

Slow it down

S.T.O.P. class teaches valuable lessons about speeding



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I got my first speeding ticket last year.

The officer had clocked me at 19 miles over the speed limit. As if that weren't bad enough, I was caught inside a work zone, so my ticket fine was doubled. The bill totaled \$271!

Luckily, since it was my first violation, I was able to participate in S.T.O.P. class.

I spent an entire Saturday in a defensive driver's class. It was eight hours that could have been spent shopping, working or doing anything else worthwhile.

In the end, I only had to pay \$40 for the class, instead of \$271 for the ticket. So I guess I got a great deal. But that class didn't just refresh my driver's-ed knowledge and get me out of a ticket - it opened my eyes.

It became the turning point in my fast-paced life.

We were shown video tapes of drivers in devastating car accidents. Some were drunk, others were simply driving too fast. Most did not have their seat belts on. Wearing a seat belt is one thing I've never had a problem doing. I would feel naked if I didn't wear my seat belt.

While watching bloody bodies being pulled from mangled wrecks and listening to sobbing parents over the loss of their children, I began to wonder how I could ever have sped.

I now realize how selfish speeding is. Killing yourself is one thing, but putting other people's lives in danger is another. Lately, when I drive home, I think about how many of the vehicles that I pass are speeding, maybe even driven by someone who is drunk. It is a scary thought.

When you think about it, there really is no reason to speed. You speed to class in the mornings so you won't be late for school, you say? The solution is easy.

Leave earlier. Yes, that means getting up earlier too. If you plan your day more carefully and still are running late, speeding is still not the answer. I now believe in arriving safe rather than sorry - in a car instead of a body bag at the morgue.

Speeding on a bicycle is less dangerous than speeding in a car, but not as safe as speed-walking. There is always a chance that a biker could hit a pedestrian. I've seen it happen. It is not a pretty sight.

Of course motorcycles are probably the most dangerous vehicle of all. At least an automobile provides some protection in case of an impact or rolling upside down. At least automobiles have seat belts too. Motorcycles are simply death on wheels.

Motorcycle operators really seem to believe that the little helmet fastened around their heads is enough protection in an accident. Even if the

driver's brain does survive the accident, there won't be much skin left on his body, because it will probably be ripped off by the concrete when the driver falls off the bike. This scenario doesn't sound very appealing to me.

Motorcycles are objects that shouldn't be allowed to operate, let alone speed.

What will it take to reduce the speed at which most people like to drive? I have other friends who have received numerous speeding tickets throughout their driving careers. You would think that acquiring more than one ticket would cause a driver to slow down. But unfortunately, most people still ignore the speed limits.

If giving away hard-earned money and watching videos of horrendous car wrecks isn't enough to stop speeding, other solutions need to be devised.

Drivers tests should be changed so that they are more difficult to pass.

Another idea that I have heard is to make the minimum age to get a driver's license 18 instead of 16. It is believed that the older the driver, the more mature and responsible he or she is. However, as much as I want to believe that with age comes safe driving, I have to disagree.

I can't count the number of times that I have been driving the speed limit on the highway, (for those of you that don't know speed limits, the usual highway limit is 55 or 60) and a vehicle comes out of nowhere. In no time the automobile is riding my bumper.

Tail gating annoys me almost as

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much as speeding does. Most of these tail gaters have been people twice my age - people who are old enough and should be wise enough to know the dangers of speeding. I'm sure that most of these speeders have children, whom they would never want to speed.

Parents who speed sure send good messages to their children!

Not only did those tail gaters twice my age follow me less than five feet from the back end of my car, but within a few miles each one flew around me in a blur.

It would have given me great satisfaction if I had been able to tell each driver about the dangers of speeding and how a person's life can change in the blink of an eye when there is an accident. But of course none of the drivers could hear me, no matter how loudly I screamed inside my car.

Every time someone speeds around me and leaves me in the dust, I pray there will be a police car parked on the other side of the hill. There never is. But the funny thing is that almost every time I get passed by another vehicle, I end up meeting that vehicle at the first red light when I pull into town. Their speed-

ing didn't get them there any faster after all.

So even though I was extremely embarrassed to receive such an expensive ticket, I am glad that I was pulled over that fateful day. If I wouldn't have received that ticket, I might still be endangering people's lives with my crazy driving on the road. Pedestrians and bicyclists could have been in trouble too!

As for others that still continue to speed after reading this article, shame on you. Most of you would never think about murdering someone, but vehicular homicide is also taking someone's life. So slow down.

Besides, life goes by too fast anyway, without rushing from place to place in your car.

Plan your day in advance so you don't have to speed to get somewhere, and at the same time, you won't put others lives, and your own, in danger.

I'm also warning you. If you happen to speed by me, don't be surprised if you see the flicker of a bird from my driver's side window.

