

THE TATTOO

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Principal's cell phone hang-up angers students

By ZACH BROKENROPE
The Tattoo

It isn't uncommon for schools to ban the use of cell phones during school hours.

But this semester, a Nebraska high school principal made the rule even stricter.

At Aurora High School, cell phones are banned in any sort of school activity — including after school practices and even during sports games.

While the ban of cell phones has been common in the school for at least several years, the recent initiative comes weeks after school authorities searched students' backpacks and pockets during the school day for the contraband items.

Principal Doug Kittle followed this by issuing an unofficial statement the next morning in the

announcements proclaiming the new rules.



It wasn't a popular decision. "Most kids have cell phones because their parents want them to have it for when they go home, like if something happened to them they want to keep in touch," said sophomore Amanda Davis, who opposes the new rule.

She's not the only one who doesn't like it.

Freshman Janet Morris also finds the rule objectionable.

"I drive to school," said Morris, "and my parents don't let me out of the house without my phone."

Zach Brokenrope / The Tattoo

Aurora, Neb. freshman Janet Morris, 15, poses by a locker with her contraband cell phone, an item that due to the schools new rules could get her in trouble.

Kittle recently said that if two more cell phones are found on school grounds, a ban on hooded sweatshirts would take place in the school.

To some students, a sweatshirt ban is even more outrageous than the cell phone ban.

"It's hypocritical," Morris said. "The school sells hoodies! I mean, I understand that they don't want kids to hide them in them but are they gonna ban pockets on pants, then, too?"

But Linda Simmons, who is the secretary at Aurora Middle School and also a parent, supports the ban.

"School is not a place for cell phones," said Simmons, "and at other school-related things, they should be left in the car."

"When you need them, go out and get it, but during the school day if

you need to get a hold of your parents, the office has a phone you can use," the school secretary said.

However, not all parents agree with the school secretary. Some wrote letters to the school board or to the local newspaper out of concern over the sudden restrictions.

The new cell phone rules seem to some to have appeared almost out of obscurity.

"It came out of nowhere," junior Marissa Schamle said.

Before the ban, Schamle said, the school "pretty much had a 'don't ask, don't tell' policy" towards cell phones.

Since the new rule, said Schamle, teachers are paying closer attention.

"Now they are watching us like hawks," Schamle said.

Pope's legacy is a changed world

By JOHN ELFED HUGHES
The Tattoo

Most teenagers probably heard very little, or perhaps nothing at all, about Pope John Paul II until his death.

It is important that we remember the pontiff for driving communism out of his birth country, Poland, back in the 1980s.

Though Pope John Paul II's evident conservative views made some people disagree with him, he was respected by most.

His critics argued that his stance on abstinence and opposition to condoms led victims to die a needless and horrible death from AIDS, which has killed at least 28 million people worldwide since 1982.

The pope taught that the best way to prevent AIDS was through abstinence and fidelity.

The Vatican also teaches that the only acceptable sex is between an adult man and woman. It condemns the use of any artificial contraception.

Despite clearly causing controversy, the pope's views never stopped most people from feeling warmly toward him.

In 1981, an assassin tried to gun down the pope. But what shocked me, and I'm sure many people around the globe, was the fact that he had a private meeting with the gunman in 1983 to offer forgiveness.

I could never do that. Could you?

It's amazing that John Paul II was the first non-Italian pontiff in 455 years.

It is also incredible that he is the most traveled pope in history; he visited 119 countries.

He even managed to master eight different languages.

After a long decline in his health, Pope John Paul II died April 2 in his apartment at the Vatican.

The next elected pope, who will be chosen by church leaders soon, has a very hard act to follow indeed.

After all, John Paul II's papacy spanned 26 years and broke all sorts of records.

The next pope will find it difficult to replace such an inspirational leader who appealed to people from all backgrounds, countries and religions.

He transformed not only the papacy, but also the world.

Requiem Pope John Paul II



Joe Keo / The Tattoo

My wild Saturday night at Wal-Mart

By ZACH BROKENROPE
The Tattoo

"Wanna go to GI?" Matt says, as he relaxes against his car outside of Espresso's, our town's coffee shop and cultural Mecca.

Max, Matt, Tanner, and I are all there, bored as humanly possible and looking for something to do.

After all, it is Saturday night.

