

With the ease of purchase and growing popularity of battery-powered motorcycles and electric bicycles, we have seen a concerning increase in high-speed activity on our trails and in our parks. Too often, riders are traveling at excessive speeds past pedestrians, with little regard for others. In some cases, there have been verbal threats and even physical confrontations.

With simple modifications, many e-bikes can reach speeds of over 50 miles per hour. While this issue is not unique to Clarence, we made the decision, with input from local law enforcement, to act quickly and proactively.

Last year, Clarence became the first municipality in Western New York to pass a progressive local law addressing this issue. This law provides law enforcement, especially when dealing with minors, with more options when encountering unauthorized motorized equipment on bike paths, sidewalks, and in our parks. It allows for the confiscation of electric bikes when rules are violated or when reckless operation occurs.

In addition to younger riders, e-bikes have also become popular among adults who may have lost their driving privileges. Many are operating on public roads without protective gear and often without proper lighting, attempting to avoid attention. Several states have already implemented regulations requiring insurance, licensing, and minimum age requirements for e-bike operation. We are hopeful New York State will follow suit in the near future.

It is important to note that dirt bikes of any kind are strictly prohibited on our bike paths. Just last month, the Erie County Sheriff's Office impounded a gas-powered bike operating illegally on one of our trails. Moving forward, the Sheriff's Office and State Troopers will be actively patrolling to ensure our trails remain safe. If you violate the law and put others at risk, your vehicle will be confiscated.

Sadly, last year our community experienced a tragic loss when a Clarence youth lost his life in a low-speed e-bike crash while not wearing protective equipment. Another young person was seriously injured in a bicycle accident without a helmet. In response, the Town is currently reviewing potential amendments to our local law that would require helmet use on our bike trails.

On a more positive note, our Youth Bureau recently hosted another successful Easter Egg Hunt at Clarence Town Park. With over 300 children and families in attendance, it was a wonderful community event. Thanks to the great weather, the eggs were found quickly, and all children received candy and prizes.

A special thank you to the Clarence Fire Company for escorting the Easter Bunny, as well as to the Clarence Rotary Club, Fidelis Care, Paula's Donuts, and Tim Hortons for their generous contributions. I would also like to recognize Youth Bureau Director Dawn Kinney and Assistant Director Jessica Wruck for organizing another outstanding event.

Our Parks Department, led by Superintendent Jason Holden, has remained active throughout the winter, supporting events at the Clubhouse and Nature Center. As we move into spring, they are hard at work preparing our fields and facilities for what will be another busy season.

Our Highway Department also completed a demanding winter season, once again ensuring our roads remained safe and passable despite challenging conditions. While many municipalities struggled with staffing and salt supplies, Highway Superintendent James Dussing and his team consistently delivered. Their dedication does not go unnoticed.

The Highway Department will be conducting a town-wide brush pickup next week, which will also serve as the first round of their monthly brush collection program.

As always, thank you for your continued support in helping keep Clarence a safe and vibrant community.