

Auto battery-related accidents cause blinding injuries, burns

Injuries from one of winter's greatest hazards — the dead auto battery — can be reduced if motorists take some precautions, according to the National Society to Prevent Blindness.

An estimated 20,733 people were treated in a hospital emergency room in 1983 for a battery-accident-related injury. More than two-thirds, or 13,673 of these were injuries to the eyes. Many may have resulted from the mishandling and improper jump-starting of automobile batteries, a society official said.

"Some people don't know that a lighted match and cigarette, or a spark from a dropped tool, booster or charge cable can ignite a battery," said Barbara Allen, executive director of the Nebraska affiliate.

"The explosion can throw battery acid into the eyes, causing severe burns, possible vision impairment or even blindness," she said.

To minimize this risk, the society urges motorists to carry safety goggles in their car and wear them whenever working around or jump-starting a car battery.

"The best way to reduce the risk of a dead battery is to make sure it's in good working condition," Allen said.

LIFE service shows elderly how to cope

By Carla Johnson-Kimbrough
Staff Reporter

Americans treasure and strive for independence. LIFE is helping Lincoln's elderly live independently.

LIFE, or Lincoln Information Service for the Elderly, is an information and referral service for people age 60 and older in an eight-county region.

"We're the one place where someone can go to get all this information," Tom Cardwell, a case manager for LIFE, said.

But LIFE has become more than a referral agency during the past 13 years, Cardwell said. It began taking cases that required counseling and other special services. LIFE counselors sometimes "intervene" for elderly people who face problems when they apply for services like nutrition and housing programs.

LIFE has eight full-time counselors and two part-time counselors who help the elderly with insurance policies.

Student internships are available with LIFE. The LIFE staff evaluates whether the student would have enough supervision to make the internship a valuable experience, Cardwell said.

"They have to be self-starters," Cardwell said. "We have a lot of autonomy here."

Students usually work in counseling, assessments or technical areas, he said. With counseling, students assist counselors on particular cases.

Students working in the assessment area have the responsibility of assessing elderly clients. After they finish this, counselors can provide their clients with appropriate services and counseling.

Students also can work with research and program evaluation at LIFE, Cardwell said.

As a case manager, Cardwell visits about 10 homes of elderly clients a week.

Most of the people the center works with don't have enough money, he said. Without money their independence is threatened. Money helps people deal with problems such as food, housing and mental and physical health, he said.

However, elderly people probably would say that transportation is their biggest problem, Cardwell said.

Cardwell, who has worked with LIFE for eight years, said he has learned that you cannot stereotype the elderly.

"They're as different as night and day," he said. "Older people can and do change."

The following are some suggestions from the society that motorists can use to assure their car battery's peak performance:

- Water level. Water lost through evaporation overcharging should be replaced.

- Corrosion. Inspect battery terminals on a regular basis and clean as needed. Any corrosion on terminals should be removed with a cleaning solution of water and ammonia or baking soda. Clean terminals can be coated with petroleum jelly after attaching cable terminals to battery. Replace any severely corroded terminals.

- Charge. The charging system should be checked annually — particularly before cold weather season.

- Manufacturer's instructions on batteries and in car's operating manual should be followed.

Should jump-starting a dead battery be necessary, the society recommends that vent caps are tight and level; that a damp cloth, if available, is placed over the vent caps; that vehicles are not touching and that both electrical systems are the same voltage.

- Do not jump-start if fluid is frozen.

- Attaching the cables (Do in order listed):

1. Clamp one jumper cable to positive (+) terminal of discharged battery wired to starter or solenoid. Do not allow positive cable clamps to touch any metal other than battery terminals.

2. Connect other end of positive (+) cable to positive (+) terminal of booster battery.

3. Connect one end of the second cable (negative (-)) to the other terminal (negative (-)) of booster battery.

4. Make final connection on engine block of stalled engine (not to negative post) away from battery, carburetor, fuel line, any tubing or moving parts.

5. Stand back from both vehicles. Start car with good battery — then start the disabled car.

6. Remove cables in reverse order of connections beginning by first removing cable from engine block or metallic ground.

Even "maintenance free" batteries pose some of the explosive potential of their non-sealed battery counterparts, according to the society. It is advised that drivers always wear safety goggles when performing any of these maintenance or jump-start tasks.

Black History...

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the last few years.

ment on campus. "The black organizations got together and began attending student body meetings to share information and keep the vital communication open between us," Johnson said.

Since then, Johnson said, black students' events on campus have been increasing.

