



Safety: **Alertness a Responsibility**

By Bill Hurtig

Many persons participate in the motorcar hobby some of whom maintain their health by regularly taking medications. I have friends who are pharmacists, and a family member who is a physician. When they mention particular medications which are unfamiliar to me, I ask for an explanation. It is amazing how great a debt we owe to research, pharmaceutical development, and medical practice, and of course we are grateful for all of this.

However, it does come at a price. Medications are often expensive; office calls also cost money. But there is another dimension to this which directly affects our hobby. Some medications, prescription and over-the-counter, may induce drowsiness, impair alertness, or affect response time.

It would be tempting to consult with a physician or a pharmacist, asking for their advice concerning which medications should be used with special caution when operating a motorcar. Certainly when a physician prescribes a medication, we should ask her/him what the effects may be which might affect alertness, response time, and induce drowsiness. The same questions need to be addressed to the pharmacist.

Our responsibility for appropriately using medications, though, cannot be delegated to others. A great deal of significant literature accompanies the prescriptions we receive. It is our own responsibility to carefully study that literature and, if necessary, note further questions for answering by pharmacists or physicians. Information also accompanies over-the-counter medications, and the same responsibility is ours here, too.