

## COMMUNITY CORNER

## Let's prevent drunken, drugged driving in December, year round

By Col. Kevin Brown  
GARRISON COMMANDER

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, every 30 minutes, nearly 50 times a day, someone in America dies in an alcohol-related crash. In 2003, more than 17,000 people died in alcohol-related highway crashes. Hundreds of thousands more were injured.

Since 1981, the president has proclaimed December as National Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month. At Fort Riley, I'd like us to make that every month. Year round, units have designated driver programs; Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation offers the Riley Ride, which provides a safe way to and from Aggieville on Friday and Saturday nights; and we all have friends and family and fellow Soldiers to look out for and those who can look out for us.

This year's 3D Prevention Month theme is "This holiday season if you catch a buzz, catch a ride." Many of us go out with family and friends over the holidays. Even if going out is just to the neighbor's house or maybe to your sister's home for a get-together, we still need to think about how we're going to



Col. Kevin Brown

get home after a few drinks. The period between Thanksgiving and New Year's is one of the deadliest times to be on the roads. Planning ahead can help make finding a safe ride home easier. Don't drive to Aggieville and then try to decide who's had the least to drink after you've been to several bars and are ready to head home. Find the nearest Riley Ride stop to your home on post and take the bus. You can pick up tickets ahead of time at Information, Ticketing and Registration, Building 6918 on Custer Hill next to Burger King. After a spiked egg nog or two, don't take chances with your safety and that of others. Before you choose to drink, choose to get home alive and designate a driver.

On the flip side of the coin, if you are hosting a party, there are things you can do as a host or hostess to help prevent drunk driving. The Sociology Department at the State University of New York maintains a Web site full of information on alcohol including facts

on health issues and drunken driving prevention information. Here are their suggestions for playing the role of responsible host:

- Create a setting conducive to easy, comfortable socializing; soft, gentle music; low levels of noise; comfortable seating. This encourages conversation and social interaction rather than heavy drinking.
- Serve food before beginning to serve drinks. This de-emphasizes the importance of alcohol and also sends the message that intoxication is not desirable.

• Have a responsible bartender. If you plan to ask a friend or relative to act as bartender, make sure that person is not a drink pusher who encourages excessive consumption.

- Don't have an "open bar." A responsible person needs to supervise consumption to ensure that no one drinks too much. You have both a moral and a legal responsibility to make

sure that none of your guests drink too much.

- Pace the drinks. Serve drinks at regular reasonable intervals.
- A drink-an-hour schedule is a good guide.
- Push snacks. Make sure that people are eating.
- Be sure to offer a diversity of attractive non-alcohol drinks. (For numerous non-alcohol drink recipes, see [www.idrink.com](http://www.idrink.com)).

• Respect anyone's choice not to drink. Remember that about one-third of American adults choose not to drink and that a guest's reason for not drinking is the business of the guest only, not of the host. Never put anyone on the defense for not drinking.

- End your gathering properly. Decide when you want the party to end and stop serving drinks well before that time. Then begin serving coffee along with substantial snacks. This provides essential non-drinking time before your guests leave.
- Protect others and yourself by never driving if you think, or anyone else thinks, that you might have had too

much to drink. It's always best to use a designated driver.

(source: <http://www2.potsdam.edu/hanondji/DrinkingAndDriving.html>)

The holiday season should be a merry one. While I encourage everyone to spend time with their family and friends, let's do it safely. Impaired driving has serious consequences. The trauma and financial costs of a crash or an arrest for driving while impaired can be significant and not the way you want to spend your holiday season.

So remember, this holiday season if you catch a buzz, catch a ride. Designate a sober driver before all holiday season and New Year's festivities. For more information on 3D Prevention Month, call the staff of the Army Substance Abuse Program at Army Community Service at 785-239-9435. Also, keep an eye out for information on ASAP training events and displays at the Commissary and Irwin Army Community Hospital.

If you would like to comment on this column or suggest a topic for Community Corner, send an e-mail to [rile.post.news-paper@conus.army.mil](mailto:rile.post.news-paper@conus.army.mil).

## IN BRIEF

**Child, Youth and School Services is hosting college preparation seminars** to help parents and youth deal with school transitions successfully. All classes are held in the CYSS conference room in Building 6620 at 7 p.m., unless otherwise noted, and are free. Call 785-239-9539 for more information.

Jan. 10 – Financial Aid  
Jan. 21 – College Choices  
Feb. 18 – Prepare Yourself Financially for Leaving Home (ACS Annex)

**Army Community Service and K-State Research and Extension are offering special marital workshops** at Riley's Conference Center designed for the recently redeployed Soldiers of the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team. Classes also are open to all Soldiers and Family members experiencing difficulty.

Day 1 – Monday, Jan. 11  
Finance and Marriage – 9 a.m. to noon  
Infidelity and Marriage – 1 to 4:30 p.m.  
Day 2 – Tuesday, Jan. 12  
Trauma and Marriage – 9 a.m. to noon

Blended Families and Marriage – 1 to 4:30 p.m.  
**Children's interactive workshops will be offered** at the same time and will provide 3 to 5 year olds with tools to help them effectively and successfully learn more about their roles and responsibilities within their Army Family. Sessions will include learning games, educational activities and simple crafts that will touch on topics of problem-solving, emotions and communication. Call 785-239-9435 to register.

**Join the Employment Readiness Program for a workshop** from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Jan. 14 at Army Community Service. Attendees will learn how to write a stand-out resume and the skills to crack the government's Resumix system. Space is limited. To register, contact 785-239-9435 or [rile.dmwrcs@conus.army.mil](mailto:rile.dmwrcs@conus.army.mil).

**Normandy Chapel will host a Bible study group at 6:30 p.m. Wednesdays.** Come explore the word of God in a relaxed and friendly environment. Soldiers and Families are welcome. Call 785-239-3359 for more information.

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"If there's not six feet of snow on the ground, it's not Christmas," he said. So during his Christmas in Iraq, Little was hoping for snow.

And he wasn't disappointed. "I looked way up and I saw snowflakes falling. And I was told it was the first time it snowed on Christmas in Iraq in as long as anyone could remember," Little said.

After sharing his favorite holiday tradition, Sgt. 1st Class Randy Hagin, was "called away on business" and an understudy was brought in to play his timpani.

The understudy was 1st Inf. Div. Command Sgt. Maj. Jim Champagne. Champagne played along with the band to a non-traditional holiday song: the theme from "2001 A Space Odyssey."

Another special guest featured at the holiday band concert was 1st Inf. Div. and Fort Riley Commanding General Maj. Gen. Vincent K. Brooks.

Wearing a camouflage Santa hat,

Brooks joined the band for their performance of "Twas the Night Before Christmas."

Brooks sat in a rocking chair at the side of the stage and read the famous Christmas story to the children gathered at his feet.

The 1st Inf. Div. Band Holiday Concert is an annual event at Fort Riley.

Maj. Gen. Vincent Brooks, 1st Infantry Division and Fort Riley Commanding General, reads children "Twas the Night Before Christmas" during the 1st Inf. Div. Band's holiday concert on Dec. 1 at 7 p.m. at Kansas State University's McCain Auditorium.

Ashley Strehle  
POST

