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Bike accidents common in Phoenix

Crash that killed girl not a rare occurrence in area, numbers show

By Michael Clancy

The Republic | azcentral.com

Accidents such as the one Wednesday between moving vehicles and a bicycle that resulted in fatal injuries to an 11-year-old girl are not rare in Phoenix.

The accident took place near 20th Avenue and Indian School Road, where a two-stage crosswalk connects a shopping area on the northern side of the street with residences on the south.

According to Phoenix police Sgt. Trent Crump, the child, Bu Meh, pedaled ahead of her father and out into the roadway from the protected median without waiting for traffic to stop. She was hit by a car in the center lane, then proceeded into the curb lane, where she was hit by another vehicle.

Crump noted that Meh was not wearing any protective equipment.

The city averages between 450 and 500 accidents a year involving bicycles and vehicles, resulting in around 10 deaths per year, according to the city's Street Transportation Department.

Many of them take place near the same intersection where the child was killed. Indian School Road at 23rd Avenue, 27th Avenue and Interstate 17 has some of the highest numbers of bike-vehicle accidents in the past five years in Phoenix, city records show.

In such accidents, the person on the bicycle rarely has a chance.

"A bicyclist can be doing everything right and still end up wrong," said Sandy Adams, traffic-education program manager for Glendale, which has averaged 36 bicycle accidents a year since the start of 2007, with two deaths since then.

Nationally, more than half a million people annually are treated in emergency rooms after bicycle accidents, and more than 700 people are killed.

In 1975, two-thirds of those who died were younger than 16. Now, that has reversed, with 86 percent of deaths among those older than 16.

No one can really explain why, other than children are a captive audience for bicycle-safety education programs.

According to statistics from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Arizona has consistently been in the top 10 for bicycle traffic fatalities. In 2009, the state ranked fifth in the nation, although it is the 16th-most-populous state.

The state saw 19 bicycle traffic fatalities in 2010 and 25 in 2009. The states with more deaths are considerably more populous — California, Florida, Texas, New York and others.

It is not clear why Arizona is so high on the list. The climate, which enables bicycling year-round, could have an impact.

Jeremy Stapleton, volunteer chair of a Phoenix subcommittee on bicycling, says the prevalence of vehicles not accustomed to bicycles plays a part, as well.

Making the city better for bikes is a tough job, he said, with funding and political will lacking.

"We have a long way to go," he said,

"but if we don't start, we'll never get anywhere."

Kerry Wilcoxen, traffic-safety supervisor for the Phoenix Street Transportation Department, said the city is working on improvements to bicycle infrastructure, including more bike lanes, marked crosswalks, over- and underpasses, and the like.

He said the child killed last week was taking advantage of such an improvement — the double crosswalk on Indian School Road near 20th Avenue. It didn't help.

In addition, Phoenix and other Arizona cities consistently try to educate bike riders on safety, emphasizing helmet use and other protections.

"We can control infrastructure and education, but not behavior," Wilcoxen said.

Adams in Glendale noted that there, more than half the accidents are the motorist's fault. But most of those involved in accidents who end up in emergency rooms and morgues are the people on the bikes.

COMMUTING

LOGJAM OF THE WEEK

SCOTTSDALE

» **Shea Boulevard** restricted between Scottsdale Road and Loop 101. The east-bound lane will be closed in short segments from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays to permit utility-line work. Completion is scheduled for Thursday.

CHANDLER

» **116th Street** restricted at Riggs Road.
 » **Ocotillo Road** restricted from Alma School Road to Jacaranda Parkway.

MESA

» **Higley Road** restricted from Broadway Road to University Drive.
 » **Main Street** restricted from Sycamore Drive to Hobson Circle.

PEORIA

» **83rd Avenue** restricted from Hatcher to Mountain View roads.
 » **Olive Avenue** restricted at 107th Avenue.

PHOENIX

» **Camelback Road** restricted from 42nd to 46th streets.
 » **Seventh Avenue** restricted from Vineyard Road to Southern Avenue.