If I can't get through to you with common sense, I can at least vent my frustration.

Big hair nightmare

Confessions of a former heavy metal addict



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I can't go on with this onus (engineering majors, look it up) on my soul anymore. I have to confess my past transgressions. I admit, I've tried to hide my horrible secret for years.

However, I know for the sake of the nation, it's best if I just admit my wrongdoing and face the consequences.

I have had an improper musical relationship.

I was once a glam, hair-metal fan.

Yes, I was one of the shameless who donned the bluejean jacket and grew my hair long, at least as long as my parents would allow.

I was the kid who used to ride his bike to the mall to buy the new issue of Metal Edge magazine every month.

Once, in an informal survey, I listed C.C. DeVille as one of the five greatest guitarists of all time. In my defense, I also listed Eddie Van Halen and Eric Clapton.

However, I reached my low, the depths of addiction if you will, when I purchased a Warrant CD. I still cringe when I think back to how I'd smile on your face 10 miles wide," rolled out of my \$14 Kraco

car stereo.

It was soon after that that I began to seek help. I knew I had a problem, and the only real answer was professional counseling.

So I enrolled in a pop metal rehabilitation clinic. I was slowly weaned off of Van Halen and Guns N' Roses with smaller and smaller doses of stuff like Winger and Nelson.

Soon the withdrawal set in. I would twitch in a cold sweat longing for a whining guitar solo played by a rail-thin man in spandex.

I was so desperate, I would've killed for a Bon Jovi song.

However, I had only begun to experience the worst of my problems. See, I was hooked on the hard stuff.

The Power Ballad. Poison's "Every Rose Has Its Thorn," Bon Jovi's "I'll Be There for You" and the king of them all, Extreme's "More than Words."

At night I would wake up in a cold sweat with the piano riff from Mötley Crüe's "Home Sweet Home" echoing in my skull.

It was a truly dark period in my life. Today I see the old school pictures of me wearing that damn jacket, and I want to hide in shame.

Thankfully, I've put it all behind me.

For now. Hardly a day goes by without temptation to headbang. Last semester KRNU had a show that was nothing but hair metal. Naturally, that's the only station that comes in clearly at work. Pure torture.

If I try to watch TV, I always see the commercials for the heavy metal compilation albums. The retro fad has finally affected me.

As if all that weren't bad enough, Quiet Riot and Cinderella have both played Lincoln in the past year.

Thanks to continuing support from my fellow clinic members, I've been able to stay clean. But it hasn't been easy.

Did you know that Dee Snider has his own syndicated-radio show? You remember Dee. He was the scary blonde with the filed teeth in Twisted Sister.

Keep in mind, I'm from the generation that knew Niedermeyer from the "We're Not Gonna Take It" video long before we knew him from Animal House.

I live in the constant fear that I will slip back into my addiction. I fear my hair will grow out, my ear-ring will reappear.

God forbid, I might someday wear stonewashed jeans with the knees torn out again.

However, it's the lady rockers that have me the most worried. I remember when "mall hair" was a turn-on.

When I was a high school freshman, I had first-hour gym class. None of the girls did their hair before class. After class, we'd come out of the locker room and there would be an Aqua Mist haze filling the gym.

Great for a buzz. Thank goodness there was never a spark.

Recently, I've been traumatized by films like Airheads. For a recovering metal head, it was terrifying. I never have been able to watch Beavis and Butthead.

I've been trying. I've gotten better. For a while I substituted older '60s and '70s rock in its place. It is like the recovering drug addict's version of cigarettes.

However, I've made great strides in the last year. I've begun to listen to Matchbox 20, Ben Folds Five and Fastball. Granted, it's still pop-type music. But it's better than buying all the old \$4.99 CDs of the bad bands.

Frighteningly, I hear that Guns N' Roses is about to release another album.

Has our God forsaken us?

I look at the musicians now

and I see that most of them have recovered also.

Alice Cooper plays golf in Arizona. That's got to be sign of mellowing.

Van Halen has recruited the lead singer from the wussiest band ever, Extreme. Then they turned into one of the wussiest bands around.

Aerosmith has become the kings of Top 40-pop. At least Steven Tyler produced Liv from his heavy drug days. Thank you Steven.

I hear

Sammy Hagar not only drives 55, he does it in the left-hand lane with his blinker on for 18 miles in an RV.

To really rub salt into my wound, Pat Boone released a cover album of heavy metal songs.

Nothing can kill a craving faster than hearing Pat croon "No More Mr. Nice Guy."

At least Mötley Crüe continues with its juvenile ways. They still think it's cool to get loaded and smash everything in sight. Just ask Pamela Anderson Lee about that.

You want to know the worst part? Part of me wants to jump in and trash right along with them.

Long live metal.

