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News

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Chief: Officers followed standard procedures during Tenn's arrest
Fathers-4-Justice member criticizes Braidwood police following traffic stop

By Jo Ann Hustis Herald Writer

Friday, October 24, 2008 8:26 PM CDT

BRAIDWOOD - Donald Tenn apparently wants nothing to do with the village again after local police gave him a couple traffic citations last weekend.

"In my line of work, I am often detained and questioned by police around the country," Tenn, 52, of Sacramento, Calif., was quoted in a Fathers-4-Justice press advisory sent Thursday as saying.

"However, Braid-wood, Ill., is one place I hope I never return."

Acting Braidwood Police Chief Brandon Myers said Friday that Tenn, of the F4J board, was given a verbal warning by local police for operating a vehicle with one headlight.

Following further investigation, police arrested Tenn for operating a motor vehicle on a revoked California driver's license. He did not have an Illinois driver's license, Myers noted.

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"I don't know if he behaved any differently than anyone else who is arrested," said Myers. "My officers never said anything about him being out of line. He was treated according to standard procedures. We always strive to treat everybody with dignity and respect."

Tenn was quoted in the advisory as saying: "One's constitutional rights are completely ignored in this small town."

"They completely ignore the law of the land, they have no jury and no trial, but they do have a mandatory vehicle impound law and fee of \$500 and towing fee of \$250," he said in the advisory.

Tenn was quoted as labeling the fees as extortion, and a violation of the RICO Act.

"It's a lot of money for anyone, but for a charitable organization (F4J), this will adversely affect a lot of children and their families for months to come."

The Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, or RICO, is intended to eradicate organized crime by establishing strong sanctions and forfeiture provisions

Myers said it is nice that Tenn builds himself up.

"The fact is, though, he didn't have a valid driver's license," the chief said.

Myers said the village has an administrative impoundment license with a fee of \$500, a common practice in communities throughout Illinois, he noted.

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"We have had situations where the \$500 administrative fee is returned if the person is found innocent of the charge," Myers said.

In regards to the \$250 towing charge, this issue is out of the hands of police, as the fees are established by the towing companies, he noted.

"I think our officers acted appropriately, according to the standards established by our police department," Myers said.

Fathers-4-Justice is a tax-exempt organization headquartered in St. Paul, Minn.

The organization is a fathers' rights pressure group based in the United Kingdom. F4J has received national news coverage because of the circumstances of the many protests the organization has staged.

A charge of felony vandalism against Tenn, who is also known as Spiderman, was dismissed in Municipal Court on Friday, Oct. 10, in Columbus, Ohio.

Tenn was cited after he spent several days atop a construction crane during a protest at Ohio State University.

"In his attempts to bring awareness to the injustices perpetrated upon children, their parents and grandparents by our family courts, Mr. Tenn has been involved in numerous acts of civil disobedience around the country," the F4J press advisory notes.

F4J members from several states are to rally at Heinz Field when the Pittsburgh Steelers play a home game with the New York Giants on Sunday, Oct. 26.

[Return to Previous Page](#)

Comment Blog - Note: All Comments Subject To Approval

Brent D. wrote on Oct 27, 2008 1:20 AM:

" Does the mayor or chief of police own the towing company? Or is this a nephew or brother in law thing?

Sometimes the people in charge lose focus, they forget that some folks are not always criminals when they make mistakes under Illinois law, and maybe they're just honest mistakes.

Protect and serve seems to have been lost lately and changed to bag them and tag them. "

Drew4Justice wrote on Oct 26, 2008 7:21 PM:

" Donald is a true sperhero, doing nothing more than trying to be involved with his child's life. The state says "NO". Why is this? Why would ANY sane person retain a loving, fit, compassionate and able father from his daughter? I have not heard an acceptable answer as of yet. "

CkG wrote on Oct 26, 2008 6:12 PM:

" 250.00 towing fee??? Are you kidding me? The fact that the village looks the other way while citizens are being way OVercharged is criminal. Let's all remember this at election time. The last time I had to have a vehicle towed (about 4 months ago) it cost me 75.00 to have it towed about 6 miles. Again - let's remember this at election time. "

F4J Canada wrote on Oct 26, 2008 3:04 PM:

" Not only is the USA watching mate, this is an International event.

