

# Tomahawk Leader

## Year in Review – 2008

The following is a brief recap of some of the stories that appeared week by week in the pages of the *Tomahawk Leader* during 2008:

### January

**Jan. 1** – All of Lincoln County’s snowmobile trails officially opened, beckoning thousands to take to the Northwoods trails. ... Gov. Jim Doyle announced federal approval for BadgerCare Plus which will allow every Wisconsin family, regardless of income, to buy affordable, comprehensive health care coverage for their children. ... The Tomahawk School Board met in special session with Al Prosser to begin the framework for finding a new district administrator. ... Evan P. Hargrove, 2, Minocqua, died in an early morning fire at Spang’s Italian Restaurant in Minocqua. ... “Pleasant negotiations” were had between the Tomahawk School District administrator and the Tomahawk Education Association.

**Jan. 9** – Polar plungers dove into the icy waters of Lake Mohawksin and raised more than \$9,000 for the charities of their choice at the 2008 Happy Snapper’s annual Polar Plunge. ... In upcoming election news, incumbent Mayor Bob Lee was contested by Roxanne Consolver. ... The economic revitalization state Main Street Program continued to be reviewed under a think-tank of officials, business owners and representatives of the lodging sector. Concern was raised over affording implementation of the program. ... The Tomahawk Fire Department was seeking to fill two vacant positions after longtime members of the force, Captain Bernie Haring and First Lieutenant Todd Halverson retired.

**Jan. 15** – After three meetings, the Tomahawk Education Association and Tomahawk School District reached a new 2007-09 contract. The agreement included 4.2 percent total package increases, with salary increases about 2 percent in 2008 and slightly less in 2009. ... The Russian Orphan Lighthouse Project brought six orphans from the Chuzashia region to Merrill for 10 days. ... U.S. Sen. Russ Feingold answered public questions at the Tomahawk Public Library. ... The Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services was informed by EDS, a private vendor for Medicaid services, that they sent out a mailing to approximately 260,000 Medicaid, SeniorCare and BadgerCare members which included individuals’ Social Security numbers on the outside address labels. ... The Merrill Area Public School District announced that a February recurring referendum would seek \$2.9 million in additional operating expenses to avoid eliminating programs and support services.

**Jan. 22** – Lincoln County officials went to work with an auditor and the state to resolve an unintentional billing error estimated at half a million dollars related to the Developmental Disabilities sector. ... Two separate snowmobile accidents in the town of Bradley resulted in

injuries. ... A federal report indicated that the construction accident that killed Tomahawk native Tyler Kahle, 19, and a fellow co-worker while working at a gold mine in Nome, Alaska, in 2007 was the result of lack of machine training.

**Jan. 29** – Business, industry, government and residents extended support as a committee worked in the final month before a Main Street Program application for Tomahawk was due to the state. ...Harley-Davidson's fourth-quarter profit tumbled 26.3 percent due to declining U.S. motorcycle sales amid a weakening economy. ... Perry J. Stahoviak, 41, Weston, was killed in a one-vehicle rollover on County Road M. ...The Merrill Fire Department began to reorganize with the retirement of a fire chief as a budgetary measure. ... Youth hockey teams from across Wisconsin came to SARA Park to participate in the Badger State Games Squirt A and Mite A tournaments. ... Voters learn they will have the opportunity April 1 to ink out a veto power that gave Wisconsin governors the ability to stitch new sentences together in the budget to create new laws, eliminating the "Frankenstein" veto.

## February

**Feb. 5** – The state Senate Tourism and Transportation Committee got examples at a special meeting in Rhinelander on why emergency regulations to stop the spread of the fish virus Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) simply don't make sense. ... Anthony D. King, 26, Tomahawk, was sentenced to two years' state prison for his involvement in a Nokomis tavern burglary. ... Andrew Block, 20, Merrill, was ordered to one year in jail after he was convicted for an intoxicated crash that killed a teenager in 2005 in Merrill. ... The Merrill City Plan Commission reviewed a site plan for an expansion to the Lincoln County Jail.

