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TALKS LED TO SOLUTION

Student contracts give rules for dance

Gig Harbor High School will have its spring formals this year, but students must sign a contract stating they won't dance inappropriately.

thenewstribune.com
Posted online: 2:52 p.m. Tuesday

BY BRENT CHAMPACO
The News Tribune

Sign and date here. Initial here. No freaking on the dance floor. Here's your ticket. Now enjoy the prom.

It might not be the usual message students hear leading up to the season of year-end spring dances. But Gig Harbor High students might get something close to it when they buy their tickets for the annual junior and senior gals this year.

Almost two months after suspending both proms because of students' promiscuous dance moves and their defiant attitude, Principal Greg Schellenberg said Tuesday that the functions will take place as scheduled.

The only caveat: Prom-goers will have to sign a contract that outlines what types of dancing, clothing and behavior are intolerable.

If students don't follow the contract, they could forfeit their dancing privileges, be suspended, or even lose their rights to walk with classmates during the graduation ceremony.

This is the solution school administrators, students and parents agreed on following weeks of discussion.

"I'm satisfied with it," Schellenberg said during a telephone interview Tuesday. "My secretary and I

Please see **DANCE**, back page

War games send a warning to Iran



Flight deck sailors tend to F/A-18 warplanes Tuesday aboard the Bremerton-based aircraft carrier USS John C. Stennis, taking part in war games in the Persian Gulf as a show of U.S. might to Iran.

KAMRAN JEBRELLI/The Associated Press

Flexing its muscle in the Persian Gulf, the U.S. conducts a massive naval exercise that includes the Bremerton-based carrier the USS John C. Stennis. The message: Watch yourself, Iran.

BY JAMES CALDERWOOD
AND JIM KRANE
The Associated Press

ABOARD THE USS JOHN C. STENNIS—American warplanes screamed off two aircraft carriers Tuesday as the U.S. Navy staged its largest show of force in the Persian Gulf since the 2003 invasion of Iraq, launching a mammoth exercise meant as a message to the Iranians.

The maneuvers with 15 warships and more than 100 aircraft were sure to heighten tensions

with Iran, which has frequently condemned the U.S. military presence off its coast and is in a face-off with the West over its nuclear program and its capture of a British naval team.

While they wouldn't say when the war games were planned, U.S. commanders insisted the exercises weren't a direct response to Friday's seizure of the 15 British sailors and marines, but they also made clear that the flexing of the Navy's military might was intended as a warning.

"If there is strong presence, then it sends a clear message that you better be careful about trying to intimidate others," said Capt. Bradley Johanson, commander of the USS John C. Stennis, a carrier based in Bremerton.

"Iran has adopted a very escalatory posture

Please see **WAR GAMES**, back page

**IRAQ WAR
TIMELINE**
In a victory for Democrats, senators pass legislation that sets a pullout date in Iraq, **A3**

**BLAIR
IMPATIENT**
Britain's prime minister hopes he can persuade Iran to release sailors. **BACK PAGE**

Marine research trumps condos

Site on Foss will go to Urban Waters

The Tacoma City Council approves a \$5.6 million property purchase on the east side of the Foss Waterway. It will be home to a marine research laboratory.

BY KRIS SHERMAN
The News Tribune

Land a developer envisioned as home to 75 luxury condominiums on the east side of the Thea Foss Waterway will become a city-backed marine research laboratory instead.

The Tacoma City Council voted Tuesday evening to spend \$5.6 million to buy 3.1 acres along East D Street for the Urban Waters project.

"We're a city immersed in water, so to speak, and certainly surrounded by it," City Councilman Bill Evans, chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, told his colleagues.

The city must do everything it can to reduce pollution and remove contaminant from the area's bodies of water, Evans said during a study session earlier Tuesday.

Purchase of the property and the cost of constructing a 40,000-square-foot laboratory and office complex on part of the land will be paid for by the city's utility customers.

Please see **RESEARCH**, page **A7**

TACOMA HAS SIMILAR LAW

Pierce courts get anti-vice option

The Pierce County Council approves a tool to fight prostitution. It lets judges order prostitutes and their customers to stay out of problem areas, particularly Pacific Avenue South.

BY DAVID WICKERT
The News Tribune

A growing prostitution problem along Pacific Avenue South has led Pierce County to make it possible to ban those convicted of the offense from visiting areas where prostitution is prevalent.

The County thenewstribune.com Council on thenewstribune.com Posted online: 1 p.m. Tuesday Tuesday voted

5-0 to approve a "stay out of areas of prostitution" — or SOAP — ordinance similar to those adopted by Tacoma and Lakewood. It allows courts to prohibit convicted prostitutes and their customers from entering areas where that's a problem.

Pierce County Executive John Ladenburg

Please see **OPTION**, page **A7**

BUSINESS EXTRA

[thenewstribune.com]

Starting today, the business team will launch the first edition of The News Tribune Business Extra, a daily update of business news around the South Sound and beyond. It's information you won't want to miss.

Turn to the Business section for information on how to sign up.



[The Biz Buzz]

For more news about business, economic development, aerospace, shopping and much more, check out the business team's blog.

blogs.thenewstribune.com/business

COST OF DAMAGE TO PARK NEAR \$100 MILLION

Rainier's road to Paradise could open soon

The National Park Service says it's on track to open the road to Paradise, four months after the November floods closed Mount Rainier National Park.

BY LES BLUMENTHAL
The News Tribune

WASHINGTON — The Nisqually Road, severely damaged by flooding in November, will be open to the public from the entrance of Mount Rainier National Park to Paradise by May 1, the head of the Na-

thenewstribune.com
Posted online: 12:47 p.m. Tuesday

ional Park Service said Tuesday. Previous estimates put damage to the park at \$36 million. But Mary Bomar, the park service director, told the House inter-

rior appropriations subcommittee the total price tag could approach \$100 million.

