This page was exported from - Almost-Daily Diary
Export date: Fri Oct 9 14:15:51 2015 / +0000 GMT

Why do we think it's OK to be oblivious when we ride?

Plain simple truth is this. When we drive a car, we're constantly having to change speed or direction, sometimes quickly, to avoid a collision with another driver who's doing something idiotic. Changing lanes into us, screaming through a left-hand-turn light that's red before they get to it, or just plain running through a light that just turned red. Admit it. It happens all the time. And the only reason we're around to talk about it is because, when we were driving, we noticed it and took action.

I'll bet this has happened to most of us several times this week, and we don't pay it any attention because it's just kind of normal. We know that we have to watch out for others when we're driving. People do stupid things all the time.

So why, when we're out on a ride and this happens once in a while, are we so shocked? Why do weÂ act likeÂ we have (or should have) some sort of zone of benevolence, as if we're surrounded by a force field that protects us from all evil while we enjoy our ride?

I'm not saying that it's not the car's fault when they do something stupid and take out a cyclist. No question there. But much of it is preventable. That's my politically-incorrect statement. That we have more control over our own safety than we are sometimes willing to accept. That it's kind of silly that we whine so much about how stupid and dangerous cars are when we're on a bike, and yet we accept that same behavior, and drive accordingly, when we're in a car.

Roads are shared. Shared by bikes, shared by cars, shared by pedestrians. We all have to be looking out for one another. We can all likely do better. We have to expand our responsibilities beyond the confines of the steel walls of our car or some magical 3 foot safe zone that the law has created around us. We have to realize that it's wrong when you're riding down the road and a pedestrian who's started to cross the street sees us as steps back and apologizes to us when we should be apologizing to them.

Shared roads means shared responsibility. And as we know, some are more responsible than others. Sometimes we have to shoulder more of the responsibility for something than we wish, at work, at home, and we think it's unfair and you can win or lose that argument and it's not going to kill you. But when you're out on the road, in a car, or on your bike, you have to assume that you're more-responsible for the safety of others on that roadway than anybody else. And that's going to help keep you alive.Â --Mike--