

BIKEWAY IS all the rage (we mean that in a good way)

TO THE reader who has never experienced the Minuteman Bikeway, last Sunday's front-page article "Rage on the bikeway" gives an impression that anyone who sets foot on the path is putting life and limb at risk. The piece contains a string of misleading portrayals that tell only half the story.

The bikeway is portrayed as chronically crowded; in fact, there are many daylight hours in the week when it is underutilized. I can report that I once had to bring my bike to a complete stop for a very rude beaver that completely ignored my shouts of "On your left!" (I should add that I neither kicked nor swore at it.) I won't deny that the path gets busy and chaotic on a sunny weekend afternoon, but there is so much more to be experienced if one seeks it out.

As with many things in life, how you experience the bikeway depends on your attitude. I choose to see the Minuteman Bikeway as a unique and special place that also happens to be immensely popular, and with good reason.

Perhaps we should spend more time (and ink) celebrating the fact that last year people chose to partake in a healthy activity 2 million times. Maybe then we can look for ways to safely expand that number to 4 million. Fixating on a proportionately small aspect of a complex issue and then labeling it "bikeway rage" won't help.

RANDY BAKER
Medford

WHEN THE Minuteman Bikeway opened, I rode back and forth from home to the ice cream shop in Arlington with my then-young son. One day he rode somewhat ahead of me and caught up with some strollers. He pulled to the left to pass just as a couple of bikers streaked up behind us. The bikers complained heatedly to me and my bewildered son. They seemed to have confused the bikeway with the autobahn, where fast traffic indeed has the right of way.

I also use the bikeway as a relatively fast biker, so I know how frustrating it can be to slow down and weave around dog walkers and kids wobbling on training wheels. However, that's just the nature of



WENDY MAEDA/GLOBE STAFF

Joel Taves of Lexington walks with Diego along the Minuteman Bikeway, a popular destination for strollers, bicyclists, and joggers — so popular that some weekend days can see heavy traffic.

a multiple-use trail. Those of us who are faster owe it to the slower traffic to accommodate. Nice weekend afternoons are eminently bad times to try to ride fast. Early mornings are pretty wide open, by contrast.

By the way, you do your readers a disservice in quoting someone who says that fast bikers ride at 35 miles per hour on the bikeway. They don't. Typical fast speeds for bikers are 15 to 20 miles per hour, with some getting into the low 20s downhill. Those are still enormous speeds in proportion to slower users — 20 mph relative to a walker at 3 mph is like 200 mph relative to town traffic at 30 mph.

HUME VANCE
Somerville

MATT VISER'S article misses the most important point. If some people feel rage on the bikeway, it is because it is so poorly managed and constructed. Unfortunately,

is high time to revisit building that trail, which would run from Waltham to 495 and beyond. Construction would be little more than a line item in the state budget, and would benefit hundreds of thousands of Bay Staters. And if Weston balks again, we should go over their head. Come on. It's just a bike path.

ARI OFSEVIT
Newton

IMAGINE MY surprise as parishioners delivered last Sunday's Globe sporting a front page photo of myself and several church members under the headline "Rage on the Bikeway," this only eight days after we spent a remarkable morning enjoying the Minuteman Bikeway on a trek from Alewife Station to Lexington Center.

We walked for fun, our health, and a special cause. More than 175 Episcopalians from several area churches strolled different parts of the Bikeway to converge at the Episcopal Church of Our Redeemer in Lexington. Our shared purpose and passion: raising money to care for children orphaned by the AIDS/HIV pandemic in East Africa. We wish your headline had read, "Raising money and awareness for AIDS orphans in East Africa" or "Episcopalians walk toward common goal," as both describe our experience and the photograph more accurately and might have been more front-page worthy than bike path rage.

We experienced no rage sauntering through Arlington toward Lexington, no sexual advances, no disputes, no worries, just committed people using a public facility to help hundreds of thousands of children the world seems to have forgotten.

JOE ROBINSON
RECTOR
CHRIST CHURCH
Cambridge

MICHAEL L. ALTMAN
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THE ARTICLE about space conflicts on the Minuteman Bikeway raises the obvious point that we should build more. In 1998, the good citizens of Weston voted down a segment of the Wayside Rail Trail

CORRECTION: A Jan. 5 letter said that the number of police reports filed along the bikeway in Arlington this year represented 0.06 percent of all police reports filed in Arlington in 2005. It should have