

From the Office of the Sheriff:

Last week we arrested Christopher Brugger, a 20-year old Madison man for operating his motor vehicle after revocation. Simply stated, he chose to drive after his driving privileges were revoked. Many of you were amazed that this was his 14th offense of driving after revocation. He was also in violations of bond conditions from previous offenses that required he never drive a motor vehicle w/o a valid license again. He subsequently was cuffed, and taken to the Dodge County Detention Facility and booked for OAR -14th, and misdemeanor Bail Jumping. Of course, on the way to jail he boasted how he will get out of the bail jumping charges as they are seldom pursued by the prosecutors.

My curiosity caught the best of me and I did a little research. Not only was this his 14th time operating after revocation, he had also had 7-convictions for operating after suspension, and one for operation without a valid driver's license. Do the math! Christopher has been caught driving 22 times w/o a valid driver's license. He has 36 convictions on his driving record, with 22 in 2007 alone. No doubt he drives every day. With just two convictions in 2008 I thought maybe he learned his lesson and there was hope. A quick check showed he was in jail, so he couldn't drive.

I chose to call the owner of the pick up he was driving. My intent was to ask if the owner knew Christopher was revoked and allowed him to drive the vehicle anyway. I made contact with the registered owner, a sweet woman who stated Christopher was her grandson and that he has lived with her for five year's and cares for her as she is disabled. She acknowledged she knew he has not had a valid driver's license since 2006, has spent plenty of time on jail, recently shot his sister with a BB gun, has a marijuana history, and recently brought two pit bulls home for a friend that was going to jail. Grandma stated he was doing a friend a favor driving him to work in Juneau when he was caught. That guy didn't have a driver's license either!

I enjoyed my chat with grandma; she thinks the world of him. She promised she would sell the truck and take the lure of driving away from Christopher and prevent him from getting his 15th OAR. The truck is registered to her but there is no insurance on the truck. That got me thinking about legislation being proposed in Madison with the 2010 budget. I believe it calls for us law abiding insured drivers to drastically increase our minimum coverage, increasing our premiums, yet includes no provision for everyone to have insurance. Wisconsin is one of just a few states that do not require insurance; some fools think it is unconstitutional to mandate it.

I share this story with you for a few reasons. First, do not underestimate the number of motorist that share the roadway with you that do not have a valid driver's license. Secondly, this is a clear case to support mandatory insurance of everyone. Lastly, we need to change our laws so we can impound the vehicle of those who allow others to drive. Currently it must be the offender's vehicle for us to take them away.

You may be wondering where Christopher is now. Well, grandma bailed him out with \$1,000.00 cash and his first appearance in court is not until April 27, 2009. We will be awaiting his arrival, and making sure he does not drive himself to court. He doesn't pay his fines, the state suspends him instead. That's working! Oh, even with all his convictions, he is eligible for reinstatement on February 21, 2010. Thanks for listening, tnehls@co.dodge.wi.us