

## Fast But Not Furious: Local Underground Racing Not a Menace

**JOSEPH PREVOST**  
Staff Writer

They are fast, compact and loud. They are low to the ground. They come in all different shapes from Chevy S-10s to Dodge Neons. Underground street racing culture is alive and well in Northern Michigan. A culture that began in California, it has spread rapidly throughout the U.S.

Thoughts of illegal racing

usually bring visions of muscle cars like Camaros, Trans-Ams and Corvettes revving their engines on a dark road, racing down a deserted quarter mile for pink-slips, cheered on by a throng of drunken teens around bonfires. But not so for the "Unreal Racing" crew and others involved in the local racing scene.

Sport Compact racing is moving from sub-culture into the mainstream with

magazines [like *Honda Tuning*, *Super Street* and *Turbo and High Tech Performance*] dedicated to the expansion of the quasi-sport and mostly criminal activity. These magazines are committed to guiding the interested in transforming their inexpensive sport compacts from the ordinary into distinctively styled high-tech racing machines. These cars then become a personal expression of the owner.

Locally there are about forty people involved in racing sport-compacts ranging in age from eighteen to twenty-three, said JJ the originator of "Unreal Racing". They are all involved for different reasons. Some are in it for the rush of the race, some for bragging rights, and some for the simple reason of belonging. But the common draw is the cars.

The cars are unmistakable. They are tricked out and dressed up to varying degrees. Much of the conversion of these compacts to modern hot rods has to do with how the owners want to express themselves, how involved in actual racing they are, and to a lesser degree how much money they can afford to sock away in their pursuit of power and speed.

Making one of these modern hotrods is not cheap. On average their owners are spending three to four thousand dollars. But it's all

about how far you want to go. One owner is rumored to have buried nearly twenty grand into his car.

But they don't just build their cars to show them off. They like to race them too. On a clear night when the mood strikes, the cell phones will start ringing and a race will be set-up on a deserted road in the outlying county.

There is no overseeing organization to these races; however, participants are willing practitioners of safety measures. They don't race in populated areas. They make sure there is no traffic.

They race on straight flat roads with little danger of losing control. And at both the start and finish line, they use two-way radios to be sure there is no danger of encountering any unexpected traffic.

Unfortunately no matter how many precautions these racers take every time they line-up they risk it all. There

is real danger involved in street racing and the local constabulary wants those involved to understand that.

When asked, Alpena County Sheriff James Marquardt said that he understands that a certain amount of youth will always be interested in racing but was unaware of any problems or complaints with street racing in the county. Marquardt did take the position that if their activities became a danger to the community there would be a problem.

Thad Taylor, Alpena Police Department Public Safety Director, took a similar stance.

He also was unaware of any complaints of racing in town but stated officially that street racing is illegal and that anyone involved should understand that they not only take the risk of serious injury but also serious legal consequences.

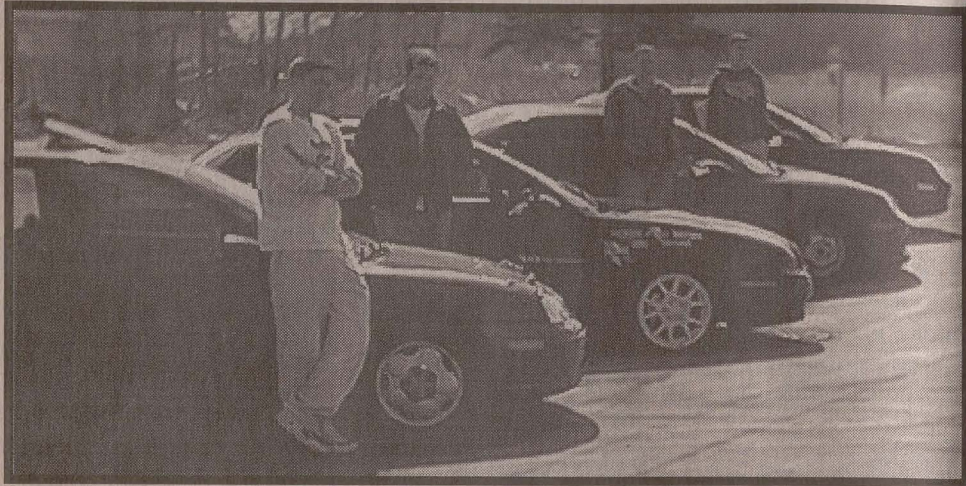


Photo by Joseph Prevost

Some of the "unreal racers" pose next to their high tech racing machines.

## Survivor: Alpena; A Guide of Things to Do in This Area

**JONAS BODA**  
Staff Writer

It's happened to the best of us. Class is canceled, your car breaks, or some other mishap. Regardless, you've got time to kill, and the thought is, "There's nothing to do in Alpena." As I found out, there is something to do.

Alright, start from the college, grab some cash and comfortable shoes. From here on we're hoofing it.

Let's start by walking down to Duck Park, and feeding the birds. Continue on, and we've reached Family Video. Currently all

VHS tapes are on sale, and finding a tape you've been looking for is an option.