SCOTTSDALE

» **Pinnacle Peak Road** restricted at 91st Street.
 » **Cactus Road** restricted between Loop 101 and Frank Lloyd Wright Boulevard.

TEMPE

» **Warner Road** restricted at Kyrene Road.
 » **Warren Road** restricted at Rural Road.
 » **Elliot Road** restricted at Kyrene Road.

PHOENIX

» phoenix.azcentral.com
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 » northvalley.azcentral.com

\$5 mil gift boosts non-profit

PHOENIX — Officials with UMOM New Day Centers said a \$5 million donation is allowing the non-profit to pay off the mortgage on its main campus in east Phoenix and redirect money to shelter services.

UMOM, which provides shelter, support services and permanent affordable housing for homeless families in Arizona, received the donation from the Bob & Renee Parsons Foundation at an event on Oct. 26.

"This gift allows UMOM to focus solely on providing the services and support our families need," CEO Darlene Newsom said in a news release. "We will be able to take 22 families from our waiting list and get them into shelter."

The donation ends UMOM's Capital Campaign, which launched in 2005 and has raised \$24 million for the purchase and renovation of the shelter's main campus at 3333 E. Van Buren St. The organization moved into the renovated campus in October 2009.

That campus will now be renamed the Bob and Renee Parsons Foundation New Day Center.

The money also will allow UMOM to increase shelter units to 156 from 134, which will allow the shelter to house 82 more families annually, build 48 additional permanent-housing units and hire more staff.

The Bob & Renee Parsons Foundation was created by Bob Parsons, founder of the domain-name provider Go Daddy, and his wife.

Fountain Hills deals with cost of downtown avenue renovation

By Edward Gately

The Republic | azcentral.com

The Fountain Hills Town Council made it clear that it's unwilling to spend more than \$1.3 million for design and construction to give downtown's Avenue of the Fountains a major makeover.

At its Nov. 1 meeting, the council examined each line item and provided direction to staff on how to bring down the overall cost.

Councilwoman Cassie Hansen said the council seems to be "jumping into a pretty major overhaul without using more of what's already on the medians." She has voted against proceeding with the project.

Councilmen Dennis Brown and Cecil Yates have been working with staff on ways to create an impressive project on a tighter budget.

"That (\$1.1 million to \$1.3 million) is what we will shoot for in design, to try to meet that budget number," said Paul Mood, the town's development-services director.

The avenue and medians, west of Saguaro Boulevard and the town's namesake fountain, now include leaky fountains, dying trees, limited pedestrian accessibility, an outdated electrical system and an inefficient irrigation system. The

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PAUL MOOD
 Fountain Hills development-services director

area was built in the mid-1970s.

The town's 2012-13 budget includes \$1.8 million for the design and construction of the medians, with \$1 million of that from the downtown excise-tax fund and \$800,000 from the capital-projects fund.

In March, the council approved an initial \$19,727 contract with J2 Engineering and Environmental Design for a site inventory and analysis and conceptual planning.

The project could include new electrical and irrigation systems, mechanical enclosures, new water features and entry features, a new pedestrian pathway, locations for public art, shade structures at two plazas and electrical conduits for future pedestrian lighting and accent lighting.

Trees may have to be removed, including those in direct conflict with major features of the project.

Conceptual estimates included four new water features at a total cost of \$234,136, Mood said. However, at Brown's request, the council instructed staff to lower that cost to \$30,000 to \$40,000 per fountain, or no more than \$160,000.

"What this will do is you will get a more canned-type water feature," Mood said.

"You're not going to get something with water columns spraying water or a custom waterfall-type feature. We'll try to give them the best product that we can within budget."

Brown and Yates suggested using pavers instead of concrete for the pedestrian walkway.

Brown said that pedestrian walkways at both Tempe Marketplace and Gilbert's San Tan Village shopping centers are made out of pavers instead of being made from concrete.

The council agreed to reserve areas for public art, rather than create public-art locations with seating areas and custom walls, Mood said.

The anticipated timeline has been to complete construction next year between the Fountain Hills Great Fair in late February and the Fountain Hills Festival of Arts and Crafts in mid-November.

