# SAFETY CANADA

The member newsletter of the Canada Safety Council

# **Seniors Behind the Wheel**

ith people living longer and families having fewer children, seniors represent a growing share of the population, eventually likely to reach one-quarter of all Canadians.

Year	Number	Population share
1998	3.7 million	12.3%
2016	5.9 million	15.9%
2021	6.9 million	17.8%
2041	9.7 million	22.6%
Percentage of Canadians aged 65 and older		

The Canada Safety Council has identified our country's aging driver population as a key traffic safety issue.

Already, the 50 and over group represents 26 per cent of Canada's population. About 70 per cent of Canadians 55 and over have a driver's licence. Drivers over 80 are the fastest-growing segment of Ontario's driving population. The number of elderly people with driver's licences will increase exponentially over the coming decades, bringing to the fore concerns about age-related deficits and driving ability.

Over the past five years, from 1993 to 1998, road fatalities dropped significantly in all age groups except those 65 and over. Seniors account for

about 17 per cent of the Canadians killed in traffic crashes, but only 12.3 per cent of the population.

In 1996, about one-half of Canadians aged 65 and over living in private households (about 1.7 million) were driving a car, minivan or truck. Seniors in small towns and rural areas are more likely to be drivers — not surprising, considering that small towns and rural areas often have little or no public transit or specialneeds transportation and their residents tend to live farther from basic amenities. To maintain their independence in everyday activities such as shopping and getting to personal appointments, seniors must rely more heavily on their cars.

#### Profile of older drivers

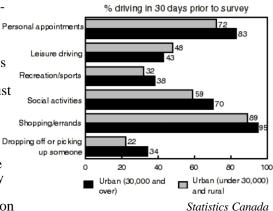
Most drivers aged 65 and over drive only a few times a week. The majority of their trips are relatively short, with total distance travelled ranging from 11 to 17 km per day on average. Most often, seniors use their car for shopping, personal appointments such as visiting physicians, and family or social get-togethers.

Senior men are far more likely to drive than senior women. According to a 1996 survey, in the majority (55 per cent) of households where the husband held a valid licence, he was the exclusive driver of the household vehicle. Whether or not

the wife had a licence, the husband did the bulk of the driving.

Women tend to outlive their husbands. Once alone, they may find that unless they drive, they must significantly curtail their activities, pay for transportation or rely on friends and family for transportation.

#### Seniors use their cars most often for shopping and personal appointments



Statistics Caraca

### Age-related factors affect driving

As time goes by, the independence of having a vehicle may be jeopardized by deteriorating health, which can affect driving ability. For example, chronic arthritis or rheumatism can make manoeuvres such as those required to make sharp turns or to merge with heavy traffic particularly difficult.

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## **New Elmer Screen Saver**

Elmer the Safety Elephant's rule "Look all ways before you cross the street" good advice for pedestrians of all ages.

The Canada Safety Council, with sponsorship from Liberty Mutual, has released a new screen saver which can be downloaded from Elmer's site (www.elmer.ca) to remind young children of this critical safety rule.



Learning to check and double-check for traffic is critical for young school children. Elmer the Safety Elephant was originally created for kids aged 5 to 9 because of the high number of pedestrian deaths and injuries in that age group. Children at this age start to cross the road without an adult. Even if they know better, momentary excitement can make children forget to be careful.

\*\*Continued on page 2...\*\*

## THE PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

On December 6, 1989 at l'Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal, a gunman killed 14 women in cold blood. That tragedy triggered a collective national response calling for greater control over the ownership and use of firearms.

Unquestionably, guns pose a danger to public health and safety. Annually in Canada, about 1,300 deaths are caused by firearms. Of these, most (77 per cent) are suicides. Shooting is the most common method of homicide. Only about five per cent of firearms deaths are accidental — but many of them, tragically, are children.

Over time, with progressive gun control measures, the firearm death rate in Canada has dropped from 5.2 per 100,000 in 1970 to 3.8 in 1996. To the Canada Safety Council, as a safety organization, legislation is a proven and obvious countermeasure to help reduce deaths and injuries. The Montreal massacre spurred this Council to support the call for more effective legislation to prevent firearms from getting into the wrong hands.

Of the many issues we have addressed over the past 10 years, gun control was by far the most emotional. Despite the tirades of opponents to the federal government's gun control legislation, we have spoken for the majority of Canadians who have serious concerns about the risks of uncontrolled access to firearms.

