

PRESS RELEASE:

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## Ride of Silence Organized to Raise Awareness of Dangers to Bicyclists

BICYCLISTS FROM ALL OVER SAN DIEGO COUNTY will take to the streets of downtown San Diego on Wednesday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in a Ride of Silence to honor bicycle riders who have been injured or killed while riding on San Diego County's public roadways, as well as raise awareness of bicyclists' rights and responsibilities. Gathering at the intersection of India and Washington Streets, the bike riders will don black armbands and embark on a silent, slow speed bike ride through downtown San Diego.

The first Ride of Silence was organized in 2003 by Chris Phelan in Dallas, Texas after endurance cyclist Larry Schwartz was hit by the mirror of a passing bus and killed. It is now an international event. The bicyclists in San Diego will be joined by thousands of fellow cyclists at hundreds of location around the globe.

“According to California Vehicle Code Section 21200, bicycles have an equal and legal right to use the public roadways,” explains Frank Paiano, organizer of the Ride of Silence and a long-time bicycle commuter. “Although most motorists and cyclists are aware of this, some motorists still believe that bicycles do not belong on the roadways. The behavior of these few motorists is often reckless and illegal. The resulting deadly collisions simply can not be termed ‘accidents.’ They were entirely predictable given the behavior.”

The prevailing attitude of many of the San Diego County authorities is also considered a problem by those in the bicycling community. “Often, when we bicyclists complain about dangerous and reckless acts by motorists, the authorities are uninterested. They will usually respond, ‘We didn’t see it. We weren’t there,’” explained Paiano. “This was the same response that claims of domestic violence generated 20 years ago. Now, every report of domestic violence is investigated. We bicyclists need to raise awareness of the abuse we receive at the hands of a few, uninformed motorists.”

All San Diego bicycle riders are invited. Riders wishing to join are asked to remain quiet, ride single file, and not exceed a speed limit of 12mph during the Ride of Silence.

For more information, contact:

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