

DANGERTOWN

With the City of Pacifica facing personal-injury lawsuits (one by a man who claims he fell through a Hickey Boulevard manhole cover and another by a woman who says she tripped and fell over a concrete bicycle rack on Beach Boulevard), the city would be eager to settle any other injury claims it faces. For example: motorists who ascend the Highway 1 grade around the second curve and scald themselves with hot coffee when blinded by the morning sun. Or Pacificans who twist an ankle stepping in a mound of dog poop along the levee because of the city's lax pooper scooper law enforcement. What other personal-injury lawsuits could arise in this dangerous town? (Opinion posted on PacificaRiptide.com by anonymous commenter "Easy Money")

TURN AROUND, DON'T DROWN

When heavy rain floods local roads, motorists and pedestrians need to be aware of just how dangerous even a little bit of water can be. For example, six inches of fast-moving water can knock down and carry away an adult. Only 12 inches of fast-moving water can carry away a small car. And 18 to 24 inches of fast-moving water can carry away a large SUV, van, or pickup truck. (Source: National Weather Service)

LOOKY-LOOS

Last week, the City of Pacifica razed 320 Esplanade, the condemned apartment building teetering on the edge of

the cliff. This is the second major demolition on that part of Esplanade caused by winter storms chewing away at the soft sandstone. It follows a number of sinkholes along Beach Boulevard and damage to the Sharp Park seawall and fishing pier. But there is another invader threatening the peace and quiet of Pacifica: looky-loos who swarm our natural-disaster sites like vultures. Pacifica's suffering has turned this city into a somehow sick tourist destination for voyeurs and ambulance chasers who seem to get a sort of perverse pleasure from watching other people's losses and misfortune. Germans call this *schadenfreude*. Look it up.

SELFIE-CENTERED

It is shocking to read about all the people who have died around the world while taking selfies with their smartphones. It has gotten so bad in some scenic tourist spots that local governments have banned taking selfies at those sites. Most of the deaths are caused by accidents: slips, trips, and falls suffered by people who are so absorbed in their tech devices that they are not paying attention to their immediate environment.

Which brings me to my secondary topic: the scourge of smartphones in general. Nancy Jo Sales' book "American Girls: Social Media and the Secret Lives of Teenagers" reports that 70 percent of U.S. teenagers own an iPhone, and that what they mostly use their phones for is "bonding, backbiting, bullying – and texting naked pictures. Lots and lots of naked pictures." The resulting desensitization of young people should be a cause for

concern in all societies.

SWAMI SEZ

"A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining, the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing, and the lawnmower is broken." (James Dent)

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