Canadians do not want a society where shooting deaths are an everyday occurrence. The Montreal massacre woke us up to that inherent danger. The government's gun control law reflects longstanding Canadian values in support of measures to promote public safety and security.

SAFETY CANADA

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President: Emile-J. Therien Editor: Ethel Archard (ext. 228) Older drivers, from page 1...

The use of medications may also slow reaction time by that fraction of a second needed to avoid a collision.

On the basis of kilometres driven, older drivers get into about the same number of collisions as their 16- to 24-year-old counterparts. Many older drivers compensate for age-related health limitations by driving shorter distances and avoiding night driving, busy highways and downtown areas.

The Canada Safety Council's 55 Alive Driver Refresher Course helps older drivers sharpen their driving skills and adjust to age-related changes.

## Governments prepare for the future

In October of 1999, the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators held a national workshop in Ottawa to help provincial and territorial governments address emerging issues related to older drivers. The Canada Safety Council was a sponsor of the workshop, at which a number of issues were identified:

- There is a need to strike a satisfactory balance between the desire of an individual to continue to drive and public safety on the road. Current testing standards need to be reviewed to determine if they are adequate to fairly assess a maturing driver's performance.
- The removal of a driver's licence is a potentially traumatic experience which may lead to a huge change in lifestyle; program and policy reviews must recognize and be sensitive to the issues of maturing drivers' experience and need for independence.
- Education on this issue is needed among the various stakeholders and the general public.
- Vehicles and road signs should be designed with an older population in mind.

Recommendations and priorities from the October workshop are expected to provide a basis for a national model licensing programfor older drivers, for use by provincial and territorial governments. @

Cources

Canadian social trends, Statistics Canada (September 9, 1999) Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators, October 22, 1999 1999 and Beyond/Challenges of an Aging Society, National Advisory Council on Aging.

Elmer Screen Saver, from page 1.

While the rate of pedestrian mishaps has gone down over the years, the 5 to 9 age group is still over-represented in the statistics. More than 20 per cent of injury-related deaths in this age group involve pedestrians.

Young Web surfers can download the Elmer screen saver for Windows free of charge. While they're on Elmer the Safety Elephant's site, they should also try Elmer's Internet Safety quiz. @

Elmer the Safety Elephant is a trademark of the Canada Safety Council.



Download Elmer's "Look All Ways" screensaver. www.elmer.ca

# Intersection

# **Drunk Driving Still Top Safety Issue**

Impaired driving still accounts for close to 40 per cent of all deaths on Canadian roads, or about 1,200 deaths in 1998 — more than double the number of homicides. In 1997, police laid over 84,000 charges related to the impaired operation of a vehicle, more charges than any other criminal offense. Statistics like these point overwhelmingly to the fact that impaired driving continues to be a serious social and health problem which affects all Canadians.

## **National Safe Driving Week**

For most of the past decade, National Safe Driving Week (December 1 to 7) has focused on impaired driving. The 1999 campaign, "Impaired Driving — What's New?" was designed to raise awareness of the most recent changes to Canada's law on impaired driving.

The possible loss of your licence and a fine are the least of your

concerns if you drive impaired. The 1999 amendments to the Criminal Code increased Canada's alreadystrict penalties for those convicted of driving while impaired. For details, visit CSC's Web site (www.safetycouncil.org).

### **Public Service Announcement**

In March 1998, CSC and the Association of Canadian Distillers (ACD) produced a PSA for radio and television. Based on a quiz show concept, the message was that you can become impaired whatever beverage alcohol you consume. That PSA has been aired extensively across the country.

To start the new millennium, CSC and ACD joined forces to launch a second responsible use PSA. "Do you want to be a winner?" takes its inspiration from a popular new TV quiz show. @



National Safe Driving Week: Base Transport from 17 Wing Winnipeg created a crash display at its main gate to show what can happen if you drive impaired.

For many years, the Department of National Defence and its bases across the country have been strong supporters of the Canada Safety Council and its programs and campaigns. Many bases organize events and publicity in support of CSC initiatives and to bring the safety message to their personnel. In December, Base Transport from 17 Wing Winnipeg hosted an instructor training program for CSC's Defensive Driving Course. All 26 candidates from 15 units across central and western Canada were successful and will be strong program representatives. Congratulations to all who took part in the program!

