

SMART DRIVING CARS

<http://smartdrivingcar.com/BadNews-100716>

Friday, October 7, 2016

**The
New York
Times**

An Alarming 10% Rise in Traffic Deaths in the First Half of 2016

D. Victor, Oct. 5, "Traffic deaths in the United States rose 10.4 percent in the first half of this year compared with the same period in 2015, maintaining a steady climb...."

The [numbers were released on Wednesday](#) by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which noted that Americans drove about 50.5 billion more miles in the first six months of 2016 than in the first half of 2015, an increase of 3.3 percent....Officials have not identified a specific cause for the most recent increase... " [Read more](#) *Hmmm...worst kept secret...Texting!!! It is an epidemic and the way to address it begins with **Automated Collision Avoidance Systems (ACAS)**...what is on the shelf today (if it only really worked), and a necessary foundation for Self-driving (which improves Quality-of-Life for some but increases VMT) and Driverless (which improves Quality-of-Life for all and decreases VMT). Alain*

NHTSA

Early Estimate of Motor Vehicle Traffic: Fatalities for the First Half (Jan-Jun) of 2016

DoT HS 812 332, Oct 5, "...The second quarter of 2016 represents the seventh consecutive quarter with increases in fatalities as compared to the corresponding quarters in the previous years...."

The fatality rate for the first half of 2016 increased to 1.12 fatalities per 100 million VMT, up from 1.05 fatalities per 100 million VMT in the first half of 2015..[Read more](#) *Hmmm...Yipes, see above. :-/ Alain*

NHTSA

U.S. DOT, National Safety Council launch 'Road to Zero' Coalition to end roadway fatalities

Washington, Oct 5, "... DoT has committed **\$1 million a year** for the next three years to provide grants to organizations working on lifesaving programs."*Hmmm...there must be some zeros missing or the units are wrong. They must mean **per hour** (or at worse **per day**). Roadway*

crashes are *are a [Trillion dollar per year problem](#) growing at what may well be a [10% rate](#). The best business minds in the world, not even The Donald, could take \$1M and have any hope of eliminating the rate of increase, let alone drive the base of this problem to zero.* "... "The "4Es" – Education, Engineering, Enforcement and Emergency Medical Services provide a reliable roadmap for driving down fatalities." *Really???* *A lot of excellent "Es" have been expended on drunk driving over the last 30 years. We've made headway, but still are nowhere near Zero on that one.* "...With the rapid introduction of automated vehicles and advanced technologies, the Department believes it is now increasingly likely that the vision of zero road deaths and serious injuries can be achieved in the next 30 years. [Read more](#) *Hmmm...OK...I see...AVs are the answer, but how much is DoT/NHTSA investing? I didn't see a number. I also note that DoT believes "...it is now **increasingly likely**" rather than "likely". Is that like going from "no hope" to "a hope and a prayer"? Seriously, it is wonderful that DoT has adopted the 'Road to Zero' vision and that it is not saying that we'll get there using v2v (although v2v will help in the last stages), but if it took, say, the Federal contribution to the [\\$5.6B Purple Line](#) and applied to AVs then one might begin to take this announcement seriously. (Note: the Purple line is scheduled to begin operation in 2022 just in time to be rendered obsolete by AVs, particularly if the Feds don't help. Not to belabor this, but my mechanic said: to repair my car would cost \$500; however, if I watch the cost will be \$750. and if I help, then \$2,000.)* Alain



[Train Was Traveling at Twice the Speed Limit Just Before Hoboken Crash](#)

E. Fitzsimmons, Oct 6, "A New Jersey Transit train that crashed in Hoboken last week accelerated to about 21 miles per hour just before it smashed into the terminal, killing a woman and injuring more than 100 other people, federal investigators said on Thursday.

In the minute before the crash, the train had been moving toward the platform at just eight miles per hour, the National Transportation Safety Board said. The engineer had blown the train's horn and activated the bell that signals its approach before suddenly accelerating, braking only at the last second before the train plowed through a bumper and onto the platform.