**Feb. 12** – The claims of a former Lincoln County social services supervisor, David Haka, were set to go to a federal jury trial. ... Three Tomahawk (Ryan Petrouske, 24, Jason Schirmer, 25, and Lonnie Hamann, Jr., 20) men were taken into custody after an altercation at Silverado Bar where Douglas Drake, 44, and John McMeekin, both of Tomahawk, were seriously injured. ... 15 people apply for the Tomahawk School District administrator position.

**Feb. 19** – Approximately 200 Wisconsin National Guard soldiers in two units, including the 951<sup>st</sup> Engineer Company of Tomahawk and Rhinelander, were alerted for possible mobilization. ... Kimberly Shuman, 10, Tomahawk, was rescued by EMS, deputies and bystanders after she was ejected and trapped under the family van in a one-vehicle crash on icy roads on U.S. Hwy. 51 near Tomahawk. ... A fire broke out at the town of Rock Falls home of Linda Teschner. ... The three Tomahawk men accused of beating two other men in the Silverado Bar parking lot were charged with felony aggravated battery and misdemeanor battery. ... Tomahawk's A.J. Theiler spoke with Tomahawk School Board members about a grant he and other concerned citizens were working on to assure students had safe routes to school. ... Reporter Cherie DuPlayee-Brown wrote a feature about Tomahawk's Sidney Peterson, 18, who joined the Army National Guard and her father, Rick, 28, who followed in her footsteps.

**Feb. 27** – Nick Hagar, a Tomahawk High School junior, made history by defeating Sugar River's Calvin York 5-4 in double overtime of the WIAA Division 2 140-pound weight class and secured his unprecedented third consecutive state wrestling crown. ... Merrill Area Public Schools voters narrowed a field of 10 School Board candidates

to eight. Voters also rejected a \$2.9 million recurring referendum. ...The Tomahawk Finance Committee requested more information on a pay-as-you-go Tax Incremental Finance (TIF) being proposed to help develop Northwoods Village. ... Lincoln County Board supervisors unanimously approved entering into a discount prescription drug program with Caremark. ... A jury trial found Kevin Schumann, 34, Tomahawk guilty of third degree sexual assault in 2006.

## **March**

**March 4** – A feature article by Jed Buelow reflected on the kindness of community after one Tomahawk woman, Vickie Rivard, signed over the title of a vehicle she was selling to Wendy Shuman, the mother of 10-year-old Kimberly Shuman, who was ejected and trapped under a vehicle after a one-vehicle accident. ... Cutbacks at the Tomahawk Police Department left two part-time dispatchers without jobs and the station unattended and closed during early morning hours. ... Two finalists in the Tomahawk School District’s administrator search, were narrowed to Roger Rindo and Richard Appel. ... The April jury trial for Seth Louis, 25, Rhinelander, who is accused of stabbing Tomahawk woman Tracy Maurer, 42, was pushed back after his defense attorney withdrew. The third attorney appointed to the case, Aaron Nelson said he had to step aside for “personal reasons.” ... Nelson’s County Market announced a 36,000-square-foot expansion. ... The Tomahawk Police Department recommended that the Tomahawk Common Council move forward with legal action to have three properties violating the city’s junk ordinance to clean up.

**March 11** – Despite below-zero temperatures, 24 brave people jumped into Lake Mohawksin to raise funds for Kinship of Tomahawk; Roger Rindo of the Wausau School District was named Tomahawk School District’s new administrator. ... Tomahawk School District fourth grade teacher Gary Nelmark, middle school core teacher Bob Skubal and physical education teacher Joe Farmer announced their retirements. ... The Tomahawk Board of Public Works moved forward with abatement measures against three property owners deemed noncompliant with the nuisance compliance ordinance requiring property owners to remove or store out of public view junk. ... The family of Tomahawk native Edward “Larry” Street, 70, were mourning after his death following a hit-and-run car-pedestrian accident near his West Allis home. The 19-year-old male driver turned himself in following the accident.

