

Watch the road, not your electronics!

By Carlie Dickson
Staff Writer

When you are driving, texting could be very dangerous in many ways. Driving has its own complications and texting could make them worse. Did you know that when you are using your phone, reflexes are as slow as or slower than a 70-year-old man? And even though almost 50% of teenagers 18-24 say that texting while driving is their biggest distraction, they do it anyways.

When driving, taking your eyes off the road for even two seconds could be a horrific decision. And when you text you look at the screen and it makes you take your eyes off the road. This decision could lead to either a ticket for texting while driving and/or you could even be in a crash. In 2008 al-

most 6,000 people were killed and a half-million were injured in crashes related to a distracted driver. (<http://www.edgarsnyder.com/car-accident/cell/statistics.html>)

There are different laws that prohibit different cell phone usage. In 6 states (CA, CN, NJ, NY, OR and WA), hand-held cell phones are not aloud. This means that all drivers are prohibited from using hand-held cell phones while driving. Twenty-three states have banned texting while driving. 18 states, D.C., and Guam have primary enforcement. In the other five, texting bans are secondary. In Washington State it is a primary Offence. (http://www.ghsa.org/html/stateinfo/laws/cell-phone_laws.html)

Some ways you could stop phone dis-



tractions while driving are that you could keep your phone on silent, put it in the passenger seat, or put it in your purse.

Some other driving distractions could be fidgeting with your iPod, CD, radio. Some ways that you could not be distracted with this is if you have an iPod, you could create a playlist and listen to that, or when you come to a stoplight then you could change songs or what ever you would like.

Changing a CD and texting doesn't sound like it would be very

distracting but it could. Just picture, you are driving and you are listening to a CD, a song is playing and you don't like it. You would like to change the CD and so you are looking around your car for another song. Whether you know it or not, you are taking your eyes off the road. You could get into a crash and that wouldn't be a pleasant thing.

Next time that you are driving, think about how much of a distraction your music can be and, same goes for your cell phone.

The Scottie Scribbler Staff

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Photo courtesy of Google Images

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Tanning, why so popu-

By Rachel Robinson
Staff Writer

Have you ever subjected yourself to the so-called benefits of a tanning bed? If so, have you ever thought that there really aren't many benefits at all, but serious dangers? These days, having a nice summer glow year-round is extremely popular. In most areas of the country, being able to tan naturally in the sun all year just isn't possible. This is where tanning beds come into play.

In 19th century England and America, having pale skin meant you had wealth. If you were tanned, it was because you worked a lower paying job and were most likely in a low economic class. These days, being a tanned beauty means you, well, follow trends. Tanning has become a major addiction for teens and young adults across America, but why? Many want that summer glow in the dead of winter to get away from that feeling of being stark white, some want a tan for that upcoming school dance, or maybe they just want to fit into the vastly growing community of browned bodies.

But what many don't seem to realize is this seemingly harmless hobby is quite dangerous. Many people know that the natural tan from the sun is dangerous, yes, but more so avoidable than a tanning bed. If you wear sunscreen and limit the number of hours spent outside in the summer, then you most likely won't get too much damage to your skin.

The real issue is tanning beds because people do not realize how dangerous they are. By climbing into a tanning bed, you are subjecting yourself to possible skin cancer, skin burns, premature skin aging, and both short-term and long-term eye damage.

One problem with tanning beds is the lights in them and their powerful, damaging rays. According to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), tanning beds contain UV-A and UV-B omitting light bulbs—rays similar to those in the sun. These rays cause sun burns and allergic reactions such as rashes. The issue with tanning beds is that these rays are much more concentrated than that of the sun. If you spend 30 minutes in a tanning bed, it's the equivalent to 8 hours in the sun. Condensing that much sun exposure into that short of an amount of time is bound



Photo courtesy of Google Images

to cause damage, damage you may not even realize you're receiving.

One ironic thing with the want for tanned skin is that the darkening of your skin is actually a sign of damage.

"A tan is the skin's reaction to exposure to UV rays," said Sharon Miller an FDA scientist and expert on UV radiation and tanning. "Recognizing exposure to the rays as an 'insult,' the skin acts in self-defense by producing more melanin, a pigment that darkens the skin. Over time, this damage will lead to prematurely aged skin and, in some cases, skin cancer."

The UV rays that are omitted in these bulbs suppresses proper functioning of the body's immune system and the skin's natural defenses, leaving you more vulnerable to diseases, including skin cancer (FDA). These rays have put tanning into the highest cancer risk category, labeling it carcinogenic to humans.

The scariest part about skin cancer is it develops over many decades. You may only use tanning beds for a few years while a teenager and seemingly cause

no damage, but decades down the line, you could develop melanoma, a skin cancer that more than 68,000 people in the United States will learn they have this year. One out of eight will die from it, according to the National Cancer Institute (NCI). If you make the decision to start tanning in a tanning bed, the risk of developing melanoma increases by 75 percent when you begin usage before age 35.

However, if you still choose to tan with these risks weighing over your head, consider avoiding these dangerous habits: failure to wear the goggles provided, starting with long exposures, which can lead to burning, failing to follow manufacturer-recommended exposure times on the label for your skin type, or tanning while using certain medications or cosmetics that may make you more sensitive to UV rays.

