

SHARE the ROAD!

The phrase "Share the Road" is used widely throughout the USA, and it is on some of our license plates. However, if we think that sharing the road is only good advice for automobile drivers, we are doing a poor personal job of supporting the concept.

I mention this because, several (actually MANY) times recently, I've heard long-time SMBC members comment on the lack of common-sense manners by some who ride with us; and today, one former Board member said that he was afraid to ride with the group because it has become so reckless... A sad commentary.

Yes, people who pass while others signal slowing or turning, or when failing to yield way when others are signaling to get back in line, or those who don't use (or even HAVE) mirrors, or those who refuse to pass along signals, or those who don't pass along their intentions are creating a needless hazard, those who are simply BREAKING THE LAW, are worse.

Recognize that Florida law requires that bicycle riders STAY TO THE RIGHT and to USE BICYCLE LANES when they are available! However, I have recently noticed the following two infractions all too commonly:

1. Riders who block an entire lane of traffic when stopping for a break.
2. Riders who block traffic when bike lanes are available.

Such practices are not only ILLEGAL, but:

- * They are UNSAFE
- * They are RUDE
- * They represent SMBC POORLY
- * They cause MORE people to have LESS TOLERANCE for bicycle riders.

So, what am I saying? SHARE THE ROAD! It's a good SMBC club policy!
—Jim Wheeler SMBC Ride Coordinator



Florida is the deadliest state in the U.S. for cyclists and pedestrians, according to federal statistics cited in a USA Today article. In 2008, 17.4% of the cyclists (125 of 716) and 11.1% of the pedestrians (490 of 4,378) killed in the U.S. died in the Sunshine State, which has 6% of the nation's population. The statistics perplex state officials. "There are so many factors involved and most of them are random," says an officer for Florida's Department of Transportation. "We're trying to figure out root causes and how we can fix it."

SO:

1. Try to stay within the designated speed for the ride, depending on the conditions.
2. Do not pass the person leading, depending on the conditions. (uphill / downhill)
3. Point out obstacles, by hand and voice.
4. Let other riders know when you are passing, stopping, slowing, turning, or changing position in the group.
5. Pass the word to the front if someone is being dropped, has a problem, or missed a stoplight.
6. Rounding a corner when you are in front, don't hammer it. Keep a slow pace until everyone has cleared the corner.
7. No Jack Rabbit starts. Let the whole group get going before the leaders pick up the pace.
8. Everyone must rotate to the front position, switching about every 1-2 miles depending on conditions.
9. Ride leaders should announce start, and check to see that everyone is ready to ride.
10. No one will be dropped if they can ride at the designated ride speed.

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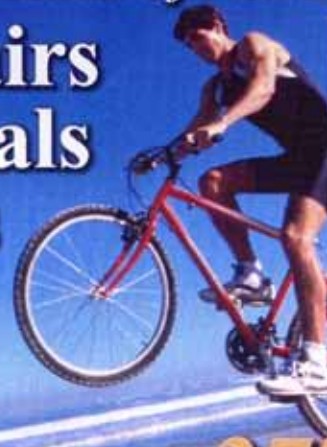
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