

# THE NEWS TRIBUNE

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**GET PLUGGED IN TO SOME QUIRKY USB GIFT IDEAS**  
SOUNDLIFE, E1



**HUSKIES' HOPES**  
UW BUILDING ON JON, JAKE  
SPORTS, C1

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**TEENS LOSE LIVES TO RACING**

## Flirting with death

Law enforcement officers report an increase in impromptu street racing in the South Sound. The dangerous game has led to two deadly crashes in recent weeks.

[thenewstribune.com](http://thenewstribune.com)  
Posted online at 9:00 p.m. Monday

BY STACEY MULICK AND ADAM LYNN  
The News Tribune

It's quick. It's dangerous. It's practically impossible to stop.

It's impromptu street racing, where a nod, a wink or just a quick look can spark a high-speed sprint.

"It's just a temptation of your mind," said Gavin Simcoe, a 17-year-old street racer from Graham-Kapowsin High School. "You just want to do it so bad you can't stop yourself."

Impromptu races led to at least two deadly crashes in recent weeks. On Nov. 19, 30-year-old Matthew S. Shipman died when he lost control of his car while racing on High-

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Washington State Patrol

This 2002 Volkswagen Golf was mangled in a deadly crash Nov. 19 on Highway 512.

**ZERO TOLERANCE IN ONE CITY**

## New laws aim to curb racing

A focused effort to stop organized street races appears to be netting good results for law enforcement agencies in the region.

BY ADAM LYNN  
The News Tribune

The days of large organized street races in the South Sound area appear to have run their course.

Authorities credit a campaign of strict enforcement, new laws and education for reducing the illicit races.

"Organized street racing is not an issue, at

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DREW PERINE/The News Tribune

Gavin Simcoe, 17, shows a piece of his ruined exhaust pipe that was torn from his vehicle in September when he crashed and flipped his car while racing down this residential street in Graham.

**WHAT YOU HAD TO SAY ABOUT RACING**



racers live in the neighborhoods where they race.

**HERE ARE A FEW COMMENTS FROM THE SURVEY:**

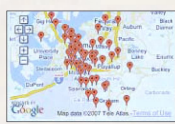
- "I didn't know you could call the police — it seems to usually be isolated to just the two cars — by the time the police would get here, they'd be LONG gone (especially at that speed)."
- "I usually don't see anything but I sure can hear it. I hear a lot of high-speed revving."
- "Hondas w/LOUD exhausts, racing up on shoulder, which is a sidewalk where people & kids walk."
- "Kids racing up and down these very windy, dangerous roads, imitating the 'drifting' shown on TV; are also aggressive to drivers like me who drive sports cars but have half a brain cell and know how to drive them."

**THEY SAID RACING:**

- Occurs mostly late on Friday and Saturday nights.
- Hurts their quality of life, most notably by interrupting their sleep.
- Prompts them to call law enforcement, even though police can do little about it.
- Is a home-grown phenomenon. A vast majority of the suspected

racers live in the neighborhoods where they race.

**MORE ONLINE**



Go to [blogs.thenewstribune.com/crime](http://blogs.thenewstribune.com/crime) to see complete survey results and a map of the places where News Tribune readers say street racing is bad.

**BACK PAGE**

Some readers describe street racing near their homes. **Stacey Mulick, The News Tribune**

## Fife targets online sex ads

City cracks down on prostitution

Fife makes it illegal to solicit sex over the Internet. But other cities with prostitution problems, such as Tacoma and Lakewood, have yet to go after activity on the Web.

[thenewstribune.com](http://thenewstribune.com)  
Posted online at 7:28 p.m. Monday

BY STEVE MAYNARD  
The News Tribune

Prostitutes used to walk up and down Highway 99 in Fife to flag down customers.

Now they're mostly using the Internet and other electronic means to advertise sex for money and arrange meetings with customers at Fife motels.

To keep up with the changes, the city last week approved expanding its laws against prostitution.

