

United Way for Fun Day

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It's fall and that means the kick-off to the United Way Day of Fun at Penn State Harrisburg.

The annual fund-raising event began three years ago and was held this year on Sept. 21. Its organizer, Lisa Conrad, budget manager in the Office of Continuing Education office, said the event has been a success.

"We have been able to raise at least \$2,000.00 for the United Way," Conrad said. Participating are PSH faculty and staff and other United Way organizations that are donating prizes and food for the booths. New food and game booths are added each year to help draw attention and participants to the event.

This year's event featured a dunking booth, a balloon dart game, a booth offering books for sale, another sold baskets, and plenty of items to feed the hungry appetite such as ice cream, baked goods and an array of other food stands. And for the animal lovers there was the pet photo contest.

All proceeds from the event will

go directly to the United Way.

Regardless of the location or kinds of events offered, all United Way campaigns have the same goal -- to help change lives.

Over the years, United Way has helped to improve the lives of people in local communities through donations of funds and items. The United Way also makes available a wide range of counseling services.

Though giving money is one way to help support United Way, it is not the only way. Volunteer services are always needed.

In addition to this year's Fun Day, the United Way plans two more events: a golf outing will be held in October and a bowling tournament will be held in November.

"United Way is a way more students could get involved in helping the community while also having a good time," Conrad explained.

For more information on the United Way and how you could help become part of this organization please contact Lisa Conrad at ext 6517.

Aid approved for Central American flooding problems

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on border security, crime and disaster response.

Rumsfeld planned to stop in Tampa en route to an early afternoon town hall-style meeting at MacDill Air Force Base.

The Central American ministers meeting, which begins Wednesday, comes just days after mudslides caused by torrential rains buried entire Mayan towns in Guatemala and killed hundreds of people

across the region, including in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Costa Rica and Mexico.

"The purpose is really to look at nationwide cooperation in Central America," Pardo-Maurer said, adding that there is growing interest in developing coordinated responses to drug trafficking, gang crime and illegal arms sales.

Improving security, said Pardo-Maurer, will help boost economic development in the region.

U.S. officials are also concerned about political unrest in

Nicaragua, including what Pardo-Maurer called the "brazenly corrupt alliance" between Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega and governing Constitutionalist Liberal Party leader Arnoldo Aleman. The Liberal party last year halted plans to destroy a cache of about 1,000 surface to air missiles that the country had initially agreed to eliminate.

Last week, in a visit to Nicaragua, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick made it clear that the United States sees Aleman, who is serving a 20-

year prison term for fraud and money laundering, as a threat to that country's democracy. And he warned that at least \$175 million in U.S. aid would be lost if the Ortega-Aleman alliance leads to the ouster of current President Enrique Bolanos.

Pardo-Maurer said U.S. defense officials are concerned because a missile showed up on the black market. He added that Rumsfeld wants to let Nicaraguan military officials know that he is pleased with their efforts to support Bolanos.

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Photo courtesy of google.com

Studies indicate increase in phone use

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phenomenon."

"In this day and age we base our friends on a technological or billing situation rather than on an actual meeting of the minds. It's a very powerful comment on how technology can influence social relationships," Sundar said.

"Technology for the most part is defined by the user and if one chooses to abuse it, then it will become an abusive tool," says Tayo Banjo, 23-year-old Penn State doctoral candidate in Media Effects. Banjo is working with Sundar and conducting a study involving the creation of a theoretical model that will examine the relationship between cell phone use and social interaction with proximate others along with a study examining peoples'

likelihood to stay in touch with people who are outside of their service network.

"So yes, it's possible for the use of cell phones to be abused, but the very nature or component of cell phones do not call forth such abuse, rather, it is the user that determines that," she added.

"I don't know, it's like I can't wait 'til later," said Nicole Yetter, a 19-year-old communications major at PSH, regarding the 15 to 20 phone calls she makes daily.

"You have the time and you're used to being on your cell phone all the time," said Yetter.

"I usually talk to my friends away at college and see how classes are, what they're up to," she said, "it's entertaining, like 'guess who I saw' or 'guess what I heard.'"

