November 2026

A Note from Executive Director, Lisa Zimmers

Right of Way

It's remarkable to me the things that stick with a person throughout the years. Sometimes, it seems a struggle to remember to grab my purse, keys, wallet, and phones (yes, more than one) as I head out the door. It would seem everything is in the purse but that's not always the case depending on which activity I last engaged in. Walking my dog, work, pickleball, concerts, soccer games, they all require different bags for equipment and necessities and thus add to the equation. One thing I learned decades ago in driver's education has stuckwith me throughout the years. Mr. Bevilacqua, who was the boy's physical education teacher at the middle school I attended retired after I moved on to the high school. When he retired, he founded, "Bee Driving School."

In the late 1980's, driver's education was required for anyone wanting to get their driver's license before they turned 18. The rule now requires candidates up to 21 interested in acquiring a driver's license to complete the course prior to taking their examinations. Bee Driving School may not have been the only school in town, but Mr. Bee was familiar to many of the students and pretty much everyone I knew took their driver's education with him. An added layer of convenience for me was that the assistant coach on my high school softball team was also one of the in-car driving instructors so I could complete my 8-hours of required practice training with him and get some added coaching during that time.

Driver's education is a pretty standard course. A book was provided during my two weeks of in class training, videos were shared, and scenarios and stories were told. I distinctly remember a story that Mr. Bee shared during my driver's education class. His sister was riding a bike decades before and there was a hill on the road she was riding on. A driver, unable to anticipate a car was approaching the hill from the other side went around her as they approached the top of the hill. The driver of the car going the same way she was going overcorrected and hit her. She passed away from her injuries. That story and his heartfelt delivery never left me.

The laws for driving haven't changed much. What seems to have changed is the pace by which people want to go. We want what we want, and we want it now. Whether it's results for medical tests, meal service, home improvement projects or getting to our next destination, patience seems to elude us at times.

I see more and more people riding bikes around town. In the past several years, I have known multiple people who have lost their lives to impatient or impaired drivers. Many of the roads in this area have hills and curves. I have had drivers behind me get hostile because I give bikers ample space and don't speed around them with obvious blind spots ahead. I can feel the frustration growing behind me, particularly if no cars come over or around the blind spot. It's not a risk I'm willing to take. I'm not in that big of a hurry. If I'm late, that's on me. I can live with that. What I can't live with is creating a tragedy that could have been prevented.

-Lisa Zimmers

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