

Cyclists, motorists need 'respect'

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was hit by a car and killed riding his bike along Hwy. 27 Wednesday, he became the second cyclist killed on York Region roads in the past week and the 10th pedestrian or cyclist killed in the region this year.

Dimitri Buykov was killed around 6 p.m. trying to cross Hwy. 27 when he was hit by a northbound 2002 Volkswagen Jetta driven by a 44-year-old Beeton woman.

Georgina resident Robert Bond, 77, was crossing The Queensway South Nov. 3 when he was hit by a southbound 2004 Cadillac Escalade operated by a 31-year-old Richmond Hill man.

But most of those fatalities were preventable, the Canada Safety Council says.

More than 90 per cent of cyclist deaths across the country involve motor vehicles and in 70 per cent of the collisions, the cyclist is at fault, either by violating a law or by poor road sense, according to the council.

Ontario's Motor Vehicle Act considers bicycles to be vehicles and Raynald Marchand, council

manager of traffic safety and training, said that means cyclists need to learn how to respect other vehicles and obey rules of the road, just like cars and trucks.

However, a healthy dose of respect from both sides is what's really needed, Mr. Frank said.

'I think the most I would want (from other vehicles) is a little bit of space. And if space means respect, then, yes, we need that respect and a little bit of patience.'

Brian Frank
cyclist

"I think the most I would want (from other vehicles) is a little bit of space," he said. "And if space means respect, then, yes, we need that respect and a little bit of patience."

In the hopes of preventing future deaths, Mr. Marchand said a few simple safety tips can save lives.

Two-thirds of all cyclist deaths involve head injuries and up to 85

per cent of those injuries could be prevented by wearing a helmet, according to the council.

"In Ontario, riders younger than 18 must wear a helmet by law, but we think all cyclists should wear a bike helmet at all times," Mr. Marchand said.

While a helmet is the No. 1 way to protect yourself on a bike, the council also recommends cyclists ride with the flow of traffic, avoid roads with speed limits 60 km/h and above and pick routes that allow the kind of space bikes need.

"Every time a vehicle passes you on the road, you are giving that driver an awful lot of trust. He has to miss you each time," Mr. Marchand said.

"Be predictable, visible and wear the proper equipment including a bike helmet," Mr. Marchand said. "Do that and you'll be a lot safer."

As a veteran cyclist, Mr. Frank wears a helmet and reflective clothing. He follows every safety tip out there, but thinks more needs to be done, including improving road conditions and building dedicated bike lanes for cycling commuters.

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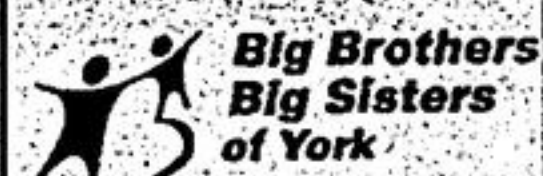
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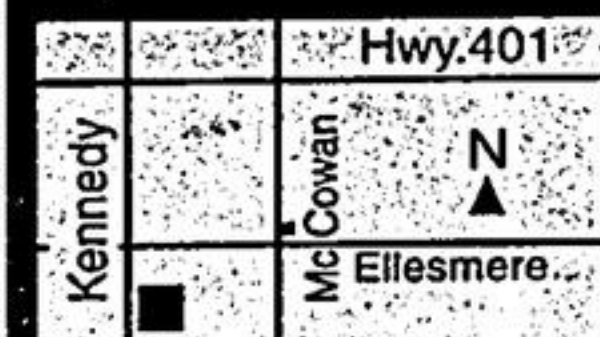
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