

Trabing

# Mostly about People

By Wally Trabing



## What A Head-On Did To One Man

Charlie Jensen, 42, had driven a car 26 years without a serious accident.

He is a pressman, employed by The Sentinel. We are used to names of crash victims rolling off the press every day, every day, every day.

Other people!

But Charlie, who lives at 101 Germaine avenue with his wife and three children, became one of those victims himself last January 17 and it did terrible things to his body and he hasn't worked since.

He was a passenger in a car which was smashed head-on by another car in Moss Landing.

Each car, says the California Highway Patrol, was coming toward the other at 55 to 60 miles per hour.

This crash maimed and killed other people, but let's concentrate on Charlie, a quiet, steady man who never expected this to happen to him.

★ ★ ★

Mercifully, he thinks, the impact smashed him into unconsciousness from which he never totally emerged for a week and a half.

Every day, every day this happens to people in cars, in each case the grinding power of sudden stoppage crushes the body a little differently. Some must suffer every minute.

Charlie followed the advice of safety experts and was wearing a seatbelt.

But he wore it rather loose and a bit too high on the stomach.

Upon impact the belt ripped

at his stomach like a slashing cable and the doctors removed 15 feet of his lower intestines.

For the rest of his life he must eat small meals several times a day.

He cannot eat green salads, his favorite food, because of the gas the leafy vegetables generate.

Charlie's right leg was broken: the bones separated near the thigh, and for eight long weeks it was held motionless and at a 45-degree angle in the air by a traction with ropes and pulleys.

Five of his ribs were smashed and broken.

★ ★ ★

This horrible crash, which happens day after day—every day, to other people—did a terrible thing to Charlie Jensen's jaw.

It broke it in three places—at each hinge and near the chin.

For six weeks his mouth was wired shut.

Doctors inserted a metal band around the upper and lower gums, drilled pins through the gums and then took steel wire and laced his mouth tightly shut.

This scared Charlie and worried him.

Why doesn't somebody do something about this kind of thing on our highways? —

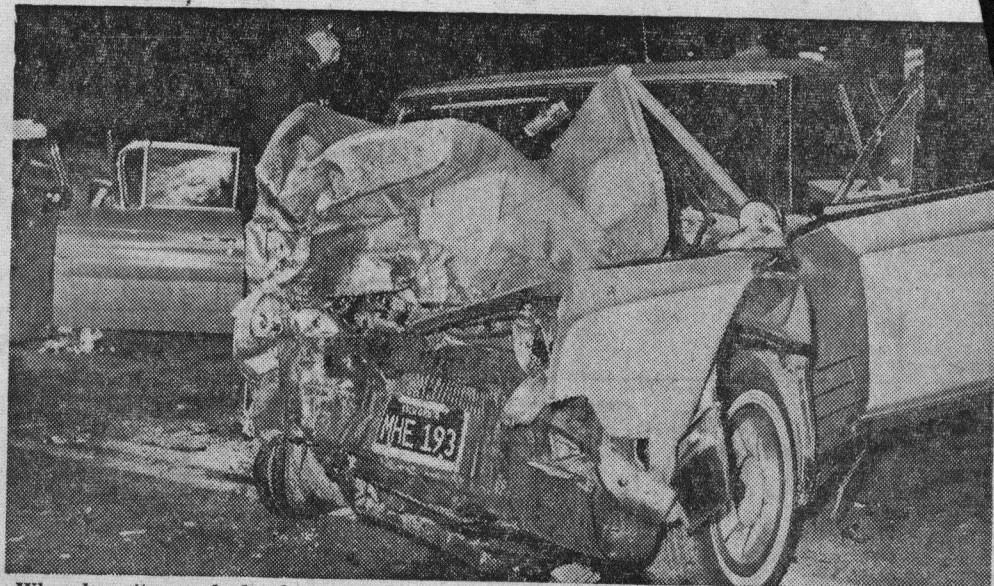
"I had a terrible fear of throwing up and choking to death, and I kept a pair of wire cutters at my night stand to rip out the wires in case this happened," he said.

They fed him liquids through a tube during this ordeal. He could not yawn or lick his lips and, until you can't do this, you don't realize how important it is to your comfort.

After six weeks they let him open his mouth but the heavy jaw braces remained on for 17 weeks. They were removed the other day.

Charlie realizes that the doctors did a wonderful job pushing his face back in shape, but they say his normal bite is probably gone for life.

He can't tear into a steak, but hamburger is just right for him now. Except that Charlie can't open his mouth wide enough to munch hamburger.



somebody, meaning you. Terrible things happened to the people in these two cars.

He also received a minor concussion.

This is all that happened to Charlie Jensen physically.

The other driver had no insurance.

His own did well by him, but there are years of doctor calls ahead.

Charlie is still off the job. It will have been seven months before he can return.

What happened to Charlie Jensen happens day after day after day after day.

To other people.

Somebody better do something about it pretty soon—else what happened to Charlie Jensen will eventually happen to you.

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