND SUDDEN DEATH

**Editor's Note:** In printing this article, written especially for The Reader's Digest, and reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Journal hopes that in some measure it may aid in reducing the toll of accidents which each year claim death and injury victims in this vicinity.

If the reader, at the threshold of the New Year, will read this article with attention and photograph its gruesome details on his mind, perhaps he may be saved later from the horrible experiences described by Mr. Furnas.

Permission to publish the article was obtained by the Plattsmouth Chamber of Commerce, and this organization has also distributed nearly 100 pamphlets containing the article. **MAKE A RESOLUTION TO HELP REDUCE ACCIDENTS IN 1936.**

help it if the facts are revolting. If you have the nerve to drive fast and take chances, you ought to have the nerve to take the appropriate cure. You can't ride an ambulance or watch the doctor working on the victim in the hospital, but you can read.

The automobile is treacherous, just as a cat is. It is tragically difficult to realize that it can become the deadliest missile. As enthusiasts tell you, it makes 65 feel like nothing at all. But 65 an hour is 100 feet a second, a speed which puts a viciously unjustified responsibility on brakes and human reflexes, and can instantly turn this docile luxury into a mad bull elephant.

Collision, turnover or sideswipe, each type of accident produces either a shattering dead stop or a crashing change of direction—and, since the occupant—meaning you—continues in the old direction at the original speed, every surface and angle of the car's interior immediately becomes a battering, tearing projectile, aimed squarely at you—inescapably. There is no bracing yourself against these imperative laws of momentum.

It's like going over Niagara Falls in a steel barrel full of railroad spikes. The best thing that can happen to you—and one of the rarer things—is to be thrown out as the doors spring open, so you have only the ground to reckon with. True, you strike with as much force as if you had been thrown from the Twentieth Century at top speed. But at least you are spared the lethal array of gleaming metal knobs and edges and glass inside the car.

Anything can happen in that split second of crash, even those lucky escapes you hear about. People have died through windshields and come out with only superficial scratches. They have run cars through head on, reducing both to twisted junk, and been found unharmed and arguing bitterly two minutes afterward. But death was there just the same—he was only exercising his privilege of being erratic. This spring a wrecking crew tried the door of a car which had been overturned down an embankment and out stepped the driver with only a scratch on his cheek. But his mother was still inside, a splinter of wood from the top driven four inches into her brain as a result of son's taking a greasy curve a little too fast. No blood—no horribly twisted bones—just a gray, corpse-like figure still clutching her pocketbook in her lap as she had clutched it when she felt the car leave the road.

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By **F. C. Furnas**

*Like the gruesome spectacle of a bad automobile accident itself, the realistic details of this article will nauseate some readers. Those who find themselves thus affected at the outset are cautioned against reading the article in its entirety, since there is no letdown in the author's outspoken treatment of sickening facts.*

Publicizing the total of motoring injuries—almost a million last year, with 36,000 deaths—never gets to first base in jarring the motorist into a realization of the appalling risks of motoring. He does not translate dry statistics into a reality of blood and agony.

Figures exclude the pain and horror of savage mutilation—which means they leave out the point. They need to be brought closer home. A passing look at a bad smash or the news that a fellow you had lunch with last week is in a hospital with a broken neck will make any driver but a born fool slow down at least temporarily. But what is needed is a vivid and sustained realization that every time you step on the throttle, death gets in beside you, hopefully waiting for his chance. That single horrible accident you may have witnessed is no isolated horror. That sort of thing happens every hour of the day, everywhere in the United States. If you really felt that, perhaps the cold lines of type in Monday's paper recording that a total of 23 local citizens were killed in weekend crashes would rate something more than a perfunctory "out" as you turn back to the sports page.

An enterprising judge now and again sentences reckless drivers to tour the accident end of a city morgue. But even a mangled body on a slab, waxy and portraying the consequences of bad motoring judgment, isn't a patch on the scene of the accident itself. No artist working on a safety roster would dare depict that in full detail.