While black students are getting involved at UNL, the majority of UNL students are not. Carla Johnson-Kimbrough, who will pass on her Miss Black UNL 1984 crown Saturday, said that at a university where blacks make up only 1.5 percent of the student population, most of them have turned "apathetic" in

"Many of them are ignorant," Johnson-Kimbrough said. "They don't know the power they can have. They just criticize."

Anthony said activities during Black History Month include the Miss Black UNL pageant, scheduled for Saturday night at 7:30 p.m.; the Big Eight conference on Black Student Government; a speech by State Sen. Ernie Chambers of Omaha; a "Blacks in Communication" seminar featuring black newsmen Ray Metoyer, Mike Jones and Hubert Brown. A movie, "Lady Sings the Blues" will be featured, plus a seminar on black women and careers and a gospel night.

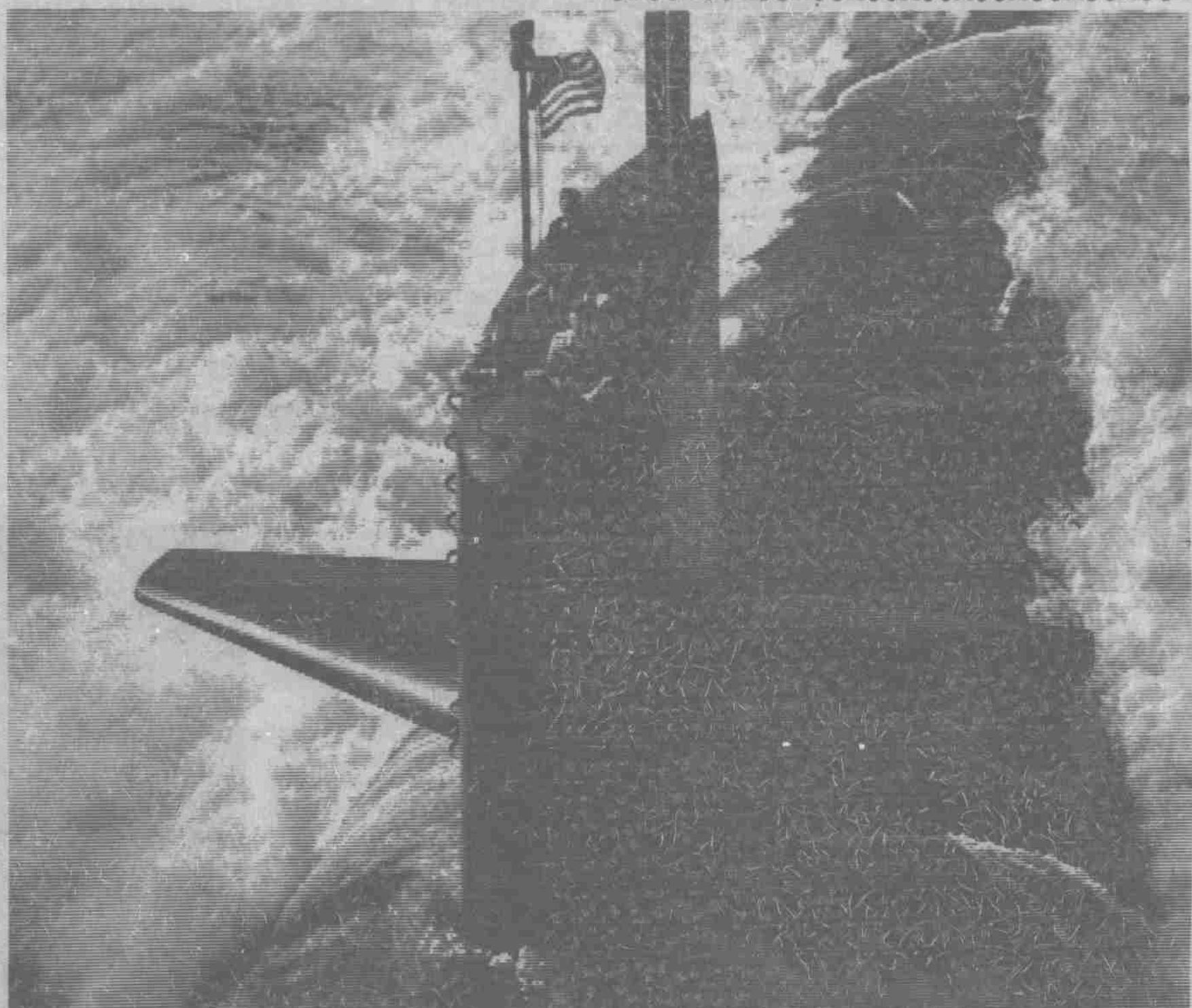
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