

# Cell phones, cars don't mix

**Shannon Armstead**

Commentary Editor

Cell phones have become a part of the average person's existence. They are the quintessential connection to our business and social lives, yet collisions are bound to happen when people put their concentration on their social connection device while driving.

Some cell phone-distracted drivers are worse than others, yet they are all distracted and therefore dangerous. You have probably been stuck behind, cut off, or, god forbid, hit, by one of those swerving, chatting drivers, or, you have been one of them.

A little chat on the cell phone might seem harmless, but save it till you have stopped. A quick chat is all it takes to take your vehicle, or somebody else's, for a ride no one wants to go on. Unfortunately many have had to learn the hard way that cell phones equal distraction. Melissa Borggaard of Portland took one of those dreaded rides when she was talking on her cell while driving over the Morrison Bridge recently. In "moment one" Borggaard was chatting on her cell phone and in "moment two" her vehicle was pummeling toward the Willamette River.

Luckily, Melissa survived her accident, but many more don't. An article in LiveScience noted that drivers distracted by cell phones cause 2,600 deaths and 330,000 injuries a year in the United States. That means that seven people are killed every day because of the distraction caused by cell phones.

The study also confirms that using a cell phone while driving slows your reaction time. A 20-year-old on a cell phone has the reaction time of a 70-year-old, according to the study. While using a cell phone, drivers most often look but don't actually "see" because they are concentrating on their conversation instead. Previous studies have found that cell phone users are less adept at driving than a drunk driver with a blood-alcohol level of about .08 percent.

Statistics like these have caused most countries to ban cell phone use while driving. While 11 states and the District of Columbia have laws restricting cell phones while driving, America overall is one of the few countries that allows cell phone use while driving. Europe charges fines for the use of the communication devices while driving.

It is easy for a person to assume that they are never going to fall victim to a serious accident because of a cell phone chat but let's

face it: you take a risk not only for yourself, but for other drivers when you use your cell phone while driving. Don't take my word for it; talk to the relatives of people like Gregory Davis, Leona Greif, Marcia Nathans, Richard McKeefery, or two-year-old Morgan Pena. Each died at the hands of a driver who was chatting on the phone. Supermodel Niki Taylor could also be added to the list of people who was critically injured by an accident involving a cell phone.

When it comes right down to it, a phone call probably is not so important it can't wait until you arrive at your destination or can find a place to stop. If your phone call is so important that you have to do it, make it snappy and uninvolved, please stay out of my lane.



## Last moments of class should pass in peace

**Ben Maras**

The Clackamas Print

At approximately three minutes before the end of every class, it starts like grass rustling on the savannah. The gentle sounds of students shuffling their papers, unzipping backpacks, clicking their pens closed—all poised for the instructor to fire the starting pistol.

"OK, next time in class ..." he begins, but no one can really be quite sure what comes after this, because a deafening roar drowns out all sound within a 50-foot radius of the classroom. It is a jumble books slamming and binders being thrown into book bags, while cigarettes are ripped from their cardboard carriers and thrust into the lips of waiting tobacco junkies yearning for the sweet taste of arsenic and tar.

Before the second hand has reached the 12, instructors are left talking to themselves and gathering their things to prepare for their next class.

Of all the things I thought I left behind in high school, I didn't expect this strange phenomenon to rear its ugly head in an institution of post-secondary education. This practice is not only mind-numbingly bothersome to the rest of us students, and extremely rude to the instructors who are teaching you, but corrosive to one's own character.

Why? Because everyone thinks you're an idiot when you come into class the next day (after rushing out, of

course) and can't figure out why you didn't know there was homework.

A favorite anecdote to sum this up happened just the other week in a class which shall remain nameless. It went something like this:

Instructor: "OK, next class we'll be ..."

(Rustling deafening roar begins.)

Student: (While turning around to leave, turns back to student at desk next to him or her) "Do we have any homework for next class?"

Funny, those of us who actually listen have found this amazing correlation between having homework due next class, and the instructor saying that there will be homework due next class.

Who would have thought?

Now I must ask myself, and every Clackamas student: What in the name of all things holy could be so important that 30 seconds will ruin it? Avoiding the rush to get to your car or the cafeteria? Taking that nice soothing drag of stimulant-ridden smoke? Sprinting downstairs to make out with your significant other (that's a whole other rant there)? I've yet to hear a convincing excuse for doing this every day.

It made at least a little bit of sense in high school, with a very limited time to get in between classes, and disembowelment being an acceptable

punishment for being late. Or having only one bus to catch to get home. But in college?

There are a few excuses, yes. Acceptable excuses include: having a bus to catch (this only really flies during night classes though; there is adequate time in day classes to get from class to bus with time to spare), or some sort of emergency which must be attended to (a real emergency).

Half a minute isn't really going to save you any time, and almost nothing can be that important. Remember, this isn't high school. We're all paying for these classes after all; why not get all the time you're paying for?

Ultimately, though, I—nor the rest of my kind—really care if you choose to run out and not hear that there will be a test the next class, but please show respect for your instructor and keep quiet for another 25 seconds.

If you do however feel the explicit need to rush out of class like you've found yourself in a shoal of candiru fish, please keep quiet if the instructor is still talking, and don't ask questions of the person next to you which the instructor is in the middle of answering ... if you're going to do something arbitrary and annoying, at least don't make yourself look like an idiot too.

*What in the name of all things holy is so important that 30 seconds will ruin it?*

## Letters to the Editor

More than one way to change your brakes

Hello. I am writing in concern of the article on page 3 titled "How to change your own brakes."

First off, the way that Joe explained how to do it was only one style of brakes. There are many types of brake styles that require completely different steps in order to change disc brakes. Disc brakes are the only style he talked about and only one style of them at that. There are also drum brakes. I am just saying that a writer should know all of the facts before he writes.

I believe there should be a recall on this article and you should have a few students like us from the automotive department rewrite the article the way it should be.

**Nic Armstrong**  
CCC Student

We want to hear from you!

Write us letters to the editor. Please keep them under 200 words and sign them. They may be e-mailed to [cccprint@clackamas.edu](mailto:cccprint@clackamas.edu) or can be dropped off at RR135.

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