

Prospective bicyclists given tips

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By JOHN L. HILL
Attorney General

AUSTIN—Bicycles turn up frequently on Christmas gift lists for children—and for adults, too, these days.

The Bicycle Institute of America estimates that there are about twice as many bikes as families in the country today. In 1972 alone, more than 12 million new bikes were bought.

So bikes are undoubtedly popular consumer items. Since they are also relatively expensive items, consumers should shop carefully to get the best machine for the money—and that means the machine best suited to the rider and the type of riding he or she will do.

Such a machine will probably also be the safest, too, since many bike injuries result from problems occurring with a bike unsuited to its rider. Other causes of injury are loss of control, mechanical and structural problems, entanglement, slipping from pedals, and collisions.

More than 400,000 persons suf-

fered bicycle-related injuries serious enough to need hospital emergency room treatment last year, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

The Commission is developing safety standards for bicycles to eliminate many of the injuries caused by mechanical or structural failures. The new regulations will set strict performance and construction standards for brakes, wheels, steering system, and frame. They will require reflectors on front, back, sides, and pedals to make bikes visible at night, and also will require elimination of uncovered sharp edges and jutting parts.

These new standards aren't expected to go into effect for several more months. In the meantime, however, if you're bike-shopping for Christmas, the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division recommends avoiding possible dissatisfaction, repair problems and even danger, by looking for these points when choosing a bicycle:

-If you're buying for a child, get a bike that fits his current size. Don't select a larger one, thinking he will grow into it. A bike that's too big will be hard to handle and could contribute to accidents.

-A bike should suit the rider and the purpose. A youngster who has never owned a bike before may need a more basic model than an adult who has biked frequently for years. Likewise, a bike that will be used mostly for jaunts to the park can be less complex than one used for cross-country competition.

-Make sure the bike is the correct size. First check to see that the seat post extends the recommended two inches. Have the rider stand over the bike seat and rotate the crank so one pedal is all the way down. If the bike fits, the rider's leg should be straight when the heel is resting on the pedal.

-Check brakes carefully for fast, easy stopping. If the bike is for a youngster, and it has caliper hand brakes, make sure the child has the strength and hand size it takes to

operate them easily.

-Check the entire frame of the bike for sharp points and edges and for any protruding bolts or other structural problems.

-Inspect pedals. Plastic ones may be slippery. Rubber-tread pedals or metal ones with serrated edges or toe straps are usually safer.

-If the bike doesn't come with headlights, taillights, and all the reflectors recommended by the Consumer Product Safety Commission, consider purchasing them, along with extra reflective trim for fenders, handlebars, chainguards, and wheels, to be certain the bike will be recognizable in the dark.

-If the bike is for a child under 12, the safest choice may be a single speed model with pedal operated brakes. In most cases, a three-speed bike with pedal brakes is the most

elaborate model a child should have, according to bike safety experts. Five or 10-speed models are relatively complicated for a child to operate and may cause more concentration on gear shifting than on traffic. A three or five-speed model may be all an adult needs, too, after considering how the bike will be used.

-If you know little about bikes, choose a reputable dealer who has a variety of models for comparison, who can help you make a decision, and who can service the bike after the sale.

Consult the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division, your county or district attorney, or your local Better Business Bureau if you have a consumer problem about a bike purchase or service under a warranty.

Listen up

'Student priorities bad'

Editor:

Having just spent two days on the A&M campus while on leave from the Army, it has been a real education to discover how messed up the priorities of this university and its students really are.

The members of the Corps of Cadets are griping about women entering ROTC; yet, at the same time, the number of men actually participating in the ROTC program has dropped significantly in the last few years. Instead of downgrading the women for becoming part of the great tradition of the Corps of Cadets, the time and effort could be spent more effectively in upgrading the numbers and quality of the Corps.

While the Corps is complaining about women, other members of the student body are complaining about saying prayers in Duncan Dining Hall and before football games. Apparently, prayers before football games are more important than the fact that the Administration is trying to dictate what students can say and see on this campus. And while everyone is worrying over some trivial item, the construction on the University Center continues with no consideration as to the needs and wants of the student body.

