

"I missed what?"
YES, I want to subscribe!
ONLY \$9/mth*

- SECTIONS**
- News Gateway
 - Top Stories
 - Local
 - Sports
 - Business
 - Opinion
 - Living
 - Nation/World
 - Entertainment
 - Health
 - Bride 2005
 - Dating
 - TourismVT.com
 - Classifieds
 - Shopping
 - Careers
 - Real Estate
 - Business Directory

NEWS SEARCH

- EXTRAS**
- Weekly Archives
 - Obituaries
 - Columnists
 - E-technology
 - Announcement Forms

- SERVICES**
- Contact Us
 - Subscriber Services
 - Customer Services
 - Advertise
 - Ad Design Specs
 - Palm/PDA
 - Carrier Opportunities



- Fresh Flower Arrangements
- Wide Variety of Indoor Foliage
- Fresh Fruit Baskets

Open 7 Days (802) 878-2361

TOP STORIES Wednesday, March 23, 2005
[Subscribe!](#)

[More Top Stories](#) Top Story Archives for: [Mon](#) [Tue](#) [Wed](#) [Thu](#) [Fri](#) [Sat](#) [Sun](#)

Sex offender registry doesn't reveal all

By Terri Hallenbeck
 Free Press Staff Writer

MONTPELIER -- Six months ago, Vermont started an Internet sex offender registry designed to alert communities to convicted sex offenders living nearby. So why didn't Gerald Tyrone Montgomery's neighbors know about his past?

That's the question Rick Tyler, who lives down the street from Montgomery, was asking Tuesday after police charged his neighbor with raping and killing a 31-year-old Burlington woman.

"I didn't know he was a sexual offender," Tyler said. "He wouldn't have been allowed in my house if I knew."

Tyler, like other neighbors, presumed police would notify him if a sex offender lived nearby. In reality, not all sex offenders are on the Internet registry, nor are police authorized to alert the community about offenders whose crimes fall below a certain threshold.

When lawmakers created the online registry last year after the killing of a Barre teenager, they had to walk a fine line between notifying the public and subjecting offenders to potential vigilantism, said Sen. John Campbell, D-Windsor, chairman of a committee appointed by the Legislature that has been studying the issue since summer.

"It's a delicate balancing act," Campbell said.

"The unfortunate reality is that the sex-offender registry is not the end-all and be-all," said Sarah Kenney of the Vermont Network Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. "I think it's an important tool."

The state's Internet sex-offender registry lists 144 people. Montgomery is not one of them.

His conviction for lewd and lascivious conduct in a 1996 case and his 1999 failure to comply with the registry did not qualify him for the online list of offenders accessible to the public, said Max Schleuter, director of the Vermont Criminal Information Center.

That list is intended for only the most serious offenders -- those convicted of



VERMONT RADIOLOGISTS

State-of-the-art
 Digital Mammography

Evening &
 Weekend Hours

[Click Here for Details](#)



Just what I needed.™

Free delivery!

Shop for weekly specials



NARU
 Asian Cuisine

KOREAN AND CHINESE DISHES

Taft Farm Shopping Center
 202 Cornerstone Drive
 Williston, VT 05495
802-878-8868
 Fax: 802-878-8558

Mon - Thur 10:30am - 9:30pm
 Friday 10:30am - 10:00pm
 Saturday 11:00am - 10:00pm
 Sunday 12:00noon - 8:30pm





©2001 The Burlington Free Press. Use of this site signifies your agreement to the Terms of Service updated December 17, 2002.



aggravated sexual assault; kidnapping and sexual assault of a child; a repeat sex offense against children; those who have an outstanding warrant for not complying with the requirements of the registry; and those who have been designated by a court as sexual predators.

Montgomery's name is among the 2,205 people on the sex-offender registry available to police. The list provides police with details such as an offender's convictions, his address and whether he's under Corrections Department supervision, Schleuter said.

The public can inquire whether someone is on that list, but only by name. Schleuter said the department receives inquiries from people wanting to know whether anyone on a certain street is on the list, but the department cannot provide that information.

As an advocate for sex crime victims, Kenney would have preferred to see the registry include more crimes and give police more specific guidance about when they can release information about offenders.

People should remember that offenders frequently end up being convicted of a lesser offense than the original charge, Kenney said. Montgomery was convicted of lewd and lascivious conduct after a hung jury could not decide on more serious sexual assault charges, said Chittenden County State's Attorney Robert Simpson. Burlington Police Detective Shawn Burke said in court papers that Montgomery was investigated but not prosecuted for the rape of an 18-year-old woman in Burlington, which resulted in his pleading guilty to failure to comply with the registry.

Campbell, whose committee will soon issue a report on the online registry's effectiveness, said the group concluded it's too early to tell but that the public seems to feel safer knowing the registry exists.

Forty-seven other states have online sex-offender registries. Some include all sex offenders, Campbell said. Others, like Vermont's, include only certain offenders.

A 1995 study in Washington state found that community notification of high-level offenders had little impact on their likelihood of committing a new crime, but that new crimes committed by those offenders were solved more quickly, he said. Staff Writers Andy Netzel and Jill Fahy contributed to this report. Contact Terri Hallenbeck at 229-9141 or thallenb@bfp.burlingtonfreepress.com

Information

For information about Vermont's sex offender registry, go to www.dps.state.vt.us/cjs/s_registry.htm

[Respond to this story in a Letter to the Editor](#)

Email this news item to:

[Back to index](#)

