Same Roads, Same Rights, Same Rules again

In a May 26 letter, Dennis Bolyard stated that bicyclists would have the same rights as motorists when they pay for license plates, pay property taxes on their vehicles and carry the minimum insurance that the law requires motorists to pay.

Mr. Bolyard seemed to overlook the fact that cyclists already have the same rights as motorists. WV 17C-11-2 and Morgantown 373.02(a) both grant cyclists the same rights as motorists. That fact was reported in the column, Same Road, Same Rights, Same Rules to which Mr. Bolyard was responding. That column’s point was that we’ll all fare best when bicyclists act as drivers of vehicles and motorists treat them as such.

Licensing bicycles, levying personal property tax on bicycles and requiring bicyclists to pay liability and property damage insurance would probably cost more than they’re worth.

Considering that a bicycle weighs less than 1/100th the weight of a typical car, a bicycle license fee would be about $0.35.

Considering the $300 average new bicycle price, the property tax would be about $4.14.

The State required minimum insurance protects others against injury and property damage that motorists cause. Since crashing bicyclists usually only injure themselves and do little or no property damage, the premium would probably be less than the collection cost.

Can Mr. Bolyard’s issue be that his motorized transportation is too expensive? Yes, economically, bicycling is a great deal. The benefits to health, wellbeing and our environment are even greater. Most cyclists also drive motor vehicles when appropriate but have also discovered the joy and freedom of riding their bikes when they can. The Morgantown Bicycle Board encourages Mr. Bolyard and all of his friends to give it a try. Preston County has some of the best bicycling in the world!

Frank Gmeindl

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