

Getting testy on the road

A light look at the driving exams we all have to take

BY JAY DYCKMAN

EVER BEEN DRIVING down the road when some fool suddenly sticks his hand out the window and swirls his finger in the air, indicating, apparently, a desire to make a U-turn?

Yes? Well, then, we've met before, when you shouted at me, "Hey, idiot, who gave you a driver's license?"

You can blame the Department of Motor Vehicles, although if it could see me now, I'm sure it would regret the error. In fact, I doubt I could pass a driver's test today. You see, to me, the act of driving relies more on "feel" than rules, as if Obi-Wan Kenobi himself were guiding me, whispering, "Use the Force, Jay," as I parallel park.

Now, having recently moved to car-crazed Los Angeles after years of not driving, I looked up some actual driver's test questions to see how I'd do. Hop in, buckle up and hang on for dear life.

Q: You must obey instructions from school crossing guards:

- (A) At all times.
- (B) Only during school hours.
- (C) Unless you do not see any children present.

Correct answer: A.

My answer: C. If you're not leading a pack of kids, you're just a strangely old Boy/Girl Scout inexplicably holding a traffic sign.

Q: You drive defensively when you:

- (A) Always put one car length between you and the car ahead of you.
- (B) Look only at the car in front of you while driving.
- (C) Keep your eyes moving to look for possible road hazards.

Correct answer: C.

My answer: In all honesty, I thought this meant driving while explaining to your friend that your girlfriend really isn't all that bad, and no one's talking marriage, so why don't you just lighten up.

Q: You are driving on a freeway with a speed limit of 65 mph. Most of the other vehicles are driving 70 mph or faster. You may legally drive:

- (A) 70 mph or faster to keep up with the speed of traffic.
- (B) Between 65 mph and 70 mph.
- (C) No faster than 65 mph.

Correct answer: C.

My answer: A. Not drive at the same speed as everyone else? Does the DMV want me to get shot?

Q: You have been involved in a minor traffic collision with a parked vehicle and you can't find the owner. You must:

- (A) Leave a note on the vehicle.
- (B) Report the accident without delay to the city police.
- (C) Both of the above.

Correct answer: C.

My answer: C. But, truth be told, if "leave immediately and never return" were an option ...

Q: If you plan to pass another vehicle, you should:

- (A) Not assume the other driver will make space for you to return to your lane.
- (B) Assume the other driver will let you pass if you use your turn signal.
- (C) Assume the other driver will maintain a constant speed.

Correct answer: C.

My answer: I assume the other driver is like me and should not be on the road. Thus, I floor it into the lane I want to be in and then wait for a red light where we can settle this through a stare-down.

Q: All of the following practices are dangerous to do while driving. Which of these is also illegal?

- (A) Listening to music through headphones that cover both ears
- (B) Adjusting your outside mirrors
- (C) Transporting an unrestrained animal inside the vehicle

Correct answer: A.

My answer: C. Listening to Celine Dion is really worse than giving a lift to a rabid weasel? OK, I concede, that does make sense actually. **W**

