Busted.

Again.

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

One lapse in falling 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 ahead. Behind me? Helmet. Not one. How cool is that? Like, “Why did the chicken cross the road?”

The home page reads, “Welcome to...Easier...Affordable...Fun...Arizona Online Defensive Driving.” Thus, I began hours of mind numbing classes. Sure beats the times I had to sit through mind numbing classes. Sure.

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 smiling face – sort of like “You’ve got mail.” (Should copyright that.) And there it was: The dreaded citation.

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 in 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.

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