



## Are you a good driver? Take an offensive driving course

The officer peered down at me. "Boy, do you know how fast you were going?" he asked.

"About 40 miles per hour, I guess."

"Well, I clocked you at 42. Do you know what the speed limit is on this stretch of road?"

"I thought it was 55."

"Not the maximum limit, the minimum."

"Uh, I don't know."

"For your information, the minimum on this road is 45 mph, and you were going at best 42. I'm afraid I'm going to have to write you a ticket for impeding and attempting to obstruct traffic."

I scanned the empty road. Why would he give me a ticket? I remembered that it was the 30th of the month. He had to fill his quota, I guessed. Wait a minute, did he say impeding?

"What do you mean I was impeding?" I asked.

You were going below the minimum speed limit," he explained. "In this county that's a moving violation."

"How much is the fine?" I asked.

"For only three miles under, just the base rate of \$30. Or you can pay \$20 to take an offensive driving course, and then you won't be publicly embarrassed by having this on your record."

"Offensive? Don't you mean defensive driving?"

"Defensive driving? My god, kid, you



**Timm Doolen**  
Columnist

were going 42 on a 55 mph highway. You can't get any more defensive than that. You need to take an offensive driving course. They'll teach you how to be more aggressive on the road. They'll tell you how to take chances and offend other drivers. Anyway, here's your ticket."

"Thanks and have a nice day," I said as he walked back to his car.

It sounded like it would be a boring experience, but I didn't need my insurance rates going down, putting me in a higher tax bracket. Getting a ticket for driving too slow was also a blow to my manhood; I didn't want to be considered an "impediment" for the rest of my life.

Weeks later I entered the offensive driving classroom and noticed that the overwhelming majority of the class consisted of senior citizens, with just a few obvious first-time drivers. I sat in the back next to another "younger" guy so we could laugh at the instructor and make fun of the older people's comments.

After talking to a few of the people, I realized that most were there on an impeding charge. But a few of them were there for other charges like signaling for a lane change when no other cars were around, unnecessarily waving for cars to go in front of them at a jammed intersection, stopping at a stale yellow light, pulling over to the right to let people pass, and other various courteous or safe driving techniques.

The instructor of the class handed out a booklet, "How To Bend The Rules of the Road," which was our text.

I glanced at some of the headings and sub-headings. "Ten Ways To Legally Run a Stop Sign," "Nothing Makes Them Madder Than Tailgating," and "Blind Them — Use the High Beam" looked interesting.

So did "Conveying Emotions Without Speaking: The Art of Rude Gesturing," "Why Restrict Yourself to Half the Road? Use the Left Lane," and "Effective Use of the Horn To Annoy People."

No sooner had I started reading about the advantages of keeping my mind focused on the stereo during heavy traffic when the instructor started lecturing to us.

"Let's start by talking for a few minutes about pulling out in front of people. Now, the best way to maximize the amount of frustration you can instill in another driver is to wait until the car is approximately two seconds or four car lengths from you when you pull out. The amount of time varies with car speed, of course." He pointed to the chart.

"Now don't worry about getting hit. While you're pulling out, just remember — the

## Mail Call

### Don't forget vet school

**EDITOR:**  
This is an open letter to president Mobley and the Board of Regents. Although I am not a member of the veterinary school, I am very concerned as to why its accreditation has been downgraded. I hear the main reason is for lack of funding. This is very puzzling since A&M appears to be growing faster than most major universities. It seems the Regents are appropriating new money left and right (new buildings, garages, centers) on top of raising fees. The vet school is a cornerstone of this University and does not deserve to be forgotten. Hopefully, through responsible spending and leadership, the veterinary school will be restored to its full status.

**Jeff Boylan '90**

### Simply shocking

**EDITOR:**  
I can't believe that you let Scott McCullar's cartoon run on April 3. With all the attention that racism at A&M has been given recently, it is shocking that someone would have the audacity to try to use a racial joke in the school newspaper. In fact, this is the second time this has been done by Mr. McCullar. This insensitivity is proof of the one thing that so many are denying lately: Racism is indeed alive and well at Texas A&M.