The City Council voted unanimously to make it illegal to use e-mail, the Web, message boards or any other online service to solicit, advertise or otherwise agree to an act of prostitution. Soliciting by telephone, voice mail or pager also was outlawed.

Fife police have conducted several stings over the past year and have arrested prostitutes who advertise on Craigslist, the Web site known for its local job and for-sale ads in hundreds of cities around the world.

Please see FIFE, back page

**HE'S WORKED THERE BEFORE**

## Tacoma attorney heads to Iraq

Phil Lynch, an assistant U.S. attorney in Tacoma, will spend a year in Baghdad as Iraq's 'rule of law coordinator.'

BY GENE JOHNSON  
The Associated Press



Lynch

An assistant U.S. attorney in Tacoma whose day job is defending federal hospitals from medical malpractice claims will soon find himself in a very different role: heading the Justice Department's operations in Iraq. Phil Lynch, 56, has been appointed to a one-year stint as "rule of law coordinator" in Baghdad, meaning he will oversee efforts to advise judges, lawyers and police in Iraq's nascent, overwhelmed legal system. It's a tall order in a country where judges and their families live behind 12-foot blast walls and thousands of detainees are held without charges.

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**CORN CROWDS OUT OTHER CROPS. THEY SAY**

## Some blame ethanol boom for high food prices

With Congress ready to mandate a doubling of ethanol production, critics say the U.S. is facing a long battle between food and fuel.

BY ANDREW MARTIN  
The New York Times

Shopping at a Whole Foods Market in suburban Chicago, Meredith Estes said food prices have jumped so much she has resorted to coupons. Charles

Rodgers Jr., an Arkansas cattle rancher, said normal feed rations are so expensive and scarce he is scrambling for alternatives. In Oregon, Jack Joyce, the owner of Rogue Ales, said the cost of barley malt has soared 88 percent this year.

For years, cheap food and feed were taken for granted in the United States. But now the price of some foods is rising sharply, and from the corridors of Wash-

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**WEATHER**

**CAN IT GET ANY MORE GRAY?**  
Don't answer that. Rainy and cloudy. High: 45. Low: 36. Details: C6



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## RACING

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way 512. Cameron Harbin, 19, died Oct. 15 in Spanaway.

"We're going through the worse grieving process," said Debra Sharp, Harbin's stepmother. "It doesn't only affect those racing. It affects everyone, especially the family."

The adrenaline unleashed by the challenge drew Simcoe to street racing but the brutal consequences abruptly halted his fascination.

While racing a friend Sept. 25 at 110 mph, Simcoe crashed his car into a ditch along a residential street in Graham. Heading down a hill, the car flipped several times.

Simcoe walked away with a mild concussion, two stitches on a finger, a sprained neck and abrasions on his left elbow and left ear.

"I didn't think at all about that hill and the consequences," he said. "I really did think I was going to die. I seriously think my life changed right there."

### FIGHTING 'WHAT'S COOL'

Law enforcement officials don't have statistics on how many street racers are stopped or cited. Washington State Patrol trooper Brandy Kessler has seen an increase in the past year but doesn't know what's behind it.

"It's a change in a trend of what's cool to do," she said. "Right now it is cool to have fast cars and race."

Law enforcement officials say they can do little to stop the spur-of-the-moment contests, which can happen any time, anywhere.

"The challenge is issued and it's time to race," Tacoma police spokesman Mark Fulghum said. "There's really no way to plan ahead and combat that. Unless an accident happens or someone has information, they are long gone" when officers arrive.

The races can end as quickly as they begin — sometimes with disastrous results. "It's fairly easy to lose control of your car," Fulghum said. "Surface streets weren't made for racing and high speeds."

Some racers have lookouts to call off the races if they spot a police car. Once they see a police cruiser, drivers slow down and obey the traffic laws.

"It's frustrating," said state trooper Kessler, noting that she sees street racing when she's driving her personal car.

Sometimes, law enforcement officers get lucky.

