

AggieLife

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THE BATTALION

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Hello! Many think cell phone use is rude and should be controlled

By MEREDITH HENSLEE
THE BATTALION

For some, cell phones are a symbol of status, for some a necessity and for others, a way of life. According to ABC News, there are presently 100 million cell phone users in the United States, and that number increases by about 46,000 daily. With so many cell phones, there is bound to be an abundance on campus, and by extension, in the classroom. Of those in the classroom, the likelihood of one ringing during class seems almost inevitable.

"The first thing people do when a phone rings is turn around to see whoever is holding it — that's distracting to students and professors," said Ryan Collier, a junior journalism major.

This issue is a problem when students do not consider how their cell phone use

will affect others around them.

Jenny Fatheree, a junior marketing major, understands well the frustration that stems from students' seeming need to be available at all times by cell phone.

"I was in a huge lecture class, and all of a sudden I heard this chattering noise down the row," Fatheree said.

"Finally I looked over and a girl was digging through her backpack trying to find her cell phone. When she got it out, she realized that she had left it on. It had speed dialed someone, and he was yelling for her to hang up her phone so loudly that we could all hear it from the bottom of her bag."

This is not an isolated incident and is demonstrated by new policies developed by professors to deal with the incessant ringing.

Keith Swim, a professor of business law and journalism, has adopted a policy of answering phones that ring during his lectures. Swim tells his students about the rule and said most students willingly comply and leave their phones turned off during his lectures. Out of classes with hundreds of students, he said three or four phones ring every week.

Swim is not the only professor with a

no-tolerance policy.

Leslie Smuland, a junior elementary education major, had a professor last semester with a different, yet just as effective policy.

"Her (the professor's) policy was to stop lecture, stare down the person and say, 'Get it and get out.' And she wasn't kidding. The student really did have to leave the room. But I understand her frustration — it was distracting to me, too."

Etiquette experts across the country have started dealing with this issue. Especially in the business world, proper behavior within the realm of cell phone use is becoming increasingly important.

Letitia Baldrige, a professional etiquette expert, from said it comes down to common courtesy and taking other people into account.

"What we have to do is become more aware of other people," she said. "That's very hard in this electronic, computer age because we are pushing buttons and looking at machines all the time."

Phones should be completely turned off at theaters, meetings, classrooms, churches and most restaurants. Business etiquette trainer Dian Orejada from said leaving phones on in these and other places and taking calls in these situations indicates that you hold little regard for other people's presence.

Yet it is not as if students or professors want cell phones to be banned from campus.

As Reagan O'Reilly, a senior marketing major, said, "I don't mind people having them in class if they're turned off, or if between classes people are talking or checking their messages."

Students can avoid getting glaring stares from professors and classmates by using common courtesy when using cell phones.

VOLUME CONTROL

Gravitational Forces
Robert Earl Keen
Lost Highway Records



Fans will recognize the name but not the music of this album, Keen's latest in three years.

Gravitational Forces' 12 tracks continue Keen's mellowing trend towards more adult, or civil, themes, as his newest Texas tales mourn only two murders and there is no mention of the Christmas season. It seems the madman that lives inside his soul has been sedated.

Or perhaps the Texas A&M University graduate's musical constructions are calculated.

"My Home Ain't In The Hall Of Fame," though not written by Keen, fits him exceptionally well. Keen will probably never win a Grammy or be enshrined by any hall of fame, but for a fan, who cares?

For those who gave 1998's *Walking Distance* a listen, the mood of *Forces* will be more familiar, though the aim of each is widely different. *Walking Distance* was somewhat of a southwestern opera with woven themes and defined movements, while *Gravitational Forces* revels in Keen's ability to relate a variety of stories to an audience.

Three cover songs, one each by Townes Van Zandt, Johnny Cash and Terry Allan, ground Keen's

sometimes thick and intricate lyrics. These are gravity for the album.

The title track is the most out-of-this-world; whoever allowed the inclusion of this spoken poem set to music has some explaining to do.

All of Keen's usual bandmates play on the album, and the addition of different instruments flavors the album well. The use of harmonica, slide guitar and the occasional lamentations of an organ twist the group's more western than country sound into intricate and subtle confessions of life. On first inspection, the album seems incoherent, but further listening proves otherwise — a meticulously planned and executed collection of songs.

The surprise inclusion of an old Keen favorite leaves listeners contemplating the purpose of its presence on the disc rather than singing the anthem's refrain. "The Road Goes On Forever" has been reworked and rewired with distorted rock guitar, sounding like the live version previously recorded for Keen's *Live Dinner No. 2*. The new question is, "What was wrong with the original recording?"

This is a good CD for patient listeners who already know Keen's previous efforts. Fair-weather fans should prepare themselves to wade through the tracks that follow "Walking Cane" — the album's best. (Grade: B)

— Thomas Phillips

DELL

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Starting at 8:00 a.m., at the Career Services Office

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