

Letters

Motorized wheelchairs, motorists on collision course

TO THE EDITORS:

Ah, it's summer again, people are out and about in their cars, on their bicycles, their motorcycles and — unfortunately for drivers — their motorized wheelchairs. No one driving a motor vehicle wants to harm another person sharing the road, be they passengers or pedestrians. Which leads me to ask the question: Why does it appear nothing is being done regarding persons on motorized wheelchairs riding on the city streets and not using the sidewalks? Which, by the way, cities and states were forced to

pay millions and perhaps billions of dollars to make accessible to handicapped persons (Americans with Disabilities Act). I can understand that riding on the sidewalk is probably uncomfortable and jarring to the body, but riding on a street meant for cars, trucks, SUVs, buses and motorcycles poses a potential for much more serious injury. Are the police permitted to give them warnings, citations and/or fines, preferably in that order? I'm sure most of these people have social and/or case workers that should

discourage this activity. Just the other day, as I was crossing from one side of a street to the other in my car, I nearly collided with one of these wheelchairs. The person operating the wheelchair never saw me, as he was going the wrong way on a one-way street. He entered the crosswalk just as I entered the intersection. I did not see him because I could not see him riding along the row of parked cars and, most of the time, in a seated position, the top of the head is only a few inches above the hood of an average-size car.

Not only was he traveling in the wrong direction on this street, he was crossing over so that he could travel in the wrong direction on another one-way street, this one with two lanes and a main artery in and out of the city. I blew my horn at him but he never looked at me or even turned around. That created an even scarier scenario — a deaf person riding a motorized wheelchair on the streets in areas designated for licensed motor vehicles. Can this be stopped?

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