A State Patrol trooper spotted two side-by-side cars revving their engines on Meridian near 116th Street East in Puyallup in July 2006. When the light turned green, the two cars peeled out and quickly exceeded 60 mph in a 35-mph zone, according to court records.

The trooper stopped the two drivers and cited them with violating a state reckless-driving statute that prohibits "racing of vehicles on highways," the records state. Both men were convicted.

The State Patrol has an aggressive team assigned to its Aggressive Driver Apprehension Team to combat street racing. The troopers, in unmarked cars with regular license plates, are looking for people racing in and out of traffic, Kessler said. Drivers can be ticketed for reckless driving for racing or can be charged with vehicular assault or vehicular homicide if the race results in serious injury or death.

"If they are racing, it's a disregard for the safety of others," Kessler said. "Usually, if someone is racing and they are caught, they are going to be charged."

### THE VICTIMS

Glen Coberly, Kelly Vick, Lance Harbin and Debbie Sharp are firsthand the cost of kids driving recklessly.

Coberly's daughter, Briana Hyde of Tacoma, died in July 2004 when the Honda Accord she was riding in crashed in



The brush is still flattened at the spot where Gavin Simcoe's car came to rest Sept. 25 after flipping several times in a street-racing accident in Graham. Simcoe, 17, survived with minor injuries. Now he speaks against the dangers of racing.

'IT'S A HAZARD'

## Neighbors speak out against racing

An informal News Tribune survey hears from South Sound residents worried about the dangers of street racing near their homes.

BY ADAM LYNCH  
The News Tribune

Young people are driving fast, and it's making people across the South Sound furious.

Some of the races would attract crowds of 500 as many as 500 to industrial areas of Kent, Auburn and Pierce County as little as two years ago. The vast majority of the people went to watch the contests, some of which were videotaped and posted on the Internet.

Racers came from all over the Northwest, Kent police Sgt. Pat Lowery said recently.

"They'd come from Portland, Snohomish County, you name it," Lowery said. "We had middle-aged people coming

down to race their high-end sports cars." Kent police developed a comprehensive "zero tolerance" strategy for curtailing the races after a series of crashes and complaints from business owners. The strategy:

- Made it a crime to gather to watch illegal street races.
- Designated specific areas of the city as no-racing zones. Judges now can issue orders prohibiting people involved in racing from going into those zones at certain times of day.

- Police can arrest violators.
- Included emphasis patrols in which police would identify racers, then "swoop in with enforcement teams" to ticket or arrest drivers and spectators.

Officers also made it a point to start impounding participants' cars.

and provide an unwelcome annoyance.

"It bothers us, plus it's a hazard as well," he said. "Not just for them, but for anyone else on the road out here. We've notified the State Patrol a dozen times or more. It's just a long run for them to get out here."

Many people who responded to the newspaper's survey complained that call to law enforcement about the problem had little effect.

Most of the racing going on in the South Sound appears to be impromptu or small-scale. By the time police arrive, if they come at all, most of the races have moved on, respondents said.

"I don't know how you're going to catch these people," said Gary Hillin, who said racers use 46th Avenue East off 208th Street East in Spanaway as a track. "When they do it, it doesn't last long and then they're gone."

"Tickets — they collect those things like wallpaper," Lowery said. "You take their car away — they'd sell their mother to get it back."

Other jurisdictions, including Auburn and Tukwila, have adopted Kent's approach, Lowery said. The effort has been successful, he said, although it's a constant battle.

"We've seen a significant decrease in the number of races," Lowery said. "But we're not going to make street racing go away."

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Staff writer Steve Mulick contributed to this report.

## NEW LAWS

CONTINUED FROM A1

least that we are aware of," Tacoma police spokesman Mark Fulghum said. "They tend to go elsewhere."

The State Patrol has an aggressive team assigned to its Aggressive Driver Apprehension Team to combat street racing. The troopers, in unmarked cars with regular license plates, are looking for people racing in and out of traffic, Kessler said. Drivers can be ticketed for reckless driving for racing or can be charged with vehicular assault or vehicular homicide if the race results in serious injury or death.