That picture would have to include motion-picture and sound effects, too—the flopping, pointless efforts of the injured to stand up; the queer, grunting noises, the steady, panting groaning of a human being with pain creeping up on him as the shock wears off. It should portray the slack expression on the face of a man, dazed with shock, staring at the Z-twist in his broken leg, the insane crumpled effect of a child's body after its bones are crushed inward, a realistic portrait of an hysterical woman with her screaming mouth opening a hole in the bloody drip that fills her eyes and runs off her chin. Minor details would include the raw ends of bones protruding through flesh in compound fractures, and the dark red, soiling surfaces where clothes and skin were flayed off at once.

Those are all standard, everyday sequels to the modern passion for going places in a hurry and taking a chance or two by the way. It ghosts could be put to a useful purpose, every bad stretch of road in the United States would greet the oncoming motorist with groans and screams and the educational spectacle of ten or a dozen corpses, all sizes, sexes and ages, lying horribly still on the bloody grass.

Last year a state trooper of my acquaintance stopped a big red Hispano for speeding. Papa was obviously a responsible person, obviously set for a pleasant week-end with his family—so the officer cut into papa's well-bred expostulations: "I'll let you off this time, but if you keep on this way, you won't last long. Get going—but take it easier." Later a passing motorist hailed the trooper and asked if the red Hispano had got a ticket. "No," said the trooper. "I hated to spoil their party." "Too bad you didn't," said the motorist. "I saw you stop them—and then I passed that car again 50 miles up the line. It still makes me feel sick at my stomach. The car was all folded up like an accordion—the color was about all there was left. They were all dead but one of the kids—and he wasn't going to live to the hospital." "Maybe it will make you sick at your stomach, too. But unless you're a heavy-footed inebriate, a good look at the picture the artist wouldn't dare paint, a first-hand acquaintance with the results of mixing gasoline with speed and bad judgment, ought to be well worth your while. I can't

terlock, requiring an acetylene torch to cut them apart. In a recent case of that sort they found the old lady, who had been sitting in back, lying across the lap of her daughter, who was in front, each soaked in her own and the other's blood indistinguishably, each so shattered and broken that there was no point whatever in an autopsy to determine whether it was broken neck or ruptured heart that caused death.

Overturning cars specialize in certain injuries. Cracked pelvis, for instance, guaranteeing agonizing pains in bed, motionless, perhaps crippled for life—broken spine resulting from sheer sideways twist—the minor details of smashed knees and splintered shoulder blades caused by crashing into the side of the car as she goes over with the swirl of an insane roller coaster—and the lethal consequences of broken ribs, which pierce the lungs and lungs with their raw ends. The consequent internal hemorrhage is no less dangerous because it is the pleural instead of the abdominal cavity that is filling with blood.

Flying glass—safety glass is by no means universal yet—contributes much more than its share to the spectacular side of accidents. It doesn't merely cut—the fragments are driven in as if a cannon loaded with broken bottles had been fired in your face, and a splinter in the eye, traveling with such force, means certain blindness. A leg or arm stuck through the windshield will cut clean to the bone through vein, artery and muscle like a piece of beef under the butcher's knife, and it takes little time to lose a fatal amount of blood under such circumstances. Even safety glass may not be wholly safe when the car crashes something at high speed. You hear picturesque tales of how a flying human body will make a neat hole in the stuff with its head—the shoulders stick—the glass holds—and the raw, keen edge of the hole decapitates the body as neatly as a guillotine.

Or, to continue with the decapitating motif, going off the road into a post-and-rail fence can put you beyond worrying about other injuries immediately when a rail comes through the windshield and tears off your head with its splintery end—not as neat a job but thoroughly efficient. Bodies are often found with their shoes off and their feet all broken out of shape. The shoes are back on the floor of the car, empty and with their laces still neatly tied. That is the kind of impact produced by modern speeds.

But all that is routine in every American community. To be remembered individually by doctors and policemen, you have to do something as grotesque as the lady who burst the windshield with her head, splashing splinters all over the other occupants of the car, and then, as the car rolled over, rolled with it down the edge of the windshield frame and cut her throat from ear to ear. Or park on the pavement too near a curve at night and stand in front of the tall light as you take off the spare tire—which will immortalize you in somebody's memory as the fellow who was mashed three feet broad and two inches thick by the impact of a heavy duty truck against the rear of his own car. Or be an original as the pair of youths who were thrown out of an open roadster this spring—tornown clear—but each broke a windshield post with his head in passing and the whole top of each skull, down to the eyebrows, was missing. Or snap off a nine-inch tree and get yourself impaled by a ragged branch.

