

Headlight



Written by the students of Marblehead High School for our school and community

2016-2017 Issue

www.mhsheadlight.weebly.com

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Texting and Driving

Lilly Tapper, Junior
Reporter in the Field

The average reaction time of a driver is 2.3 seconds, but as a new driver I feel like my average is five seconds. I have had my license for a few months now, and because of this, I cannot even imagine texting while I drive. In fact, I can barely have a conversation with my passengers while giving enough attention to the road and my surroundings. Texting while driving might not be a major issue to me, but it is for thousands of drivers, especially teen drivers.

Everyone can agree that texting and driving is not as great of a mix as peanut butter and jelly. In fact, 97% of teens agree that texting and driving is dangerous, but regardless, 43% of teens text anyway.

One of the major factors of texting and driving is dopamine, which is released in the brain every time someone gets a text message. Once they look at the text, more dopamine is released in the brain. Texting can become a bad habit, and a dangerous one while driving. The habit of texting has been compared to drinking and driving. Nine out of ten teens anticipate a text back from their friend within five minutes. When they are driving they are expecting a text, which diverts their attention away from driving safely.

The statistics on texting and driving are unbelievable. There are about 660,000 drivers that use their phone while driving. This means that the driver's likelihood of crashing goes up to 23 times more likely. Also, texting teens will be out of their lane 10% more than if they were not on their phone. Ten percent of new drivers have been in an accident where they were distracted when the crash occurred. New drivers are the biggest group of all drivers who are distracted during an accident. Looking at all of the statistics makes me wonder why teens still text and drive. Do the facts not scare them enough to stop?

Parents are not the best role models either. It has been reported that 40% of teens have been in a car with a driver who was using his or her phone. Even though 77% of teens say that adults have told them not to text and drive, the adults use their phone anyway. Some adults feel like they do not need to follow their own advice, because they have been driving a lot longer than their child. Adults are still at risk of being a part of a crash while they were on their phone, no matter how long they have been driving.

There are several ways of fixing the issue. First, parents should be better role models. They should not be on their phone at all while driving, especially when they are with their children. Teens should be encouraged to pull over to use their phone, or wait until they are at their destination. They should only use their phone, while driving, if it is an emergency.

About 169.3 billion texts are sent each month in the United States. That is a lot of dopamine released in many brains. While 25% of teens have texted while driving, women are more likely than men to use their phone while operating a vehicle.

Next time you are about to reach for your phone while driving, think about how teens that are texting while driving have a reaction time of a 70-year-old. Texting slows down your time to react to different situations on the road and increases the likelihood of crashes. Just think, if you are traveling 55 mph, and you look off the road for only five seconds, that is like traveling across a football field with your eyes shut.

Everyone tells new drivers never to text while drive, but saying that will not have as great an impact as setting a good example.

SPUR Good Deeds

With the recent furor over our "divided nation," it is more important than ever to continue helping each other. That's why SPUR is engaging all people, of all ages, to work for positive change in the community, beginning with volunteer opportunities in the next few months. More event details, contact information, and registration can be found on SPUR's website, www.spur.community.

February 2017: Container for Syrian Refugees

SPUR is partnering with the Rotary Club of Marblehead Harbor and Swampscott Unites, Respects, Embraces (SURE) to collect, sort, and pack items for Syrian families forced to flee their homes. With your help, during the month of February, SPUR hopes to fill a 40-foot shipping container full of clothing, food, and personal items to be sent to Syrian refugees via NuDay Syria.

February 12, 2017: SPUR Love

Through February 5, SPUR is accepting nominations of individuals in the Marblehead, Salem and Swampscott communities who could use a little extra love this Valentine's Day. If you know an elderly person in a nursing home, someone going through difficult times, or a lonely neighbor, nominate them!

Volunteers can join SPUR on February 12 between 3:00-6:00 p.m. at the Salem School of Music in Salem, MA to make flower arrangements and deliver to recipients.

