

## FATAL FATIGUE NEWSLETTER

### Summer/Fall 2008

Well it's hard to believe that its summer all ready, which also means fall, is around the corner. This month marks the sixth year of my husband Daryl's fatal meeting with a driver who fell asleep at the wheel. How tragic that we still continue to see many senseless deaths from drivers who are drowsy or asleep at the wheel. We see it on the news, in the newspaper and hear it all to often on the radio. Won't you contact your local representative and let them know you want more public education on the dangers of drowsy driving? Let them know you want our roads safer by creating accountability through a "sleeping-driver homicide" amendment to Washington State's Vehicular Homicide Statute. Go to: [http://www.leg.wa.gov/legislature!](http://www.leg.wa.gov/legislature) You can also write your senators and congressman to ask for support of funding for sleep activities. You can do this through NSF's Web site at [www.sleepfoundation.org/advocacy](http://www.sleepfoundation.org/advocacy).

This year 2008, marked the beginning of a yearlong campaign to turn the public awareness generated by National Sleep Awareness into action. It was The National Sleep Foundation's first-ever *Drowsy Driving Prevention Week*, which raised public awareness of this largely, unrecognized major cause of highway deaths and injuries.



This fall it will be time to turn our clocks back again, this brings on a big change in our routines and sleep habits, and our children are heading back to school. Please take the needed time to adjust! Sleep is not merely a "time out" from our busy routines; it is essential for good health, mental and emotional functioning and safety. While many Americans enjoy the benefits of sufficient sleep, as many as 47 million adults may be putting themselves at risk for injury, health and behavior problems because they aren't meeting their minimum sleep need in order to be fully alert the next day. (2002 *Sleep in America* poll).

#### Sleep Facts & STATS

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration conservatively estimates that drowsy drivers cause 100,000 police-reported crashes each year. (That is about 1.5% of all crashes.) These crashes result in more than 1,500 fatalities and 71,000 injuries and result in an estimated \$12.5 billion in diminished productivity and property loss (Knipling and Wang, 1996).

It's a basic necessity of life, as important to our health and well being as air, food and water. When we sleep well, we wake up feeling refreshed, alert and ready to face daily challenges. When we don't, every part of our lives can suffer. Our jobs, relationships, productivity, health and safety (and that of those around us) are all put at risk. And lack of sleep due to sleep loss or sleep disorders is taking a serious toll.

For additional information on how to be a more alert driver visit: [DrowsyDriving.Org](http://DrowsyDriving.Org)!

### What is Drowsy Driving?

Sleepiness and driving is a dangerous combination. Most people are aware of the dangers of drinking and driving but don't realize that drowsy driving can be *just as fatal*. Like alcohol, sleepiness slows reaction time, decreases awareness, impairs judgment and increases your risk of crashing.

We hope through our seasonal newsletters to educate people and exchange information on raising awareness as to the issues of drowsy driving. For further information, please read our Mission Statement on our Web site. Please show support by e-mailing us or, if you know of someone who would like to be added to our newsletter list, please let us know. Our e-mail address is: **[FatalFatigue@hotmail.com](mailto:FatalFatigue@hotmail.com)**.

Remember the National Sleep Foundation ("NSF"), which is an excellent organization, dedicated to lowering the incidence of drowsy driving crashes by raising awareness! To join this life-saving campaign, please go to their Web site and make a tax-deductible contribution: <http://www.sleepfoundation.org/donate>. Contributors of \$15 or more receive NSF's free "Sleepy? Pull Over!" bumper sticker and a year's subscription to NSF's quarterly newsletter **Sleepmatters**.

NSF also offers a free, bi-weekly e-mail newsletter with information on sleep and new developments in research. Sign up at: [www.sleepfoundation.org/signup.html](http://www.sleepfoundation.org/signup.html).

Finally, if you are interested in helping NSF prevent drowsy driving, please visit [www.drowsydriving.org](http://www.drowsydriving.org) and contact John Rancourt in the Government Affairs Department at (202) 347-3471, ext. 203 or [jrancourt@sleepfoundation.org](mailto:jrancourt@sleepfoundation.org).

***Look for our next seasonal newsletter. God bless you good!***