None of all that is new or peculiar. It is just the horrible raw material of the year's statistics as seen in the ordinary course of duty by policemen and doctors, picked at random. The surprising thing is that there is so little dissimilarity in the stories they tell.

It's hard to find a surviving accident victim who can bear to talk. After you come to, the gnawing, searing pain throughout your body is accounted for by learning that you have both collarbones smashed, both shoulder blades splintered, your right arm broken in three places and three ribs cracked, with every chance of bad internal ruptures. But the pain can't distract you, as the shock begins to wear off, from realizing that you are probably on your way out. You can't forget that, not even when they shift you from the ground to the stretcher and broken ribs bite into your lungs and the sharp ends of your collarbones slide over to stab deep into each side of your screaming throat. When you've stopped screaming, it all comes back—you're dying and you hate yourself for it. That isn't fiction either. It's what it actually feels like to be one of that 36,000.

And every time you pass on a blind curve, every time you hit it up on a slippery road, every time you step on it harder than your reflexes will safely take, every time you drive with your reactions slowed down by a drink or two, every time you follow the man ahead too closely, you're gambling a few seconds against this kind of blood and agony and sudden death.

Take a look at yourself as the man in the white jacket shakes his head over you, tells the boys with the stretcher not to bother and turns away to somebody else who isn't quite dead yet. And then take it easy.

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## Nehawka

Alvin Pollard and John W. Murdoch are the latest owners of new Plymouth cars.

Don Philpot, the salesman for the Farmers Oil Company, was called to Omaha last Monday to look after some business matters.

Lucean Carper, of Murray, was a visitor in Nehawka last Monday, coming to look after some business matters for a short time.

Mrs. Jesse M. Smith, of Mynard, was a guest on Christmas day at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Roy Gregg, residing north of Nehawka.

Charles Davis and wife were enjoying a visit with the parents of Mr. Davis, at Tekamah, they driving over to the Hurt county town in their car.

Mrs. John Yeiser and her two sons, Andy and Jack, were down several days last week, visiting at the home of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. A. F. Sturm.

Roy Gregg made the home happy when he purchased a new Maytag washer for the good wife, with which to do the laundry work with the least possible effort.

Mrs. A. J. Ross was stricken suddenly ill last week and has been confined to her bed. She is showing slight improvement, but is still in serious condition.

Miss Lois Troop, who is home from the University of Nebraska for the mid-winter vacation, was a guest at the home of her sister, Mrs. Victor Wehrlein, on Christmas day.

A. D. Rhoden and wife were at Cedar Creek last Thursday, where they attended the funeral of the late John Gauer. The two men had been close friends for a number of years.

Mrs. L. E. McBride, of Lincoln, was a visitor at the home of her brother, Roy Gregg and family, and her mother, Grandmother Gregg, for Christmas, all enjoying the visit together.

Hennings Johnson has been the unfortunate loser of five of his best horses, all of which it is thought died from earnest disease. This comes as a severe blow to Mr. Johnson, as good horses cost plenty of money and are hard to get at that.

Fred Nutzman was taken with a sudden illness Friday evening of last week and will be required to remain in bed for some time. While he is feeling slightly better, he is still unable to be up and about. His many friends hope he will soon be back in his former good health.

Conant Wolph, who had hoped to keep intact one of the buildings he owns on the right-of-way, and move it to his farm, found the bridges en route would be insufficient to carry the load, and accordingly is tearing it down, and the lumber from the two will be used in the construction of new farm buildings.

Miller Christensen and wife, who went to Rockville, Illinois, last week to visit with relatives, returned home Monday of this week and report having had an excellent time while they were away. Mr. Christensen says the crops there were excellent last year and times are good and everybody is buoyed up with a feeling that the depression is on its last legs and better times are coming.

Christmas in Omaha  
Roy Creamer and family, Anderson Lloyd and family and Victor Wehrlein and family and his mother, Mrs. Nellie Wehrlein were guests on Christmas day at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Sans and his mother, of Omaha, where they all enjoyed a fine Christmas dinner and visit.

