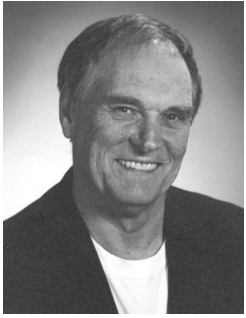


On the Safe Side

by Commissioner Don Ellis



Recently, on a drive to the south sound, I intersected a major state highway and saw three teenagers walking along the shoulder. They were on the right side of the road, walking in the same direction as traffic and ignoring the vehicles turning into the lane beside them as well as the rapidly moving traffic approaching them from behind.

I wanted to stop, point out the dangers and suggest moving to the other side of the road, but cooler heads in the car prevailed, sensing that a strange man leaping out of his car while commencing a lecture on road safety might not enhance the teenagers' afternoon, suggested I continue driving on. Grousing a bit and remarking on the absence of an adequate shoulder, I complied.

When I was young (about two centuries ago) I attended Lake City Elementary school, an edifice currently in use as a business center. I clearly recall, year after year and class after class constant reminders, in an effort to preserve our safety, to walk on the roads facing traffic. Much like Pavlov's canine companion this learned behavior became so ingrained in my psyche (and at such a young age) that I am now automatically offended when I see pedestrians walking in the same direction as traffic. Somehow they must feel quite comfortable with the ability of any approaching driver to operate a motor vehicle... unfortunately I don't.

Upon giving this more thought I realized that being a pedestrian on the side of the road has actually become more dangerous than in the days when I was growing up. The cars and drivers of today are outfitted with all types of media; music in a variety of formats, mobile phones, texts and navigation all displayed in a very attractive (and very distracting) manner in handheld and in-dash devices. We have all made mistakes when driving, from bright sun suddenly shining in our eyes, to a distraction from a child, a phone or a myriad of other minor events. During these moments, the last clear chance to avoid a disaster resides with the pedestrians' evasive leap into the bushes. If the pedestrian is not viewing the oncoming traffic, the opportunity for safety (and a close relationship with a blackberry bush) is lost.

It is interesting to note that my early years of public school also taught me to crawl under my desk in the event of nuclear attack. As a young adult, when there was more information on true devastation a nuclear attack would cause, I decided it might be best to unlearn this particular lesson. So, while the urge to crawl under the desk in this instance has become as laughable as I would look attempting this feat, the one principal: "walk on the left facing traffic" remains unshakable.

For the most part I do agree with the adage that "everything I need to know I learned in kindergarten." As most of what you learn in your early years; sharing, being respectful of others, the importance of a good nap and of course walking the opposite direction of traffic, really are lessons to live by.

In all seriousness it is very disconcerting to see adults walking on the edge of the street on the right. Granted if you grew up in or are visiting from a country where the custom is to drive on the left (if you can believe THAT) it is understandable that the conversion would take some time. But the tragedy lies with the children, walking under the guidance of adults, who are inadvertently teaching them to walk with their back to the traffic.

Driving a few blocks from my house I recently noticed a senior gentleman (such as myself) strolling in the road holding the hand of a young child. The two were on the left hand side, walking towards oncoming traffic with the child on the left next to the shoulder. Picture perfect! I drove serenely on knowing everything was right in the world. I'm positive he is a graduate of Lake City Elementary and that he also has an intimate relationship with the underside of his desk.

As a Commissioner of both Northshore Utility District and Northshore Fire District, safety is one of my great concerns. At NUD we approach safety as an investment in our employees and the community we serve. We outfit all of our fleet vehicles with first-aid kits and fire extinguishers and if you are in need of assistance, and see one of our district trucks, they can radio our dispatch center and contact emergency services. Our staff is trained to handle a wide variety of situations and are required to attend monthly safety meetings to keep their knowledge and skills fresh. Our employees work hard to keep the District operating smoothly and in a safe manner.

Keep safe, but more importantly, keep the children safe.

Meter & Hydrant Access Reminder



Have you checked your shrubs or groundcover lately? Do they need a trim? Please remember to keep those meter boxes and hydrants clear and unobstructed. Your water meter must have at least a 2' x 6' foot clearance and the hydrants must have a 3 foot radius free of vegetation and debris.

If a meter is inaccessible due to debris, overgrown vegetation, parked vehicles located over the meter box or any other obstructions, the property owner shall be assessed a special access charge in the amount of \$30.00 for each instance that the meter is determined to be inaccessible for attempted meter reading or repair. Please remember that we read every meter every other month. In other words, we read 1,200 meters on an average day. We want to keep our meter readers safe and unscathed during the performance of their duties. ♣



Email Reminders & One-Time Bill Payments are Now Available!



Have you signed up for e-mail account notifications? NUD will send you an e-mail reminder when your statement is ready for viewing on-line, when your 5% discount is about to expire, when your bill is about to become past due, and when there has been a credit or charge posted to your account. These notifications will not replace the billing statement you receive in the mail. This is just an added courtesy to help you keep track of your bill.

To access your account, we need to have your e-mail address on file for each account that you have with the District. Once we have your e-mail address associated with your account, you can then register on the website.

We also have expanded our on-line service to include a one-time payment option where you do not have to register your email address with the District. Go to <https://customers.nud.net> to set up your notifications or make a one-time payment. If you have any further questions, please call the Finance Department at (425) 398-4402. ♣



Be Climate Smart In Your Garden This Fall!

Most people know that using compost and mulch in their garden allows the soil to retain more water and reduce irrigation needs. But did you know that compost and mulch also helps your soil store more carbon from the atmosphere and reduce greenhouse gas emissions? Follow these simple steps this fall for a healthier, more beautiful garden, that is climate smart!

- Build healthy soils by mixing 2 to 4 inches of compost into the upper 8 inches of soil when planting, or rake 1/4 inch of compost into existing lawns.
- Use compost as “mulch” by spreading a 1 to 2 inch layer around plants and trees to fertilize the soil and help hold moisture.
- Choose the right plant for the right place in your garden - your plants will flourish naturally with less water and chemicals.

To learn more, visit www.savingwater.org (click on “Conserve outside”) or call the Garden Hotline at (206) 633-0224. ♣



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