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On the Cover: Cabrini students living the mission (clockwise, top left) Laura Bedrossian '05, Andrew Randolph '07, Deidre Beadle '06, Jen Brown '06, and Michael Mazzone '07

Cabrini

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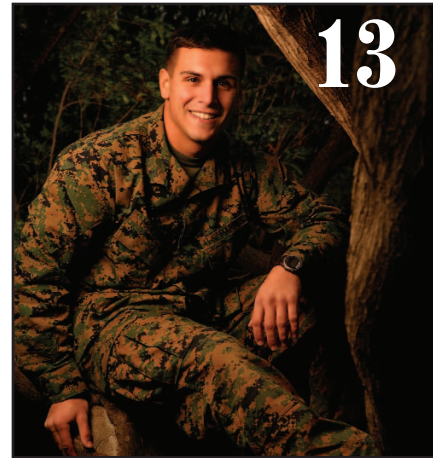
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Cell Phones Clutter our Personal Space: *The paradox of our pocket phones*

The following article was written by Dr. Stephen Gambescia, dean for graduate and professional studies. It appeared as a Commentary in News of Delaware County.

The list of inventions and innovations that have “improved” how we live, labor and enjoy life has become lengthy, since the rise of consumerism in the mid 20th century. When historians write about turn-of-the-century innovations that had a significant impact for our present century, I imagine the cellular phone will be high on the list.

The litmus test for what qualifies as “a great invention” for everyday living is when we exclaim with a sigh, “I don’t know how I ever got along without this!” The cellular phone has to be the leading invention getting such acclaim today. However, while it has impressive and endearing benefits for most of us, there are paradoxical liabilities.

Let’s first examine those who ostensibly bought a cellular phone “in case of an emergency.” Most cell phone users can recount, in great detail, how it saved their lives. Paradoxically, the cell phone has become the greatest risk to life and limb on our highways, since Ralph Nader’s exposé of the auto industry. While common sense tells us that a cell phone is distracting to the senses needed for safe driving, early data collected from highway safety agencies also shows that the cell phone is the cause



Dr. Stephen Gambescia

of far too many accidents. This new-found accessory is unsafe at any speed, when used by a driver whose primary focus of eyes, ears and mind should be on the road.

The cellular phone has replaced the fax machine as the darling of the office. We are impressed by our ability to produce for our employers anywhere and at any-time. Short of asking Scotty to beam us to the office, today’s cell phone can facilitate a number of work functions. We are pleased, because we claim that this connectedness to the office gives us a head start on work, gives just-in-time service to our clients or constituents, gives us another chance at what we may have forgotten to do at the office and generally saves us time so we can do more non-work related activities. So we think. We have become modern day Ebenezer Scrooges—on balance much more work than play—with our ball and chain a svelte, shiny kit in our

pockets that can haunt us, at will, 24/7. Does the cell phone really save us time that will be used doing non-work related activities?

The most enjoyable advantage of the cellular phone is the ability to reach out and touch someone special, anywhere, anytime. The cellular phone has made the impromptu call so easy that phone companies no longer entice us with emotional ads telling us to drop what we are doing and spend some time talking to someone dear to us. It seems we need to develop the art of going about our business while on the phone, rather than taking time out of our busy day to call to a friend. Here are some paradoxical questions on the growing need to be incessantly in touch with those important people who are, unfortunately, at a distance from us.

First question: Is the person you must call someone important?

Answer: Yes, of course.

Second question: Then, if the person on the other end is so important why are you not with that person?

Answer: Because what I am doing here, or whom I am with now, makes it important enough to be here, not with the person I am calling.

continued

Third question: Then if that is the case, why are you not attentive to the person in your presence?

Answer: Because the person I am calling is important.

Fourth question: Review second question above.

Answer: ?

Similarly, this empowering communication tool allows us to increase our reach and frequency of communicating with others. Or does it? Think about how many times you are engaged with people, the cell phone rings—yours or theirs—and, consequently, communication comes to an abrupt, truth be told, annoying halt. The party at a distance becomes an interloper demanding undivided attention. Yes, with the cell phone we have connected with someone who we otherwise would not have communicated with, but in doing so, we shut down communication with those we are with at that moment. Paradoxically, this sounds like a zero sum game. Have we really increased the number of communication encounters?

The personal cell phone, soon to be on par with other dress accessories—like the wallet, handbag, or watch—increases our ability to have private conversations. Paradoxically, we know this is not so. Many cell phone users show no compunction when carrying on private conversations, with intimate details, in the most public of places. It's difficult to discreetly take a call while on public transportation, in shopping malls and supermarkets, and most places where we conduct business or seek some sort of recreation. Holding a private conversation on a cell phone, short of being in your own home or workplace, is an illusion. The party at a distance may not have the best connection, but we have little trouble hearing those who use a cell phone in our presence. And when we try desperately to



step away, those wandering callers invariably follow, or we travel into some else's air space. Can we escape the incessant chatter?

Some futurists believe that we are at the cusp of what modern civilization means and what "a new age" will bring. While we generally benefit from the advances of the technological revolution, upon closer examination there seems to be less time for us to take in the stimulus that overloads us and have any meaningful time for reflection—intellectual, spiritual or otherwise.

Paradoxically, the mind has never been so stimulated and our interpersonal communications never so robust. On the other hand, the barrage of mumbo jumbo—our own or the ambient chatter—emanating from the personal cellular phone is robbing us of quality time to reflect. While humans are social beings, who need to reach out and touch someone, on balance there is a primal need to be still and reflect. The cellular phone—our own or another's—pierces or pokes through our reflective space.

Should we not guard against such encroachment? For all the benefits of the cell phone, let's be mindful of the words of Socrates, who believed that the unexamined life is not worth living. Soon, we could experience death by what seems on the surface to be our modern day lifesaver. ☯

When One Door Closes

(continued from page 12)

Cabrini's bookstore, has paid for her textbooks.

While the majority of the 50 EHU students who had been in the U.S. returned to Belarus, 19 chose to stay and continue their studies. There was a lot of work to be done in the two short weeks before the fall semester began. Since they were only supposed to be in the U.S. for three months, they all had to go to Toronto, Canada to obtain new visas.

Initially, Cabrini was slated to get two EHU students, but the second woman suffered health problems and decided to return home. Therefore, Kalesnikava arrived on campus alone. She was scared and confused, she knew no one, and knew nothing of what was ahead of her. After some adjustment, the days of fear and loneliness are well behind her. Cabrini is her new home, and she is flourishing here. She loves the friendly people, not to mention Cabrini's standard of education.

In her free time—the little she has, while taking five courses here, in addition to two online courses she takes through EHU—she enjoys reading, spending time with friends, and going to yoga class. In addition, she is the president of the International Club.

Kalesnikava aims to earn her degree in philosophy in May 2006, and become a proud Cabrini alumna. When asked what the future has in store for her after graduation, Kalesnikava is uncertain. She hasn't seen her family in almost a year, but if she returns now to Belarus even for a visit, it is most likely she will not be able to come back to the U.S.

Although she misses her parents and her brother terribly, she knows she can lead a better life here. In Belarus, \$200 a month is a good salary. After graduation next May, she hopes she can receive political asylum to stay in the U.S., work here and send some money to her parents.

Kalesnikava believes she can achieve anything here. Although one door may have closed for her in Belarus, many more have opened for her at Cabrini. ☯