# Graduated Licensing a Success

The objective of graduated driver licensing is to reduce crash rates by ensuring new drivers gain experience and can mature under conditions of low risk before graduating to more demanding driving conditions.

An investigation by the Traffic Injury Research Foundation (TIRF) found that Nova Scotia's graduated driver licensing program has reduced road crashes and casualties.

In October 1994, Nova Scotia introduced a program that applies to all new drivers regardless of age. It spans 2½ years with two stages, a sixmonth learner phase, followed by a 24-month newly licensed driver phase. During both phases several driving restrictions apply, most notably a requirement for supervision by an experienced driver at all times in the learner phase and a night driving restriction from midnight to 5 a.m. in the newly licensed driver phase.

The TIRF report showed that crashes involving 16-year-old drivers dropped dramatically after the program came into effect. Overall, crashes decreased by 37 per cent during the first three years of the program. TIRF estimates there were at least 560 fewer 16-year-old drivers involved in crashes as a result of the program.

The analysis also showed that there were at least 150 fewer 16-yearold drivers involved in crashes resulting in injury or death. The crash rate among all novice drivers, regardless of age, dropped by 19.4 per cent.

"Our previous studies in Nova Scotia showed that parents over-whelmingly support the graduated licensing program; even teens are surprisingly supportive," says Daniel R. Mayhew, TIRF Senior Vice President and principal investigator of the study. "In our previous research, we also found remarkably high levels of compliance with the program. But what we needed to know was whether the program was saving lives and reducing injuries. Our recent investigation provides conclusive evidence that the program is effective."

TIRF found that the Nova Scotia program was more effective in

Continued on page 4...

# **Statistics and Reality**

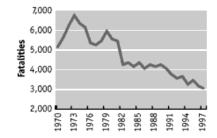
Por the first year since records have been kept, motor vehicle fatalities in Canada have dropped below the 3,000 mark. When CSC formed in 1968, there were 5,318 traffic deaths. Fatalities peaked in 1973 at 6,706. Transport Canada reported 2,927 deaths in 1998.

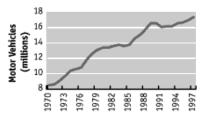
While this is a significant achievement, traffic collisions continue to cause a huge drain on health care resources. At a time when Canadians are facing tough choices about health care funding, we are spending up to \$25 billion annually in emergency care, rehabilitation and other costs resulting from crashes that were largely preventable.

More than 600,000 traffic collisions were reported in 1997, resulting in over 200,000 injuries and 3,000 deaths. That means there's a traffic collision every minute in Canada; an injury every three minutes; and a death every three hours.

Statistics, however, can never relay the untold emotional and physical suffering for individual Canadians.

Road Safety Vision 2001 is a national effort supported by all levels





of government and private sector stakeholders including the Canada Safety Council. Its initiatives aim to:

- raise public awareness of road safety issues;
- improve communication, cooperation and collaboration among road safety agencies;
- toughen enforcement measures; and
- improve national road safety data collection. @

For details visit Transport Canada's Road Safety Web site (www.tc.gc.ca/roadsafety).

# **Preventing Bumps in the Dark**

righttime driving represents only about a quarter of total driving. Yet, according to the 1998 Canadian Motor Vehicle Traffic Collision Statistics, it accounts for over 40 per cent of traffic fatalities.

During the Gulf War, thermalimaging technology helped military forces successfully carry out their missions in the dark of night. Cadillac will be the first automaker to bring the safety benefits of this technology to drivers, with the introduction of NightVision on the 2000 DeVille.

During nighttime driving, certain situations such as a person changing a tire on the side of the road, or an animal in the roadway, may not be visible with the naked eye until it's too late. NightVision enhances the driver's ability to detect potentially dangerous situations beyond the range of the headlamps.

While NightVision is not meant to replace a driver's view out of the

windshield, it will give drivers additional visual information beyond what their eyes are capable of seeing. Depending on conditions, NightVision allows drivers to see down the road up to three to five times farther ahead than low-beam headlamps. The feature can also help drivers see beyond the headlamp glare from oncoming vehicles.

Cadillac's NightVision system uses thermal imaging, or infrared, technology. The thermal imaging device creates pictures based on heat energy emitted by objects in its field of view. Everything emits heat to some degree. But humans, animals and moving vehicles are more visible in the image due to their high thermal contrast with the background.

