

Robert McClellan

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FATALITY

Bike Hits, Kills Man Crossing Petworth Street

*By CLARENCE WILLIAMS
and MARTIN WEIL
Washington Post Staff Writers*

A man was struck by a bicycle and killed yesterday while trying to cross the street in Northwest Washington, D.C. police said.

The man, who appeared to be in his 60s, was hit about 5:30 p.m. while walking across New Hampshire Avenue in the Petworth area, police said.

About one traffic fatality in five in the region involves a pedestrian death, but, according to authorities, few of the victims are hit by bicycles.

In last night's accident, which occurred just west of Rock Creek Cemetery and near Second Street, the man fell and struck his head after the collision, said Cmdr. Hilton Burton of the 4th Police District.

Burton said the bicycle was apparently moving "at a pretty good clip" when the incident occurred. Police said the cyclist, who was in his late 50s, was taken to a hospital for treatment of a head injury.

A resident of the area, who said he was also crossing New Hampshire in the 5000 block at the time of the accident, said it appeared that a dark-colored mountain bike was coming toward the intersection "pretty fast."

The witness, Adam Bansfield, said the pedestrian was walking toward some nearby stores and might have passed behind a car that was halted near New Hampshire Avenue and Farragut Street.

Bansfield said after the man was hit, he fell to the pavement and "didn't move." His head was "busted up pretty bad," Bansfield said.

In 2005, it was reported that about 90 pedestrians or bicyclists are killed each year in the Washington area. In 1983, a 63-year-old man was killed while crossing 14th Street downtown, and four years earlier, an 82-year-old man was fatally injured after being struck at 10th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue NW.

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RAW FISHER | FROM MARC FISHER'S BLOG

Going the Speed Limit: Public Service or Menace?

The following is reprinted from Marc Fisher's blog, *Raw Fisher*, which appears every day on the Web and, as of today, every Tuesday in this spot, along with a selection of reader comments. *Random Acts*, which had appeared on Tuesdays, has moved to Wednesdays.

Two organizations call on drivers to do something radical: Drive the speed limit.

In one case, driving at the legal speed limit is presented as an act of kindness designed to make streets safer for bicyclists and pedestrians. In the other case, the idea is to alert drivers to a political issue by annoying the heck out of them.

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association has launched a Neighborhood Pace Car Program, asking residents to place a sticker on their car announcing that they will drive at or below the speed limit, even when that feels ridiculously slow. The campaign seeks to spread courtesy and safety by example. Astonishingly, the association argues that having a fleet of cars driving at the speed limit will actually reduce road rage. Here's its explanation:

"Does the Pace Car provoke road rage? No. Many people who sign up for the Pace Car Program have

already been acting as unofficial Pace Cars. They report that incidents of road rage decrease when they badge their cars as Pace Cars. The Pace Car sticker credentials your car, explaining to following motorists that there is a reason for your courtesy and safe driving speed."

The folks at SaveAmericaFund.org, on the other hand, thought a "slow roll" by truckers on the Beltway would be just the right provocation to win them publicity for their cause, which is tougher government action against illegal immigrants and a halt to plans to allow Mexican truckers to drive their loads into the United States.

My bet is that both tactics — each smacking more of vigilantism than of good citizenship, even if the act involved is legal — will be extremely unpopular.

As it turns out, police foiled the slowdown by pulling over some truckers and warning them they'd be ticketed if their papers and loads were not in order.

But putting aside your views on bicyclists or illegal immigration, would you react any differently to a pace car setting a slow example in neighborhood streets or a fleet of truckers intentionally slowing traffic on the Beltway?



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Robert McEllellan
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READER COMMENTS

I hate slow drivers because they irritate me. I hate truckers because they are terrible drivers. I hate bikers because they always get in my way and are always so fucking self-righteous about their right to the road.
— Anonymous

If the people driving "Pace Cars" want to try that in the left lane of the Beltway, they are welcome to do so. I would try it without a bumper, concert, body armor and no other identifying marks (lights, etc.) on my car. I certainly would not try to run over the road. I don't have a problem with driving slowly in residential neighborhoods and I always slow down whenever I see children playing or golf. . . . But on large streets, highways or freeways, that's not going to do it. I would have more respect for the bicyclists if I ever came across a single one who obeyed the rules of the road.
— Bob

As a motorist who dislikes pace cars and as a bicyclist who refuses to be on the same streets that you see every block on suburban streets. I'm pleased that today's mode has raised such a question. You talk to us with your indignation. I'll go on passing pace cars and evading their signs.
— Mike Mathews

Mike Mathews, I have you ride your bike through my neighborhood and try to slow me. If I take great care not to slow down my car, I will not ride my bike. If I take great care not to slow down my car, I will not ride my bike.
— Bob

Marc Fisher's column appears Sundays and Thursdays in the Metro section. At washingtonpost.com/metro, his blog, *Raw Fisher*, appears daily, and his Web discussion, *Potomac Confidential*, is at noon on Thursdays.