

MORE OF A DETERRENT SEEN

## Higher prostitution fines planned

The Tacoma City Council hopes hefty fines will slow prostitution activity and encourage more men to attend 'John School.' Council members likely will approve the increases next week.

BY KRIS SHERMAN  
The News Tribune

Picking up a prostitute could soon pack a more powerful punch to your pocketbook.

So could soliciting customers for sex. Or even loitering in an area known for prostitution.

Mandatory minimum fines of \$750 for a first conviction and \$1,000 for second and subsequent convictions for prostitution activity are

under consideration by the Tacoma City Council.

Tuesday evening, the council conducted a first reading of the proposed changes to a city ordinance on "public safety and morals." Council members are expected to approve the changes next week.

The fines would affect both men and women convicted of prostitution activity.

But the aim isn't to put more money into the city treasury. Rather, it's a carrot-and-stick approach to encourage more men to attend the year-old "John School."

The daylong school uses cops, health officials, community members and prostitutes themselves to teach johns about the physical,

emotional and economic toll the trade takes on a city and its residents.

Johns caught in Tacoma, Lakewood and Fife may attend. The fees they pay are used by the Metropolitan Development Council to fund a prostitution recovery program.

A john who agrees to attend the class can avoid a court appearance. If his record stays clean of crimes for six months, the prostitution offense will be erased.

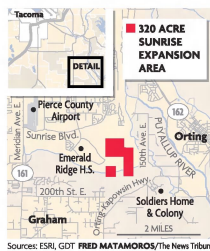
"It's a deterrent," said Councilman Mike Lonergan. "It's trying to break the cycle of prostitution crime."

But right now, it might be cheaper for a man

### 'JOHN SCHOOL' RECORD

Graduates in first year  
**67**  
Tacoma  
**40**  
Lakewood  
Sources: City of Tacoma police and legal departments

Please see FINES, page B5



Sources: ESRI, GDT, FRED MATAMOROS/The News Tribune

## Room to grow more homes

South Hill area will be expanded

One of the largest master-plan communities in Pierce County is set to get bigger. A land exchange with the state makes it possible.

BY EIJIRO KAWADA  
The News Tribune

A Sumner company plans to use 320 acres of South Hill forestland it acquired from the state as an expansion area for the Sunrise housing development.

The company has not released details. But in one of the early steps to replace trees with houses, Central Pierce Fire & Rescue has petitioned to annex the land at the request of its owner, Investco Financial Corp. of Sumner.

When the state Department of Natural Resources owned it, the land wasn't protected by any of the neighboring fire districts, said Jack Andren, chief of Central Pierce. Now that it's in private hands, it has to be assigned to a district.

The state's involvement in the controversial South Hill land transaction came to a head in February, when the Board of Natural Resources voted to transfer ownership to Investco.

In exchange, Investco transferred the site of a Walgreens drugstore in South King County, plus \$600,000, to the DNR. The 1½-acre site, worth \$8 million, lies near the intersection of Highway 99 and Kent-Des Moines Road.

Walgreens' 25-year lease is expected to generate annual payments of \$481,500, for a total annual yield of 6.76 percent.

Please see LAND, page B5

MORE ALGEBRA, GEOMETRY

## Wait until 2011 for math WASL, state board says

The state Board of Education advises a delay on the math WASL graduation requirement. But it wants lawmakers to approve its 'Mathematics Action Plan,' too.

BY DONNA GORDON BLANKINSHIP  
The Associated Press

The state Board of Education voted Tuesday to advise the Legislature to give Washington schools three more years to learn how to teach math before making a passing grade on the math section of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning a high school graduation requirement.

One day after Gov. Chris Gregoire called for a three-year delay on the math

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BUSINESS GROUPS SUPPORT WASL MATH DELAY. B5

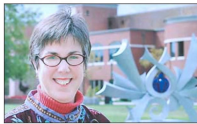
## Trim a tree, build a Mary Bridge donation



PETER HALEY/The News Tribune

Janet Nicoll of Tacoma, left, and Beverly Stroditz of Edgewood, volunteers with the Karshner Orthopedic Guild, decorate their tree, "Vintage Elegance," on Tuesday for the 20th Annual Festival of Trees at the Greater Tacoma Convention & Trade Center. The festival will be open to the public noon to 2 p.m. Thursday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday. Admission is \$6, \$2 for students over 12. The festival benefits critical care services at Mary Bridge Children's Hospital.

## Meet Ben Weymiller, pony up for rocking chairs



KATHLEEN MERRYMAN

Ben Weymiller is 10 and has big plans. He could, he says, grow up to be an architect or an engineer. He could team up with his brother Alex, who is 12, to be famous football players, like the Barbers, the Mannings or the Huards.