<http://f4j-soo.blogspot.com/2008/10/donald-tenn-f4j-usa-confronting-very.html>

Canada is here for our Superhero brother! "

Spotlight wrote on Oct 26, 2008 8:05 AM:

" No matter how you look at it, \$500 is excessive.

The bad news for Braidwood is that by arresting Tenn, a very large network of politically active people across the USA have been alerted to this highly questionable fee. "

IMAGINE THAT wrote on Oct 26, 2008 6:56 AM:

" Braidwood, nah couldn't be them. Come to think about it, that's what they charged my nephew after they stopped him for "LOUD" music! THEN, they proceeded to arrest my 16 year old son all because he looked in the van to see if his speakers were there. They through him on top of the squad car, and treated him like a piece of, well you know!! , That's Braidwood!!!!!! "

CARRIE wrote on Oct 26, 2008 4:25 AM:

" Well damn is this why we did not go to lunch . Now maybe we could have cruised in my car ! I was hoping that your visit would have been more eventful . You know .. some BBQ and Freezie ice tea's ! Peace bro. LoL You know - I shall not write so seriously !! "

Something is wrong in Braidwood wrote on Oct 25, 2008 11:42 PM:

" Tenn makes a valid point about Braidwood and we all know it but out of curiosity I checked the police section and the results are below. Same offense, considerably different results. Personally, I have never heard of a \$500 administration fee and \$250 for towing? Well, as Rich stated, that sounds extremely excessive.

Two ticketed for license violations

Friday, October 24, 2008 6:00 AM CDT

MINOOKA POLICE ticketed two drivers for license violations Tuesday, Oct. 21.

Nicholas Burke, 21, Minooka, was ticketed about 9:40 p.m. Tuesday for driving with a suspended license.

Minooka police stopped Burke at Ridge Road and Industrial Drive for not having a rear license plate light on his vehicle. A computer check showed his license was suspended.

He posted \$100 bond and was released.

Edwardo Sanchez-Ramirez, 21, Aurora, was ticketed Tuesday for not having a valid license and not having proof of insurance.

Stopped near Minooka and McLindon Roads, he was released on an I bond. "

pegleg wrote on Oct 25, 2008 2:43 PM:

" well said to jk "

Rich wrote on Oct 25, 2008 2:09 PM:

" I am a "Law & Order" type of guy but I have to admit that the \$500 administrative fee and \$250 towing fee sounds extremely excessive (especially in light of today's national economic situation). It reminds me of one of those B-grade films where an innocent vacationer happens to be riding through Mayberry, North Carolina and Barney Fife nails them for throwing a gum wrapper out their passenger window. The next thing that they know, they have been given a \$1,000 fine or 30 days in the Mayberry jail. Shades of "Cool Hand Luke" and "Rambo". There has to be something more to this story that we are missing or else it would seem to me that everybody reading this article will avoid driving through Braidwood out of fear? "

to jk wrote on Oct 25, 2008 9:06 AM:

" charity or not, the police were doing there job, enforcing the laws.

If all it took to not have to obey the laws and get away with it, was to join a charity then everyone would sign up and it would be a free-for-all.

Reading this article I beleive that the police department did the right thing, and nothing wrong.

Just because Donald Tenn cant grasp that he was breaking the law, by driving on a revoked license doesnt mean he needs to write an article complaining about his experience with braidwood police.

Hopefully he doesnt feel the need to come back.

Good job law enforcement! "

JK wrote on Oct 25, 2008 1:25 AM:

" Braidwood receives five hundred dollars to impound a vehicle? That sounds ilke plenty of incentive to impound and no incentive not to. I am surprised that they would do that to a charitable organization. "


Comments are limited to 200 words or less.

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