

**SEPTEMBER
2008**



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DRIVEN to DISTRACTION



What causes auto crashes?

What causes auto crashes? Often, the simple answer is “distraction.” Cell phones have gotten a lot of press for distracting drivers, but the truth is that they are just one of many distractions.

Car radios, iPods, Blackberries, and other electronic gadgets are the latest entries into distractions that compete for a driver’s attention. Gawking at accidents and breakdowns is another. Classic distractions include passengers and scenery. Reaching for something in the car—coffee, makeup—and any multitasking activities, such as working while driving, are also dangerous. Last, but not least, exhaustion accounts for a significant amount of driver inattention.

Driver distraction is not always at fault, however. Alcohol-induced accidents are estimated to occur every half hour. Driving recklessly—whether under the influence or not—raises the chance of an accident. Lower on the list are external causes, such as traffic signals that don’t function properly, hazardous road conditions, and defects in the automobile.

Even the most careful drivers have accidents. However, the risk drops significantly when distractions and other reckless behaviors are removed from the picture. More than 40,000 United States residents are killed in car crashes annually. Do your best to play it safe, and chances are good you won’t be one of them.

The answer: “distraction”



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Gary says:

Trial lawyers... ...do good things for clients and society

“So, who are trial lawyers really? They are lawyers whose cases range from small auto accidents to sophisticated product liability suits. Some of them barely eke out a living, and others, like John Edwards, do or have done quite well. They typically work hard and take few vacations because they do not have the support staff to do otherwise. They often litigate against well-funded, well-staffed law firms representing corporate clients. Today, most of the dollars that go to purchasing legal services pay for the representation of corporations, not individuals.”

—From July 18, 2004, *Hartford Courant*,
“Who Gave Trial Lawyers a Bad Name?”

Poem of the Month

We Real Cool

by *Gwendolyn Brooks (1917- 2000)*

Gwendolyn Brooks was the daughter of a former school teacher and granddaughter of a runaway slave who fought in the Civil War. She grew up in Chicago and was a published poet by the age of 16. President John F. Kennedy invited her to read at a Library of Congress poetry festival in 1962. She taught at Columbia University and later died at age 83 after a short battle with cancer.

Published in 1960, this poem seems to “sound” like the late 1950s. It’s a tight, simple poem, a meditation on the aimlessness of the young and misguided. The tempo is staccato. A short poem, but it creates a strong image in the reader’s mind.

Seven young school dropouts, living fast and cool; at the last line the tone of the poem changes and hits like a slap in the face.

The Pool Players. Seven at the Golden Shovel.

We real cool. We
Left school. We

Lurk late. We
Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We
Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We
Die soon.