

<http://www.news-press.com/article/20110605/OPINION/110604025/Today-s-letters-editor-Bike-safety>



Today's letters to the editor: Bike safety

10:56 PM, Jun. 4, 2011 (published June 5th)

Drive, bike safely

Like hundreds of other cyclists I spend several hours a week on the roads of Lee County.

I realize there are many people who think this is either foolish or downright dangerous, but like all who do it, I get both enjoyment and satisfaction covering long distances, an activity that's only possible if I share the road with drivers of both cars and trucks.

Obviously, my safety depends on the skill and focus of the drivers as well as my skill and attention.

All we cyclists ask is that drivers operate their vehicles responsibly, keeping in mind that those of us on bikes have no protection.

We in turn must be held accountable for the way in which we ride, following the rules of the road at all times. If we work together on this, it can very easily become a non-issue.

TOM KELLY
Fort Myers

Bikes change lives

We recently moved from San Carlos Park (in a neighborhood with busy roads and few pathways) to McGregor/Iona (where sidewalks and pathways are plentiful). This move has made a world of difference for us!

Our outdoor activity time has increased ten-fold and our attitudes reflect these extra endorphins that we encounter.

Because of the sidewalks and places to bike to nearby, my husband and I bought bikes, helmets, and a pull-behind trailer for our son. We now ride to the store, the produce stand, the beach, and the park. These are my favorite family moments.

I only wish that all Lee County residents could have a safe place to ride, walk, and enjoy the bonding time and accidental exercise that we experience on a regular basis.

SHANNON MAITLAND

Fort Myers

— Coming in Monday's Mailbag: More letters on this issue.

Today's letters to the editor

6:56 PM, Jun. 5, 2011 (published June 6th)

Be good citizens

Several recent letters all disturbingly suggest that neither cyclists nor pedestrians should be allowed on roadways.

I thought to write back immediately citing laws and statutes mandating the legitimate use of community roads by those other than motorists.

But, a more insidious line of reasoning common to each of these letters - perhaps unintentional - was the tacit promotion of abdication of responsible citizenship in favor of self-protection.

All asked, why would anyone ride roadways, close to "foolish, speeding" drivers (although one suggested allowing traffic to move faster), "zigzagging and talking on cell phones."

Simply put, how could anyone be so stupid as to venture into the territory where we as a society have allowed and even supported reckless and lawless behavior to become the norm?

Decades of engineering "improvement" have only led to higher speeds and more dangerous behaviors - one-handed and half-brained driving.

It is time, through responsible citizenship to reclaim these roads, reduce widths, reduce speeds, reduce the unsustainable expenditures, and increase safety for drivers and all roadway users.

In other words bring them back to human scale. Then provide transit for those who prefer to talk, text, eat, read or apply makeup while traveling.

ANN PIERCE
Fort Myers

Link bike lanes

Coincidental to the Lee County meeting for the adoption of the Bike/Ped Master Plan on May 20, that same week a smaller meeting was taking place in the Cape on a similar topic.

On May 15 at the Transportation Advisory Committee of Cape Coral, three requests for bike lanes, submitted by the Southwest Cape Coral Neighborhood Association, were being reviewed.

The requests were for three lanes to connect already existing bike lanes west of Chiquita Boulevard, to enable bicyclers to get to the shopping centers and LeeTran Bus stop on Chiquita. Linking these lanes provides that missing connection so wanted by citizens and businesses in the area. After having done further investigation on these requested lanes, the Transportation Advisory Committee will be meeting again for a decision.

It is noteworthy how cooperative all the various parties have been toward this effort.

We are very hopeful that all three requests will be approved because what is being requested fits perfectly with the Master Plan recommendations the Cape Coral members of the Metropolitan Planning Organization unanimously endorsed.

PAT YOUNG
Southwest Cape Coral Neighborhood Association
Board of Directors

Good news on safety

On May 20, the Metropolitan Planning Organization unanimously adopted the county's first comprehensive plan for a network of bicycling and pedestrian facilities.

Although not a quick fix, it is a historic and necessary first step. If the plan's practical recommendations are implemented, the county will become a safer, more bicycle-and pedestrian-friendly community.

The plan was developed in cooperation with all the local jurisdictions, local agencies and organizations, and advocacy groups such as BikeWalkLee.

Recent deaths of pedestrians and bicycle riders tragically underscore the need for MPO members to take action to remove Lee County from the list of most dangerous places to bicycle and walk.

A particularly important recommendation in the Bike/Ped Plan calls for the creation of a Bike/Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

This would give Cape citizens an opportunity to assist the city implement the master plan, including a network of bike lanes with intra-city and inter-city connectivity.

As the BikeWalkLee member representing Cape Coral it was gratifying to see the City Council members on the MPO show their commitment to the plan.

STEVE CHUPACK
Cape Coral

Warped attitudes

I am disappointed by the responses to recent cycling tragedies in some of the May 23 letters to the editor.

Is there no sense of community? We all have the right to move freely, without fear, in whichever form of transportation we choose.

As a new mother, I am interested in raising a well-balanced, healthy and active family.

To meet these ends we travel by foot, bicycle and stroller as much as possible to engage in our activities. It is astonishing that the citizenry and local infrastructure make this simple desire so dangerous and difficult.

Fellow community members, please help make our journey safe:

1. Slow down and be alert.
2. Be cautious and courteous of those around you.
3. Relax so you can think and act appropriately.
4. Stop behind the crosswalk, not in it.
5. Look (right) for cyclists and pedestrians, especially little children.