"If they are racing, it's a disregard for the safety of others," Kessler said. "Usually, if someone is racing and they are caught, they are going to be charged."

Renton. Sheriff's deputies said the driver, another teenage girl, was racing another car when she ran head-on into a Ford Crown Victoria.

Hyde was 17 and a budding poet. Coberly told The News Tribune last

week that he learned as much as he could about the street racing scene after his daughter's death.

"I know a lot more about this culture than I'd ever want to," he said. Racing is just part of it, Coberly said.

Justice Kevin Ringus.

The practice of selling sex this way is widespread. In Cook County, Ill., the sheriff in July rounded up 60 women who spread word of their services on Craigslist, according to The New York Times. In Seattle, a covert police ad placed on the site a year ago led to the arrest of 71 men, including a bank officer and a surgeon.

File, a fast-growing city with a population of 71,800, turned 50 this year. When the city code was written years ago, "We weren't having the problem with the Internet," Thompson said.

Now, he said, "The officers aren't seeing the girls out, for lack of a better word, shopping their wares on the road."

In the Seattle-Tacoma section of Craigslist on Monday, there was an ad for a "sexy blonde ready for anything." It later advised: "Please ask about my half hour specials."

Another ad reads, "I'm Danielle all night tonight and all afternoon until 4 p.m. Give me a call you won't be disappointed. Serious inquiries only." A phone number appears above a picture of a woman on a bed.

The File council also outlawed transporting a known prostitute to a motel and waiting for the prostitute to return after a transaction is complete. This behavior will now fall under the crime of prostitution loitering — an effort to deter pimping.

File police saw the need for this law change after arresting a man last year for obstructing. He had refused to answer questions after dropping off a prostitute, Thompson said.

A Pierce County Superior Court judge ruled police didn't have reason to contact him, Blackburn said.

Both of the additional offenses are misdemeanor crimes punishable by up to 90 days in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

Tacoma already has a law that forbids transporting someone to commit prostitution, said Tacoma police spokesman Mark Fulghum. Tacoma's code outlaws soliciting for sex but doesn't address using the Internet to do so.

"To my knowledge, we haven't had any big issues with the electronic, e-mail versions of setting up deals," Fulghum said.

If that were to become a major problem, Fulghum said, Tacoma police would consider recommending provisions like File's.

Lakewood — one of the other local cities that historically has struggled with prostitution — also doesn't have a law against soliciting sex over the Internet, said city spokesman Jeff Brewster. And it doesn't have a specific code against transporting a known prostitute, he said.

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Kids also play "games" with their cars like tag and follow the leader, which can be just as dangerous as racing, he said.

"They don't have to be racing to be driving 70 mph on a residential street," Coberly said. "They're using their cars for

## ATTORNEY

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"We in the United States know if someone's arrested they're going to go in front of a judge who's going to make a decision about whether they should stay incarcerated," Lynch said. "Iraqis don't have that tradition. ... When the population of Iraq understands that the judges will follow the law and apply it equally to everyone, we believe that will have a tremendous impact on ending the insurgency."

Lynch, a West Point graduate who spent 20 years in the Army before joining the U.S. attorney's office in 1993, knows what he's getting into. He previously spent six months in Iraq working with judges, prosecutors and defense attorneys handling the trial of deposed leader Saddam Hussein.

Why go back? He said he's fascinated by the development of Iraqi justice — in particular, the court system — after 30 years of oppression.

As of last summer, the Justice Department had more than 200 employees and contractors in Iraq, according to the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. Those include FBI personnel who help investigate high-profile cases such as assassinations. Drug Enforcement Administration officials who give courses in analyzing intelligence; and lawyers who advise the Iraqi High Tribunal, which has jurisdiction

toys."

