

On the Road Again

By Bill Gnatzig

As the Town's population continues to grow, the safety of all those using our Town roads is an increasing concern.

Our Town roads are first and foremost designed for use by motorized vehicles. As rural roads, most originally built several decades ago, the pavement is often narrow and shoulder space is limited. While there are no restrictions on non-motorized use of the Town roads, those using them for such purposes need to recognize the limitations and safety issues involved.

To aid safety, Kinnickinnic has designated a 45 mph speed limit on all Town roads, which is the lowest the town is allowed to do under nearly all circumstances. In some areas the Town has also posted yellow "advisory" signs noting lower speeds, but these are only recommendations. Safety falls heavily on those using Town roads for slow moving purposes. Walkers, bikers, joggers, etc. need to think defensively. Follow these basic safety rules:

Pedestrians

Walkers and joggers should consider wearing high-visibility clothing. Walk on the left side of the road so oncoming traffic is apparent. Do NOT WALK ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE ROAD WITH YOUR BACK TO TRAFFIC. Walk single-file when in a group. Wear reflective clothing at night. Use a leash when walking the dog.



Bicycle Use

Bicyclists should use the right lane, the same as motorized traffic. This puts a special burden on bicyclists as traffic coming from behind can

approach quickly and sometimes quietly. High visibility clothing, rear view mirrors and hearing awareness are especially important. Consider avoiding wearing ear buds. Bicycle riders are required to adhere to all traffic signs, including stop signs. Use hand signals. When riding in groups it is advisable to avoid crowding the center line. Common courtesy and safety also dictate that both single and group riders should move to the side to allow quicker vehicles to pass safely in appropriate areas. Lights and reflective clothing should be used at dusk and dark.

Horses

While Kinnickinnic does not have much horse-related traffic, it is important for riders to recognize the potential safety issues. Horses should be well trained and under the control of experienced riders. Horse drawn carriages and wagons should have slow moving vehicle (SMV) signs. Horses and riders are considered the same as pedestrians and should use the left side of the road facing on-coming traffic. As non-motorized but wheeled use, horse drawn vehicles should stay in the right lane. Keep aware of traffic approaching from behind and use lighting at dusk and night.

Farm Equipment

Farmers have the right to use rural roads to move equipment as needed from farm to field and between fields. Equipment is becoming larger, often to the point of exceeding lane widths, necessitating the need to weave around mailboxes and other obstructions. Some recent Wisconsin law changes imposed special lighting requirements on farm equipment over a certain size, in addition to the prior required use of SMV signs. Changes have eliminated the prior clause that permitted cars and trucks to pass slow-moving (less than 25 mph) farm equipment in marked "no passing" zones.

Bill Gnatzig is a former Town Supervisor and currently serves on the Town Road Committee

Editor's Note

This is an important reminder and great follow up piece to the article in the April 2018 Current. It is still fairly common to see residents jogging, walking, and walking their dogs while not facing oncoming traffic. Each year, the number of pedestrians killed or injured by distracted drivers is significant. Facing oncoming traffic can give you a pretty good idea of what an oncoming car is doing. If your back is to the traffic, well.....