

## Longview Daily News

### Annual STP bike classic safer this year

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By [Leslie Slape](#)

Early rider feedback seems to indicate that the Cascade Bicycle Club's "etiquette campaign" to improve rider safety on this year's Seattle to Portland Bicycle Classic was a success.

"Everything is smooth," said Jolly Matias of Kent, Wash., stopping for a breather Sunday afternoon in the shade of a building at the corner of West Main Street and First Avenue. "We're having fun."

Matias pedaled with friends from the Seattle area who are all Filipino. They wore bike shirts reading "Trangko," which they said means "up front" and "safety."

A record 9,500 bicyclists registered for the 29th annual classic. Last year, a motorist was arrested for felony hit-and-run after hitting and injuring a cyclist on Highway 30. Two other cyclists were injured when they hit the downed bicycle.

Matias and his friends said they like the "single-file is safer" campaign, which the bicycle club's education arm introduced this year to improve the cyclists' relationship with motorists, as well as help keep everyone safe on the 202-mile trip.

"Oh man, it's great," said David Gossard of Federal Way of the new etiquette guidelines. "Everybody's being very, very safe and trying to ride single file. There's a lot of cooperation with the public as well as different police forces."

Sgt. Troy Brightbill of the Cowlitz County Sheriff's Office, which controlled traffic at Riverside Park in Lexington, said the only issue that arose for deputies was a report around 10 a.m. Sunday of a motorist intentionally swerving toward riders. No one was injured. The car was last seen turning on to John Street from West Side Highway, but deputies were unable to locate it.

Brightbill said the single-file campaign and extra traffic controls appeared to make the ride run smoothly through the county.

"It sounds like it went off pretty well this year," Brightbill said. "It's one of those things, you have to be a little bit patient, but it's kind of neat seeing it come through town."

At various points along the route, citizens gathered to wave and encourage riders. The Clatskanie Cruisers parked at the Oregon end of the Lewis and Clark Bridge early Sunday morning in their shiny vintage cars, one honking a cheerful "ah-oo-gah" as a wave of riders came across the bridge.

Saturday, the bridge shoulder was swept clean of weeks of bark and other debris hazardous to bicyclists.

At the Longview end of the bridge Sunday morning, Sharie and Kim Burdick waited at Starbucks for their husbands to pedal up Industrial Way. The Bellingham women are married to brothers.

Sharie Burdick's husband, Brad, is on his third STP, and he inspired Kim's husband, Brent, to try it this year, they said.

Also stopping at Starbucks, Kirk Christianson of Seattle said some riders did make the effort to practice bicycle etiquette, while others didn't.

"It's just like driving," he said. "Some follow the rules, some don't. I noticed a lot of traffic control people — they did at least manage that. Hopefully residents will appreciate that."

Kent Klingman of Kent, Wash., and Ben Lazo of Seattle praised the organizers' efficiency.

"I was surprised. At every stop, it's incredible what they have to do," Klingman said.

"Every little town, there's something," Lazo added. "There's kids selling lemonade on the side of the road. It's amazing."



Seattle to Portland Classic riders climb the Washington side of the Lewis and Clark bridge on Sunday. The bridge lane was shut down periodically to let groups of riders cross the span. [Leslie Slape](#) / The Daily News