"I honestly don't know how people survive without cell phones," said Yetter, who has had a cell phone

since she was 14 years old.

Banjo noticed that the presence of cell phones connote different meanings so she thought it would be interesting to examine how the use of a personal device would function in public places, how it would be a hindrance or an aid.

"I decided to study cell phone usage because from my observations it seemed that people were using the cell phone as a mask or protective force from the demands of public participation," Banjo said.

"One of the studies I've completed has indicated that people are less likely to notice when someone is in need of help when they are on the cell phone," she added.

The interesting thing about communication technologies, Banjo explained, is they can elicit two responses: social connectedness or social isolation.

"People are generally social beings, we need to connect, we need to belong. Without the presence of another or at least a familiar other, we may experience some degree of loneliness whereby the need to communicate is primed," Banjo said.

"For instance, have you ever been alone in a room with a stranger and feel like you should say something? At least a hello? Taking into consideration our fast paced world and colorful imagery in media that orient our attention, I believe that generally, people, at least American culture, are uncomfortable with silence," Banjo said.

Dr. Eton Churchill, assistant professor of humanities and communications at PSH, also believes that loneliness may be a

motivator for cell phone overuse.

"The most terrifying thing for someone in our society is to be alone," Churchill said, "when [students] walk out of class, they have the sensation of being alone, of feeling isolated, and the cell phone provides them with the sense of being connected, of belonging."

"For me, the bottom line is, they're probably not a necessary device," said Churchill, who doesn't own a cell phone of his own.

"They are fragmenting people instead of connecting them," he added.

Dr. Richard Carlson, professor of psychology at Penn State University, also believes that people use their cell phones to try and stay connected.

"I think they help people feel as if they are connected to friends and family, but that they may contribute to isolation in a broader sense, in effect cutting off human contact with those around them," Carlson said.

"I think that often people have ongoing concerns – the status of a family member, of an ongoing discussion with someone, of an upcoming decision – that they are thinking about anyway, and talking on the cell phone may help them feel like they're in touch with those things," Carlson said.

When asked if he believes that people are uncomfortable with silence, Carlson replied, "Yes, I do think that many people are. Lots of people keep the TV or radio on all the time, without really paying attention to what is on, presumably to avoid the silence."

Andrea Marie Gardner, a 24-year-old communications major



From left, Kendra Gonzalo, junior, Education, and Erica Cook, junior, Education, find a moment to connect with others.

at PSH, uses her cell phone for calls and text-messages up to 50 times a day and admits her use in the past as excessive.

"When I don't have my cell phone, I don't miss it, but I don't feel connected. Before, it was just so normal I couldn't imagine being without it," Gardner said.

"I had to change when I got my phone bill," said Gardner, who has had phone bills of up to \$600, "and I realized I was talking about nothing."

"It's like a security blanket, in the fact that it makes you feel wanted," Gardner added.

Rebecca Gassert, a 22-year-old MBA student at PSH, realized how attached she was to her cell phone when it was taken away from her.

"I didn't realize how tough it was to not have one until I studied abroad and didn't have one," Gassert said, "We had to make plans in the morning for the whole day, or make plans to meet back at certain times."

"I have to have my phone," said Gassert, "I use it as a watch and as an alarm clock, I normally don't wear a watch."

When asked what she'd do without it, Gassert quickly replied, "I'd cry."

- v Some researchers claim that cell phones have become the fastest adopted communication technology in history
- v According to market research, cell phone users have increased by 40 million within two years in the United States alone.
- v Globally, the cell phone industry serves more than one billion cell phone subscribers.
- v In 2001, over 50% of respondents to a cell phone usage survey reported mostly using their phones for social reasons.
- v Some studies suggest that the increased likelihood of an accident while talking on a cell phone is as great as that when legally drunk.
- v Research has indicated that the mobile aspects of the cell phone often develop patterns of risk-taking behavior, responsibility, control, and bonding within its users. That is, the accessibility of the phone often cultivates unusual or un-normative behavior.



Photos by Supat Kanchanasakul/Capital Times

Saud Albuainain, junior, IST, chats on his cellphone in the lobby.