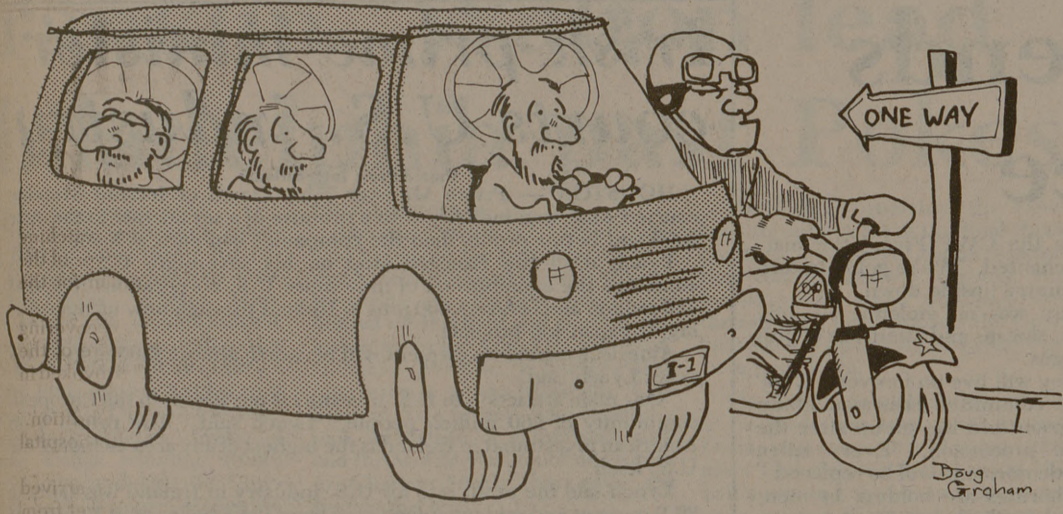


the state



5 jailed for no license

'Christ' family arrested

United Press International  
ROSENBERG — Five men dressed in ponchos and karate pants, each identifying himself as a member of the Christ family, took turns driving their van without a license during the weekend and were jailed in lieu of bond.

Officer Andy Walters stopped the van with Arizona license plates about 10:45 p.m. Saturday in search of a missing person. He found the driver, who identified himself as St. James Christ, had no license.

When Walters took the man into custody, the other four in the van — St. Duncan, St. Joseph No. 1, St. Joseph No. 2 and St. James No. 2 — insisted they would accompany St. James No. 1 to the Fort Bend County Jail.

None of the men had a driver's license, so each took a turn at the wheel to get arrested. Each drove the van from the parking lot onto a side street and back into the parking lot where he was duly charged.

"You couldn't do nothing with them," Lt. Walter O'Neal said. "Each one insisted that the first one wasn't gonna go to jail by himself, so they all took turns driving. They were gonna do something to go to jail."

Lt. D.G. Stanton said \$17, sleeping bags and fruit were found in the van, which was found to be registered to a "Christ" family in Arizona. He said the men told police God had ordered them to go to Florida.

The men described themselves as "non-violent people," "preachers" and "vegetarians," and refused to eat jail food, police said. They at first refused to give police their real

names and gave one address, a post office box in Blythe, Calif.

The men finally were identified as Robin James Backhaus, 24, of Tucson, Ariz.; and James Kostelnik, 35; James Welsh, 19; Roger Butler, 31; and Duncan Lucier, 24, no addresses available.

Backhaus was released Sunday after his father paid his \$203.50 traffic bond, O'Neal said.

Disabled attack insurance

United Press International  
AUSTIN — Discrimination by insurance companies undermines efforts of handicapped persons to be self-sufficient, financially independent citizens, representatives of the blind, deaf, crippled and mentally impaired told the State Insurance Board Monday.

"I feel that I'm being penalized, not because of ill health but because I'm sitting in this wheelchair," said Edna Maree Moore, an Austin artist. Moore said insurance agents told her there was no use for her to even apply because of the disabilities she suffered from polio.

Margaret Nosek, director of a federally funded program to help handicapped individuals lead independent lives, said she has been unable to obtain insurance herself or find a company that will provide acceptable coverage for self-employed disabled persons.

Nosek said she is confined to a wheelchair by spinal muscular atrophy but her condition has nothing to

do with back problems, the reason one insurance company cited in denying her application.

Even if the disabled are not denied coverage, they are forced to pay high rates out of proportion to the risks they pose for accidents or illness, witnesses told the Insurance Board hearing.

Jane Allison, a cerebral palsy victim, said she had to join a bank travel club 15 years ago and pay high rates to obtain insurance.

Steve Currier, spokesman for Mobility Impaired Grappling Hurdles Together, said one quadriplegic member of his group was told by an insurance agent, "We consider handicapped people uninsurable."

Currier said insurance companies make an unfair assumption that handicapped people are unhealthy and poor risks.

"The effect of current insurance policies on persons who have been judged handicapped is threatening," said Sam McFarland of San Antonio, a rehabilitation engineer with South-

west Research Institute.


"Handicapped persons are assumed to be higher risks by employers, by landlords and insurance companies."

Roger Koppa, of Texas A&M University's Texas Transportation Institute, said his office tests equipment intended to adapt motor vehicles for use by the handicapped and finds when the installation is done properly, "there seems to be no evidence at all that these folks can't drive just as well as you or I, and sometimes better."

Ralph White, program specialist with the Texas Rehabilitation Commission, said he and other deaf persons encounter particular difficulty in obtaining auto insurance.

The Legislature directed the Insurance Commission to study problems of the elderly will begin Nov. 27, Chairman Bill Daves announced.

Representatives of the Texas Rehabilitation Commission, Southwest Research Institute, Texas Transportation Institute, Texas Commission for the Deaf, Ex Students' Association School for the Blind, National Federation of the Blind, Epilepsy Association of Retarded Citizens and a number of private individuals testified at Monday's hearing.



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