The federal agency is still investigating the accident and has not determined a cause, officials said...."What it doesn't answer is: If there were those movements by the operator of the throttle, were they accidental or intentional?" he said. Mr. Hall praised the railroad's decision to place a conductor next to the train's engineer to serve as a backup. ..." [Read more](#) *Hmmm...Seems as if the NTSB and NJT are setting it up to blame the train's engineer as the NTSB did in the [Philadelphia Amtrak derailment](#) earlier this year. As with the Amtrak crash, the engineer should not be thrown "under the bus". Rather, it should be NJT's Board of Directors for [seeking a waiver to avoid installing Positive Train Control](#) on NJ Transit trains. Now, instead of finally championing automated technology to take human error out of the loop, they are [adding another human](#) in the loop. NJT is absolutely hopeless! :-/ Alain*



[A Revolution That Didn't Happen: Personal Rapid Transit](#)

J. Palca, Oct 3, "This is a story about a revolution that never happened. In 1975, a novel transportation system called Personal Rapid Transit, or PRT for short, started operating in Morgantown, W.Va. It was supposed to usher in a new age of public transit.

It didn't. But West Virginia University, which operates the PRT system, remains committed to it — and is spending more than \$100 million to refurbish the aging system. ..."If you look at it, there isn't a system in the world that can do what this system can do," he says.

But elsewhere, PRT hasn't caught on. There are a multitude of probable reasons..." [Read more](#)
Hmmm...The biggest reason is that it requires a duplicative guideway/roadway. The beauty of Driverless Vehicles is that they'll deliver PRT's mobility using our existing road infrastructure. Since our existing roads can accommodate a range of vehicle sizes, both ride sharing and goods movement can be readily accommodated. Alain



[Why Nonstop Travel In Personal Pods Has Yet To Take Off](#)

J. Palca, Oct 3, "To find out more about whatever happened to PRT, I recently traveled to Minneapolis to meet Mike Lester, CEO of Taxi 2000, a company that designs PRT systems....[Read more](#) *Hmmm...The article should have mentioned [Dr. J. Edward Anderson's pivotal role Taxi2000](#) (and who mentored me in automated transit starting in 1971 :-)* Alain

QUARTZ

[Uber's self-driving cars are already getting into scrapes on the streets of Pittsburgh](#)

Oct 4, A. Griswold, Oct 4, " Uber driver Nathan Stachelek was pulled off to the side of the road when he saw the self-driving car turn the wrong way....Stachelek isn't the only Pittsburgher to spy one of Uber's self-driving cars in an awkward spot...."I couldn't see any of the damage," says Jason, the Uber driver, who requested Quartz withhold his last name because he feared being deactivated by the company. But "there's no reason for a self-driving Uber car to be pulled over in the way that it was, with another car right behind it with its flashers on." ..." [Read more](#)
Hmmm...It isn't easy being first! (By the way kudos to Google for doing such a fantastic job in introducing GoogleCars on public streets over the past 3+ years.) And why are conventional Uber drivers reporting these anomalies? Alain

JALOPNIK

[Are Uber's Self-Driving Cars Driving Like Asshats Around Pittsburgh?](#)

D. Tracy, Oct 5, "Uber's representative did acknowledge the accident on the 24th, however, but said a driver in another car (perhaps on his or her cell phone) had rear-ended the Fusion while the latter was at a stop. So this was human error..Uber has confirmed that the vehicle from the video above was not in self-driving mode during the one-way incident..." [Read more](#)

*Hmmm...First, "GlassHoles" deflate Google Glasses, will "AssHats" tarnish Driverless cars?
Alain*



[A Google self-driving car was involved in crash in Mt. View today](#)

L. Kolodny, Sept 23, "...Google issued the following statement with details about the crash: "A Google vehicle was traveling northbound on Phyllis Ave. in Mountain View when a car heading westbound on El Camino Real ran a red light and collided with the right side of our vehicle. Our light was green for at least six seconds before our car entered the intersection. Thousands of crashes happen everyday on U.S. roads, and red-light running is the leading cause of urban crashes in the U.S. Human error plays a role in 94% of these crashes, **which is why we're developing fully self-driving technology to make our roads safer.**"..." [Read more](#) *Hmmm...Yup!*
Alain



[Open Sourcing 223GB of Driving Data](#)

O. Cameron, Oct 5, "A necessity in building an open source self-driving car is data. Lots and lots of data. We recently open sourced 40GB of driving data to assist the participants of the [Udacity Self-Driving Car Challenge #2](#), but now we're going much bigger with a 183GB release. This data is free for anyone to use, anywhere in the world. What's Included..." [Read more](#) *Hmmm...Fantastic! Link to Challenge #2.* *Alain*



[New California law allows test of autonomous shuttle with no driver](#)

Sept. 29, "A bill signed into law on Thursday by California Governor Jerry Brown allows a self-driving vehicle with no operator inside to test on a public road, a key step enabling a private business park outside San Francisco to test driverless shuttles.

