

# SLO Coaster

The newsletter for the San Luis Obispo Bicycle Club

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To promote safe and legal riding of bicycles and encourage bicycle riding as an accepted mode of transportation



## The Presidents Message

by Frank Mullin

### Safety

A few years ago the board made the decision to establish a club safety officer by making that the responsibility of one of our member-at-large board members. That has turned out to have been a great decision as it has allowed us to give much more attention to this important topic.

This year I have enjoyed the dedication shown by Warren Hockenbary as he has briefed us on a wide variety of topics. Clearly his background as a high school principle has shown through.

On the fun side, we heard of the benefits of a clean helmet and techniques for cleaning it (bringing your helmet into the shower with you).

But Warren's primary theme has been that we observe certain safety rules when we participate on club rides. In support of that, he has created a "Ride Leaders Safety Check List" that he suggests ride leaders review with the participants prior to the ride.

The other day there were nearly 40 people who showed up for one of our rides, but no one bothered to go over these important safety tips. Warren was pretty upset about that and asked that I help him make his point.

**Whenever a ride is large or there are new riders in the group, please ride leaders, go through the items on this check list.**

Otherwise, these riders won't know that we want them to get off the road when we regroup or to call out hazards or the other important points covered.

Another thing ride leaders should do prior to a ride is to think through their route and identify potential safety hazards. Then when reviewing the safety points they can highlight these safety hazards to the riders. Warren gave a great example of that when he cautioned the Yellowjackets (who frequently ride out Tank Farm road and left turn onto

Higuera) that they must claim their place in the straight through and left turn lane (near the corner) rather than collecting to the right of that lane in the island. The reason is that cars in this lane can continue straight while the cyclists expect to safely turn left. Ouch!!!

The program at our last club meeting featured CHP Officer Chris Black. Officer Black is an avid cyclist (he's done the Ride Across America) as well as someone who must deal with the aftermath of accidents. Warren provided me the following summary of that presentation:

*At November's general meeting, I learned that I can legally ride to Morro Bay in the right-hand lane of Highway 1 because the side of the road (designated shoulder) is not a designated Bike Lane. Of course, before you go out and try this remember you will be "Road Kill" before you get 100 yards.*

*Officer Black shared many interesting facts, like the one mentioned above, and patiently answered all of our questions. He gave us some statistics to ponder. Since Jan. 2001 there have been 179 reported bicycle collisions in the south county. Of those, 141 were injury collisions, 8 were fatalities and 30 were property damage only. 99 of the collisions were the fault of the bicyclist due to: unsafe speed, unsafe turning, unsafe entry onto a roadway, failure to stop at a STOP sign, DUI, and failure to ride as close to the right as practicable.*

*Next time you are at the DMV, pick up a copy of the Vehicle Code and take a look at Sections 21200 through 21208. They cover much of the laws related to bicycling.*

We've had several accidents this year and last involving our members. Most of them have been caused by some careless mistake by the cyclist or a riding companion. So the most important safety tip I can make is to **BE ATTENTIVE**

when you ride. When you zone out, you miss the rider stopped in your path or the hole in the road, you drift off the road, or into the path of someone with whom you're riding, or worse you fail to see the approaching car that is in your lane passing another car. Please ride safely and courteously. This will benefit you, your riding friends and the bicycling community as a whole.

#### Ride Leader Safety Check List

1. Ride single file
2. Point out road hazards
3. Call out approaching cars "Car Up", "Car Back"
4. Ride as close to the shoulder as is safe
5. Signal your intentions (stopping, turning, slowing) and call it out
6. Get entirely off the road when stopping to re-group
7. Pass another rider only on the left and call it out, "On Your Left"
8. Use your mirror and be aware of other riders around you
9. Ride defensively
10. Remind fellow riders who forget to follow safe riding practices
11. Stop at all Stop Signs