Vick, Harbin and his wife, Sharp, lost their son, 19-year-old Cameron, on Oct. 15. The teen was racing another young man down 128th Street East after they made eye contact at Canyon Road. Cameron lost control of his car, which drove into a ditch, flipped several times and crashed through several trees.

His parents said Cameron was a good kid who didn't do drugs and never got into trouble. They said they had talked to him about driving safely.

"I never thought he would do something stupid like that," Vick said. Since his oldest son's death, Lance Harbin has been trying to get through to young adults about the dangers of street racing.

He's printed up 350 bumper stickers that have the words "Street racing" enclosed in a red circle with a slash through it.

He plans to distribute the stickers to automotive parts and repair shops. "I am trying to do everything I can so no other parent has to go through this," Lance Harbin said.

### 'I WAS IN SHOCK'

Simcoe is reaching out as well and telling his story.

He was no stranger to racing when he crashed. In some cases, he didn't know the other racer. Other times, he challenged friends to see whose car was faster. That's what started the race Sept. 25.

Simcoe and a friend got into their cars about 8:30 p.m. A third friend went down the road to make sure it was clear. The racers did one run, then decided to do a second round. This time no one went down to the finish line.

Simcoe was driving in the oncoming lane of 108th Avenue East and hit 110 mph as the road started down a hill. Then he spotted a car coming out of a driveway.

Simcoe veered left, missing the other car but heading off the road between a telephone pole and a mailbox. He hit a ditch, which threw the car into a series of flips before smacking a tree at 50 mph.

Initially knocked unconscious, Simcoe came to and walked through some sticker bushes to wait for paramedics. He also called his mother.

"I was in shock, I couldn't even cry," Darlene Burrill said. "I just went over and saw the car and I just started praying."

Simcoe went to the hospital to be checked out and stitched up. He lost his license, his totaled car was impounded, and he was charged with reckless driving.

Burrill wanted the punishment. "I wanted it to hit home for him," she said. "I was scared to death that he was going to do it again."

She also wanted her son to talk about his experiences — particularly to his peers. He has been doing that whenever and wherever he can. He's spoken to students at his high school, on television and at a football game.

Simcoe, who still dreams about what happened, wrote about his ordeal in a college essay, describing his most significant challenge and how he coped with it.

"Being fortunate to be alive," Simcoe wrote, "made me now endure the consequences of my actions."

Burrill wants young drivers especially to get that message.

"They don't realize how much power a car has and what the consequences can be," Burrill said. "I could be one of those moms building a memorial on the side of road."

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## FILE

CONTINUED FROM A1

Undercover police responded to free online classified ads offering sex acts and have arranged meetings at File motels along Highway 99, or Pacific Highway East. Two weeks ago, File police arrested three prostitutes in a sting, said Lt. Tom Thompson.

Making it a crime to advertise for sex on the Internet makes it easier for police to establish probable cause when arresting prostitutes and customers who meet in File, said Police Chief Brad Blackburn.

The Internet ads usually include pictures with the prostitutes' faces.

The expanded city code also could lead to more legal problems, including arrests, for prostitutes who are convicted, have their sentence suspended and then defy orders not to solicit over the Internet, Thompson said.

Blackburn said File is the first city in Washington to criminalize Internet advertising for prostitution. The council is expected to take its second, final vote on the additions — usually a formality — on Jan. 8.

Prostitution's move to cyberspace has been under way for a couple of years, Thompson said.

"The ordinance has got to evolve with the industry," said File Municipal Court

### COMING THURSDAY



#### HEAD NORTH

Vancouver Island's Mount Washington is still one of British Columbia's best-kept secrets.

IN ADVENTURE

### COMING FRIDAY



#### SHORT DAYS, LONG NIGHT

The Entertainment Center offers suggestions to get you out of the house over the holidays.

IN GO

### COMING SATURDAY



#### A SMALLER EMPTY NEST

The kids are gone, the garden's overgrown. Maybe it's time to downsize and enjoy retirement.

IN HOME&GARDEN