Self-driving cars are already allowed to test on California public roads ... But under current state regulations, a person must be in the driver's seat for monitoring, and the car must have brakes and a steering wheel. The bill introduced by Democratic Assemblywoman Susan Bonilla allows testing in Contra Costa County northeast of San Francisco of the first full-autonomous vehicle without a steering wheel, brakes, accelerator or operator.

A project at the Bishop Ranch office park in the city of San Ramon to deploy driverless shuttles from French company Easymile had been on hold pending passage of the bill. Easymile already operates the shuttles in Europe..." [Read more](#) *Hmmm...Yup! The other "road" to driverless.*
Alain



[FDOT Announces Partnership with Florida Polytechnic University](#)

[to Develop SunTrax Test Facility](#)

Press release, Sept. 2016, "Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Secretary Jim Boxold today announced a long-term partnership between FDOT and Florida Polytechnic University to construct the new, state-of-the-art transportation technology testing facility, SunTrax. The creation of this facility will establish Florida as a transportation technology leader and create a high-tech hub for the research, development and testing of emerging transportation technologies related to tolling, intelligent transportation systems (ITS) and automated and connected vehicles..." [Read more](#) *Hmmm...Congratulations Florida! Nothing much positive happening in New Jersey. Alain*



[81 FR 61941 - FEDERAL MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY STANDARDS; FEDERAL MOTOR CARRIER SAFETY REGULATIONS; PARTS AND ACCESSORIES NECESSARY FOR SAFE OPERATION; SPEED LIMITING DEVICES](#)

Fed. Register v81, 1173, Sept 7, "...Specifically, NHTSA is proposing to establish a new Federal motor vehicle safety standard (FMVSS) requiring that each new multipurpose passenger vehicle, truck, bus and school bus with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of more than 11,793.4 kilograms (26,000 pounds) be equipped with a speed limiting device. ..." [Read more](#) *Hmmm... Click & read comments by R.W. Peterson, Prof of Law, Santa Clara U. Alain*

Some other thoughts that deserve your attention



[Here's who's cheering and jeering N.J. road deal with 23-cent gas tax hike](#)

S. Marcus, Oct 3, "[A tax deal announced Friday](#) to replenish the Transportation Trust Fund was cheered by many for potentially bringing an end to a months-long construction shutdown and reliable funding to the state's transportation network.

But with a mix of tax cuts and hikes, not everyone is pleased with the proposal, the result of negotiations..."

"[Read more](#) Hmmm...How convenient!..Only in New Jersey; instead of simply spending State revenue on what is most needed, let's instead require that transportation must obtain its public funds from a dedicated source (fuel tax) and the "negotiations" require that any increase in that source, must be more than offset by decreases in other means of taxation. Fair enough, to get revenue that will benefits everyone, tax everyone roughly according to how much they'll benefit... Tax fuel consumption. Since "everyone" drives in New Jersey, the costs and benefits are spread fairly evenly and roughly proportional to fuel consumption. However, the "negotiated need" to more than offset the gross increase (so that a net tax decrease can be

touted), lets cut taxes that tend to apply disproportionately more on the wealthy (for example the death tax). Truly Regressive (aka Trumpian) ! Alain

On the More Technical Side

<http://orfe.princeton.edu/~alaink/SmartDrivingCars/Papers/>

Jobs

https://nrel.wd5.myworkdayjobs.com/en-US/NREL/job/CO---Golden/Transportation-Behavior-Analyst_R1580

https://nrel.wd5.myworkdayjobs.com/en-US/NREL/job/CO---Golden/Transportation-Data-Project-Leader_R1582

https://nrel.wd5.myworkdayjobs.com/en-US/NREL/job/CO---Golden/Postdoctoral-Researcher-Transportation-Data-and-Analysis_R1574