The extent of the "unprecedented" damage might not be known until the snow melts, according to a park service briefing

Please see **PARADISE**, back page

INDEX

Business	D1	Crosswords	E8, F5	Lottery	B2	SoundLife/Food	E1
Classified	F1	Events/movies	E2	Obituaries	B4	Sports	C1
Comics	E7	Legal notices	F8	Opinion	B6	Take Time	E8
		Local news	B1	Show&Tell	B3	Television	E9



WEATHER

NO NEED FOR SUNGLASSES:
Clouds will keep the sun hidden today.
High: 54. Low: 38. Details: **C8**



RESEARCH

CONTINUED FROM A1

Design studies have yet to be done, but preliminary estimates peg the cost of the structure and parking at about \$20 million, assistant public works director Karen Larkin told the council during the study session.

There's about \$22 million for the project in the 2007-08 budget for the city's environmental services division, Larkin said.

The building, which could be completed in late 2008, will primarily house environmental scientists and staff from the city's public works department.

University of Washington Tacoma researchers also would work out of the facility.

The city's scientists need laboratories for testing of water and groundwater samples, sediments soils and air samples, Larkin said.

UWT researchers will concentrate on urban waterway and estuarine health, she added.

Councilwoman Julie Anderson called putting the two together "an opportunity to combine efficiencies."

Stan Sidor of GVA Kidder Mathews told council members

his company appraised the property at \$6 million. It's now owned by Pioneer Cay Developing, LLC.

Thurston County developer Mike Co-

hen proposed a new-story office and condominium building on the site, but the port, Tidelflats businesses, the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber of Commerce and others opposed the construction of residential units in an industrial area.

Building a marine research center there makes good sense, Larkin said. The environmental services division's scientists and engineers are spread out in several locations.

A marine dock would accommodate the city's two water-quality sampling vessels and could be used to moor a fireboat or police boat, too, Larkin said.

In a recent communication with the city, former public works employee Mike Price questioned the city's decision to put the laboratory on the Foss. More study was needed to determine whether a site farther away from the waterway would provide "quality source water," he said.

"Manufactured seawater" likely might be used at the facility, as it is at other laboratories around the nation, Larkin told council members. Scientists prefer it for some research because they can control the salinity and other variables, she explained.

If researchers need to take samples directly from Commencement Bay, it would be fairly easy to lay a 2-inch-diameter pipe "just a couple hundred feet" to the mouth of the waterway, Larkin said.

At some point, the center might also employ "flow-through" technology with either artificial seawater or water pumped in from the bay for study, she said.

The city's dreams of participating in a marine research center began seven years ago, Evans said.

The council voted nearly two years ago to allocate \$500,000 to endow a faculty chair at UWT to oversee marine research at the center. The Port of Tacoma and UWT each agreed to pay \$1 million for the endowment, SSA Marine provided \$500,000.

The need is great to study invasive species and ballast from ships, marine biotechnologies to protect work already done to clean up waterways and

aquaculture, city officials have said.

Spending "perhaps as much as \$26 million" on the project might be "troubling" to the city's ratepayers, Councilman Mike Lonergan said.

The stormwater fee "nobody seems to understand" just keeps getting "bigger and bigger and bigger," he said.

He asked several questions before ultimately voting to approve the deal.

Councilman Tom Stenger praised the plan.

"We want to do more research. We want to get ahead of the ball in preventing pollution," he said. "I think it's a good deal for the ratepayers."

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CENTER FOR URBAN WATERS

WHAT: A laboratory for water quality and other environmental research on the east side of the Foss Waterway. City scientists are to evaluate soil, sediment, water and other kinds of samples to gauge the success of Tacoma's anti-pollution programs. Researchers will study sources and potential solutions to pollution in urban waterways.

COST: \$5.6 million for the property. Building design studies haven't been done, but preliminary estimates are about \$20 million.

SIZE: 20,000 square feet of laboratory space and 20,000 square feet of office space.

Who will pay for it? Tacoma residents' garbage, sewer and stormwater fees will fund the project.

Who will use it? The city's environmental scientists and engineers and University of Washington Tacoma researchers. UWT will lease 2,000 to 3,000 square feet of space.

What is Urban Waters? A public-private nonprofit organization involving the city, UWT, Port of Tacoma, SSA Marine, the Russell Family Foundation and other partners.

Source: City of Tacoma

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OPTION

CONTINUED FROM A1

said he will sign the new law by the end of this week. It takes effect 10 days later.

A major area of concern now is Pacific Avenue from the Tacoma city limits to the Roy Y.

Pierce County Sheriff's spokesman Ed Troyer said prostitution on Pacific Avenue is on the rise as Tacoma and other communities crack down on violators. Since 2005, the county has arrested 62 women and 75 men for prostitution or patronizing prostitutes on Pacific Avenue South.

"We don't believe it's a victimless crime, and we need the tools to do enforcement," Troyer said. "The city and others are pushing this activity into the county, and we want to intervene before it starts affecting the neighborhoods and brings in other crime."

Under the SOAP ordinance, judges would have discretion to specify any area of the county as off limits to individual offenders. Those who receive an order would be allowed to enter such areas for legitimate reasons, such as getting to and from their homes.

A violation is a gross misdemeanor, punishable by up to a year in prison and a \$5,000 fine.

Councilwoman Barbara Gelman, whose district includes much of Pacific Avenue South, said the SOAP ordinance is an effective way to combat prostitution in an area the county is trying to revitalize.

"It's worked in other areas," Gelman said.

County law already allows for similar orders to be imposed on people convicted of drug offenses.

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Staff writer Paul Sand contributed to this report.

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