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 speeded.

I prudently dropped off the posted speed limit, cursing my lead foot. A little later that day, I realized it had been kind.

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 an opportunity for higher education! And not only that. The class would be at Driving Arts.

My parents weren’t too impressed about parallel parking.

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?

How many times did I neglect my parents’ rules about helmet use? How many times have I driven drunk?

After the potty break, we watched a video on Road Rage in which extremely stressed, over-cafeinated 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 day’s commute, but the hazards are real.

We are confronted with opponents like Cell Phone Hunters and Grandma 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 …

Except for the woman who fell asleep whenever the lights dimmed and snored embarrassingly loud, I think most of us left that beige room with their eyes and ears open, and not only that. The lecture proved worthwhile.

For four consecutive Saturdays, the Heard Museum offers free admission to children with the purchase of an adult admission. The days include a variety of fun, educational and inexpensive indoor activities for families.

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

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.

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Each Saturday will include:
• Music & dance performances;
• Arts & crafts;
• Free cool treats & souvenirs;
• Kid’s meal specials at Arcadia Parma 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.

Scottsdale resident Brooke Bessesen is the author and illustrator of the children’s book Look Who Lives in the Desert. Her books were recognized with an educational look at desert wildlife. It’s available at all book retailers, including Gridleys of Fountain Hills.

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.

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