

EDITORIAL & OPINION

The Whalesong

The student voice
of UAS

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The University of Alaska Southeast student newspaper, *The Whalesong*, is a free bi-monthly publication with a circulation of 1000 copies per issue. The Whalesong's primary audience includes students, faculty, staff, and community members.

The Whalesong will strive to inform and entertain its readers, analyze and provide commentary on the news, and serve as a public forum for the free exchange of ideas.

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Hang up and drive!

Vita Wilson
Whalesong Editor

During winter break, I was stopped at a traffic light at Egan and Channel Drives, waiting to drive straight ahead. Finally the light turned green and I entered the intersection, only to have a man in a Subaru, talking on a cell phone, turn left in front of me! Luckily, I wasn't similarly distracted by a cell phone conversation, and I simultaneously slammed on my brakes and horn.

I wouldn't be surprised if most of you have had an experience like that, whether you were the one on the phone or the one who almost got hit by the person whose social or business life was so important that they couldn't pull over or wait to make that call. And if you were the person on the phone, I hope you've learned something from that experience. Do you still drive with one hand on the wheel and your phone in the other?

I freely admit I'm nowhere near being a model driver. I was late for an appointment the other day, so I brushed my teeth while driving down Egan. I tried to floss, too, but I couldn't do that



without a considerable amount of weaving, so I stopped. Besides, I was driving straight down the highway, not so engrossed in my teeth brushing that I turned in front of a person who had the right-of-way. See, I know my limits (I know this still doesn't excuse the very real possibility of putting myself and others in danger). There's nothing wrong with multi-tasking as long as you know what you can handle. You can drink a mocha and drive at the same time, but

you may not want to curl your hair or shave your beard while driving.

I have a reasonable request for drivers who absolutely must talk on their cell phones while operating a vehicle. Invest in a \$20 earphone to keep your hands free. Sure, you'll look like a dork, talking out loud to no apparent human being, but hey, it keeps you safe in two ways: you can keep both hands on the wheel, and the cancer-causing electromagnetic radiation won't be going into your brain. Of course, it would enter your groin region if you have your phone in your pants pocket, or whatever body part the phone is closest to, but at least you and others will (I hope) have less risk of an accident.

Spring Break story contest winner

Back to Valdez

By Kaci Hamilton

So almost everyone who knows me knows that I moved here in January from Valdez, the beautiful but po-dunk nowhere town on the Prince William Sound that is wholly sustained by oil. Exxon Valdez, 1980's oil spill, yeah you get the picture. I get this bright idea upon arriving in Juneau that I am going to go back to Valdez to snowboard over the break. Tickets aren't too expensive, I have somewhere to stay, and I know the whole town (c'mon, it's only 4000), so it will be good to see some friends.

I got really excited about going back because my friend's brother was holding a board for me and, plus, the first time I actually saw a snowboard was when it was being strapped to my feet at the top of the Thompson Pass road run. So it would be like going home. Nonetheless, that wasn't really what was in store for me.

So I get there, the pass just looks frozen solid. I am highly unamused. I couldn't fairly say the trip was a waste of money I got a discounted fare, and a roundtrip ride from Anchorage to Valdez; but, really, you can only look at the beautiful mountains around the place before you start to get cabin fever. And this is even when you're outside! So I wanted to get some riding in since I came ALL this way. After day one, I had said hi to everybody (literally). Everyone thought I was back for school and I had to explain 3 million times that I had actually left like I said I would last Christmas. The word 'Juneau' was said more than I thought was humanly possible.

Up to this point, I had not gotten ahold of my friend whose brother had the board, but not that there was any rush because you can't really snowboard on snow that has the same consistency as concrete, now can you? So I checked my e-mail for another day or so and waited. During this time, though, I took my driving road test. I wasn't nervous because I had driven many times in that town very illegally, so I knew the roads. However, the tester apparently doesn't

like *anyone* to pass the first time. I still wasn't worried, I had kissed behind to way more intellectual people; she would be eating out of my palm. And so she did. I passed the test with flying colors and I got the piece of paper and plastic that meant the difference between me being pulled over and subsequently deported or me being pulled over and given a ticket.

Day 3 arrives and I think my luck is going to turn around. Ha! That's all I have to say about that. My friend's brother gave the board away to someone else. For some reason, I thought that in three months, without any word from me, or any idea of when I was coming back to Valdez, he would hold on to the board and await my arrival. This news terribly disappointed me, but I was still fine, because the wind outside was audible from inside any building and it really didn't encourage you to do anything involving the outdoors. Being outside involved two states – being flat on your back on a sheet of ice, or being shoved by wind. It is an understatement to say that Valdez was, by this point, disappointing.

So it's about Wednesday and I am tentatively booked on standby to leave Anchorage on Friday. I don't have a ride to Anchorage yet. So I spend my days inside asking people if they know anyone who might be going to ANC. Nothing is turning up. Hence, I decide to focus on my friend Amber who is having a little relationship drama. She's seeing a girl who lives with her immensely overbearing parents; if that wasn't bad enough, this girl is trying to get away from a stalker pervert in town whom she met on the Internet and who now won't leave her alone. So this is some real 'Bold and the Beautiful' quality crap. I have to hear the stories about how this girl is really great and how much Amber likes her more than she usually likes most people, but that the situation i.e. the 'rents, is ruining everything. This is hitting very close to home, as I am going through the same thing, except it's a guy. Sorry to disappoint you. Anyway, in between my fighting off winds that feel like you're being bitch-slapped, I have to watch my friend Amber fall more into the abyss of love, while refraining from trying to kill the Internet pervert who keeps hanging around and threatening to tell the girl's parents.

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Letters to the Editor

The Whalesong gladly accepts letters to the editor. Letters may not exceed 300 words, and may be edited for length, clarity, and grammar. Letters must be signed and include a means of contact for verification. Send your letters to 11120 Glacier Highway, Juneau, AK 99801, whalesong@uas.alaska.edu, by fax to (907) 465-6399, or bring them to Room 102, Mourant Bldg.