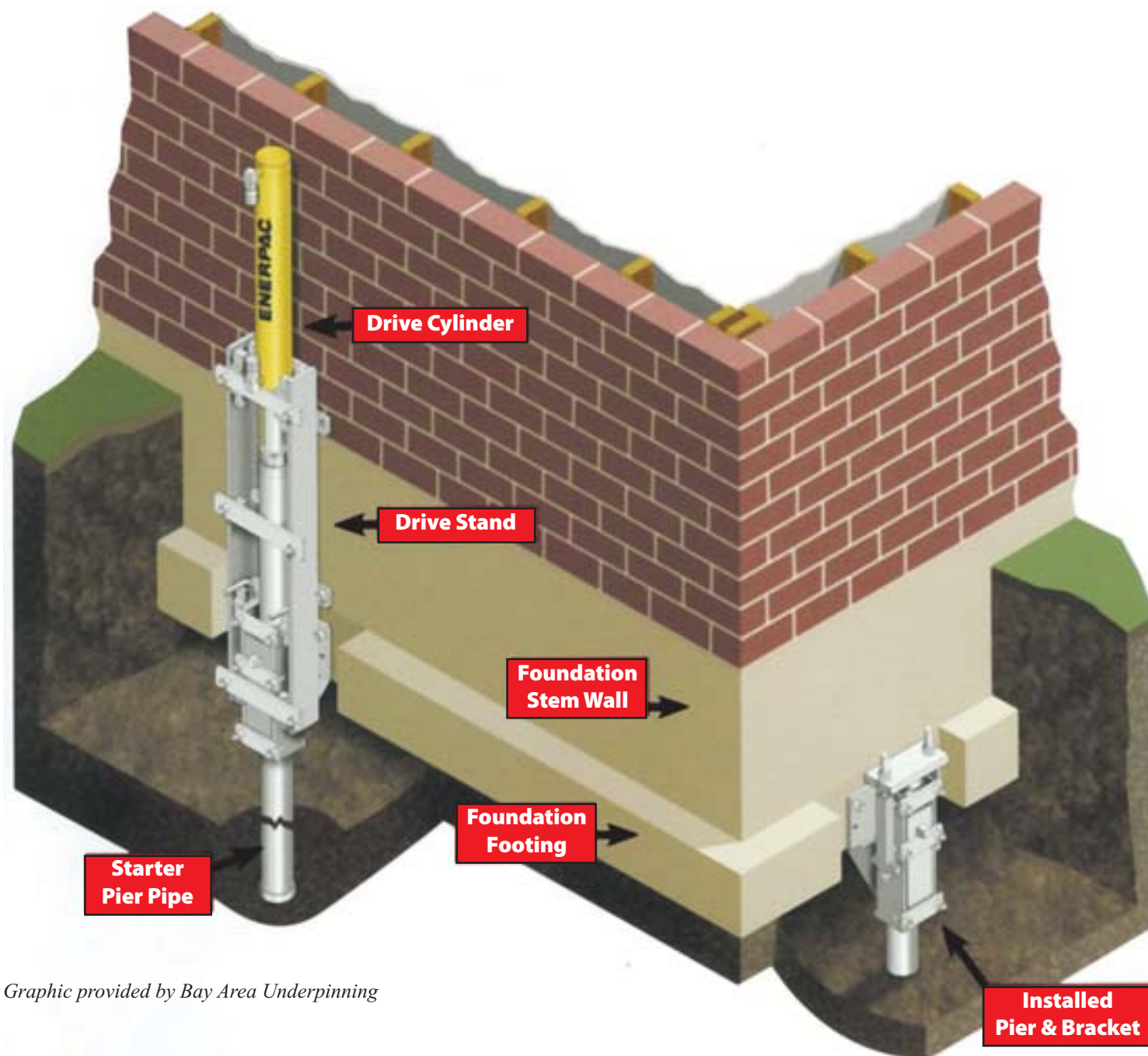


# Does Tilt Come with the Territory?

... continued from page OH1



Graphic provided by Bay Area Underpinning

DeLange says that the main reason they agreed to share their story is the leave-well-enough-alone attitude they encountered. “Plus, we’ve had such a good experience, we wanted others to know. We’ve been totally comfortable having them work here because they are respectful and really responsive to our questions and concerns.”

Most homeowners worry about the impact a construction project will have on the family. DeLange says the digging and sinking of piers took about two weeks and the actual leveling, two days. Righting the house only took more than one day because Egloff and his crew paused often, checking all through the house and taking measurements during the procedure.

The DeLange family was able to stay in the house the entire time. “One night, my husband took the boys out and had our usual family night outside, talking about the project,” Pam says, explaining the easy way the undertaking meshed with her family’s life.

Experience makes Egloff nonchalant about his work. “What happens in the Lamorinda area, is they (home builders) cut into the hill, take the fill, and move it to the front of the property. So it’s non-compacted soil. The house just settles in the front,” he says. “And drainage adds to the problem. When you get both things, like what we had here, it means a

pretty severe settlement.”

Egloff says the construction techniques of the 1940’s to the 1960’s weren’t suitable for hillsides. Signs of failure in a foundation’s integrity are cracks around windows and doors, doors that stick, and uneven floors. “It’s easier to do the work sooner, when you first see the problem, than later, when it’s horrible and there are a lot of other problems,” he says.

Egloff describes the first part of the process for leveling a home with a short, rapid list: “The building department engineers create a layout, we dig small, 2-3’ holes every 6 feet along the foundation, we mount the brackets, and drive the piers.” He slows down long enough to emphasize that each pier is individually load tested, then says, “We start lifting, and when you are level, we get a city inspection.”

Occasionally, there’s interior leveling with screw jacks, an adjustable metal jack supporting most homes. The final stages involve backfilling the holes and completing any landscaping or deck repair included in the job.

The DeLange home required 25 piers, each bearing 12,000 lbs and driven to support the load in a 2 to 1 ratio. “We over-engineer it,” Egloff says. “The company I worked



Installed pier pipe



Lift set up