



## THE EXPRESS-TIMES

### Don't let a tragedy occur: heed the 'Slow Down' signs

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Anti-speeding campaign

Maybe T.S. Garp and Roberta Muldoon had the right idea after all.

In an all-out effort to keep Garp's two young boys safe from ignorant drivers racing through Garp's suburban neighborhood, they raced down roads and across neighbors' yards until they tracked down offenders and lectured them on the dangers of speeding.

Garp and Muldoon lived in the fictional world of John Irving's novel, "The World According to Garp." But their frustration over speeders who jeopardize lives is a troubling fact in the real world, where the problem has worsened as communities have grown.

Borrowing a page from places such as Albuquerque, N.M., the Forks Township Police Department is hoping to curb its increasing problem by having residents plant campaign-sized posters in their yards. Etched in black letters on a yellow background, the signs urge motorists to "Slow Down." Forks residents can obtain the signs for free at police headquarters. The message is being driven home with a ticketing blitz.

Why are so many drivers in such a hurry? And is it really worth the risks?

Anyone tempted to shrug off anti-speeding campaigns should consider the numbers. Speeding is a factor in one-third of all fatal motor vehicle crashes, killing more than 1,000 Americans every month. In 2006, more than 13,500 people died in speed-related crashes, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety's Highway Loss Data Institute says statistics show young males are most likely to speed although every age group and both sexes have more than their fair share of lawbreakers.

Campaigns such as the one being tried in Forks can be effective – to a point. Too often public participation wanes and the signs that remain (even if shifted to different parts of a yard as police suggest) are ignored.

Why is it that it usually takes a tragedy for drivers to slow down and make our public roads safer?

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