

## Moving Together: Getting Around A-Town



Welcome to the first installment of a monthly series on transportation news and issues around Arlington, which will address all ways of getting around town.

## Making your trips more uneventful

Uneventful. No road rage, no near-misses, no crashes. It is how everyday travel should be in Arlington. Walkers, wheelchair users, cyclists, and motor-vehicle drivers all share our public streets and sidewalks, and all have the *right* to expect safe, fair, and respectful travel conditions. But everyone also shares the *responsibility* to travel in ways that are safe, fair, and respectful.

To launch this transportation column in the *Arlington Advocate*, we focus on some tips and reminders to help make your trips around town less stressful and more uneventful both for yourself and for the common good of our Arlington community. (And from what we see out there, some reminders are in order!)

### Watch where you're going

- Pay attention to traffic and other roadway users around you, and watch where you're going. This tip applies to all modes of transportation -- whether you are talking on your cell phone while driving your car or reading a book while crossing the street on foot. When you are distracted and not paying attention, you put yourself and others in danger.
- Distracted driving has become such a widespread and "life-threatening practice" that the U.S. Department of Transportation has produced a comprehensive website to stop it: [www.distraction.gov](http://www.distraction.gov).

### Obey traffic laws

- When driving or bicycling, stop at red lights and stop signs. You can turn on red only where permitted and when traffic is clear for you to do so. Yield to pedestrians in crosswalks.
- Note that cyclists have the same rights and responsibilities to use roadways as motorists, which means that these traffic laws also apply to cyclists.
- When crossing a street as a pedestrian, first check for traffic (both motor vehicles and bicycles) before entering the street, then step into the street when it is safe to do so.
- For a refresher on Massachusetts traffic laws and the "rules of the road" pertaining to drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians, see [www.mass.gov/rmv/dmanual/index.htm](http://www.mass.gov/rmv/dmanual/index.htm).

### Remember that *everyone* is a pedestrian

- Pedestrians are among the most vulnerable roadway users, including children, seniors, and people with disabilities. When driving or cycling, slow down and watch for pedestrians in busy areas such as business districts, schools, and neighborhood parks and playgrounds.

- Regardless of your primary transportation mode(s), you go into pedestrian mode when you finally reach your destination and get out/off of your car, truck, motorcycle, bus, or bicycle.

### **Try being nicer**

- Being nice won't kill you or endanger others in your path of travel, and it won't slow you down that much.
- Travel at a safe speed, observe the posted speed limit, and be ready to yield to other roadway users such as pedestrians in crosswalks. No one ever has an absolute right-of-way, only the obligation to yield it.
- If you are running late, that's not an excuse for being a road warrior and endangering others. Give yourself enough time to get where you're going.
- Be ready to forgive, and remember the simple golden rule: Treat others as you would like others to treat you.

Following these basic laws and guidelines will help reduce friction, horn-blowing, hollering and cursing, near-misses, collisions, and injuries on our streets -- and also serve you well in making your trips around our town more pleasantly uneventful.

### **Comments?**

Send comments and suggestions to directly to the *Arlington Advocate* at [arlington@cnc.com](mailto:arlington@cnc.com).

*Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Jack Johnson, Scott Smith, Rachael Stark, Ed Starr, and Christopher Tonkin contributed to this month's column, collectively representing the Arlington Transportation Advisory Committee, the Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee, and Walking in Arlington.*

### **SIDEBAR:**

#### **Celebrate National Bike Month**

- May is National Bike Month, and **Bay State Bike Week** is scheduled for May 14-20. For a schedule of local cycling activities, see [www.baystatebikeweek.org](http://www.baystatebikeweek.org).
- Join members of the Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee (ABAC) for the annual **BIKE-Arlington Tour** on Sunday morning, May 15, starting at 9:30 a.m. This year's tour will meet in the municipal lot behind the Jefferson Cutter House in Arlington Center and feature stops along the Alewife Greenway path, currently under construction in East Arlington.
- Attend Ciclismo Classico's annual **Bike Film Festival** at the Regent Theatre in Arlington Center on Wednesday night, May 18.
- Best of all -- enjoy a bike ride this month if you can!