Already, the fourth-grader at Gig Harbor's Voyager Elementary School is a notable philanthropist.

Ben, who has no trouble pronouncing the word, joked around with it.

"Thorasophis, thalantophist," he said. "Philanthropist, get used to that."

We can start Thursday.

At the Festival of Trees that day, Ben will begin a Rock-A-Thon to raise money to buy glider rocking chairs for Mary Bridge Children's Hospital and Health Center and Tacoma General Hospital.

He'll be rocking, reading and answering your questions from 2 to 4 p.m. Thursday, and all day Saturday and Sunday. On his brief breaks, his aunt Andrea and baby cousin Mary Grace Weymiller will sit in for him. They, after all, inspired the whole effort.

Mary Grace was born last December with Down syndrome and some of the

### HOW TO DONATE

Online: [www.firstgiving.com/marybridgerocks](http://www.firstgiving.com/marybridgerocks)

Write a check: Mail it to Mary Bridge Children's Foundation, PO Box 5296, Mail Stop 4091-phil, Tacoma, WA 98415. Note "rocking chairs" on the memo line.

In person: Meet Ben Weymiller and one of his rocking chairs at the 20th Annual Festival of Trees at the Greater Tacoma Convention & Trade Center, 1500 Broadway. He'll be there during public hours, noon to 2 p.m. Thursday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday.

medical problems that can come with it.

She spent her first weeks in Tacoma General's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, where Ben and Alex visited her with their parents, Kathy and Pete Weymiller.

The extended family bent their mental and spiritual will toward Mary Grace's survival as Tacoma General's medical team fought for her.

"There were a few life-and-death surgeries," Ben said.

Mary Grace's condition improved enough that her parents, Andrea and Paul Weymiller, could sit and rock her. They took her home to Buckley, then had to admit her to the Mary Bridge Pediatric Intensive Care Unit. Mary Grace ended up spending 78 days of her first three months in the hospital.

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Courtesy of Kathy Weymiller

Cousins Ben and Mary Grace Weymiller are getting ready for a Rock-A-Thon.

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### READY, SET, CHRISTMAS!

South Sound communities get spooled up for the holidays. Check this schedule of events. B2

### SHOW & TELL

Revelations of fourth-grader with poetry contest

### JUST PERFECT

A high school senior hasn't missed a day of school in nearly 13 years. SHOW&TELL, B3



**FINES**

CONTINUED FROM B1

to plead guilty to misdemeanor prostitution and take the punishment handed out by the court than to pay the John School fee, said assistant city attorney Jon Walker.

Tacoma's current law carries a fine of not more than \$500 and/or up to six months in the county jail. The fee for John School if you're caught hiring a prostitute in Tacoma is \$600. Punishment depends on the facts and circumstances of the case as well as the John's prior criminal history, said assistant city attorney Jay Hayes, supervisor for the city's criminal division.

Sentencing statistics weren't available, but Hayes conceded it could cost many Johns less to strike a plea deal than to attend the school.

Hefter fines would put "another tool in the toolbox for our officers and our courts to use in reducing prostitution in our area," said Councilwoman Connie Ladenburg.

Chris Travis, a Tacoma police special operations officer who runs the school, agrees.

In the year the school's been operating, 107 men — 67 caught in Tacoma and 40 arrested in Lakewood — have graduated, Travis said. Not one has been re-arrested for trying to pick up a hooker.

Though he doesn't believe many men have opted to plead guilty rather than taking the diversion to John School, Travis says he's heard from attorneys who pointed out it might be cheaper to do so.

"That was kind of a wake-up call," he said.

Councilman Rick Talbert sees the greater fines as a way to curb Tacoma's prostitution problem,

**TACOMA'S PROSTITUTION ORDINANCE**

**Current punishment:** A fine of not more than \$500 and/or up to six months in county jail.

**Alternative:** Many men can avoid court by attending "John School," a daylong class to teach them about the prostitution trade's cost to the community and its residents.

**Attendance fee in Tacoma:** \$600

**Proposed punishment:** Mandatory minimum fine of \$750 for a first conviction, \$1,000 for second and subsequent convictions. Sentence may include a fine not exceeding \$1,000 and up to 90 days jail.

**Alternative:** Pay \$600 and go to "John School"

**Note:** Johns who patronize underage prostitutes or who have a record of violent offenses are not eligible for the diversion program.

Sources: City of Tacoma police and legal departments

which has metastasized down Pacific Avenue to the city's southern reaches.

Ultimately, what we want to have happen is for these men to understand the impacts of prostitution on a community," Talbert said. Those associated costs include burglaries, drug sales and drug use, sexually transmitted diseases and assaults on both men and women, he said.