To the Corps of Cadets I say, "Let tradition be the base upon which you build but don't let it blind you to the fact that if you don't change and progress you cannot grow and if you cannot grow you surely die out."

To the civilian students I say that the traditions are yours also and so yours to build on as well. If you don't, this university will become a place where students come to do their four years and get out, not hav-

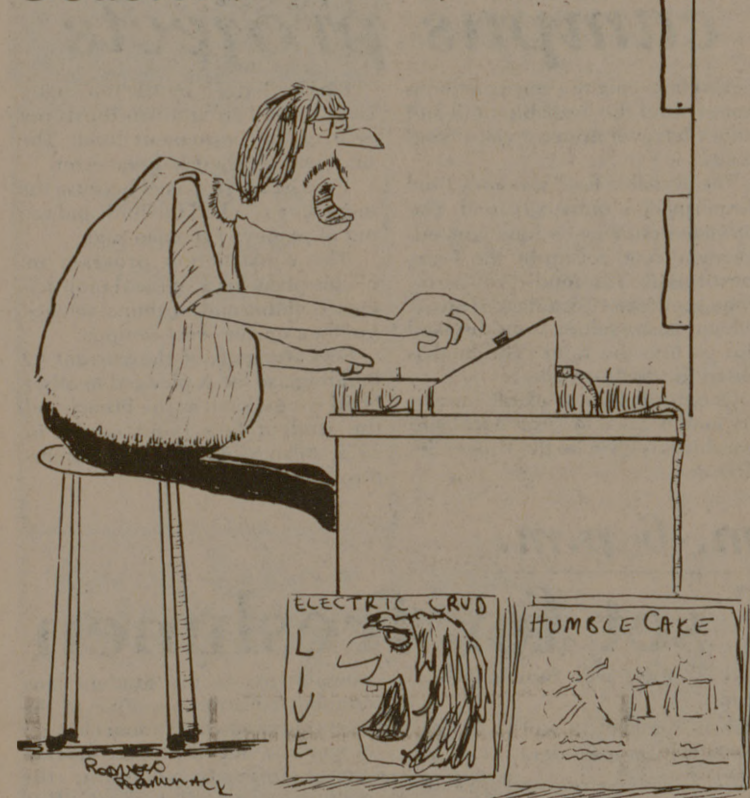
ing learned anything except what came out of a book. If you worry about ants while the elephants are tearing down the house around you, you'll be rid of a few minor pests but you'll have no place to live.

Donald F. Killingsworth '72

marked bikes after dark. In fact they could stop these individuals from molesting our sanity at all just by refusing to tag bicycles which do not have the proper safety equipment for night cycling.

Pat Mabry

Coasters By Rodney Hammack



"This is Student Radio where you just heard 'Going Down on Love' by John Lennon, before that you heard 'Pictures of Lilly' by the Who, and before that was 'Eight Miles High' by the Byrds, and before that you heard 'Smoke on the Water' by Deep Purple, and before that you heard ten minutes of stereo silence until someone called in and woke me up..."

Night nuts

Editor:

I ply you with this epistle on the behalf of a forgotten minority of faithful Aggie students. After a long and demanding day of classes and related activities followed by several hours of tedious research in the library as we drive slowly home we find ourselves besieged by those sadistic invisible two wheeled harpies of the night—the campus bicyclists.

These enemies to our mental health leap the curb into our paths with not so much as a piece of fluorescent tape to make themselves more visible. If these individuals are so desperate to commit suicide I would beg them not to draft us for instruments of this free wheeling purge. If some compulsion is pedaling them to meet their Maker astride their ten speed coffins let them run head long into Rudder Tower or Sul Ross statue so that none of the loyal minority of motoring aggies has to feel responsible for their self-ordained destiny.

There is another alternative to this plight facing my small desperate group. The university could make an all out effort to foil these thoughtless suicidals by making stiff fines for riding unlighted and un-



The Battalion

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