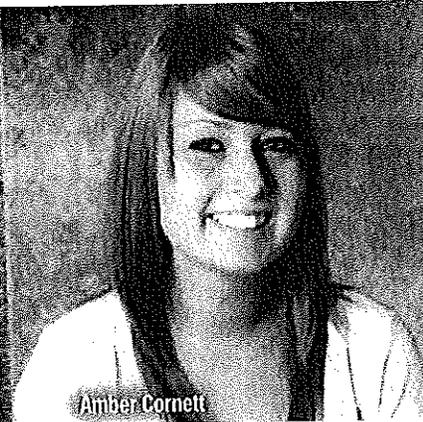


COMMON THREAD BINDS CRASHES DESPITE DIFFERENT STORY LINES

A comment by Institute president Adrian Lund

The fatal crashes described on these pages are all different, but they have one thing in common: Someone ran a red light. The circumstances of a particular crash may point to a deeper cause, so it's tempting to seek a deeper solution. After all, we know that red means stop. We learned that long before we learned to drive. If people disobey red lights, or simply fail to see them, we assume there's a reason. It must be because they drank too much or they're fiddling with their cellphones or they're inexperienced or reckless drivers. All those things may be true, and many of the underlying causes can and should be addressed. But we can prevent many red light running crashes, regardless of the circumstances, by using cameras to enforce the law. The fact is that the threat of a ticket makes everyone drive more carefully. The data prove it.



Amber Cornett

AMBER CORNETT, 16 BETHEL TOWNSHIP, OHIO

On Nov. 22, 2008, Amber Cornett dutifully called her parents to tell them she was on her way home after spending the night at a friend's house and going out for breakfast.

Cornett was belted in the front seat when the 2003 Chevrolet Cavalier her friend was driving was broadsided by a pickup truck at an intersection in rural Bethel Township in Clark County, Ohio. She was killed just 6 days before her 17th birthday.

Cornett's friend told police she thought she had a green light. The driver and the

passenger of the other vehicle insisted their light was green. A third girl who was in the Cavalier's back seat and was injured in the crash couldn't recall approaching the intersection. Police were unable to determine fault and didn't file charges.

"All we really got was no answers," says Mack Cornett, Amber's father. The daughter he lost was "every parent's dream," Cornett says. She was a good student and made friends easily. "I know she was looking forward to getting the chance to get out on her own."

On tribute pages on the web, friends remember Amber's effervescent personality. They lament that she'll never meet their new boyfriends and confide that they can't bear to delete her number from their cellphones.

Mack Cornett has his own way of remembering: The 46-year-old machinist manager keeps in his Bible a picture of Amber with a big smile, taken the summer before she died. Cornett says he's disappointed that neither driver has reached out to say they're sorry. He would be inclined to forgive.

"People run lights. I don't think the majority of people who run them mean to run them. They have distractions," he says.

"How many times have you done something and you got away with it? You look down, you look at your watch, you turn the knob on the stereo, you laugh at a joke — you miss the light."