**March 18** – Tomahawk police were “shocked” at the amount of illegal substances found during a search of Tomahawk Middle and High Schools. Marijuana, pipes, prescription pills and alcohol were found. Referred on felony charges were three 18-year-old males and two 17-year-old females, all from the high school. ...The contract with new Tomahawk School District administrator Roger Rindo was approved by the Tomahawk School Board on a 6-1 vote. ... A fourth defense attorney, Leonard Kachinsky, was named in the Seth Louis murder case. ... A TIF district for the former Sacred Heart Hospital property was approved by the Tomahawk Finance Committee. ... Nearly after Midway Elementary School in Gleason was closed by the Merrill Area Public Schools District, the school board was granted authority by voters to sell it. ... Tomahawk and Merrill police as well as the Lincoln County Sheriff’s Department helped nab a burglary suspect involved in the robbery of a Wausau salon. ... Edwin Juedes, 34, Tomahawk, was found not guilty of sexual assault charges after a

jury trial in Lincoln County. ... Mike Paulson, 51, Tomahawk was recovering following an ATV crash in the town of Nokomis.

**March 25** – The Tomahawk community is shaken when Rochelle S. Anderson, 25, Irma, was found dead at Zephyr Fuel Station on North Fourth Street. Police suspect the gas station was robbed and Anderson was murdered. The cause of death is later noted to be from blunt force trauma to the head and stab wounds to the back. A suspect description is issued for a male who was observed leaving on foot north on North Fourth Street. A statewide alert among law enforcement is issued later in the week for “person of interest” Nathan Ives. Anderson, a 2001 Tomahawk High School graduate, was the mother of an 18-month old daughter, Izabelle. ... Lincoln County said it would look at selling its five group homes for those with developmental disabilities to help meet a \$500,000 billing error shortfall. ... Mike Tolvstad was selected by an ad hoc committee working to fill the city of Tomahawk’s public works director position. Tolvstad was director of public works in North Fond du Lac.

## **April**

**April 1** – A “person of interest” in the Rochelle Anderson homicide turned himself in to Milwaukee authorities. ... Current Tomahawk Mayor Bob Lee beat out a challenge by Roxanne Consolver 344-155. ... Lincoln County Board Chair Curt Powell of Tomahawk was voted out. Challenger John Bailey took over the District 18 seat. ... In other contested races, Robert Lussow of Tomahawk won over Ken Islo, Richard Eisenman over Guy Schweigert and Frank Saal Jr. over William Rice. ... Merrill Area Public School District voters ousted all of the incumbents – Russ Grefe, Kari Anderson, Curt Eckes and Brenda Mamer – for Kraig Jaeger, Keith Schmelling, Jennifer Seliger and Jeff Verdoorn. ... Following appointment of new attorney Leonard Kachinsky to the Seth Louis homicide case, a jury trial was set for August. ... Nine expulsion hearings were slated at the Tomahawk School District following a drug bust. ... *Tomahawk Leader* Publishers Larry and Kathy Tobin celebrated their 26<sup>th</sup> anniversary as owners of the newspaper. ... The deer herd across the northern portion of the state experienced winter severity levels not seen in nearly a decade. ... Milwaukee-based motorcycle-maker Harley-Davidson and United Steelworkers (USW) Local 460 in Tomahawk have reached a tentative contract agreement. ... Lincoln County Board supervisors authorized Miron Construction as the prime contractor to start expansion and remodeling of the jail. ... Merrill’s Melissa Schroeder, who held one of Wisconsin’s superdelegate Democratic votes, said she endorsed Barack Obama for president.

