

Letter Sent to The Republic in 2007

Laws Help Prevent Danger At Intersections

From: Cynthia Scott

Columbus

I thank The Republic for publishing the 2006 Columbus Intersection accident report last Sunday. The cautions offered for icy winter weather were welcome, but there is more than weather to consider. I am concerned about an irritating apparent lack of attention to safety and traffic rules. I'd like to offer two traffic law reminders that should have been included in the Dangerous Intersection report:

1. A common mistake happens when a driver wants to make a left turn against on-coming traffic while under a green light. The BMV says "only one vehicle is allowed to move into the intersection to complete the turn when the way is clear." To me, that means one at a time. Potential trouble builds when two or more cars nose out to the middle, one behind the other, hoping to sneak through before the light turns yellow and red. More often than not, the last car is caught in the red light.

2. The second common error is making that left turn into the wrong lane. Many drivers will move into the left-moving lane farthest from the centerline instead of the nearest. Many of those that do manage to pick the correct lane "cut the corner" and come close to brushing the front of any car waiting to cross the intersection with right-moving traffic.

I'd also like to suggest that the City of Columbus could make a pile of money in traffic fines simply by positioning a plain-clothes officer with a digital camera on any busy corner on 25th Street at random times. Other cities have automatic cameras mounted over intersections for red light violations. The license number and make of the car is captured and the registered owner gets a traffic citation in the mail. The equipment cost and set up are probably expensive, but I'd bet that cost would be recaptured in a very short time and drivers would soon learn the intended lesson.

OPINION

Edited by John Harmon

3 letters best of field in 2007



John Harmon

SOME Letters to the Editor are destined for greatness. I can spot them on first read.

Such was the case with Ernest Lifferth's November 2006 letter that explained how his family enjoys the People Trail at all times and in all seasons ...

"Thanks for these weekly or sometimes daily sensory experiences as I commute to work or in our leisurely, ponderous pedaling of the paths ..."

• So in looking for nominations for 2007 Letters to the Editor of the Year, I naturally gravitated to Michael Fahey's August letter about ... the People Trail.

He enjoys the trail from another dimension, that of an inline fitness skater. His concern: scooters and mo-peds, which do not mix well with walkers or skaters.

Yet, Fahey has detected heavier scooter and mo-ped traffic each year.

"I urge all those able to get out on our wonderful trail system and enjoy some exercise and take a slower look at our surroundings," wrote Fahey.

• Tied for first place was Cynthia Scott who also had safety in mind when she wrote about some motorists' sloppy left-turn habits.

Only one car should try to turn left when a stoplight is yellow, she reminded, and the turning vehicle should go into the lane closest to the center line, rather than drift over to the right lane.

She also advocates cameras at intersections to serve as a deterrent to red-light runners and to boost the city's coffers in



The Republic photo by Joe Harpring

Writers of the 2007 Letters to the Editor of the Year were, from left: Kathleen Leason, Cynthia Scott and Michael Fahey.

Letter tips

You can join the Letters to the Editor brigade in a variety of ways:

- E-mail your letter to editorial@therepublic.com for the quickest turnaround.
- Fax your letter to 379-5711.
- Mail it to "Letters to the Editor" The Republic, 333 Second St., Columbus, IN. 47201.
- Hand deliver it to our office at the address above.
- Use the Letter to the Editor form under "Submissions" on our Web site, therepublic.com

Some guidelines for the letters:

- They must be signed and include the writer's city of residence.
- Include a phone number for verification only.
- Be concise; address one topic per letter.
- Letters longer than about 700 words literally won't fit in the letters column and will be held until appropriate space is available.
- Avoid personal attacks.

the process.

• The third winning letter this year also dealt with motorists. Kathleen Leason suggested ride-sharing (car-pooling)

in the spirit of World War II conservation efforts to reduce carbon emissions.

"With the Internet in virtually every home, it wouldn't take a

rocket scientist to figure out how to connect people willing to share rides," she reasoned.

Runners-up, honorable mention and/or next-best letters included:

• Dot Yeaton's farewell to the staff at Lincoln Elementary School, which transitioned into a magnet school this year.

• Kenneth Landreth's salute to veterans, Iraq and freedom.

• Jay Saunders' urging moderation from the folks who submit Letters to the Editor, Sound Offs, Orchids and Onions about NASCAR star and Columbus resident Tony Stewart.

"Leave him alone!" urged Saunders.

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