

We are all aware of the phone-impaired drivers on our highways. It's common to see people on the interstate creeping along in the fast lane because they are engaged in phone calls and aren't in the moment. My favorite: A driver holding the phone with one hand and gesturing with the other while talking. I find myself asking no one in particular, "Hey Charlie, who's got the wheel?" when I see that particular stunt.

The addle-brained among us still haven't learned to turn off their phone ringers while in meetings, movies, restaurants, seminars, churches — or on golf courses. They insist on forcing the rest of us — who are usually there to learn, relax or pray — to listen to their conversations whether we want to or not. For crying out loud, you're not so important that you can't shut your phone off for an hour or two and spare us the intimate details of your lives.

I'm particularly bothered by the people who talk loudly on their phones in supermarkets. The aisle-clogging chatterboxes at the supermarket make routine shopping a real chore now. While there, they prove they can't grab a can of beans and gossip at the same time.

I saw another example of this cell-phone madness at a restaurant. One booth had four diners who were all on their cell phones — ignoring their current company and talking to other people. Why on earth would you go out with your friends, only to ignore them and talk to other people on phones? You can stay in your house in the dark to do that.

My most recent incident came on a flight to Kansas City enroute to a GCSAA committee meeting. A short, slender young man was holding up the exiting passengers trying to wrestle a large duffle bag out of the overhead bin. It was almost as big as he was and looked like it might contain a semester's worth of dirty laundry. Overhead bins can be tricky on a good day, but trying to extract this big, bulky bag with only one hand while talking on a phone with the other was the straw that broke my tolerance level for this wireless weirdness that has hypnotized the population.

I attended the Carolinas GCSA Confer-

Crazy Cell-Phone Use Must Cease

BY JOEL JACKSON



TO KEEP MY SANITY,
I CREATED SOME
ONE-LINERS TO USE
AGAINST THE RUDE
USERS OF THE
DEVICES ON THE
GOLF COURSES

ence and Show last November and had a wonderful time — and played well at the golf tournament to boot. But the outing was marred by the constant buzzing of one gentleman's cell phone as he literally took or made a call on practically every hole.

One playing partner finally spoke up and said, "I sure hope you're making lots of money with that phone today!" The offender apologized for the obvious distractions, but the calls kept on coming.

One thing I know is that cell phones and the golf I play are not compatible, so to keep my sanity, I created some one-liners to use against the rude users of the devices on the golf courses:

- "I apologize for interrupting your phone call with my backswing."
- "That had better be the mating call of some rare bird, and not your cell phone ringing while I'm putting."
- "Don't you just hate it when a round of golf screws up a perfectly good work day?"
- "You could probably handle all these business calls more efficiently from behind your desk and not the steering wheel of a golf cart."
- "All those calls you're getting are life or death, right? If not, they might be real soon."
- "In case your golf etiquette is a little rusty, the part about not talking during someone's golf shot also includes talking on the phone. The operative word is *talking*."
- "Until they program a cell-phone ringer to sound like bagpipes, turn the darn thing off while on the golf course."

For serious golfers, I'm working on a directory of golf courses located in cell-phone dead zones and no service areas. Until then, this list of snappy comebacks will have to do.

Joel Jackson, CGCS, retired from Disney's golf division in 1997 and is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.