

Sensory Delights



Get Real

by

Brooke Bessesen



Camera's flash leads to enlightening traffic lessons

Recently, Kronos (Greek God of time) granted me a small miracle of time.

I was zooming along in my car, hurrying to an appointment, thinking it would be impossible to fit one more teensy-weensy thing into my packed schedule, when suddenly – in a flash – I found *eight free hours* to go to Defensive Driving Class!

The blast of light from the photo radar van was so startling; it took a moment for the horror to fully sink in. I was the latest DMV poster girl. And I hadn't even smiled.

I prudently dropped back to the posted speed limit, cursing my lead foot. A little late for compliance.

As blocks passed, I experienced the Five Stages of Grief in rapid succession: Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and within about a mile ... Acceptance.

My frazzled brain eventually managed a positive spin: This was nothing less than an opportunity for higher learning – yes, it would be like going for a Masters of Driving Arts.

Imagine my delight when I learned the class would be at a local resort hotel. Ah ... I was fated to join the ranks of superior vehicular operators and enjoy a day of luxury and comfort.

But when the time came, filing into the small, beige, partitioned room and securing a stiff-back chair between two other dubious-looking lawbreakers, I was decidedly disillusioned.

My classmates were from all walks of life, a cross-section of Americana. During registration, I overheard some consolatory chit-chat.

Like prisoners, most claimed innocence.

I am told Los Angeles was the first city to hire stand-up comedians to teach driving school, citing two logical reasons: 1. members of that profession are almost always seeking employment, and 2. everyone loves a good gag about parallel parking.

Turned out, instead of a comic, our instructor was a hypnotist. He didn't actually say so, but applying his best droning, Ben Stein voice, we were quickly lulled into a trance.

That is, until he delivered some of the overwhelming statistics about bad driving and its deadly consequences. That woke us up.

Despite advances in car safety, such as airbags, crash testing and DVD players designed for rear passengers *only*, the road is a very dangerous place.

When I was a kid, we didn't even wear seat belts. I remember fishing a long, strange strap from tiny crumbs and lint balls under the seat of our Buick Skylark wagon and asking what it was.

How many times did I gleefully ride in the back of an open pickup truck? Or sit crowded with friends on the folded top of my brother's old convertible while cruising to A&W for a root beer drinking contest?

My parents weren't negligent; times have simply changed.

After the potty break, we watched a video on Road Rage in which extremely stressed, over-caffeinated individuals opted to settle a minor tailgating dispute with AK-47s.

What happened to frustrated drivers ending an argument with their middle finger? Those were the days.

Once, our witty friend, Rich, after accidentally cutting off another car, allowed the angry driver to pull up next to him at a stop sign. Just as the man rolled down his window to give Rich a piece of his mind, Rich shouted back at him, "Where the hell did I get my license? In a Cracker Jack's box?"

The fellow, completely disarmed, drove away chuckling.

Driving cars, we learned, is like playing video games – we have to strategize and calculate risk. We may be trying to earn points for shaving milliseconds off the daily commute, but the hazards are real.

We are confronted with opponents like Cell Phone Susie and Grandma Go-Slow.

Not to mention Level 8 Speed Demons: reckless drivers who swerve between vehicles like it's the Baja 1000 road race. One untimely lane change and it could be GAME OVER.

Although it might have been nice to listen to a comedian or meet in a movie theater with cushy recliners and Jujubes in hand, the lecture proved worthwhile.

Except for the woman who fell asleep whenever the lights dimmed and snored embarrassingly loud, I think most of us left that beige room enlightened. And not only were 25 driving delinquents transformed that day, but Kronos pulled one more amazing trick out of his bag: he managed to make eight hours feel like a lifetime.

Motoring home, I allowed additional travel time, carefully watched traffic around me and kept to the proper speed limit.

And as I drove past a photo radar van on the side of the road ... I smiled.

Scottsdale resident Brooke Bessesen is the author and illustrator of the children's book **Look Who Lives in the Desert!**, a humorous-but-educational look at desert wildlife. It's available at all book retailers, including Gridleys of Fountain Hills.

Ostrovskys open Cappucci Coffee Bar at art gallery

Two of Scottsdale's most intriguing arts impresarios are putting their special flair into the new Cappucci Coffee Bar, and plan to offer the public its first sneak peek Thursday, July 6 during the M&I Bank Summer Spectacular ArtWalk.

Victor and Bella Ostrovsky, renowned artists-owners of Ostrovsky Fine Art on Main Street's gallery row, now add restaurateur to their impressive list of accomplishments.

Victor Ostrovsky may be best recognized for his accomplishments as a painter, but he's had an intriguing career as a "Mossad" (Israel's foreign intelligence agency) case officer and a No. 1 *New York Times* best selling author. The Ostrovskys' desire to open Cappucci Coffee Bar, which adjoins their gallery and features a bold, artsy European atmosphere, grew out of the sense that their gallery and others were already making the corner of Main Street and Marshall Way a destination for curious art lovers and adventuresome others ... and that they needed a correspondingly cool place to "hang" while soaking up the best of Scottsdale's culture. "Cappucci will be rich with reds and blacks," said Victor

Ostrovsky. "Some will see it as quiet and classy, others will think of it as relaxed or even earthy. Like art, it's open to your own interpretation."

The café will reside in a remodeled 1,200-square foot space formerly occupied by another gallery adjacent to Ostrovsky Fine Art. Cappucci will serve a full palette of specialty coffees, delectable pastries, and all the great art you can soak up while you're there. Customers can even wander directly into the gallery and sip their java in a quiet parlor surrounded by massive paintings. Cappucci will also feature live music on selected evenings beginning later this summer.

Opening day for Cappucci Coffee Bar is Thursday, July 6, particularly that evening from 6 to 9 p.m. during the always-fun M&I Bank Summer Spectacular ArtWalk up and down Main Street. It's a great time to sample the new "taste" of art in downtown Scottsdale, and catch some live music from the very hip Kairos Jazz.

For more information about all the latest happenings at Cappucci Coffee Bar and Ostrovsky Fine Art, at 7048 E. Main Street, visit www.OstrovskyFineArt.com or call (480) 941-1600.

Heard offers Sizzlin' Saturdays for kids

Beginning Saturday, July 8 and continuing each Saturday through July 29, the world famous Heard Museum in downtown Phoenix is hosting its fourth year of Sizzlin' Summer Saturdays, a summer program designed for children and families.

This year's theme, "The Heard is a Cool Place," promises to deliver lots of fun activities and cool treats for families.

For four consecutive Saturdays, the Heard Museum offers free admission to children with the purchase of an adult admission.

The day includes a variety of fun, educational and inexpensive indoor activities for families.

Each Saturday will

include:

- Music & dance performances;
- Arts & crafts
- Free cool treats & souvenirs;
- Kid's meal specials at Arcadia Farms Café;
- Children's authors and book signings.

Dates are July 8, 15, 22 and 29.

Heard Museum is at 2301 N. Central Ave., in Phoenix.

Admission to the Heard Museum costs \$10 for adults; \$9 for seniors (65 and older); \$5 for students with a valid student ID; or free for members of the Heard Museum and Native Americans with proof of tribal enrollment.

For details, call (602) 252-8848 or see www.heard.org.