Children are invited to join SPUR for a simultaneously hosted workshop which begins with a reading of "Have you Filled a Bucket Today?" Following story time, there will be a discussion on how one can be a bucket-filler or empty-er and how to fill your own and other's buckets. Participants will then make cards to accompany the flower arrangements. (Minimum Age: 5)

SPUR will also be starting several new projects in the spring and summer months, so keep an eye out for more information on these events:

Fairy Godmother Project: SPUR will be collecting gently worn formal dresses for local deserving teens (March 2017)

"Boomerang" Re-usable Bag: Volunteer to help sew fabric into reusable bags and pilot a local initiative to increase the use of reusable bags (March 2017).

SPUR Team Challenge: A family friendly athletic event to benefit the SPUR Seed Grant program, which empowers individuals and groups between 4th - 12th grade to carry out their community impact project by providing financial and organizational support (tentative date: June 24, 2017)

Source: Conspiracy Theorist

Kyra Veprek, Senior
Reporter in the Field

"Kyra!" my friend beside me exclaimed, grabbing my leg with one hand and grasping her iPhone in the other. Her face lit up by the white of a Facebook wall, her eyes scanned the page as her thumb gently scrolled through the words. "Doomsday..." she exclaimed, "... might happen this month." My immediate reaction was an internal "yeah right," but I couldn't help but wonder as to how my friend could have possibly come up with this idea. Eager to back up her case, she mindlessly regurgitated the scanned words: A meteor, which was not originally on course for Earth, somehow made its way on course for our planet, and NASA really wasn't prepared to stop it. It seemed utterly ridiculous, but she was convinced and gladly handed me the phone to see for myself. Sure enough, published by Elite Daily was an article reading "NASA finds 'Doomsday' Asteroid Astronomer Says Will Hit Earth Next Month." The article confirmed what my friend had said, but I was bent on proving it false. Minutes later, I discovered an article on the same topic; however, the title of this article read concluded its title with the line "Claims Conspiracy Theorist."

How can one article cite a man as an "Asteroid Astronomer," decorated with acclaim from NASA, while the other deems him a "Conspiracy Theorist," and focuses the article on proving him to be a liar? Although I am not regularly faced with articles of impending doom, I, like most Americans at this time, have done my very best to stay up to date with current events. Before this year, I had always trusted news for the raw facts; I knew information could be slanted to support an argument, and that each paper was trying its best to legitimize its own argument. To raise awareness of the differences in publishing agencies, my U.S. Government teacher provided her students with a list of sources with a rainbow of different beliefs and motives. With quarterly "Current Event" assignments, I challenged myself to explore all reaches of political media, from the conservative cries of *American Spectator* to the liberal demands of the *The Progressive*. I was unsurprised by the opinions published by each; neither argued anything too far left or right. The shocking part was that each side presented their opinions as fact. Two articles written about the same topic could convince a person of entirely different realities.

*Your truth may be documented
as another's conspiracy.*

No one wants to be behind on politics these days. With executive orders being issued left and right and foreign relations on the line, it's easy for people to feel out of the loop. There's danger, however, in only gleaming information from a single source. Many choose to reference their Facebook newsfeeds to stay up to date without considering the fact that friends and family share articles that have views that align with your own. If someone dares to post something that opposes your core values, you're likely to even "unfriend" them, as you don't want to be friends with someone who could possibly hold such heinous views.

This is dangerous. Social media has become an echo chamber. You are constantly reassured of your beliefs and realities through the others' posts, losing any exposure to the opposing side. Social media has aided the polarization of our country by providing each individual with a single story, losing sight of the big picture. We all want the best for our country, so the bashing of the liberals or slandering of the conservatives is nothing but harmful. Stay informed, but more importantly, stay aware. Your truth may be documented as another's conspiracy.

Interested in Staying Aware? Check out these reliable sites:

Conservative: Reason, Weekly Standard, National Review, American Spectator

Liberal: New Republic, The Nation, The Progressive

Moderate: Christian Science Monitor, Time, Newsweek, The Economist



Above, a depiction of a potential "doomsday" meteor.

Below, a collection of various news media.



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2016-2017

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