"If there's no clientele, then there won't be any prostitution," he said.

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**WASL**

CONTINUED FROM B1

WASL, the state board took a slightly different approach, Chairwoman Mary Jean Ryan said in a phone interview after the board meeting ended in Olympia.

The board and the governor both want to delay the math WASL as a graduation requirement until 2011, while requiring students to keep taking math classes and trying to pass the test.

The WASL test was developed to monitor how well Washington's 1 million public school students are achieving rigorous standards in reading, math and writing. As it now stands, beginning with the Class of 2008, students have to pass all three sections to graduate.

More than half the students in the Class of 2008 have passed the math section.

About 44,000 of this year's juniors passed the math section last spring and another 3,000 passed it in the fall. About 1,000 still haven't passed and risk not graduating next year. Most of these students have passed the reading and writing sections of the test.

So far, the Legislature has authorized multiple retakes, paid for summer school and tutoring and established alternative ways to pass.

The board got more specific than the governor in its recommendation — asking the Legislature to require students to take more high school level math classes such as algebra and geometry, and insisting lawmakers approve the board's "Mathematics Action Plan" along with the change in the WASL requirements.

"You're going to keep taking math until you've taken two full years of what people think of as a relating, block high school math classes," Ryan said.

She said the board is concerned that too many students fulfill the state's requirement of two years of high school math by taking two years of remedial math and nothing further.

The WASL assumes that they've taken algebra and geometry and that's not necessarily true," Ryan said. "There's a disconnect and it's not fair for the kids."

The math action plan calls for a clarification and revision of state math standards, a revision of the math WASL if necessary to properly test for these standards, a limited menu of math curriculum choices for school districts and improvements in teacher training and recruitment.

"I think people felt really strongly that we don't want to just be recommending a delay in the graduation requirements unless we can honestly say we are going to see the system changes that we all want to see that make a difference in student learning and levels of achievement," Ryan said.

The most controversial section of the action plan will probably be the menu of math curriculum options, but Ryan said she thought school districts, which are used to having local control of their curriculum, would be satisfied with the exemptions for districts whose students are already performing well on the math WASL.

Next on the board's agenda is a clarification of the state's high school math requirement.

The board is leaning toward changing the two-year math requirement to say specifically that it refers to two years of math like algebra and geometry. The board will go further and require three years of high school math.

Next year, the board is planning to review the whole high school diploma, looking at the requirements in every subject.

**Business groups back WASL delay**

**The state should use any suspension of the WASL math requirement to refine instruction, testing boosters say.**

BY TARA M. MANTHEY  
The News Tribune

Two organizations that have been boosters of the WASL graduation requirement support a proposal by Gov. Chris Gregoire and state schools superintendent Terry Bergeson to delay a requirement to pass the math test until 2011.

However, representatives of the Partnership for Learning and the Washington Roundtable said Tuesday that their support of the three-year review is conditional on the state improving math instruction.

"This is a decent and fair compromise for kids" said Melissa Heston, executive director of the Partnership for Learning, a business-supported coalition. "But from our perspective, we feel that we can't let up on the gas in the next three years."

On Monday, the governor and the schools superintendent recommended that the Legislature change the requirement that beginning with this year's juniors, high school graduates pass the writing, reading and math portions of the assessment test.

With nearly half of students not passing the math test on the Tuesday, the officials say the math requirement should be put off

until the state can implement changes in instruction.

The partnership reluctantly supports the governor's plan, Heston said. It agrees a math reform is needed — but should have been started three years ago, she said. The recent WASL scores were needed to motivate everyone to change.

"If we can use this moment of truth and crisis to significantly accelerate these reforms," she said, "I think we can push this forward."

The Washington Roundtable, a group of the state's largest employers, still supports state standardized tests.

"The WASL has already served an important purpose by putting a bright light on an academic deficiency, the focus now needs to turn to solutions," vice president Marc Frazer said.

Both organizations support increasing the number of years of math required for graduation. The state currently requires two years.

Students who pass the WASL and fulfill that requirement aren't necessarily prepared for college, Frazer said. Thousands of high school graduates require remedial math courses in college.

"It's wrong to hand students a diploma and then require they pay for extra math classes before they can begin college work," he said.

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**LAND**

CONTINUED FROM B1

according to state calculations. The land was assessed at \$6.5 million at the time of the deal, according to state documents.

Neighboring residents and conservationists opposed the loss of the South Hill acreage, which they called a valuable wetland system. The Puyallup Tribe of Indians also protested the land swap, although it later dropped its opposition.

