

# Multi-Billion Dollar Expense

Dear Citizens of Charlotte-Mecklenburg: What is a multi-billion dollar expense that the nation could clearly live without? No, it's not a major new defense system. No, it's not the federal welfare budget. Hint: The elimination of this expense would require no congressional debate and not a single penny for new federal programs. All it requires is diligent voluntary efforts on the part of individual citizens like you and me. Still haven't guessed? The answer - drunk driving.

Actually, the most horrible aspect of the drunk driving tragedy is not the multi-billion dollar economic cost, but the thousands of human lives lost each year. The fact is, 44,241 died in traffic crashes on U.S. highways in 1984. Twenty-three thousand, five hundred of them - or more than 84 per day - died in crashes in which alcohol was a factor. The good news is that due to increased public attention over the past few years, alcohol-related crashes have begun to decline by over 30 percent in

some parts of the nation. However, even though this improvement is commendable, it is not enough. The fact is, most of us continue to be too tolerant of a dangerous minority of arrogant, self-centered people with attitudes like, "I drive better when I'm drunk," "I only had a few," and, "Nobody drives my car but me." It is true that many of us are still unwilling to stick our necks out and actively prevent others from becoming potential killers on wheels. This is a difficult position to take. But if we don't care enough to stand up to our friends who wrongly insist they are sober enough to drive - we take an even greater risk. We risk losing a friend; we risk the lives of others; and we risk living with the knowledge that we might have prevented a tragedy from occurring.

The alternatives are simple and highly publicized: call a cab, or ask guests to spend the night or wait a few hours before driving, or drive them home yourself. If you are the host, be a wise one. Offer non-alcoholic drinks, use a bartender who knows when to say "no," close the bar early in the evening, and always serve plenty of food along with alcohol. It is clear that the primary solution to the drunk driving problem is self-discipline. But it is also clear that we need to care enough to look out for our friends. You may not be able to control the United States' defense budget, foreign policy, or the welfare budget, but you can prevent drunk driving. This year, make a resolution. Resolve to stop your friends from driving drunk. "Because You Care."

Have a safe and happy holiday season! Sincerely yours, Flay J. Lee, The Alcohol and Drug Education Traffic School

picked up a box of COURAGE to help me run this race, my basket was getting full when I remembered I needed GRACE.

I didn't forget SALVATION, for SALVATION that was free, so I tried to get enough of that to save both you and me. Then I started up to the counter to pay my grocery bill, for I thought I had everything to do the Master's Will.

As I went up the aisle, I saw PRAYER and I threw some in, for I knew when I stepped outside, I would run right into sin. PEACE and JOY were plentiful, they were on the top shelf. SONG and PRAISES were hanging here so I just helped myself.

And then the Angel at the door I asked, how much do I owe? He smiled and said, "just take them everywhere you go." I smiled at him and said, "now really, how much do I owe?" My child, he said, "CHRIST PAID YOUR BILL A LONG TIME AGO."

This is the season to remember our many blessings and share our time and love with others. May you enjoy a Holiday Season filled with JOY, PEACE, AND HAPPINESS.

Merry Christmas, Ralph W. Ketner

## Walking Down Life's Hiway

Dear Sir, I found the following poem in my file of treasures. I'm not sure where I got it, but wanted to share it with you.

While walking down Life's Hiway some time ago, I saw a sign that read "Heaven's Grocery Store." As I got a little closer, the door came wide open, and then I suddenly realized I was drawn right inside.

I saw a host of angels; they were standing everywhere, one handed me a basket that said, "My child, shop with care." Everything a Christian needed was in that Grocery Store, and what you couldn't carry, you could come back tomorrow for.

First I got some PATIENCE, LOVE was in the same row, further down was UNDERSTANDING, needed wherever you go. I

## Nature Film

The Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Department will sponsor a nature film at Latta Plantation Park, located off Beatties Ford Rd., Sunday, December 29, at 2 p.m.

The viewing of the film is designed for free fun and educational family entertainment. While at the park, be sure to enjoy the nature trails, fishing pier, shoreline and Visitor Center. For more details about the film or the park in general, call Bobby Parker at 875-1391 or Lynn Saul at 336-3854.

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# Speaking Out

## "I Want A Second Opinion!"

Dear Editor, Growing up in a media family, with a grandfather who ran a newspaper and a father who ran a television station, I got a pretty good dose of the First Amendment at the family dinner table. Both men held strong views, expressed them forcefully, and suffered opposing views with patience approaching Job's.

Some ideas they felt articulate, but wrong. Some foolish, but wrong. Some threatening, but wrong.

Controversy and anger swirled around the family because ideas and viewpoints were forcefully advanced or defended. Important and unimportant people thought them wrong. And even the purveyors of small-mindedness never suggested that they be silenced.

So I grew up in the American tradition - you can have an idea and express it and your neighbor can have an idea and express it. And I grew up and I went to work for a tobacco company and have the good fortune to agree with and advance its ideas.

It's not too dissimilar to the family dinner table: freedom of expression, freedom of choice, and informed populace.

And now in the name of the common good the doctors have decreed that the tobacco companies' freedom of expression must be silenced. "Silence them and we will have Utopia" has been the shrill cry of the small-minded through the centuries.

They tried to silence Frederick Douglass. Thank God they failed.

They tried to silence Harriet Tubman. Thank God they failed.

They tried to silence

Walter White. Thank God they failed. They tried to silence Martin Luther King. In death his voice is only better heard.

To be sure I cannot stand with these historical giants. But my freedom to be heard is no less than theirs.

And now the American Medical Association wants

to silence me. I want a second opinion!

By Guy L. Smith, Vice President

Guy L. Smith IV is Vice President - Corporate Affairs, Philip Morris USA. His father is retired General Manager of WTVK Television, Knoxville. His late grandfather was editor of The Knoxville Journal.



Catch the update on sports in The Charlotte Post

### "BEST PICTURE OF THE YEAR"

National Board of Review  
"The Color Purple" is a motion picture that will tug at your heart and make you care about what happens to its characters. It evokes joy, laughter, sadness and tears. All of the principle actors give an Academy Award performance.  
—John Johnson, Ebony and Jet  
"A masterpiece, Spielberg magically weaves a tale."  
—Loretta Manago, The Charlotte Post



## HAMPTON ALUMNI ASSOCIATION POST-CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

— COME JOIN YOUR FRIENDS —  
At The 2nd Annual Hampton Alumni Association Scholarship Dance  
Friday, December 27, 1985 9 pm - 1 am  
At The Adams Mark Hotel (Carolina Ball Room)  
Complimentary Hors d'oeuvres & Champagne  
Music Provided by the Master Trax Band  
For Ticket Information Call Hi-View Cleaners, 393-7289 or 392-9357, 846-1309  
Donation - \$15.00 Attire - Semi-Formal

THE COLOR PURPLE  
NOW PLAYING!  
PARK TERRACE  
MARSHVILLE  
1:00 4:00  
7:00 10:00  
EXCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT