

DID YOU KNOW???

STUDENTS' INSIGHT INTO TRAFFIC SAFETY SIGNIFICANT

On May 18th, at Paul Smiths College, the Franklin County Traffic Safety Board (TSB) held its Enforcement Recognition breakfast. The purpose of this annual event is to recognize two officers from each enforcement agency in the county for their contribution to traffic safety through enforcement. As part of the program, three students from the Driver Education class, at Franklin Academy were also recognized for their award-winning essays on traffic safety. This article, with permission from the students, will highlight the three award-winning essays.

Katie Duprey was the first presenter with an essay on **Drinking and Driving**. Katie points out that annually around 10,000 people in the United States are killed due to an alcohol-impaired driver. She states that the risk of a driver under the influence of alcohol being killed in a vehicle crash is at least eleven times that of drivers without alcohol in their system. "Why would anyone want to take such a preventable risk?" asks Katie. "When someone chooses to drink and drive, they're putting not only themselves but many others at risk too", she says. The main thrust here is that all DWI-related crashes are 100% preventable, and Katie is fully aware of that fact.

The second student to present was **Adelynn Murphy**, who spoke on **Driving Under the Influence of Drugs**, which is becoming an increasingly dangerous problem. Adelynn states that drugged driving is exactly what it sounds like; it is when a person drives under the influence of any drug that can affect their driving, even prescription medications. She points out that they do not realize that their driving abilities are being impaired by the drug, which makes the situation even more dangerous because they become less cautious than they were before. Adelynn says "More than 18 percent of fatally injured drivers tested positive for at least one illegal or prescription drug in 2009. "The worst part about this statistic is that the loss of life could be prevented." She advises everyone to make sure you check your medications for warnings about driving while under the influence of them, and NEVER get in the driver's seat after you partake in the use of illegal drugs.

The last student to read her essay was **April Gokey**, who addressed the issue of **speeding**. April realizes that speeding is dangerous but that most drivers drive over the posted limit anyway. She says a study of 1,000 motorists conducted by Purdue University concluded that many Americans do not worry about safety when it comes to speeding but rather the fear of getting caught doing so. "Despite the established speed limits and special speed zones, many people seem to exceed them regardless of the risks and consequences associated with it", says April. She points out that speeding is more than just getting pulled over. It can result in fines, violation points, license suspension, collisions and sometimes even death. "The next time you think about speeding, think of why you are speeding and how you can prevent it, the alternatives and the consequences of your potentially deadly decision", states April.

The TSB thanks Stephanie Marsh, Driver Ed instructor at FA, for providing the opportunity for the students to write about traffic safety. And, our thanks to all three students for their insight into traffic safety and their willingness to tell their stories to a room full of police officers. Hopefully they will also spread the word to others.