DNR officials wanted the exchange because of the prospect of increased revenues, which the state is responsible for maximizing to benefit public schools. They said the department can't manage timberland in an urban area that doesn't make money.

Brian McCabe, vice president of Investco, said his company doesn't yet have a plan for how it will develop the land.

"It's going to take us the next 1½ years to go through the planning process," he said.

But he said the vision is to make it part of the Sunrise development, all of which Investco now manages. The 1,000-home, 1,500-acre development is one of the biggest master-plan communities in Pierce County.

The 320 wooded acres are adjacent to Sunrise. Andrea said the developers plan to extend 184th Street East in front of Emerald Ridge High School to the

**INFORMATION ON AN ANNEXATION**

For more information about the Central Pierce Fire & Rescue annexation of 320 acres, call the Boundary Review Board at 253-798-7156 or check www.co.pierce.wa.us. Under "Quicklinks" pull down to "Planning & Land Service." On that page, click on "Other Info" from the left column. A link to the "Boundary Review Board" should be at the top. Residents or groups can request a hearing before the review board, but must file a \$200 fee before Dec. 22.

area east of it. Central Pierce filed paperwork with the local Boundary Review Board on Nov. 7, outlining its intent to annex the land.

Deirdre Wilson, a Pierce County planner, said last week that she recently met with an Investco official on a five-year update of the Sunrise master plan, which is due next month.

She also said the plan for the 320 acres is unclear.

Wilson said the area probably will be developed as mostly residential. The current zoning allows two homes per acre.

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**MERRYMAN**

CONTINUED FROM B1

Ben noticed something especially distressing about the second hospitalization — asking the Legislature to require students to take more high school level math classes such as algebra and geometry, and insisting lawmakers approve the board's "Mathematics Action Plan" along with the change in the WASL requirements.

"You're going to keep taking math until you've taken two full years of what people think of as a relating, block high school math classes," Ryan said.

Ben accepted the logic of protecting babies from germs and hospitals from liability. But he believes rocking does babies good.

"If you are rocking in a rocking chair, it soothes the brain," he said. "It helps the brain grow, so it's easier to learn."

He wanted Mary Grace, and all babies, to have that benefit. He went home and made up an envelope and put his \$40 allowance savings in it.

Ben's \$10-a-month allowance does not come easily. He feeds and scoops up after the family dogs. He hauls garbage and recycling down a quarter-mile of driveway.

Andrea delivered his envelope. "She turned it in to the gift-taker, Mr. Colarusso," Ben said.

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*"If you are rocking in a rocking chair, it soothes the brain. It helps the brain grow, so it's easier to learn."*

**BEN WEYMILLER**, 10-year-old philanthropist, on the importance of rocking babies in rocking chairs

Frank Colarusso, Mary Bridge Children's Foundation's major gifts officer, responded with a cordial letter that concluded, "Please call me if you have any questions, and I will make sure that we let you know how we progress in raising funds for this cause."

Ben took that as an invitation. "I said, 'Mom, I'd like to call this Frank guy and see if we can help,'" Ben said.

Impressed, Colarusso asked Ben for his fundraising ideas.

"I thought about sitting on the street with my mom, putting out collection jars, or selling bracelets or pens, electrical pens that say

"Keep on rocking!" he said. "My former neighbor, Dexter Reuhl, suggested a rock-a-thon."

"I wrote down some of the ideas and sent them to Mary Bridge," Ben said. "Two weeks ago we had a meeting."

The plan is to set Ben rocking at the Festival of Trees during public hours. At trivia evening events, he will make cameo pitches for donations.

The chairs, he will tell people, are special glider rockers that cost \$725 each.

"They are so expensive because any kind of person has to be able to rock any kind of child," he

said. The hospital is hoping to buy 25 to 30 chairs, said spokesman Todd Kelley.

Ben is going for more. He wants to raise \$25,000 to \$35,000 to get more chairs into more rooms in more MultiCare facilities.

Knowing what he does of Ben, Kelley thinks he'll meet that greater goal.

"He is a very well-spoken, poised, intelligent young man," Kelley said. "We were very impressed with him. I have no doubt this guy will be a CEO someday."

Maybe so.

But being a philanthropist is better. And Ben is that already.

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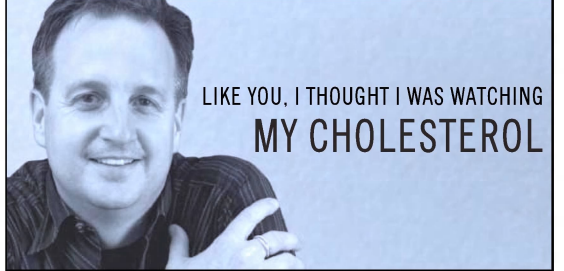
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