While most teens believe they are invincible to anything harmful, we just aren't. An excerpt from the FDA website states that Brittany Lietz Cicala of Chesapeake Beach, Md., began tanning indoors at

age 17. She stopped at the age of 20 when she was diagnosed with melanoma. The former Miss Maryland used tanning beds at least four times a week, and sometimes every day. In the four years since she was diagnosed with melanoma, Cicala has developed 25 scars from surgeries to remove the cancer, and every three months, she has to have a head-to-toe exam that removes any suspicious growth. She will forever have to live with the chance that her cancer might come back, next time maybe worse than before.

Though tanning is a fairly popular trend around the United States, is the cost of damage or life threatening illness worth the darker skin pigmentation? You may want to think twice before you climb into a tanning bed again. Source: www.fda.org



Television's impact on children

By Terin Saylor
Staff Writer

Television has negative effects that are well-known to every single parent, but are ignored by them in order to put the responsibility for bringing up kids and showing them examples through interaction on the shoulders of somebody else. Contemporary parents work a lot, but when they come back home they are not eager to spend time with their child. (www.brainy-child.com)

The consequences of this fact are the following: kids watch anything they want, or TV plays a role of a babysitter. Therefore, children learn moral principles from the television, where by the age of 16 they observe 100,000 violent acts and 33,000 murders (www.brainy-child.com). As kids get older, too much screen time can interfere with activities such as being physically active, reading, doing homework, playing with

friends, and spending time with family.

Of course, television, in moderation, can be a good thing. Preschoolers can get help learning the alphabet on public television, grade schoolers can learn about wildlife on nature shows, and parents can keep up

with current events. TV can be an excellent educator and entertainer.

Despite its advantages, too much television can be harmful. Children who spend more than four hours a day watching TV are more likely to be overweight. Kids who view more

violent acts are not only more likely to show aggressive behavior, but also to show fear that the world is a scary place and something bad will happen to them. TV characters often show risky behavior such as smoking and drinking, and reinforce gender-roles and racial stereotypes. (kidshealth.org)

Television, whether popular or not, has provided negative consequences on children of today. Yes, many of them will eventually grow into respectable adults with careers and families, but for now, T.V. junkies flood America with laziness, impatience, and false political knowledge. (www.helium.com)

Sources: <http://www.brainy-child.com/article/children-tv.shtml>; http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/family/tv_affects_child.html; <http://www.helium.com/items/161828-the-negative-effects-of-television-on-children>



Photo courtesy of Google Images

Are weight restrictions fair?

By Mary Zakheim
Staff Writer

Recently, airlines have been both scrutinized and praised by the public for their new policies concerning obesity and planes. While some people encourage the policy to charge larger citizens an extra fee to travel by plane, others are crying foul and saying that charging people more just because of their size is discrimination and not allowed.

However, don't we take it as common sense that a bigger package costs more than one that weighs less? Or that a ferry would charge more for a motor-home than a motorcycle? Well, people that weigh over a certain weight begin to cost more for the airline in gas prices than they're paying, doesn't it make sense that they would have to pay more?

"The extra pounds on passengers are causing a drag on planes. Heavier fliers have created heftier fuel costs," reported USA Today, citing a government study. The study found that since the 1990's the average weight in America has increased by 10 pounds which, in 2000, caused airlines to spend an extra \$275 million to burn 350 million more gallons of fuel on the additional weight carried by Americans who flew in 2000, according to the federal study.

"Just like we don't control the costs of our fuel, we don't control the weights of our passengers," Air Transport Association of America spokesman Jack Evans said after this study was released.

"Passengers gain weight, but airlines are the ones that go on a diet. It's part of the conundrum we face right now."

The answer airlines made to the puzzle posed in 2000 was to charge passengers who take up more than one seat an extra fee or ticket, which does make sense. An airline is a business and people who weigh more are taking advantage of that business by paying less than they should, based on their fiscal effects on the airline.

A new United Airlines policy stated that passengers who are too large to fit into a single seat, buckle the seatbelt, or unable to put down the armrests, will be forced to buy a second ticket or upgrade to a premium class, where the seats are larger. If a flight is full and an obese passenger is unable to buy another seat, they will be bumped from the flight, according to the United Airlines website.

Some are asking: how is this not discrimination? And they have a fair point, as a larger person who is subjected to the seemingly shameful duty of buying two tickets for one person; it would indeed be hard to not feel discriminated against.



Photo courtesy of Google Images

For some, their size is something they've always had to deal with and losing weight is a hard task, especially with Americans' exceedingly busy lives.

But the fact of the matter is – it's nothing personal, honestly. It just makes sense. A passenger who takes up the space of two people and is only paying for one is undermining and taking advantage of the airlines as a business. If you need two seats, you should pay more. Weight is a touchy subject; it's a personal matter that cause defenses to be raised and words like "discrimination"

and "unfair" to be thrown around. Yet, if looked at from an unbiased point of view, and through the idea that extra weight just costs more, it's easy to see that these new laws are a way to make the airline businesses a profitable industry.

Though some people might look at this new policy as unfair and prejudiced, if you look at the facts and reasons behind it, it just makes sense.

Source: http://www.usatoday.com/travel/news/2004-11-05-obese-fliers_x.htm