

READERS' LETTERS

Drivers, cyclists, pedestrians are all responsible for road safety

The two recent pedestrian deaths in Newport are a devastating reminder that we all need to join together to make our city a safer place for everyone who uses our streets and highways. Last year, the Newport City Council created the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission to advise our city government on issues relating to safe use of our streets. We are committed to working with the city manager and her staff, as well as the mayor and the other members of the City Council, to understand and address the circumstances that cause Newport to have the second-highest crash rate by population in Rhode Island.

The commission invites all citizens of Newport to share their concerns and ideas for making our streets safer. We meet the third Tuesday of the

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month (next meeting: Feb. 18) from 5-6 p.m. in the assembly room of the Newport Police Department, 120 Broadway. Or email us at newportbpac@gmail.com.

We encourage all road users to know the rules of the road and follow basic safety practices. Motorists must approach crosswalks with extra caution and expect pedestrians to cross. Where there is no traffic signal, pedestrians in a crosswalk have the right of way. Motorists, pedestrians and cyclists all need to obey traffic signals.

Pedestrians should cross streets at marked crosswalks,

and should never assume an approaching motorist will stop even if you are in the crosswalk. Enter the street only when you are certain that the car is stopping. Try to make eye contact with an approaching driver before crossing.

Cyclists are required to ride in the same direction as traffic, as far to the right as practical and safe. Obey stop lights and stop signs. Be visible to traffic: Wear reflective gear and use proper lighting in the dark. Communicate with drivers using hand signals. Make eye contact whenever possible before turning or crossing in busy traffic.

Wear a helmet when riding—always.

Additional safety tips for all road users can be found at the Bike Newport website, <http://bikenewportri.org>, under “Be your own best defense.”

The bottom line is that every road user needs to understand and obey traffic laws, and be considerate and respectful of others' right to share the road.

Each of us has a stake in safe streets, and each of us—drivers, pedestrians and cyclists alike—has a responsibility to be attentive to, and respectful of, others who use our streets. Please join us in working to improve safety for all road users in Newport.

**Chuck Flippo, chairman,
and the members of the
Newport Bicycle & Pedestrian
Advisory Commission**