SCOTTSDALE

» scottsdale.azcentral.com

Event aims to inspire women

SCOTTSDALE — The first Beauty in You Workshop was held in downtown Scottsdale this fall in an effort to inspire and empower women throughout the Valley.

The workshop was Sept. 29 at Pepin Restaurante Español and was hosted by Nassim Sana, the founder of Beauty in Truth Life Coaching LLC.

Sana said her mission is to "touch, move and inspire" women to start making changes in their life.

Donnalee Sarda, executive director of Defenders of Children, was presented with the Tahirih Award, which honors outstanding women in the community.

Profits from the gathering were donated to the Mona Foundation, an organization that supports universal education.

Annual concert series to begin

SCOTTSDALE — The 14th annual Pinnacle Concert Series begins Sunday and runs through May 14 at Pinnacle Presbyterian Church, 25150 N. Pima Road, Scottsdale.

Ticket prices vary.

More information: 480-303-2474 or www.pinnacleconcerts.org.

Spirit of Scottsdale luncheon

SCOTTSDALE — Women of Scottsdale's annual Spirit of Scottsdale luncheon begins at 11:30 a.m. Nov. 16 at Westin Kierland Resort & Spa, 6902 E. Greenway Parkway.

Reservations are required.

For more information, visit www.womenofscottsdale.org.

EAST VALLEY

» mesa.azcentral.com

» gilbert.azcentral.com

» chandler.azcentral.com

» tempe.azcentral.com

» pinal.azcentral.com

Parents to aid school changes

GILBERT — More than 75 Gilbert Classical Academy and about 10 Gilbert Junior High School parents expressed interest in being a part of the transition committee that will help decide what's best for each campus next school year.

The interested parents gathered last week at two separate meetings at each of the schools, and each group decided it wanted to select the five parents on the committee, said Assistant Superintendent Shane McCord, the committee facilitator.

The first planned meeting will be 6 p.m. Nov. 13 at the district's Community Education building, 6839 E. Guadalupe Road, Mesa.

The panel is tasked with telling the Gilbert Public Schools governing board on Jan. 8 the best option for both schools' transition for the 2013-14 school year.

The board decided Oct. 2 to close Gilbert Junior High no later than the 2014-15 school year and form the transition committee to get parental input on several options.

The original recommendation from Superintendent Dave Allison was to close Gilbert Junior High next school year to make way for an expanded Gilbert Classical Academy.

However, the board put the decision off after many parents, students and teachers urged them to spend more time on the decision and receive more parental input.

WEST VALLEY

» glendale.azcentral.com

» peoria.azcentral.com

» surprise.azcentral.com

» svvalley.azcentral.com

Help fund medical equipment

GOODYEAR — The non-profit Southwest Lending Closet is holding a buffet dinner to raise money for medical equipment.

The Southwest Lending Closet will receive \$1 for every buffet purchased from 4 to 9 p.m. Nov. 13 at the Golden Corral, 420 N. Dysart Road, Goodyear.

The all-volunteer organization lends durable medical equipment, at no charge, to those in need throughout the Valley.

For more details, visit www.southwestlendingcloset.org.

Pilots invited to a fly-in meal

GLendale — The Wings and Wheels fly-in, drive-in pancake breakfast will be held from 7 a.m. to noon Saturday at the Glendale Municipal Airport. 6801 N. Glen Harbor Blvd.

This is no charge.

The Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter 55 has invited local pilots to a fly-in pancake breakfast hosted by the Left Seat West Restaurant located at the airport. Aircraft can be viewed by the public. Many of the pilots will be available to answer questions about their planes.

Also to be seen are a number of light-sport aircraft, the newest class of aircraft to evolve over the last 10 years.

Classic-car club members driving Corvettes, Mustangs, Mopar and other sport vehicles will have their cars on display on the tarmac in front of the restaurant.

Parking is free and will be at the terminal and adjacent lots.

LOTTERY RESULTS

Lottery information is available at arizonalottery.com or 480-829-PICK (7425).

POWERBALL