**Kevin Worley '91**

### Let's fix parking problem

**EDITOR:**  
As a student in the Commons who has to park in the Fish Lot on occasion, I agree with Becky Weisenfels that our parking situation needs a lot of help. However, as a student senator who is currently studying the parking and busing situation on other campuses, I feel that we are not ones to complain. At Ohio State for example, over 22,000 students bought parking permits for just over 4,000 spaces. At UCLA, the parking lots are a 15 to 20 minute bus ride away. Or, if you love walking to your car in subzero weather, go to the University of Minnesota. Their parking lots for residents are in the ozone layer. However, if you don't give a damn about other schools and care to something about A&M's parking and bus situation, come to our committee meetings. They are open to students and we would like your input. We usually meet in Room 208D of the Pavilion at 5 pm on Mondays. As a final thought, a good shuttle bus service, which ours is not, could make up for a bad parking situation.

**Brian Kingston '91**

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## Reagan's missing the gunfight at the O.K. Corral

The late Judge John King, a tough South Side Chicago Irishman, had a simple way of measuring a person's loyalty and character. Of some people, he'd approvingly say: "If you have to walk down to the O.K. Corral, he'll go with you." Or with a sneer, he'd say of someone else: "If you have to walk down to the O.K. Corral, don't wait for that guy. He'll hide in the outhouse." He was referring, of course, to the legendary gunfight in Tombstone, Ariz., when Wyatt Earp, with his two brothers and Doc Holliday at his side, walked down to the O.K. Corral to take on the bad guys. It was his way of saying whether a person was, to use a Chicago phrase, "a stand-up guy."

I thought about Judge King's old-fashioned standard while reading



**Mike Royko**  
Columnist

about the latest developments in the Oliver North trial. And I was surprised and saddened to see that Ronald Reagan, the Old Cowboy, is still not inclined to walk down to the O.K. Corral with Ollie North. North's lawyer has subpoenaed Reagan as a defense witness. That makes sense. They'd like to put Reagan on the stand and get him to concede that he knew a lot more about the Iran-contra affair than he's admitted to. If North's lawyer could do that, it would make North appear less of a

loose cannon, breaking laws and thumbing his nose at Congress when he saw fit, and more of a loyal, obedient Marine, fulfilling the wishes of his commander in chief. Obviously, Reagan doesn't want to testify about what he knew or didn't know, since the Justice Department has been fighting to keep him off the witness stand. This has to be a great disappointment to North. Although Reagan fired him when the scandal began unfolding, Reagan made a point of describing North as a "hero." It has to be gratifying to be called a "hero" by the president of the United States. On the other hand, it must have been confusing to North to be fired and called a hero at the same time. It would be understandable if North

said: "I thought they held parades for heroes. How come I get a pink slip instead of a ticker tape shower?" By calling North a "hero," Reagan persuaded a large segment of the population, who had never before heard of the Marine colonel, that he really was a hero. And that helped North win most popularity polls during and after his testimony at the congressional hearings. But now the "hero," is up to his ears in trouble, standing trial for shredding government documents, providing illegal aid to the contras and other alleged mischief while working in the White House. If he's convicted on even some of the charges, he could wind up in a federal prison. That would probably make him the first American ever fired and im-

prisoned for acts of heroism. If it happens, I can imagine other military men saying: "What, you want to give me a medal? Please, I beg you, don't. I have a wife and kids to think of." So if there was ever a time when North needed a stand-up guy at his side, it's now. After all, if Reagan thought North was a "hero," that must mean he approved of what North had been doing to further Reagan's goals. And if he considered North a hero, he must have been aware of what North was up to. Or else he wouldn't have called him a hero, would he? Of course not. I can't believe that Ronald Reagan would tell the American people that someone was a hero if he didn't know for sure that he was. Maybe he would have done that when he was a sports announcer, but

surely not as president. This, then, would be the appropriate time for Reagan to say: "Ollie, I'm not going to let you take that long walk down to the O.K. Corral all by yourself. I'm going to be right there with you, partner." That's not too much to ask. After all, Doc Holliday did it for Wyatt Earp, and Holliday was nothing less a dentist who gave up pulling teeth for the life of a card shark and gambler. I think we have the right to expect more of a president than a boozing ex-dentist. Of course, there might be a good reason why Reagan doesn't want to walk down to the O.K. Corral with Ollie, the "hero." Maybe Reagan didn't see the movie. Copyright 1989, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

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