**April 8** – Tomahawk police continued to work with the state following leads into the killing of Rochelle Anderson. ... In the days following Anderson’s funeral, the *Tomahawk Leader* spoke with Randy Anderson, Anderson’s father, Tara Duranceau, Randy’s fiancée, and Carla Senn, Anderson’s mother. ... The Lincoln County Sheriff’s Department switched from analog to digital, rendering most at-home scanners useless but upgrading the county’s radio system. ... Harley-Davidson Tomahawk Operations United Steelworkers (USW) Local 460 members ratified a new, four-year contract with the company.

**April 15** – Three Tomahawk men (Ryan Petrouske, 24, Jason Schirmer, 25, and Lonnie Hamann, 21) faced felony aggravated battery charges after allegedly brutally assaulting a man and wounding another outside a Tomahawk tavern. ... Thanks to snowstorms, the Tomahawk

School District added 12 minutes to each day for the remainder of the year to make up instruction time. ... After expelling 15 students, Tomahawk School District Administrator Al Prosser looked at ways to combat drug use and to protect the health and education of students. ... Honored at the American Red Cross/Ministry Health Care Our Northwoods Heroes banquet included the Tomahawk ties of Louisiana-Pacific Corp. Tomahawk mill employees Haenel, Steve Graeber, Dotter, Corey Myers and Derek Eberl for coming to the rescue of Duane Dotter after the electrician subcontractor suffered a heart attack while working at the mill. Kathy VanRyen also was recognized for assisting two people on two occasions during emergency situations at church. ... Robert Lussow of Tomahawk was voted as Lincoln County Board chair.

**April 22** – Tomahawk Elementary School’s fifth grade leadership group hosted a Health and Wellness Expo encompassing all grade levels. ... Harley-Davidson of Tomahawk Operations noted it could see a reduction of 19 jobs after the company announced it would curtail production and cut its entire workforce by 8 percent. ... About 125 soldiers from the Wisconsin Army National Guard's Troop E, 105<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, based in Merrill and Antigo, were safely back in the United States after completing an eight-month mission in Iraq. ... Katie Decker, 17, the teen accused of helping then-boyfriend Seth Louis hide bloody clothes allegedly worn in the murder of Tracy Maurer, 42, Tomahawk, was in court with her lawyer contesting admissibility of statements she made to police. ... Tomahawk Common Council alderpersons voted to deny a claim against the city by The Liquor Store charging that the business was required to shut its doors early and not sell beer from a side door during last year’s Fall Ride while other establishments were overlooked. ... The city hired Mike Tolvstad as the new city director of public works.

**April 22** – Terence Cole, 29, Irma, and Nicholas Erwin, 28, Tomahawk, were taken into custody after they were accused of a home invasion robbery in the town of Bradley. The pair allegedly forced entry into the home of an elderly couple in pursuit of their prescription medications. ... The Wisconsin Department of Commerce notified Tomahawk that the city was among three finalists being recommended for the state Main Street status. ... Tomahawk High School Associate Principal Jeff Braun signed a letter of intent to become the grade 6-12 middle/high school principal in the Dodgeland consolidated district in Juneau. ... The Tomahawk Police Department 2007 report indicated that crime in the city had increased while violent crimes had decreased. Additionally, prescription drug abuse was reported to be the largest drug threat. ... Nate Schoone and Shanna Dennis were king and queen of Prom 2008 at Tomahawk High School.

## **May**

**May 6** – Ground was broken for the \$9 million, 30,000-square-foot addition to the Lincoln County Jail. ... Nicholas Erwin and Terence Cole pled not guilty to charges accusing them of breaking into an elderly couple’s home to steal prescription drugs. ... The effects of a nationwide doctor shortage on Tomahawk and the Northwoods was reviewed. ... A crew working for Plum Creek Timber Company planted some 55,000 red pine seedlings, replacing a parcel off Spring Creek Road that was harvested two years ago. ... Post office customers were informed that first-class stamp prices would increase by 1 cent to 42 cents.

