

Cutler Bay

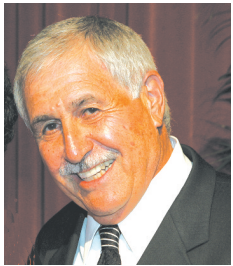
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SERVING SOUTH DADE

Being BI gives me a view from both sides of issue

BY ERNIE SOCHIN

Vice Mayor



I am BI! Don't worry, my wife already knows and has been able to deal with it. Yes, I confess to being a BI-traveler.

I freely admit to riding my Bicycle and on occasion my automobile on Old Cutler Road. As a result I get to see both sides of the problems that exist there.

First, let me discuss it from a motorist's point of view. When I am anxious to get somewhere, I go nuts when the car in front of me refuses to pass a cyclist because they don't think there is enough room. Believe me, if you have normal driving skills, and are not talking on your cell phone, there is adequate room to safely pass and continue on your journey.

For those who prefer to blow their horns and shout out the window, "Get off the road!" I offer that cyclists have the same rights to the road as you do. Notice the "Share the Road" signs in Cutler Bay. (I am responsible for those, by the way.)

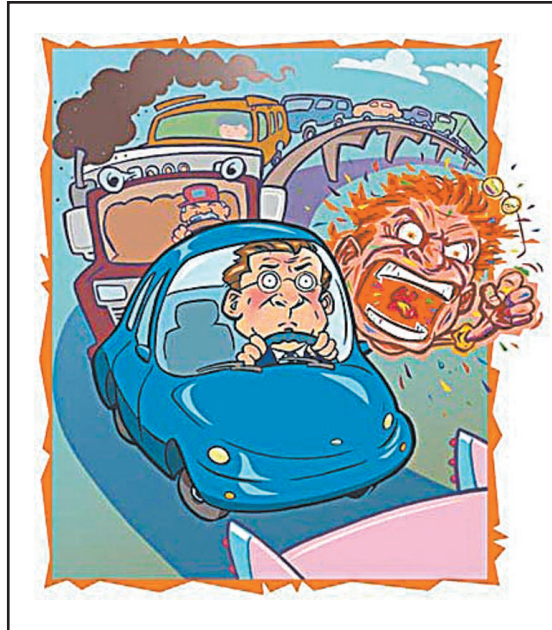
Now I know that the county has spent a fortune redoing the bicycle paths along Old Cutler and for that I am grateful. They were (and probably again will be) in deplorable shape but they are fine when I ride with my grandkids on a nice leisurely ride. When I am going on a longer ride at higher speeds of 15-20 mph, I find it quite dangerous to encounter

kids on training wheels or mothers pushing baby carriages.

I also fear riding by driveways and intersections where motorists don't seem to heed with caution the possibility of someone approaching at speeds as mentioned.

I hear many complaints about cyclists traveling in large groups all clumped together. Theoretically they are supposed to ride no more than two-up or two riders side by side. This is fine if there are only a few riders involved but when there are dozens, it is best that they clump up and allow a motorist to pass safely if there are no oncoming cars, without dealing with perhaps a half mile stretch of single or double rows bicycles.

The answer to this is of course, bicycle lanes as apposed to paths. This involves slightly widening the road to accommodate a lane for bicycles only, as is done in many other countries and some cities and towns. I doubt that the historic designation given Old Cutler Road was intended to restrict cyclists. This is one of the most beautiful and well-



used roads for riding a bicycle that we have in Florida for cryin' out loud!

The county now has made matters even worse by adding curbing along the road so that a cyclist has nowhere to turn or bail out if a truck with a trailer comes up from the rear. A couple of feet of shoulder would have helped but there is none now. I have called and written the people in charge but no one seems willing to challenge the historic designation to at least allow for the safety of the many riders using this beautiful road.

I recently had to get off my bike to break up what was looming to be a fight between a motorist and a cyclist. The motorist passed a little too close to the cyclist just to prove a point. The bicycle rider answered with the standard one-finger salute. When I got there the motorist was bragging how he had been trained to kill in the military and could kill the cyclist if he wanted to. I finally got everyone calmed down, but I can't be there all the time.

Perhaps you might want to contact your county official or representatives as well before we encounter a serious accident on Old Cutler.