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Orinda TSAC Takes on Distracted Driving

By Laurie Snyder



Photo provided by Distraction.gov

The slow drift. The sudden veer. Most adult Orindans have had more than their fair share of whoa-inducing commute moments after which they've silently thanked BMW for their cars' responsive steering systems. Many, like Orindan Mark Roberts, will tell you their instant, gut reactions – the instigators of their particular incidents were distracted while texting or talking on a cell phone.

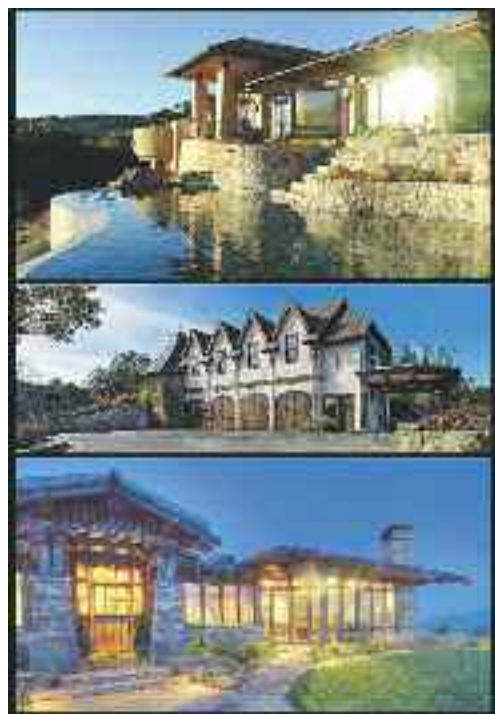
Roberts currently chairs Orinda's Traffic Safety Advisory Committee, and recently reported that research done by his fellow TSAC member, David Libby, and others nationwide seems to bear this out. According to Distraction.gov, a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration website, "Texting is the most alarming distraction because it involves manual, visual, and cognitive distraction simultaneously. Sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for 5 seconds. At 55 mph, that's like driving the length of an entire football field, blindfolded. It's extraordinarily dangerous."

What worries Roberts and Libby even more are statistics proving that reckless, distracted driving is worse than "just" being dangerous for adults. It's the number one killer of American teens. The Virginia Tech Transportation Institute reports, "A quarter of teens respond to a text message once or more every time they drive," and that 20 percent "admit that they have extended, multi-message text conversations while driving." These statistics become even more concerning when you learn that the institute has further shown that, "Engaging in visual-manual sub-tasks (such as reaching for a phone, dialing and texting) associated with the use of hand-held phones and other portable devices increased the risk of getting into a crash by three times."

As a result, said Roberts, "We unanimously passed a resolution at the committee's Aug. 18 meeting recommending that the Orinda City Council adopt the Impact Teen Drivers program." ... continued on page A10

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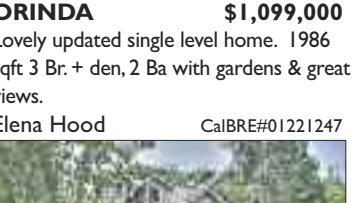









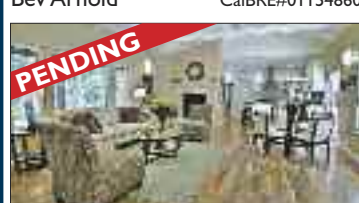
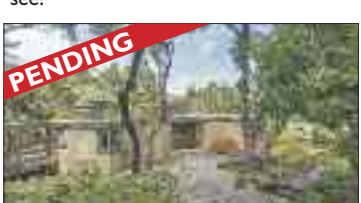
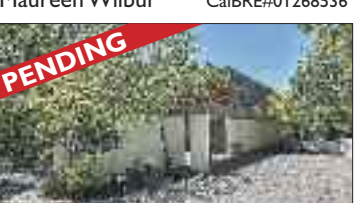

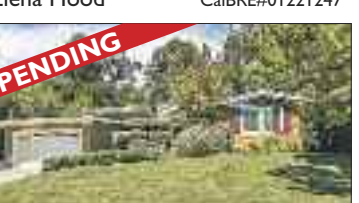


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