

## Let's Be Very Careful Out There

by John Farrow

Just after the start of any race, the last thing any runner wants to hear is the unmistakable squeal of tires trying to find a grip on the pavement. A recent triathlon began with the crunch of metal on metal, as a delivery truck plowed into the front of the bike pack. Fortunately, no one was seriously injured, and the race continued without further incident.

But it does make you stop to reflect on the predicament of runners with respect to traffic. None of us ever won a confrontation with a vehicle, nor will we ever. No wonder race organizers have us sign those long waivers, some of which may include your next born (have you ever tried to read one?).

Of course, the pickup truck with the gun rack and bumper sticker reading "Guns Don't Kill People, I Do!" may initially appear intimidating. When you think about it, it's really just nature's way of saying to the rest of us, "Back Off!" Sort of like rattles on a rattlesnake, or stripes on a skunk.

New Mexico also has a nationally-recognized problem of drinking and driving, as there seems to be a segment of the population that claims a God-given right to sip a brew in the car on the way home from work. Their attitude is you'll take my beer when you pry my cold, dead finger off the trigger of my gun! About the only way to reduce the chances of someone like that having an accident is for them to be too messed-up to find their keys.

What to do? For one thing, consider some of the following responses to questions asked on the written portion of the driver's license exam, and you'll get an idea of the extent of the problem we're up against.

**Q:** Describe an appropriate way of dealing with heavy traffic problems?

**A:** Carry a heavy weapon.

**Q:** Do you yield when a blind pedestrian is crossing the road against the light?

**A:** What for? He can't see my license plate.

**Q:** When are you required to use seat belts?

**A:** Seat belts are required?

**Q:** How can you safely park on a hill?

**A:** Lie down in the back seat so nobody can see you.

**Q:** When parking, how close should you be to the curb?

**A:** I like to be right up against my ol' lady.

**Q:** When is it safe to make a left turn?

**A:** After the light turns red. That way traffic stops coming at you after a while.

**Q:** What does a yellow light indicate?

**A:** You have to speed up to get through the intersection.

**Q:** Describe one important safety tip when backing.

**A:** Always use a condom.

**Q:** How would your life change if you could not drive legally?

**A:** I would be forced to drive illegally.

*ARR News, August 1997*

Albuquerque Road Runners Club