

MUSINGS OF A DISTRACTIBLE MIND / BY HOPE H. OZER

Busted.
Again.
Suffering through Defensive Driving School is sheer torture. I know. Been there. Twice. Vowed to *never* do it again.

One lapse in failing to reset cruise control when the speed limit drops and kaboom! Flash! Snookered.

Doing 52 in a 40. I would have *sworn* it was a 45. (Yes, I know, it was still over the speed limit even if it was 45mph – but not by *nearly* as much!) Well, it *was* 45. A few feet back. I *know* the speed limit changes there. I *know* the photo radar sits there. All. The. Time.

Weeks go by. I've forgotten all about it.

LH says, "You've got mail." (Should copyright that.) And there it was: The dreaded citation.

Actually, it was quite a good photo of me. Hands at 10 and 2. Eyes straight ahead. Textbook. With "eyes straight ahead" I must have missed the sign telling me *the speed limit has dropped*. Did I hear you say, "speed trap"? Indeed.

The home page reads, "Welcome to...Easier...Affordable...Fun...Arizona Online Defensive Driving." Thus, I begin hours of mind numbing classes. Sure beats the times I had to *show up* at a class. *Not* my first rodeo.

I embark on the first section. Amongst the descriptions of "Signs, Signals and Pavement Markings," is a random sentence that reads, "Sparky does not like to stop completely at stop signs because he is too cool." I find myself wondering, (1) Who is Sparky? (2) Why do I care that he thinks he's cool? and (3) How random is *that*?

When I arrive at the *four* question section test, an "aha" moment: One of the questions is about Sparky. He's 25% of the test. I pass with flying colors.

By the time I complete the next few sections with Sparky references on the quiz, I spot a trend. They just want to see if I'm paying attention. Reading *all* of the material – not just setting the clock and returning to take the quiz.

Am I to learn something about safe driving or Sparky's preferences on food, entertainment and snarky Sparky responses to questions like, "Why did Sparky always want to be a police officer?" Answer: "So he could pull someone over and ask, 'Do you know what you just did?'" Like, "Why did the chicken cross the road?"

What I learned: Of the 25 questions in the final exam, *all* were about Sparky.



I now know (and recall) who his favorite actor is: Arnold Schwarzenegger or Tom Cruise? It's Arnold in case you're curious.

I learned about what music he likes: Hard rock. Surprise. Where he likes to eat: Jack in the Box. What he likes to *eat* there and that he likes to meet his *friends* there. There were *four* questions related to Sparky and Jack in the Box! Does Jack in the Box get a piece of the action?

One was about his favorite drink at Starbucks: Fat free, sugar free, extra hot Latte. Same as LH! Who knew? *Not one* about anything substantive. I would think that they would ask relevant questions. See if I retained *anything*. Retaining Sparky's culinary and entertainment tastes are not the stuff from which better drivers are made.

I am *not* complaining. I scored 100%! Better than I'd *ever* done in *real* school.

The *pièce de résistance*: The final page of the website proclaims, "Congratulations, you have passed the course!" complete with a graphic of a lady holding lots of money in each hand with a *huge* smile on her face – sort of like a cheerleader – with a quote, "I made all this cash just by referring others! I took this course 2 years ago and I am still getting cash every month by mail. You can make money too!"

Wish I'd realized that *before* I took the class. It was LH who recommended this particular school. He didn't give me the answers. Nor did he tell me about Sparky. Nor was he aware of the \$2 kick back – oops I mean "commission" – for having referred me. We could be in the money, honey! At least it's not tied to a discount on my next class.

I now have an "Associate Code" so I can get a \$2 referral fee on each one. How cool is *that*? Look at all the money I can make if my friends have a lead foot like mine.

A refresher? Not a bad idea. It's natural to become complacent. Being tested on Sparky's preferences prompts me to be even more mindful that I need to pay better attention to driving so that *I never have to partake of this exercise again*.

The sign on the back of some trucks queries, "How am I doing?" When you see me on the road – YOU be the judge.

Hope H. Ozer is founder and Publisher Emeritus of CITYSunTimes. Her monthly columns previously written as "Publisher's Pen" range from personal – some humorous, some poignant – to observations on life, and continue to be one of CST's most enduring features.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Carefree Business Owners: Have Problems With Your Mail?

I opened my gun store, Old West Guns & Trading Co., almost two years ago and immediately started having mail issues. Great frustration has ensued ever since. Fast forward to a few weeks ago when one of my firearm suppliers sent me a package by U.S. Mail to my physical store address. The package was promptly returned by the Post Office as undeliverable, vacant address, no forwarding information, return to sender. Luckily, for me, this supplier immediately called me to discuss why I was closed and to obtain my new address information to redeliver the package. I obviously haven't moved or closed, so I asked them to send me a picture of the label area of the package, which they were kind enough to do.

After many more hours on the phone dealing with USPS QA and QC personnel and customer adjuncts, and having an extensive background in computer programming (in a former business life), I focused on those last two lines of the yellow label that had been attached to my package. It read, at the bottom, no forwarding information, return to sender. This got me thinking, it meant that there was a database of my store's physical address, and that the important field (for forwarding) was blank. So, with a little more telephone work with USPS customer adjuncts, and their supervisors, it was decided that this indeed might fix my non-delivered mail issues.

Today, I received confirmation of my mail issues being resolved, hopefully. The solution is simple, go to the Post Office, or do it online at usps.gov, and have your mail forwarded from your store address to your PO Box. Do this for your personal name, DBA, legal name and important employees that receive mail. The mail forwarding is good for one year, so do it every year.

– Steve Jones, Owner of Old West Guns & Trading Co.