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Section **D**

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Music to our ears

Cell phone rings becoming just another way to show personality

BY ADAM SHULL

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Hearing AC/DC's "You Shook Me All Night Long" in a bar used to mean someone fired up the jukebox or hit the karaoke machine.

Now it's just as likely to be the person next to you getting a call on his cell phone, said Rachel Hannah, retail sales manager at Verizon Wireless in Paducah.

Ringtones (heard when users receive a call) and ringback tones (heard instead of rings while calling someone) are widely popular, Hannah said.

"It's a way for people to personalize their phones, make it their own," Hannah said, who hears "Our Country" by John Mellencamp when her mother calls.

Hannah helped explain why cell phones are sounding more and more like radio stations.

How they work

Cell phone users must download applications onto their phone before accessing ringtones and ringback tones, Hannah said.

"These applications work like computer programs on a computer that allow people to download games and music directly onto their phones," she said.

She thumbed through menu options on a cell phone and within seconds accessed Verizon's VCast Music application.

Each service provider has its own applications, which usually start at \$2.99 each.

"They work a lot like downloading music onto an MP3 player or iPod," Hannah said.

Verizon signed contracts with music companies to allow customers to legally download the songs, and the rest is history, she said.

How they sell

Hannah said Verizon developed its first application in 2003. In that year's first quarter roughly 6 million were purchased for phones.

Please see **RINGTONES** | 2D



Photo illustration by JOHN WRIGHT | The Sun
Chuck Tate (right) and Nevada Kennedy seem to have had enough of Erin Guard's cell phone ringtone.

Improvements to Apple's iPod line get lost in shuffle

BY ERIC BENDEROFF

McClatchy-Tribune News Service

A few interesting things were overlooked last week amid the uproar over the iPhone's sudden price cut: Apple Inc.'s new line of iPods.

The iPod Touch is a direct descendant of the iPhone, which should appeal to anyone who likes the iPhone's fabulous touch-sensitive navigation. It will be worth a long look later this month when it goes

on sale, even though its 16 gigabytes (and \$400 price tag) may not satisfy iPod fans with sizable music and movie collections.

Those folks will want the ridiculously large and newly named 160 gb iPod Classic, priced at \$350.

So, considering those breakthroughs in design and storage, it would be easy to overlook the revamped iPod Nano. Don't, because this snappy

little gadget offers the same cool features, more actually, first used on the iPhone in a remarkably small and familiar package. The only difference is that navigation is by scroll wheel, not touch.

The Nano is available in two versions, a 4 gb silver model for \$149 and the 8 gb version offered in five colors for \$199.

I've been using an 8 gb version and I quite like what Apple has done. Like the iPhone, it

is another gadget you want to touch. It is small enough to sit in the palm of your hand yet so thin that when you slip it into a pocket you could forget it was there.

Frankly, it's so small you could drop it into an envelope and mail it across the country for about the cost of a first-class stamp.

As for appearance, the Nano looks like an iPod Classic but much smaller. It is as if some-

one put a Classic into that gizmo in Willy Wonka's Television Room that miniaturizes things.

Like its brawnier sibling, the new Nano now plays video. The 2-inch screen (measured diagonally) is surprisingly bright and easy to watch. Apple says it is 65 percent brighter than the previous Nano, and I wouldn't dispute the claim. It shows videos, photos and album art quite well.

Could you watch an entire

movie on the Nano? On a plane, sure, but you probably wouldn't at home unless the cable was out.

A great feature is the new menu screen. Along the left side sit the standard menu choices — music, videos, photos, podcasts and a few others — but on the right, as you scroll down, you see images of your content. That could be

Please see **IPOD** | 2D

Get a YouTube education, from blending iPods to dance lessons

As students meekly file back to school this fall, they might remember that class is in session at — of all places — YouTube.

Yes, in this upside-down world of education where video games are touted for teaching kids visual skills, even YouTube can be of some benefit to learning.

When one thinks of lessons learned from watching videos on YouTube, what comes to mind is sage wisdom like: iPods can be blended, Mentos react violently to Diet Coke, and cats typically lose arguments with

On the Net

ceiling fans.

But one of the site's top categories is called "Howto & DIY," a broad section that compiles videos that explain everything from magic tricks to Soulja Boy's "How to Crank That" dance (<http://tinyurl.com/2y424p>).

I'm sure that upon hearing this, students across the coun-

try are tossing textbooks out the window. But there are many videos that are quite useful or — to use the most fearsome of words — "educational."

One video is in response to a clip posted by filmmaker Michel Gondry, who showed himself solving a Rubik's Cube with his feet. The video (<http://tinyurl.com/2hdxxko>), which nearly 900,000 have watched, carefully explains how Gondry accomplished his trick. The lesson, it turns out, is not so much about the Rubik's Cube, but about techniques of deception in film-

making.

Learning how to play any musical instrument is also easier, since video allows close-up demonstrations. Guitar lessons in particular abound, including a video of Adrian Smith of Iron Maiden explaining his technique (<http://tinyurl.com/29etsc>).

Science experiments also can be found, including one showing what happens when you mix water and corn starch — and then shake it (<http://tinyurl.com/y29bkt>). Workout videos are popular, too, such as one

about how to work out your abs without buying anything (<http://tinyurl.com/yv9hgk>).

Many videos offer cooking instructions, like director Robert Rodriguez's excellent "10 Minute Cooking School" (<http://tinyurl.com/yu8q5o>). Others teach how to draw cartoon characters like Homer Simpson (<http://tinyurl.com/2xkqkq>).

One can also learn how to style "rock star" hair (<http://tinyurl.com/29sj6u>), do a backflip (<http://tinyurl.com/2aqukm>) or french kiss (<http://tinyurl.com/2uxmyt>). It's a little sad, really,

that the days of the sexually uninformed adolescent — so long a staple in comedy — is a thing of the past.

YouTube isn't the only repository for instructional videos. Currently in Beta, www.5min.com specializes in visual how-to lessons explained in five minutes or less. The site's slogan is: "Everyone is good at something." One of its most popular videos currently teaches how to survive a knife attack.

JAKE COYLE writes for The Associated Press.