



I finally bought a new color laser printer to replace the HP 3505x which had served me well for many years. Although it was working perfectly, its age was such that some non-routine parts were considered to be obsolete. The new printer is technically an all-in-one, but I don't anticipate using the fax features unless my current color laser fax machine gives me problems. I also bought the optional 550-sheet feeder tray. It can hold more of the same media as the main feeder tray, or it can hold different sizes or types of paper to enable printing to different media without having to change paper in a tray. The standard paper tray holds 250 sheets, so I can load roughly a ream and a half of paper in the machine.

I have often written about the difficulty a motor vehicle operator has in observing a pedestrian at night. I was recently driving home in the neighborhood where I live when I suddenly saw two legs in front of me. I instantly recognized that the legs belonged to a woman who was wearing a knee-length black skirt. (I never saw what was above the waist, because my headlights were on low beam.) I immediately swerved to avoid striking the woman, and I was immediately grateful that she hadn't been wearing a floor-length black gown or black slacks—if she had been, I'm reasonably certain I would not have seen her in time to avoid striking her. She would have been injured, and the incident would have haunted me for who knows how long. I am using this example to point out what I have often written before: the visual environments of the operator of a motor vehicle at night and of a pedestrian at night are radically different. Apparently this woman thought that she was plainly visible to me; she was only visible to me as her legs came into view as I rounded a curve. At night, a pedestrian whose eyes have adapted to the relative darkness can see with as little light as starlight. The eyes of a motor vehicle operator are adapted to a much higher level of light, from headlights and interior (instrument panel) lights, plus there is always some loss whenever light passes through glass. So, why didn't the motorist see the pedestrian at night? Because the image of the pedestrian was beyond the capabilities of his visual acuity in the driving situation! But it seems that most pedestrians never understand this. Instead, they step or stand in front of a motorist, get hit, and want to claim that the impact was the motorist's fault. Sound familiar?

I received the photograph at the top of the column to the right in an email with the subject **No Texting**. According to the text in that email, the tractor-trailer in question was parked well out of the normal travel lanes when the incident occurred. The email also stated that the driver's cell



phone was found in his hand and his head was found on the shelf behind the seats. (The Corvette does not have a back seat.) I have forwarded that email to many people I know. If you have an opportunity to share this photo with your friends who may talk and drive or text and drive, please do so. My fifteen-year-old daughter is learning to drive, and the first thing I have told her to do when she gets into a vehicle to drive is to turn off her cell phone. I have no information about the source or location of this photo.

I have been conducting tire failure evaluations for decades. With the exception of certain lines of tires from one manufacturer, most of the tires which have been presented to me for analysis failed because of some form of user abuse: road-hazard impacts, prolonged operation in an overdeflected (underinflated) condition, use of a tire to the point that body-ply cords were showing, and other such mechanically induced or caused failures. Over the years, I have found some tires with manufacturing defects of one type or another, but there have been far fewer of those in the tires I have examined in recent years. There is one case, however, which stands out in my memory as a first. I am unable to provide any details of this tire, because it is a recent

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case, but I am sharing one photo with the explanation. The photograph below shows the interior of the region of a new tire which blew out after it had been mounted on a rim for the first time and was being inflated. Examination of the exposed sidewall cords showed that the ends had failed when they were hot. When fabric cords break at ambient temperatures, the ends of the broken cords are fuzzy. When they fail at or near their melting temperature, the ends are rounded or pointed, and the cords are brittle. Since this tire had never been in service, and since there was no evidence that the tire had been subjected to extreme heating (localized or generalized) after it was manufactured, the conclusion was that there was inadequate material used in the building process, causing the cords in that region to be exposed to the full temperature and pressure of the bladder used to vulcanize the tire during manufacture. Since there was not enough rubber to protect the cords, the heat from the bladder melted these cords in the region where they were essentially unprotected during the manufacturing process. But external examination did not reveal any suggestion of the internal problem until after the blow-out. Who looks at the interior of a new tire before mounting it? Since the cords were discontinuous in this region, the sidewall failed during the first inflation process.



In January of 2017 I will have been involved in forensic consulting work for 45 years. It really doesn't seem like that long. I guess I'll make a career of it one of these years. ☺ To commemorate my 45 years of business, I am thinking of offering one or more special discounts during 2017, but I haven't decided what those will be. I anticipate that I will list them on my Web site in late December of this year or early January of 2017. Perhaps 2017 will be my best year ever. I really love this work—each job is different, and most jobs require some use of original thought. But some of you may have believed that if I ever had an original thought it would die of loneliness! ☺

I hope all of you had a safe and happy Thanksgiving and will have a joyous holiday season. As the year comes to a close, we can all reflect on what has occurred and be thankful for blessings we have received. In some philosophies, difficulties are also considered blessings, because they are supposed to make us stronger. So, whether our plates were full of steaks and seafood or cabbage and broccoli this year, we can be grateful that we made it through this one and look forward to another year of challenges and rewards. I am grateful for your ongoing consideration of my services, and I hope each one of you has a year full of steaks and seafood. Happy Holidays and Happy New Year.

Ralph Cunningham, Inc.
Accident Reconstruction
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1804 Thornhill Pass, SE

Conyers, GA 30013

770.918.0973

Fax: 770.918.8076