The virtual image that is produced looks something like a black and white photographic negative — hotter objects appear white and cooler objects appear black.

Graduated Licencing, from page 3

reducing crashes than programs in New Zealand, Ontario and Florida. New Zealand was the first to introduce a graduated driver licensing program in 1987. In 1994, Nova Scotia and Ontario were the first to introduce programs in North America. Currently six provinces and 24 U.S. states have enacted some form of graduated driver licensing.

Statistics released in December by the Canadian Institute for Health Information show that the rate of injuries from traffic collisions in Ontario has dropped markedly in the past five years, notably among males aged 15 to 24. Researchers credited the 35 per cent decrease in that age group to the province's graduated licensing system.

Implementation of graduated licensing systems was a major recommendation emanating from the Canada Safety Council's 1990 symposium on youthful drivers. @

The 33-page report Impact of the graduated driver licensing program in Nova Scotia is available from TIRF (telephone: (613) 238-5235; fax: (613) 238-5292; e-mail: tirf@trafficinjuryresearch.com).

There's a traffic collision every minute in Canada; an injury every three minutes; and a death every three hours.

Because the virtual image is projected by a head-up display (HUD) rather than on a flat screen mounted in the car, drivers can keeps their eyes on the road and hands on the wheel. This image, which is projected near the front edge of the hood, is in the driver's peripheral vision and was designed not to obstruct the view of the road. Drivers can glance at the virtual image without refocusing or removing their eyes from the road.

NightVision powers up when the key is in the "on" position, when the Twilight Sentinel photo cell indicates that it's dark out, and if the headlamps are on. Using a switch in the instrument panel, drivers can turn the system on and off, or adjust intensity and vertical position of the image. @

Source: General Motors of Canada Limited. Visit www.cadillac.com (DeVille) for a demonstration of NightVision.

# Public Platform

# **Cyber-safety**

Over half of all Canadians now have access to the Internet. As of March 30, 1999, all public schools and libraries in Canada were connected to the Internet. Canada is the first nation in the world to accomplish this.

Gathering information (often for school), playing games, participating in chat rooms and posting to online message boards are popular activities for young Web surfers.

The Internet has brought many benefits, but it has also raised some safety concerns such as the potential for crime and predators. To make sure children have a safe and rewarding experience on the Web, parents and educators must understand where they go, what they do and the safety issues they may face.

The Canada Safety Council recommends that children who use the Internet follow these rules.

## **Online Safety Rules**

- I will not give out any personal information online without my parents' permission. This includes my name, phone number, address, e-mail, location of my school, my parents' work address/ telephone numbers and credit card numbers, and my picture. This goes for anywhere on the Internet, including e-mail, chat rooms, newsgroups even Web sites that promise me free stuff or prizes, or on Web pages that I make myself.
- When using the Internet, I will always use a pretend name or nickname that doesn't reveal whether I'm a boy or a girl. When creating a password, I will make one up that is hard to guess but easy for me to remember. To avoid having it stolen, I will never reveal it to anyone (except my parents) not even my best friend.
- I will not respond to any message that makes me uncomfortable. I will show an adult right away.
- I will arrange to meet a friend I have made on the Internet ONLY if one of my parents has been informed and will be present.

- I will not send an insulting or rude message to anyone online. This is called "flaming" and it is not good Netiquette.
- I will not disable any filtering software my parents have put on the computer.
- I will not open e-mail, files, links, pictures or games from people that I don't know or trust. I will always ask an adult first.
- I will not take words, pictures or sounds from someone else's Web site without their permission.
- I will not believe everything I read on the Internet. I will always check the source of the information and confirm it with my teacher, parent or librarian.

Source: Media Awareness Network To find out more, visit Safe Passage (www.webawareness.org).

## Kwiz Korner

# Heat Stress and Hypothermia: True or false?

The body must maintain its temperature in a safe range around 37 C. If the body temperature that remains too high or low can be very dangerous.

- 1. Hypothermia means death from exposure to extreme cold.
- 2. Even if a person suffering heat stroke is having chills, treat by placing in a cool bath.
- 3. Dehydration contributes to both hypothermia and heat stress. Drinking any type of fluid will help prevent dehydration.
- 4. Most body heat is lost through the head.
- 5. Adding a small amount of salt to your drinking water will help prevent dehydration.

