

Sadly, ~~that~~ our county coroner has been busy lately: pulling a man's body from the bay who had drowned, then searching for the identity of another who had been hit by a car on US Highway 101 just south of Eureka on Sunday. The bay has its hazards to be sure, but I'm most concerned about the many pedestrian deaths and injuries in Eureka the past few years.

My personal experience ~~the past few years~~, leads me to believe Eureka is a very dangerous place for pedestrians: E.g.

Last week one of parishioners was hit by a car at Hodgson and J street; she was thrown a long distance, landing on her head, sustaining ~~some~~ serious injuries but fortunately she is healing.

About two years ago ~~one~~ ^{another} of my other parishioners was walking near the Eureka Inn; ~~and~~ ^{when he was} struck by a car and thrown a great distance ^{with} serious injuries and many months in recovery.

On the other side of the coin: a few more years ago one of my colleagues looked rather depressed and when I asked him what was going on, he confided that he had struck a man with his car, causing ~~a~~ fatal injuries. My colleague is a sensitive and caring ^{man} person and the grief it caused him seemed to be almost ~~overwhelming~~ ^{unbearable}.

A couple of years ago a teenager was hit near Carson Park and suffered fatal injuries:

According to statistics on pedestrian accidents, Eureka is indeed a dangerous place to be ^{for} pedestrian. ~~per capita deaths are way higher than the national average.~~ I've ~~read~~ ^{done some} online research

Eureka ranks ^{3rd} nationally in terms of pedestrian deaths per capita. ^{in Calif.} depending on year.

So, what can we do to make our pedestrians safer?

First, let's talk about walking in traffic and using cell phones. ~~don't do it!~~

I've noticed I don't always multi-task well: so walking and texting on my cell phone can prove to be hazardous; there is something about texting and walking that insulates a person from imminent danger posed by autos. When I am teaxting it sometimes becomes almost like a Matrix, sci-fi movie where your mind and body move in and out of ~~cyber~~ ^{the empirical} space. When texting, my mind is in cyber space, and so there rises the delusion that those cars coming at me must also be cyber space. They're not.

I am not the first to sound the alarm about pedestrian safety: and appreciate the signs that have been placed all around our town: Some in Spanish:: Oye, ver y ser visto – Look! See and be seen. They often have a diagram of a cell phone on them, and for good reason. Here is a few suggestions: don't text and walk anywhere near traffic. ~~I've had some close calls with my cell phone in hand and cars approaching.~~ Put the thing away, then go to home or office or school and get the much needed text message.

Second: as a driver, most of us do not want to hit a pedestrian: no never. So let's slow down. I find that when I see the speed limit I add 5 mph and figure that's what I can get a way with. Let's all stay at or below the speed limit. It just might save a life.

This has been Dan Price for Community Comment