

A question of responsibility

■ Should Hanover Park have to pay \$6.7 million to a paralyzed man?

Regarding the news story on a \$6.7 million jury award to a paralyzed motorcyclist, Hanover Park taxpayers should be livid with their municipal leadership of eight years ago, not the accident victim.

Whoever was at the helm left Hanover Park exposed with grossly inadequate insurance.

Their million-dollar policy is barely adequate coverage for small companies and wealthy homeowners, let alone a municipality.

If the real problem for the public leaders of eight years ago was the unavailability or expense of liability insurance, then Hanover Park should instead join with consumers calling for reform to stop insurance gouging, rather than restrict the rights of the injured.

Nancy A. Cowles,
executive director,
Coalition for Consumer Rights

Taxpayers suffer

The Village of Hanover Park appreciates Celeste Garrett's column.

Because the village was not allowed to inform the jury that [plaintiff] Tom Redlin was unlicensed, the jury found the village 90 percent negligent. Many residents have asked if the village can refuse to pay the award. Unfortunately, lawfully the village is required to burden future taxpayers to fulfill the payment.

Residents are appalled that the legal system does not require greater personal responsibility. Redlin's injuries are tragic. However, mounting a motorcycle one does not own, without formal training or proper licensing, potentially places one in harm's way.

Marc G. Hummel,
village manager,
Village of Hanover Park

Belittling a tragedy

Just as the facts of the McDonald's coffee case never got in the way of media distortion, so they elude the current commentary. The Sun-Times and columnist Ce-

leste Garrett do a disservice not only to a fine young man tragically injured, but to all those who are potential victims of negligence.

Tom Redlin, an experienced motorcycle rider, borrowed his friend's motorcycle and was driving on an unfamiliar road in Hanover Park. Ahead of him, in darkness, was a raised curb and island in the middle of his lane. The village had long before determined that a warning sign was necessary.

That sign was not present that night. It had not been present for several months. Other motorists also had hit the same island when the sign was absent. This was reported to the village. The village did nothing. Redlin struck the island and was paralyzed from the waist down.

Garrett instead focused on inaccurate statements from a biased source concerning Redlin, now confined to a wheelchair for the rest of his life. He is called a "mope" by Garrett because he was unfortunate enough to be the one severely injured. I wonder what colorful description Garrett has for the Hanover Park engineer who failed to replace the sign?

No one has bothered to ask about our attempts to settle this case both before and after the verdict on terms far more favorable to Hanover Park; we were rebuffed each time.

Mark Novak, partner,
Anesi, Ozmon & Rodin Ltd.

He's no cyclist

Celeste Garrett wrote that Tom Redlin was a motorcyclist. On the contrary, Redlin was injured while riding a motorcycle, but he was definitely not a motorcyclist.

A true motorcyclist, while perhaps appearing somewhat "rough," is a trained, law-abiding, licensed and responsible operator. Redlin does not fit that category.

Garrett is correct. There is something wrong with a system when those lacking responsibility are rewarded.

Joe Lanckhoff, Mount Prospect