Answers on page 6.

## **Kids Create Safety Posters**

In November, the Canada Safety Council asked pupils in grades 1 to 3 to create and illustrate some community safety rules for Elmer the Safety Elephant. Elmer's basic rules relate to traffic safety. The Community Safety poster contest, sponsored by the Liberty Mutual Group, asked children to address safety concerns outside of the road environment: at school, in the home, on the playground, on the Internet and in the neighborhood. @



First prize in the November contest went to Jessica Brett (Grade 1, River Heights Public School, Dorchester, Ontario). Injuries related to playground equipment are the most common for children aged 5 to 9.

# Did you know?

Three recently released U.S. studies show a disproportionate number of unlicenced drivers are involved in fatal crashes. A study of fatal crashes involving red-light running found that of the drivers who ran red lights, 23 per cent drove with expired, revoked or suspended licenses. Of 54,935 drivers involved in fatal crashes in 1997, more than 10 per cent had invalid licenses. Another study found that 20 per cent of U.S. traffic-crash fatalities involved at least one driver who was improperly licensed or whose license status was unknown.

Traffic Safety, November/December 1999, National Safety Council

Alberta became the sixth Canadian jurisdiction to outlaw the popular teen practice of riding in the back of a truck, joining British Columbia, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Quebec and the Northwest Territories. A government public opinion poll showed 82 per cent of respondents agreed that riding in the back of a truck should be banned.

The Globe and Mail, November 11, 1999

Although most Canadian parents (91 per cent) consider their home to be childproof, more than half fail to take some of the more basic childproofing precautions. For example, 55 per cent of the parents surveyed do not lock up deadly household cleaning products.

DirectProtect, December 9, 1999

Anti-icing measures before snow falls and ice forms on the roadway, to prevent the bond of frozen precipitation to the road surface, help reduce traffic delays and resources needed to maintain safe road conditions. Liquid sodium chloride, or salt brine, is the most effective chemical for use above -9 C and will work to -6F. Accurate weather and road surface information are critical for the efficient use of anti-icing chemicals.

Salt & Highway Deicing, Fall 1999, Salt Institute (www.saltinstitute.org)

The national homicide rate in Canada dropped in 1998 to its lowest rate in 30 years. There were 555 homicides.

Most were committed by someone known to the victim; only 15 per cent of the killings solved by police involved a stranger. Knives were the most common murder weapon. One killing in seven was drug-related. *Canadian Press. October 8, 1999* 

The province of Quebec is the only jurisdiction other than New York City where drivers are not allowed to turn right on red. But that might change this year. Transport Minister Guy Chevrette is consulting Quebecers on five controversial road safety topics: right turns at red lights, obliging all cyclists to wear helmets, using photo-radar to catch speeders, where in-line skaters should be allowed to travel, and whether to get tougher on drunk drivers.

Montreal Gazette, December 2, 1999

During its first year (1999) Canada's firearms registry refused 578 licences for public safety reasons and revoked another 469 — eight times more than the 59 revoked in the previous five years. Individuals are being identified as threats because of criminal records, prohibition orders or mental instability.

Ottawa Citizen, December 2, 1999

The number of Americans who commit suicide with guns now far surpasses those killed by others with firearms. The U.S. Vital Statistics Report shows that in 1997, guns were used in 17,566 suicides, compared with 13,522 homicides. According to Dr. Kay Redford Jamison of Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, 90 to 95 per cent of people who commit suicide had a diagnosable psychiatric illness.

New York Times, October 17, 1999

A study by the Canadian Institute for Health Information found that five times as many people are admitted to Ontario hospitals with injuries from falls as from traffic collisions. Of an average 180 persons per day admitted to hospital for treatment of injuries, 106 had suffered falls, compared with 23 in motor vehicle crashes. The most likely to be injured were elderly women, in falls.