CINDY BANYAI
Fort Myers

Eco-tourism wins

As a resident of downtown's River District and manager of a local beach resort, the new county bike/ped Master Plan that connects the county through sidewalks, bike lanes and greenway paths, gives a boost to our eco-tourism industry and the quality of life for all residents, workers and visitors.

The addition of beautiful and safe opportunities for walking and biking will not only be a draw to our county but will encourage current guests to extend their stays.

Lee County must remain competitive with other communities who have successfully implemented bicycle/pedestrian amenities and have seen their infrastructure improve, the health of their residents strengthen, and best of all - the expansion of their economy.

Now I have one more selling point to offer my prospective guests as I can tell them that they can safely explore our eco destinations by car, foot or pedals.

This is something they have come to expect as the greenway movement has immersed our national culture and way of life.

DRU ANN DOYLE
Sanibel

News-Press 6/7/11

Today's letters to the editor

6:15 AM, Jun. 7, 2011 |

A ticket would do

As a cyclist who rides 3,500 miles a year, I was heartened to see the Sunday editorial page. However, the safety tips given led to two misconceptions.

Most of the tips told riders how to avoid collisions with trucks and buses. Trucks and buses are driven by professionals; they are not the biggest threat to riders.

Whether they are impaired, distracted or aggressive, drivers of cars are the ones who kill and injure most pedestrians and cyclists (motor and self-propelled).

Secondly, all the tips were directed at riders. Riders and professional drivers get plenty of education. When are we going to start educating motorists?

The traditional way to educate motorists is to issue traffic citations. Speeding, red- light running, DUIs and seat belt usage have all been positively affected by aggressive ticketing campaigns.

If there is a fender bender at least one ticket will be written. So how is it a person can be killed and no citation is issued?

Until law enforcement takes the safety of pedestrians and cyclists seriously, Florida will remain a dangerous place to walk or ride a two-wheeled vehicle.

GERRY MARON

Estero

Care to share

As a cyclist and bike shop owner I experience the conflicts and close calls of co-existing with motorists on the road, I also hear the stories of other cyclists.

When a death occurs involving a cyclist or pedestrian, as on the Sanibel Causeway recently, public awareness of the dangers on our streets is increased, encouraging discussion.

I have cycled the causeway since 2004 through preconstruction, three years of messy lane barricades, and post-construction with an "emergency lane" that led cyclists to a concrete tollbooth wall upon exit. A beautiful bridge, but sadly not planned for non-motorists.

I commend Lee County for fixing the tollbooth area last summer to provide cyclists with a safe approach and exit. The Sanibel Causeway is now a fantastic ride that attracts resident and visitor cyclists alike.

The key to safety is for motorists to realize that our roadways are not theirs exclusively, we all must take care to share the road. With gas prices high and the need for increased activity for health and weight control, it seems we should be working together. Most cyclists also drive a car; maybe some motorists will try a two-wheel ride.

SALLI KIRKLAND
Sanibel

Guideline ignored

Most of us learned to share when we were in kindergarten.

However, recent letters to the Mailbag have pointed out the fact that this important life guideline has been far too often ignored when it comes to cycling in Lee County.

Florida law states that bicycles have the same rights to the roadways as all other vehicles, but recent cycling fatalities have brought real doubts about this legal status.

As someone who has been cycling for 35 years, I've ridden many miles on both paths and roads. I've ridden across the United States twice, from Virginia to Oregon, riding the back roads of this country for most of those miles. I've been passed by thousands of cars, hundreds of 18-wheelers, many logging trucks and once, even a trailered mobile home. Never was I ever run off the road by any of these vehicles.

No one ever tried to "teach me a lesson" by deliberately crowding me off the shoulder on any of these highways. Everyone, even the vacationing RV driver, had learned that the roads are to be shared by all.

When will the drivers in Lee County learn this valuable lesson?

MARY L. MILLER
Sanibel

Master plan timely

There have been recent letters to the editor suggesting that bicycles have no place on our public roads. As a cyclist I ride over 100 miles a week in Lee County.

It simply is not possible to get from point A to point B by bicycle without riding on roads with no shoulders or bike lanes at some point in the trip.

The recently passed Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan will go a long way to improve the connectivity of the bike and pedestrian facilities we have.

While riding on the public roadways cyclists are exposed to distracted and impaired drivers. Distracted drivers are a threat to those encapsulated in their steel cocoons as well as those who are cycling or walking. Addressing the issue of distracted driving by banning cell phone use and texting while driving would make it safer for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.

MICHAEL SWANSON
Cape Coral

Cape's not for bikes

Adding more bike paths to Cape Coral would be a disaster. The paths we have now are bad enough and I think people who ride bikes are taking a chance when riding on the sidewalks.

We don't drive very well here and some people that ride bikes here should be chained to their bedposts.

If we could find a way to run the paths through the backyards that might be OK, but we would need lifeguards to pull people out of the canals.

ROGER McHOSE
Cape Coral

<http://www.captivasanibel.com/page/content.detail/id/511819/Reminder-to-share-the-road.html?nav=5049>

Island Reporter (Breeze Newspapers)

Reminder to share the road

POSTED: June 2, 2011

To the editor,

As a cyclist and bike shop owner, I experience the conflicts and close calls of coexisting with motorists on the road, I also hear the stories of other cyclists. When a death occurs involving a cyclist or pedestrian, as on the Sanibel Causeway recently, public awareness of the dangers on our streets is increased, encouraging discussion.

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Salli Kirkland
Sanibel