

# Daily Record

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## Why can't we all just slow down?

It's a good idea, of course, to alert drivers to potential hazards up ahead: a sharp curve, a hidden driveway, two lanes merging into one. After all, a better-informed driver is a safer driver.

On the other hand, if we drivers as a class weren't so hell-bent on using our vehicles as personal spaceships, we could save a lot of money on signs. Take stop signs, for instance. Who in their right mind would not stop at an intersection?

Similarly, who would pass another car on the right when common sense reserves that side for slower travel? In both cases, such vehicular bad behavior can cause accidents, injuries and death — including that of the offending party.

The obvious conclusion: With a few exceptions, we are not in our right minds when we drive. Could it be that our cars go faster than we need them to? That, deep inside, we imagine we're Steve McQueen in the chase scene from "Bullitt"? That we view cars as an extension of our personal liberties?

The headlines also suggest that we view our fellow drivers as, well, impediments to our commute, or opponents in a personal version of "Grand Theft Auto." And when we're not leaning on the horn, yelling out the window or flipping someone off, we sin all by ourselves:

- We speed through residential neighborhoods when our main route is blocked.
- We're still surprisingly inattentive at crosswalks, jockeying (and worse) with pedestrians.
- We speed on freshly paved roads, seemingly addicted to the smoothness.

It was the repaving of my own street that brought Morris Township Police Chief Timothy Quinn, Mayor Scott Rosenbush, Committeeman Jeff Grayzel and two other police officers to the neighborhood the other night. They were armed with dozens of lawn signs reminding drivers to drive at 25 mph.

The signs are part of the "Keep Kids Alive Drive 25" campaign, a public awareness effort "targeting observance of the speed limit in residential communities." As in other neighborhoods, we'll display the signs for three weeks before they are moved to another location.

According to Quinn, the signs work because they are different, temporary and don't blend into the background like permanent signs. "We have similar techniques," Quinn said. "We'll park an old police car on a street, or put up a radar sign showing drivers their own speed."

We nodded, happy that our public officials were protecting us from outsiders who race down our streets. It took a neighbor to state the obvious: "The biggest offenders in our neighborhood," he sighed, "are us."

Thus armed with signs and self-awareness, we resolved to make our neighborhood safer. If more neighborhoods have similar epiphanies, maybe we can save a little dough on those expensive stop signs.