

License to drive us...crazy



A trip to the local Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) can make a person decide to move to the countryside and travel on horseback.

I was back at the DMV recently, to accompany my 18-year-old getting his permanent license, and decided to update my own license, too. Scrubbing down the inside of an

exhaust pipe would have been more pleasurable.

Waiting in line at the DMV can last almost longer than it would take to teach a bottlenose dolphin how to drive (which I suppose, would involve logistics like acquiring a car filled with water and a fin-friendly steering wheel.)

One may sit in a room filled with approximately 23 people per square foot and no available bathroom. When a large group of people are prevented from conducting their necessary business, things can get ugly. Every few minutes, when someone in need has become savvy to the lack of facilities, you will hear several choice expletives. When those who have been crossing their legs for hours suddenly make a mad dash for the door, it is clear that they will likely be arrested for illicit activity outside next to a tree.

When they first call my number, I am Moses parting the sea as I push through the hostile horde of people. An old man leaning on a cane tries to steal my number, but I fend him off with my purse.

I make it to counter number three, across from a gal who hasn't cracked a smile in a decade. A sign on the wall above her is cheerier, reading, "Even wearing a seat belt, you could die a slow and painful death." When Ms. Sunshine says it's time to take my photo, I preen and puff up my hair and attempt an alluring smile at what I assume is the camera. But it's not, and there is a hint of a smile in the corner of her left eye as she barks at me to face the camera, not the pen holder. Nevertheless, what was likely just her eye twitching feels like a victory.

Next, she hands me someone else's license. "This is not me," I say flatly, because the face in the photo looks like Attila the Hun after being forced at dagger point to suck on a lemon. I try to give it back, but she won't take it.

As I walk out of the place holding my grand prize, I decide to go shopping for a saddle. After all, I like to be prepared. Because if the government requires that I get a new license in the future, I will skip the trip to the DMV and just get a horse.

— Pam J. Hecht

Pam J. Hecht is a writer/instructor, mother of two almost-but-not-quite grown children and author of a syndicated parenting humor column. If she was alone in the woods and saw a bear, the first thing she would do is make a joke about it. Then she would run like hell. When she was 14, she read her mother's copy of Erma's *If Life Is a Bowl of Cherries, What am I Doing in the Pits?* and realized she could grow up and still make fun of everybody, including herself. You can find her online at www.pamjhecht.com.

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Humor Writer of the Month

Mike Reiss



Mike Reiss has won four Emmys and a Peabody Award during his 28 years writing for The Simpsons. He ran the show in season four, which

Entertainment Weekly called “the greatest season of the greatest show in history.” In 2006, Mike received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Animation Writers Caucus of the Writers Guild of America West. He has written 19 children’s books as well as the best-selling memoir Springfield Confidential: Jokes, Secrets, and Outright Lies from a Lifetime Writing for The Simpsons. [...]

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