**May 13** – Derek K. Domke, 18, Tomahawk, was charged with first degree intentional homicide and burglary in the murder of Rochelle Anderson in Lincoln County Court. A \$1 million cash bond was set for his release. A Tomahawk High School senior, Domke lived just across the street from the gas station that Anderson was killed at. Police note that Domke’s palm print was found in blood in the gas station restroom, despite him initially denying in the days following Anderson’s murder that his prints would be found. Domke provided his prints and DNA May 12. ... A ribbon-cutting made note of a 9,800-square-foot addition and remodeling project at Nelson’s County Market. ... Tyler Carlson, 18, Adam Kopetzky, 19, and Brandon Finucan, 18, the teens accused of supplying alcohol at a party where French foreign exchange student Arnaud Bernard Van den Berghe, 17, died in fall 2006, had felony charges reduced to deferred prosecutions in Lincoln County Court. ... Tomahawk moved one step closer to becoming a state Main Street community as the Common Council unanimously eliminated one of two contingencies set by the state by approving the formation of a Business Improvement District. ... Tomahawk High School Spanish teacher Jackie Gaedtke was the recipient of a prestigious Fulbright-Hays grant which would take her to the South American countries of Chile and Argentina for an educational study.

**May 15** – For his advancements as chief of the Little Rice Fire Department and pastor at The Log Church in Tripoli Larry Mathein was honored with the Distinguished Service Award at the 53<sup>rd</sup> Tomahawk Community Awards banquet sponsored by the *Tomahawk Leader* and hosted by Inshalla Country Club. Also receiving awards were Melinda Krueger with the LEADER*ship* Award for her personal and professional role in organizing the mock crash program at Tomahawk High School. The 2008 Employee of the Year went to Julie Thompson of the Tomahawk Community Senior Center and her daughter, Kinsey Thompson, was honored with the Youth LEADER of the Year award. Kinship of Tomahawk was saluted with the Community Appreciation Award. ... The preliminary hearing for Derek Domke, the man accused of murdering Rochelle Anderson, was set for June. ... Dan Schuller, Tomahawk, a 28-year employee of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, was named the new director of the Wisconsin State Park Program. ... Thomas Brotski, Pete Wurl, Ken Schulz, Dale Ernst and Gary Baier took seats on the Tomahawk School Board following the April election. ... In an unprecedented event, Merrill High School seniors Zachary Ratkovich, Gleason, and Joshua Burton, Merrill, were appointed to the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo. ... The Lincoln County Humane Society reported that unless a major turnaround in funding occurred, it might have to close its doors.

**May 27** – Graduation ceremonies were held for more than 120 members of the Tomahawk High School Class of 2008. Alex Cummings and Kaylee Goretski were co-valedictorians. The program included speeches by co-third honor students Alexis Heim and Taylor Mickelson. ... Nathan Ives was cleared as a “person of interest” in the murder of Rochelle Anderson. ... Anderson’s father and fiancée Tara Duranceau were married in Door County with special tributes to their daughter. ... The 14<sup>th</sup> annual Main Street Memories Car Show drew thousands of car enthusiasts and spectators to downtown Tomahawk despite poor weather. ... Enough funds were donated to sustain the Lincoln County Humane Society, but financial woes still loomed. ...

Lincoln County Board supervisors approved hiring four, full-time correctional officers to staff the new jail once it was ready to be occupied.