Christmas at Troop Home  
W. O. Troop and wife enjoyed themselves at home Christmas day, their daughter, Miss Lois, who is a student at the University of Nebraska, and their sons, Thomas and Earl, all being present to enjoy the day with them.

Pleasant Family Dinner  
The Anderson family have a practice of getting together the Sunday after Christmas each year and enjoying a family reunion and dinner. This time it fell to Mr. and Mrs. Albert Anderson to entertain the other members of the family. There were 22 gathered around the festive board. A splendid time was had, as usual, and all enjoyed the excellent dinner that was served by Mrs. Anderson. Those who were present included Dan Anderson and family of southwest of town on the O street road, Andrew Anderson and family of Omaha, Edith Anderson and Mr. and Mrs. K. V. White, of Louisville, and Mr. and Mrs. Fred Marquardt, of Avoca.

United Brethren in Christ  
Rev. Otto Engelbrecht, Pastor  
Phone 2241  
NEHAJKA CHURCH  
Bible church school at 10 a. m. Evening gospel service at 7:30. Our special meetings conducted by

### OVERCOATS

For a Limited Time . . . We offer you Choice of Our Entire Overcoat Stock, at—

**\$15 \$17.50 \$19.50**

These are all new this season's Coats and cannot be duplicated at this money as woolens are going up daily.

#### WESCOTT'S

Rev. Bierdorf, of Omaha, will close on Friday, January 10.

Our Bible conference conducted by Rev. and Mrs. C. L. Nixon, of Omaha, was enjoyed by all.

The Women's society will be entertained by Mrs. Lloyd this week.

**OTTENBEIN CHURCH**  
Bible church school at 10 a. m. Morning worship service at 11 a. m. The Women's society will be entertained by Mrs. M. C. Christensen this week.

Rev. H. A. Bierdorf of our church at Omaha will speak at Otterbein church at the Sunday morning service. Come.

Let us pray for the lost and by all means win some. Wishing all a Happy New Year.

**RIVALS IN GALLANT DUEL**

Chicago.—A cross fire of pretty plenaryries opened the congressional "battle" on Chicago's Gold Coast. The principals in the gallant duel were Mrs. Kertha Baur, republican national committeewoman for Illinois, who seeks her party's nomination in that district, the ninth and Representative James McAndrews, the democratic incumbent, who has not yet declared his intentions.

Stated Mrs. Baur: "I think Mr. McAndrews is smarter than I am."

Rejoined Congressman McAndrews: "No, I can't think so. She is a very bright and fine woman."

Mrs. Baur elaborated: "It is to be a battle of principles, not personalities."

Congressman McAndrews pointed out: "Even if I knew anything against any candidate, I would rather be defeated than say it."

The compliments were carried back and forth by a reporter engaged in a little reconnoitering in what had always been a political battlefield.

Inflated or ordinary dollars—either kind will still buy what it expended in your home community, where a part is retained to help meet the tax burden and other community obligations.

**OVERCOME BY FUMES**

Gothenburg, Neb.—Mrs. John Cunningham, wife of the school principal here, is recovering in a hospital from the effects of fumes from the furnace in her home. She was overcome when the fire became clogged with soot. Cunningham, on his return from school, found his wife unconscious and rushed her to a hospital.

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# January Sale of COATS

## Large Savings For Women & Misses

OUR JANUARY SALE of Women's and Misses Coats is once again the high point in value getting for our patrons and value giving for this store. New and fashionable fur-trimmed coats at prices which mean a saving of from 30 to 45 per cent. Come in and see these coats!

### Three Groups fine FURS fine FABRICS

**\$10.95 regularly \$22.50**

The fabrics are the season's newest weaves and patterns. They come from the leading woolen mills. They include matelasse wools, diagonals, jacquards and broadcloths. The linings are beautiful. Many coats are interlined. Representative size range.

**\$19.75 regularly \$29.75**

The furs in these Coats at \$19.75 include Beaver, Skunk, Persian, Caracul, Fox, Canadian Wolf, Mink, Cross Fox and other fine furs. They are correctly styled collars and trims.

**\$29.75 regularly \$39.75**

These coats are in sizes for women, misses and little women. They are not all sizes in all models, so we would suggest early selection if you want a wide choice.

# LADIES TOGGERY

The Shop of Personal Service