Canadian Institute for Health Information, December 1, 1999

### Answers to Kwiz (page 5)

- 1. False. Hypothermia occurs when the body can no longer produce more body heat than it is losing. Extreme cold is not necessary; it can happen on a mild winter's day, or a damp day in fall or spring if the temperature is under 10 C. Severe cases can be fatal.
- 2. **True.** If a cool bath is not available, sponge with cool water or rubbing alcohol. Heat stroke happens when the body's cooling system crashes. Sweating stops and the body has no way to get rid of excess heat.
- 3. **False.** Drink plenty of water and fruit juices, but avoid alcohol, and caffeine, because they can lead to dehydration.
- 4. **True.** This makes it important to wear a warm hat in the cold.
- 5. **False.** Salt interferes with the body's ability to adapt to heat stress and may cause problems for people on salt restricted diets. There is an exception: for heat cramps, administer a salt and glucose solution.



*Cyberfriends*, an online safety story for children aged 9 to 12

# On the Job

# **Shop Safety Basics**

Inter is a busy time in many farm workshops. Good shop management prevents injuries and improves the efficiency of repair operations. This article from the Farm Safety Association applies to workshops in industry and at home, as people prepare for spring projects.

## Keep it clean

Many injuries result from poor house-keeping in the shop. Trips, slips and falls account for most of these mishaps.

Scrap material and wrappings, loose parts, scattered tools and equipment, or oil spills can cause injury. Debris should be swept up and disposed of in designated areas.

Parts should be kept on work benches. Tools should be placed where they cannot fall and cause damage or injury. Cover oil spills with absorbent material and clean them up.

Good housekeeping helps prevent injuries and increases workshop efficiency.

### Lighting, heating and ventilation

Enough windows and overhead lights are required for a good level of overall illumination. Additional lighting should be available over benches and stationary tools.

Supplemental heating is required for winter workshop operations. The heating unit should be located to provide adequate, even distribution of heat. Ceiling units leave the working area clear.

Adequate systems are needed to vent smoke, fumes and exhaust gases. Open windows and doors may provide enough ventilation in the summer. Special systems may be needed to remove exhaust fumes and other gases during the cold weather months.

Flexible pipe or tubing can be used to vent exhaust gases. Properly designed ventilation systems are required in welding and battery areas to remove smoke and fumes. A booth with separate venting is recommended for paint fumes.

### Wiring check

- All wiring must conform to the applicable provincial Electrical Safety Code. Following are general, basic standards.
- Wiring must be of adequate capacity to handle lighting, heating and power tool requirements.
- The shop should have a sufficient number of conveniently located outlets.
- Conductors, plugs and receptacles should all be three-wire grounded to prevent shock with power tools.
- Sufficient power should be available for welders and motors used in the workshop.

Ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI's) are recommended for damp areas and wash bays. Explosion-proof wiring, motors and fixtures are required where flammable gases, fumes, or vapours may be encountered.

## **Shop management summary**

Strict adherence to the following procedures will help prevent injuries and increase efficiency in the shop.

- Keep all tools and service equipment in good condition.
- Always use the appropriate personal protective equipment for operations such as welding and grinding.
- Keep floors and benches clean to reduce fire and tripping hazards.
- Clean the area completely after a job is finished.
- Empty trash containers regularly.
- Lighting, wiring, heating, and ventilation systems should be well maintained.
- Do not allow unauthorized use of tools, service equipment and supplies.
- Don't allow anyone to use tools or service equipment without proper instruction.
- Keep guards and safety devices on power tools in place and functional.
- Use tools and service equipment only for their designed purposes.
- Service fire extinguishers regularly and keep the first aid kit fully stocked. @

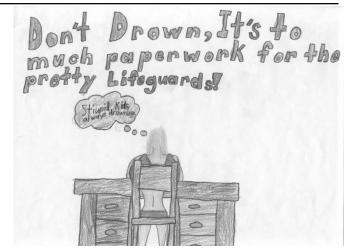
Farm Safety Association

## **Cyberfriends**

The Canada Safety Council's Web site offers an online safety story for children aged 9 to 12, sponsored by Liberty Mutual. The story reinforces some of the online safety rules listed on page 5.

Cyberfriends ends with a downloadable game from the Media Awareness Network, Cybersense and Nonsense. The game helps children learn to distinguish between biased, prejudicial information and factual, objective information, and to detect bias and harmful stereotyping in online content. Players are introduced to an accepted online code of conduct ("netiquette"), and to the concept that information isn't necessarily true, just because it's on the Internet. @

Visit Cyberfriends at www.safety-council.org



National Summer Safety Week, May 1-7, 1999, grades 3 to 6: CSC staff chose this entry to the Infomarine poster contest as the most memorable of the year.