Thoughts or ideas for Safety Behind the Wheel? Email Paul Markoff at pmarkoff@forwardair.com

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Behind the Wheel profile: Georgi Vatev and Tatyana Zueva-Vatev

(Georgi Vatev and Tatyana Zueva-Vatev with son Georgi Jr.)

By Paul Markoff Safety Compliance Coordinator

Georgi Vatev came to the United States to achieve the American dream, and thanks to hard work, opportunity and a positive attitude, they have done just that.

Georgi and Tatyana’s native country is Bulgaria, but they now call America their home, holding citizenship in the United States. “After five years of paying taxes, not doing any crimes and being a good resident, the Unites States gives you the opportunity to become a citizen. So, we grabbed that opportunity,” Georgi states.

At times the language barrier presents a challenge for both Georgi and Tatyana, but they have found comfort in the structured nature of American society. “We like that everything is so ordered and regulated, and when you follow the rules, you can make everything you want happen. We like, enjoy and cherish every minute since we’re here,” Georgi proudly states.

Georgi and Tatyana also cherish their roles as parents to their son Georgi Jr. “He is at that age that it’s so much fun being with him, playing, teaching him new things,” Tatyana states. Georgi Jr. speaks both Bulgarian and English, thanks to his parents’ bilingual speaking habits. “It’s really funny when he goes and asks his grandma something new (in English). When she says something wrong, he corrects her,” says Tatyana.

The joys of parenting are treasured by Georgi and Tatyana, but as over-the-road drivers, they also face difficulties as parents. “It is a huge challenge. It was really hard in the beginning,” states Georgi. “There are some sacrifices we have to make for everything we want to do. The good thing is that we have his (Georgi Jr.) grandma and grandpa at home taking care of him.”

Both Tatyana and Georgi understand that working in the transportation industry is a give and take proposition when it comes to one’s personal life. “Good thing about that is the lifestyle that we can provide to our family. The bad part is being far from them for those two weeks or more,” Tatyana states.

Georgi has driven nearly his whole adult life, dating back to his work in Bulgaria, while Tatyana began driving three years ago in America. As the two embark on their one year anniversary with the company, FAF, Inc. wishes the husband and wife team continued success as Americans, drivers and most of all, parents.

FAF, Inc. recognizes drivers

FAF, Inc. would like to recognize drivers who have recently reached or surpassed ten or more years of safety and service with the company. These drivers are:

- Robert Battistoni
- James Blankenship
- Thomas Cummings
- Louis Esteves
- Jane Fleming
- Donald Henry
- Patricia Henry
- William McCarley
- Michael Monahan
- John Nelson
- Juan Rodriguez
- Eva Ruelas
- Juan Ruelas
- Tom Turnmire
- Jose Vazquez
- Jose Villegas

Special thanks for these drivers’ devoted service.
Diabetes and Depression
(Why They Often Show Up Together)

By Catherine Price
From Parade Magazine

Given the responsibilities that come with diabetes - the monitoring, the medications, the constant self-control - it's not surprising that people who have the condition are twice as likely to suffer from depression as those who don't. "It's a 24-hour disease," explains John Anderson, M.D., president-elect of medicine and science at the American Diabetes Association. "Anything that puts that type of increased burden on a person can increase the risk for depression."

But here are two things you might not know: People with depression are 60% more likely to develop type two diabetes, and a recent study from the University of Washington found that those who suffered from both diabetes and depression were twice as likely to develop dementia as people with diabetes alone. The exact causes for these findings are unknown, but experts theorize that inflammation brought on by high levels of stress hormones could lead to insulin resistance, and that damage to tiny blood vessels caused by high blood sugar might also affect the brain. It's enough to make you, well, depressed.

Luckily, there are steps you can take to prevent or ease depression. The first is to recognize its signs: In addition to the obvious (feeling sad or down much of the time), you might feel overwhelmed by daily tasks (including your diabetes care), experience appetite changes, or have unexplained ailments like back pain or headaches.

If you suspect you may have depression, see your health care provider: They can give you a quick screening questionnaire and recommend treatment options, which may include counseling, life-style modifications like exercise, or therapeutic drugs. According to new research, treating both conditions together can result in a better outcome for your blood sugar and mood.

(Initial publication: Parade Magazine by Catherine Price)

Weight Management: Action Plan

A message from The Stay Well Company

Don’t try to lose too much weight at once.

A good starting goal is to lose 5% of your body weight. For someone who weighs 200 pounds, 5% is 10 pounds. This may not seem like a lot. Still, it can make a big difference if you have health problems like diabetes or high blood pressure.

Once you lose those first pounds and get used to making lifestyle changes, you can decide to lose more. It’s much better for your body (and your self-esteem) to lose a few pounds and keep them off than to lose many pounds and gain them back.

Make a commitment to managing your weight. Write down one good thing you will start doing, one bad habit you will stop doing and one thing you are already doing well that you will keep doing.

(Content for this piece was provided by The Stay Well Company, 2000, 1100 Grundy Lane, San Bruno, CA 94066-3030. www.staywell.com; 1-800-333-3032)

Warm Weather Maintenance Reminders

A message from Tom Deporter
Director of Maintenance

Just as we set our clocks ahead, prepping for the upcoming months and cleaning up too! Fresh flowers and spring rain, what a better time for out with the old and in with the new! Seeing things clearly are an important part of our day-to-day lives: checking our lighting systems are priority and most importantly, our most effective way to communicate with our fellow drivers.

Wipers will be working overtime in the upcoming months, let’s change out the blades.

Keep in mind hot summer days will accompany rain showers, so check your cooling system during the hot daytime hours.

Staying ahead of schedule will definitely keep the pep in your step!