Next jog on down to Hokie's, open 24 hours, you get greasy but good food, and at a wallet-friendly price. Finally, an alternative to Ramen noodles.

After grabbing a quick snack, continue down the main drag, and keep going till you hit the theaters. So now you're looking for somewhere to hang out, well turn a quick left, and head to Artis Books. Not just books, but three stories of antiques and other odds and ends.

Looking for a 1950s police

club, or those really obscure beer signs that would fit your room? They've probably got them. Grab a homemade cappuccino, and hit the town again.

Right next to our local sex-shop, Whispers, is Concert Connections. Help Wayne (the owner) out, and yourself, and grab some cheap records, T-shirts, and other paraphernalia that suits your needs. Wayne's a cool guy, and would gladly order that out of stock or subversive CD, tape, or record FYE or Wal-Mart refuses to stock.

Turn right around, and head on down past the bridge.

Let's hit JJ's next, not only do they offer a good steak, but they run an arcade, and pool hall. It's adults only after 10pm so you won't have to worry about any snot nose punks spilling your beer, ruining your shot.

Alright, now hit the town again, and head back up past the bridge to the The Center. Head inside, because we're getting some lunch. The Take5 deli offers *The Dagwood*, a mountain of meat, and other toppings. It will stop any hunger.

After that, let's get down to the Harbor side mall. You've got two choices. Earthdance,

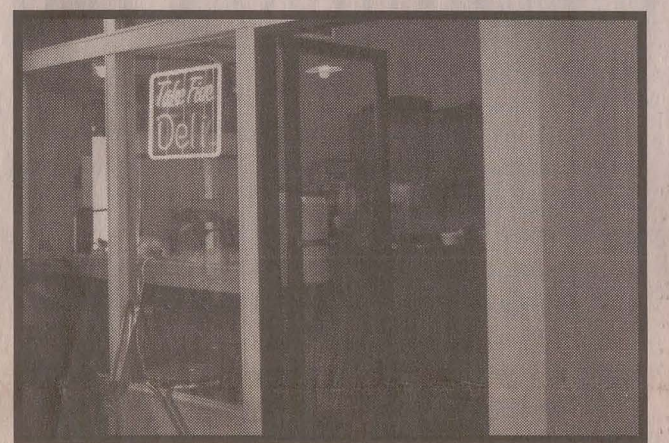


Photo by Jessica Thiem

The Take 5 Deli located inside offers hunger stopping food.

or the Military surplus shop. Either one will take up time.

Well by now, you've managed to kill enough time by reading this article that it's pointless. Next time, just remember Alpena isn't boring, you're just lazy.

## Students Catapult into a Career After Commencement

**DOREEN FOUCHÉY**  
Staff Writer

Wondering where to look for work following graduation? Finding the right job for your specific career goals can be a job. There are several programs in Northern Michigan that can help catapult students into a career of their choice. These careers are in the area waiting to be obtained by students with the proper educational backgrounds.

Alpena Community College offers a program called Employment Services that is managed by Frank McCourt and other counselors at the school. There are two career

centers located on the Alpena College Campus. One is McCourt's office, where he will assist you in obtaining employment and learning liability skills. His office is located in CTR 110 C.

The other office is located in the Van Lare Hall building, located across from the Employment Services Center. Yvonne White is there to assist students with resumes and the skills needed to conquer those vital job interviews.

"We provide these services for any college student or potential students who would like the skills needed in finding employment," said McCourt. So whether

someone is graduating or just starting college, he/she may want to take advantage of this opportunity. Frank McCourt can be contacted at 989-358-7263 during regular office hours, Monday through Friday.

Another program called Michigan Works, located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Huron Shores Campus, offers assistance to anyone in need of a profession. Program Director, Lisa Bolen stated, "One of the hurdles that we have to get over is that people believe our program only serves public assistance recipients. We support every job seeker, no matter what type of profession they are looking for or income

they desire. We also offer informational workshops with resource information on how to write a high-quality resume, a suitable application, and a cover letter, all directed toward your specific needs in acquiring an occupation that fits your degree."

In fact, Michigan Works slogan is, ABC (a better job). Students can call them at 989-739-1444 or walk in and use their computer systems, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. In addition, you can log on at [www.michworks.org](http://www.michworks.org) from the comforts of your own home. They also provide many resources for job opportunities statewide,

by county, or nationwide in their computer data, as well as most major Michigan newspapers, so clients can take advantage of the employment ad sections.

These newspapers consist of The Detroit News, The Alpena News, The Lumberjack, and all other local papers in the area. They offer all of these services free of charge to anyone.

You may also find a Michigan Works program near your area by calling 1-888-285-WORKS.

Another service offering job opportunities is Trillium Staffing Solutions located at 836 E. Bay of East Tawas City. The staff consists of

Manager Carole Adams and Assistant, Yvonne Gregg, who will help you achieve your employment goals. "We do some permanent job placement work for local businesses here and are currently looking for people with management backgrounds," said Trillium. They have all the resources needed to help any student obtain an occupation that suits their career desires.

You may contact Trillium Staffing Solutions at 989-362-3452.

These services just may ease the pain of job-hunting for those college students getting ready to begin their careers and build their lives.

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