

Letters to the Editor



The Southwest Portland Post
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Long-time pedestrian urges motorists to drive cautiously

I am responding to Patti Waitman's letter, "Pedestrians need to share responsibility for their own safety," [*The Post*, March 2011]. The author advises [against] wearing dark clothing when walking at night, face traffic, and look both ways before crossing--self-evident perhaps to most except children.

I am not sure whether the author is referring back to a time when there were fewer cars on the road, and people drove more responsibly than many do today, but things have changed everywhere, and the pace of life and realities are far different today than at the time of "our mothers" or "their mothers."

I have been a pedestrian for several decades, by which I mean I do not drive. The experience of pedestrians is something that most drivers, who only walk in and out of the car to get to the storefront, mall, etc., do not experience, especially not on a daily basis.

It is probably "scary" to come across someone walking in the dark barely visible. I know this area very well and

it is a fact there are very few sidewalks and even the sides of the roads, where many drivers seem to think pedestrians should be are unsafe, wet and slippery, and unstable to walk on.

For this reason few attempt to do so. Only those who must catch a bus, or have no transportation have to negotiate these awful, intermittent spaces on edges of roads, like Capitol Highway, Multnomah Boulevard, Taylor's Ferry Road, etc. Others, attempting to get some exercise, occasionally make the effort, perhaps being more agile or foolhardy.

I have seen countless drivers using cell phones, which is against the law, and drivers speeding daily, even on blind curves. These people are driving recklessly, and are not facing the consequences of their actions. By the time there is an accident it is too late.

It is arrogant to think that cars are entitled and pedestrians/cyclists are not. We all have to look out for others on the streets and drive responsibly. Carrying a bright flashlight is almost a must in unlit areas.

I call on [City of Portland] officials, the Mayor, and the [Bureau] of Transportation to serve the community they were elected by and install lights, pedestrian crossings, and start work immediately on sidewalks on all these major roadways.

It "scares me to death," when I see cars veering towards me, or cutting me off when I am crossing the road legally at crosswalks on Barbur [Boulevard] and elsewhere.

To the comment, "Use the common sense that mothers preached for years", I would say this: try taking a walk on these roads someday, and if you care enough to take the time,

please give officials a call and lobby for some real changes, because times have changed and they are continuing to change.

Irene J.
Southwest Portland

Effects of bullying at any age can last a lifetime

Every seven seconds, a child somewhere in the U.S. is bullied on the playground, on the bus and/or online (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development).

The effects of bullying at any age can last a lifetime; it lowers the self-esteem and security of our youth, and has a

deep impact in how people view themselves into adulthood.

As President Barack Obama addressed to the nation recently, bullying is not a rite of passage and "no child should feel that alone."

Bullying goes beyond pushing and shoving. Today's youth are utilizing technology to expand the reach and harm of bullying without any direct consequences.

Bullying is also when a child suddenly finds no one will eat lunch with or play with them at recess. It is relational aggression, not just physical aggression. Both are destructive.

There are programs available to help decrease bullying in our schools, such as *Kids on the Block Awareness Program*

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Editor & Publisher: Don Snedecor
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Retail Advertising Manager: Harry Blythe
Graphic Design: Leslie Baird Design
Printing: Oregon Lithoprint

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Deadline for news and advertising is generally the 20th of the month prior to publication. Please call for current deadline information. Advertising rates are available upon request.

The Post has a circulation of 7,000 in Multnomah Village and the surrounding neighborhood business districts including Burlingame, Capitol Hill, Garden Home, Glen Cullen, Hillsdale, South Portland, Raleigh Hills, West Portland and Vermont Hills. The Post is published on or about the 1st of every month. Subscriptions are \$14 per year. Back issues are \$2.50 each when available. All major credit cards accepted.




The Post is printed on recycled newsprint using soy-based inks. 



The Southwest Portland Post

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