"GI," which stands for Grand Island, is the nearest "big" city (by big I mean 36,000 people — hey, it's Nebraska) and it usually provides endless hours of entertainment for bored teenagers on weekends.

"Okay, why not..." we collectively mumble.

We don't want to sound desperate, but secretly, we've been hoping for this all night. Matt's a sophomore and has had his driver's license since last summer.

He's also the only guy around that drives a minivan.

Now, most normal kids would consider driving a 1992 Dodge Caravan with wooden paneling a bad thing, but you see, it's actually the only mode of transportation that can comfortably hold more than five people.

With other cars we have to get creative. This often means putting someone with a good lung capacity in the trunk, or if you need more

space, the skinniest person is going to find themselves laying across the others' legs. Sure, it's a little dangerous, but hey, it works.

"Where we goin'?" Tanner asks as we drive into town 45 minutes later. It's already dark outside and the skatepark is closed, so that's out.

"Wal-Mart," Matt says calmly, his eyes focused intently on the road, his palms never budging from the 10 and two position.

"WAL-MART!?" Tanner asks.

"Uh, DUH!" Max says sarcastically. "It is the cheap-plastic-crap capital of the world! And plus they have like those two-gallon bottles of pop for a dollar."

Max is perhaps the cheapest of all of us. He rarely spends money on anything, which is probably the reason he has so much of it.

"And plus, what's more entertaining than wasting 10 dollars of quarters at the games they have in the entrance?" I say, as Tanner brushes his hand across his face, a habit that has annoyed us for years.

It's not too cold out, I think, as I step out of the van and onto the Wal-Mart parking lot. After all, it is February and it was supposed to snow all week — a prediction that never came true after sending the entire tri-county area into panic.

The parking lot is somewhat empty with only about 30 cars

parked.

"I wonder if this is what heaven's like," Tanner says as we enter the sliding doors.

"Wow, that was random," Max says, laughing.

the freshman diaries

"I mean, think about it, you're welcomed by some friendly old guy into this big giant place that just shines whiteness and you can pretty much find anything you want," he says as we walk past the in-store McDonalds, the soft smell of grease-soaked French fries filling our nostrils.

"DUDE! Check this out!" Max says, and runs up to a big bin in the middle of the aisle and pulls out from obscurity a boxed set of *Dr. Quinn Medicine Woman*. "This like used to be my FAVORITE show when I was little."

"Wow...isn't that odd," I say and kind of give him a weird look.

"No, dude, you have like absolute-

ly no idea how cool Dr. Quinn is," he says, in all seriousness.

"If I was a girl I would so totally be like her," he says, and tucks the box beneath his arm.

Sometimes I don't understand my friends ... at all; but isn't it like that with all people?

You think you have them figured out, set down in a certain pattern, and then they totally surprise you with something odd like having an obsession with a TV show that airs on Lifetime.

For an hour and a half, we browsed the sacred aisles of Wal-Mart, discovering its hidden secrets.

And then of course, we got bored. "Are you guys about ready to go?" Matt asks, looking at his watch.

"Sure," we all respond, our purchases in our hands.

Half of what we're buying consists of food, of course, mostly sugar-based products with high fat content.

We pay using the self-checkout machines, which to me is like THE coolest invention ever.

"Hey, do you mind if we stop at the gas station quick?" Matt asks as we pull out of Wal-Mart's parking lot and head down the highway.

"No prob," I say. "What for?"

"Just want to pick up some condoms," he says, and pulls into the

nearest gas station.

For teen boys, knowing the rest stops that have condoms is like an instinct — they just know.

"What do you need condoms for?" Max says, laughing. "You don't even have a girlfriend."

"He's just preparing in case he finds a nice hooker," Tanner pipes up as Matt runs in.

He returns a minute or so later.

"Happy?" I ask.

"Quiet," he says. It's nearly one as we drive home — a whole night spent accomplishing nothing.

The music from the stereo plays and the windows are rolled down. Cool air is filling the car.

I look over at my best friend Max and see the moon casting a ray of light on his face.

It's in this exact moment that I realize how great it is to be young, so full of life and possibilities, so free to be as random as you possibly want.

It's amazing to me, how with the right song playing on the radio, on the perfect night, with the people you care about most, can make you feel so different.

As I sat in that old van as we traveled down the deserted highway I was truly happy, and for that brief drive, I truly, honestly, felt infinite.

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