

From the Sheriff:

As you have read or heard, we have had a rash of tragic traffic crashes the past two weeks. The three fatalities included a young man killed by an intoxicated driver, one that was operating too fast for conditions, and the third appears to be a result of inattentive driving. I am not casting blame. I am sure that if they had lived they may have made a better choice had they know their actions would have resulted in their deaths. There is nothing law enforcement could have done to protect the people that died. As much as law enforcement tries, you can not protect people from their own actions and the mistakes they made.

Have you ever thought about the impact on your friends and family should you make a poor choice that results in killing another or even yourself? Think about that the next time you decide to exceed posted limits, drive impaired, or make a decision that places innocent motorists and your self at risk of serious injury or death.

Every traffic death is sad and senseless but some tear your heart out more than others. In Adams County last week a popular man, his son, and his son's friend were killed when their vehicle was rear ended while stopped waiting to make a left turn. A contributing factor in that crash was the direction the front wheels were turned as the victim awaited traffic so he could safely turn. A young man approached from the rear and struck the victims car and the force propelled the vehicle forward. Because the wheels were turned left in anticipation of making the turn, the vehicle was naturally forced into the oncoming lane and then struck by a large truck.

Who ever would have thought such subtle change in driving behavior could potentially have saved three lives. After reading the article I reflected and realized I do the same. Henceforth, I will change the way I operate my vehicle in the future.

There are other driving behaviors that are just sheer stupidity but we see them often. The classic is the driver who swerves into the oncoming traffic lane to drive around the rumble stripes because they are noisy. Clue - that is the purpose of the rumble strips. And what is with those who fail to turn on their headlights during periods of limited visibility. Clue - if oncoming traffic can see you and you can see them, we will all be a little safer. Another classic is cutting curves short, driving like a NASCAR driver, getting down low in the curve as your turning left. Clue – that's not your lane of traffic.

I could go on forever. Nobody is a perfect driver; all of us can do more to ensure our highways are safer. If you don't want to do it for yourself, do it for your friends and family who will have to deal with the consequences of your actions should they seriously injure or kill another or yourself.

For the younger readers, thank you for a safe prom season thus far. Once we get prom behind us it will be time to focus on senior skip days and graduation parties. Nothing hinders ones goal of a great college education than a drunk driving or underage drinking citations at age 17. Be safe and be a friend to those your with.

In closing, it is an election year for county officials. I have enjoyed writing these bi-weekly educational columns for you. Rules and regulations will require that the newspapers stop publishing them at a certain time until the elections are over. In the interim, feel free to email me at [tnehs@co.dodge.wi.us](mailto:tnehs@co.dodge.wi.us) for any issues or concerns.

