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JAY WALKING

**Procrastinators Anonymous**By *Jacqui Zurcher*

Posted Tue, 08 Apr 2003

Any week that features four visits to the traffic department in three days could leave even the most indefatigably cheerful craving high-octane prozac. I was craving weapons of mass destruction to zap the smug traffic department staff that constantly reminded us hapless procrastinators that it was all our own fault — we had had four years to convert our driving licences.



We were there in our hundreds, if not thousands, deluging the traffic department in our last minute attempts to secure legal card licences.

As I arrived at Gallows Hill traffic department in Greenpoint at 6.30am on Wednesday morning, it was my fourth visit there in three days and there was already a long queue.

The surly officer had assured me the previous afternoon that if I were there the next day at 6.45am I would get a good place in the queue. Four hours into the queuing, having achieved zen-like calm about the whole affair, I decided my place wasn't so bad. My queue neighbours were great, I had learned about panel beating and spray painting in Grassy Park and had been given some helpful hints on divorce from a frustrated lawyer, hopelessly late for court.

The threat that compelled us all to doggedly stay in the confoundingly long queue was that if, by Friday, we did not possess our card driving licences we would have to redo our learner's and driver's tests. From the stoicism I observed during my 10-hour wait, I could only imagine that for those around me, their drivers test had been as traumatic as mine.

I would rather be eaten alive by a starving giant iguana than have to repeat my driver's test. Ten leprous zombies poking me with flame-tipped umbrellas would not have moved me from my place in the queue.

Fours hours into my wait I had worked through my aggression towards the self-righteous, but admittedly overworked traffic officers and had quelled my shameful thoughts that, surely, there must be someone I could bribe — why not

JACQUI ZURCHER isn't a vegetarian, but occasionally enjoys Soya mince and lentils. She has an honours degree in Computer Science and a Postgraduate Diploma in African Studies, majoring in Postcolonial English Literature from UCT. She likes olives, abhors cigarettes and admires pregnant woman. She lives in Cape Town and is really chuffed about that.

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## from the editor



"If you like all the good things in life, you've come to the right place. So go on, live a little..."  
*Leigh Robertson,*  
*Highlife Editor*

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make corruption work for me!

I felt a twinge of remorse for having entertained thoughts of bribery and corruption when Gerald Morkel appeared at about 9am, proceeded to have his photographs taken by the entrepreneurial photographer and then continued straight inside the building, impervious to the seething crowd as yet denied access to the inner sanctum of roadworthiness.

The damp, morning fog was doing terrible things to my hair. I was also slightly annoyed that my amazing foresight of a piece of fruit, water bottle and book seemed pathetically naïve compared to the hardy queue-meisters with their fold-up chairs and cooler boxes.

I would not have been surprised if one of them had whipped out a Weber and wireless TV and started braaing to the cricket. It would have been possible — a disabled snail with a prosthetic sucker foot could have moved faster than that queue.

The hours passed. Rihaad and Ishmael educated me on spray painting, Hajj and where to get good Islamic wear in Cape Town while Tim made sure I was acquainted with the latest interior decorating trends. White is the new white and lacquer... talk to the hand!!!

As we approached our ninth hour in the queue, my composure mutated intermittently into hysterical euphoria at the prospect that the cashiers were in sight and bleary-eyed disbelief that we had hardly moved in the last hour. People were plastered against pillars, sardined onto benches, perched on counters and sprawled on the linoleum floor.

The minutes trawled on, though, and finally our little group was at the front of the queue, surveying the open area before the tellers with no less awe than the desert-weary Israelites gazed upon the Promised Land.

Strains from the 'Chariots of Fire' theme tune played out in my mind as I loped toward the counter in exhaustion-drugged slow motion. I handed my form to the harassed-looking cashier and registered a stab of guilt that my pathological avoidance of the traffic department these last four years had resulted in her working overtime.

Finally it was all over and the world was a beautiful place. The previously demonised traffic officers now wore halos and radiated munificence and grace. I made a silent, fervent oath to turn from my procrastinating ways; from now on to always strike while the iron was hot and not put off for today what I would rather not even do tomorrow and could make a good excuse for avoiding indefinitely.

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