Be safe and happy traveling!
E-logging: Required notes for your status

A message from Ken Greene
Log Auditor

Company policy requires that all drivers make notes on their logs for every duty status change. This is especially important for off-duty driving and off-duty statuses. A simple note such as “going home”, “to eat”, “break”, etc is sufficient. Just make sure that the note reflects what you are actually doing.

Company policy also requires that each driver performs a pre-trip inspection of at least ten minutes every day that they are on duty. It is necessary to show this inspection on your log. Sending Macro 23 as a post-trip is a separate function which does not appear on your log. You must also show a post-trip inspection although there is no minimum time set for it. Both inspection functions can be combined with other duty status changes such as “hook”, “drop trailer”, “fuel”, etc.

Another area of concern is the proper use of off-duty and sleeper berth. Sleeper berth is to be used only when you are in the sleeper berth. If you go home or are otherwise off duty for an extended period of time, the proper duty status is off-duty, not sleeper berth. Likewise, if you are in the truck, use sleeper berth to show the time that you are resting and off-duty when you are out of the truck for meals, etc.

When dropping your truck off at a repair facility, we suggest logging out of the truck. If a mechanic drives your truck, that driving time will not be charged to you.

If one team member is off the truck for more than a day or so, it is advisable that they log off the truck so as not to give the appearance of a co-driver in the truck.

Finally, just as you approved your paper logs daily by signing them, it is important that you approve your electronic logs daily too.

Please contact for assistance:

Rob Williams, Fleet Safety Manager
1-800-347-0071, x3153

Bob Leach, Driver Trainer
404-362-2452

David Odom, Driver Trainer
1-800-347-0071, x3230

Ken Greene, Log Auditor
1-800-347-0071, x3144

ANNUAL Safety Awards

A message from the safety department

Recognition of Excellent Safety Performance is something we like to do. Completing a year and meeting the criteria to earn an annual safety award is something for which to be proud. We take pride in so many FAF earning this safety recognition.

Knowing the target can help you reach the goal and the following lists the criteria that must be met to earn the annual award. Remember this is not a cumulative award but based upon your performance during the prior 12 months.

**Over-the-Road Driver Award Criteria:**
1) Must have driven at least 48,000 miles in the past 12 months
2) Must have no preventable accidents in the past 12 months
3) Must have no moving violation convictions in the past 18 months
4) Must have no driver or equipment out-of-services in the past 12 months
5) Must have no violations of the eleven, 14 or 70-hour rules as identified on monthly log audits, or roadside inspections in the past six months
6) Must have no driver safety-invoked suspensions for any log violation whether missing logs or disciplinary action for log violations in the past 12 months

**Company Driver Requirements:**
1) Must be a full-time driver for the past 12 months
2) Must have no preventable accidents in the past 12 months
3) Must have no moving violation convictions in the past 18 months
4) Must have no driver or equipment out of services in the past 12 months
5) Must have no violations of the eleven, 14 or 70-hour rules as identified on monthly log audits, or by roadside inspections in the previous six months
6) Must have no driver safety-invoked suspensions for any log violation whether missing logs or disciplinary action for log violations in the past 12 months

Share The Road Safely tip: Always drive defensively

Always leave enough space between you and the vehicle in front of you. Reduce speed, watch for changing hazards.

If you hit someone from behind, you are typically considered "at fault," regardless of the situation and this type of crash is most often preventable. Large trucks require more stopping distances than other vehicles. Take advantage of your driving height, stay alert and anticipate braking situations.

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Distracted Driving

A message from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) at www.distraction.gov

Distracted driving is any activity that could divert a person's attention away from the primary task of driving. All distractions endanger driver, passenger, and bystander safety. These types of distractions include:

- Using a cell phone or smartphone
- Eating and drinking
- Talking to passengers
- Grooming
- Reading, including maps
- Using a navigation system
- Watching a video
- Adjusting a radio, CD player, or MP3 player

The best way to end distracted driving is to educate all Americans about the danger it poses. On this page, you'll find facts and statistics that are powerfully persuasive. If you don't already think distracted driving is a safety problem, please take a moment to learn more. And, as with everything on Distraction.gov, please share these facts with others. Together, we can help save lives.

(Information for the above Distracted Driving piece and Key Facts and Statistics from Distracted Driving are provided by the following link: http://www.distraction.gov/content/get-the-facts/facts-and-statistics.html)

Check out more information on distracted driving at…

DISTRACTION.GOV
Official US Government Website for Distracted Driving

Key Facts and Statistics from Distracted Driving
Facts and Figures provided at www.distraction.gov

*In 2009, 5,474 people were killed in crashes involving driver distraction, and an estimated 448,000 were injured. (NHTSA)

*16% of fatal crashes in 2009 involved reports of distracted driving. (NHTSA)

*20% of injury crashes in 2009 involved reports of distracted driving. (NHTSA)

*In the month of June 2011, more than 196 billion text messages were sent or received in the US, up nearly 50% from June 2009. (CTIA)

*Drivers who use hand-held devices are 4 times more likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves. (Monash University)

*Text messaging creates a crash risk 23 times worse than driving while not distracted. (VTTI)

*Sending or receiving a text takes a driver's eyes from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds, the equivalent-at 55 mph-of driving the length of an entire football field, blind. (VTTI)

*Headset cell phone use is not substantially safer than hand-held use. (VTTI)

*Using a cell phone while driving - whether it's hand-held or hands-free delays a driver's reactions as much as having a blood alcohol concentration at the legal limit of .08 percent. (University of Utah)

*Driving while using a cell phone reduces the amount of brain activity associated with driving by 37%. (Carnegie Mellon)

Don't let these sunny days keep you from getting the proper rest you need & require before your next trip. Fatigue behind the wheel can be deadly. Don't put yourself or the public at risk by not getting proper rest.