## June

**June 3** – Tomahawk High School senior Joe Lilek hit a perfect throw in the shot put competition at the WIAA state track and field meet in La Crosse to win the state title. His effort established a new Tomahawk High School record. ... Also at the state track meet, Cody Lemke and Nick VanStrydonk both competed in the 3200m run and placed 15<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, respectively. Tomahawk's 4x800m relay (Tyler Bostwick, Nick Glaeser, Nick Hagar and Jordan Leggett) placed 14<sup>th</sup> in that event. ... Operation H\*E\*R\*O\*E\*S at Tomahawk High School went underway with the goal to make and donate 100 patriotic pillowcases by the Fourth of July. ... Harley-Davidson Tomahawk Operations Employee Riders Association (ERA) saddled down 50-pound bags of peanuts in preparation for the third annual "Ride for Peanuts," which benefited Wisconsin war veterans at Camp American Legion in Lake Tomahawk. ... Christopher Getlinger, 27, and Vance Dalton, 35, both of Menasha, were arrested after they allegedly broke into Cimino's Gun and Archery in Merrill. The men were charged with burglary and theft.

**June 10** – Three Tomahawk teachers – Gary Nelmark, Joe Farmer and Bob Skubal – have retired with 108 years of combined teaching experience, 98 of them with the Tomahawk School District. ... Testifying in Lincoln County Court, forensic scientist Gerald Kotajarvi stated the bloody prints he recovered from the Zephyr Fuel station bathroom hours after store clerk Rochelle Anderson, 25, was murdered were a positive match to Derek Domke. Dr. Michael Stier, University of Wisconsin-Madison forensic pathologist, said Anderson's injuries resembled those seen in auto crashes. He noted that though Anderson was stabbed in the back, she would have died regardless due to the head injuries she sustained. ... About 50 Tomahawk and Rhinelander soldiers continued to prepare for possible deployment to Afghanistan after the U.S. Army has alerted the 951<sup>st</sup> Engineer Company that it may be headed overseas in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom. ... Lincoln County Humane Society Manager Jillian Janikowski resigned. ... The Tomahawk Common Council approved scratching two subsections of the municipal code that would have restricted all opened alcohol to be consumed inside the tavern or restaurant where it was purchased. Under the amended ordinance, patrons can purchase an opened malt beverage (beer) inside a facility and exit onto public streets during such permitted events as the Fall Ride and July Fourth festivities. ... Anthony Ellenbecker, 52, and Jeffrey Graap, 39, both of Merrill, were arrested following an investigation into unlicensed salvage dealers. The men were charged with receiving stolen property, alteration of property identification marks and for being unlicensed salvage dealers.

**June 17** – Ground was broken for a new, 3,000-square-foot product review center at the Case Customer Experience Center in Tomahawk. ... Nathan Hanson was hired as Tomahawk High School's new associate principal. ... *Tomahawk Leader* Publisher Larry Tobin became a published novelist. "*Pressing Matters*" is about small town corruption and the fallout experienced by a local newspaper publisher, his family and staff after the news is brought into the public eye. ... Sienna Selmer, 7, and Allison Meinheit, 8, of Tomahawk were

instrumental in saving an injured loon found near Twin Bay Resort in Nokomis. ... The Hatchet Athletic Hall of Fame announced it would host its ninth annual induction program with four new members including Jessica Evans, 2000 graduate, three-sport athlete; Gregg Gaedtke, 1986 graduate, four-sport athlete; Steve Liberty, 1990 graduate, five-sport athlete; and Aaron Plachetka, 1990 graduate, four-sport athlete.

**June 24** – Tomahawk-native-turned-Hollywood-director-and-actor Jay Leggett came to town to celebrate the premiere of a new television series he's helped produce, "Factory." ... Harley-Davidson Tomahawk Operations was on a temporary shutdown as a company-wide effort to curtail production. ... Al Prosser, Tomahawk School District superintendent, officially bid farewell to Tomahawk after six years. ... In preparation for being designated a state Main Street community, the Tomahawk Downtown Business Council formed a new organization, Tomahawk Main Street, Inc.

## July

**July 8** – Family, friends and Tomahawk Cub teammates gathered as Bronsted-Searl American Legion Post 93 retired the baseball jersey worn by local native and 2006 Tomahawk High School graduate, Tyler Kahle, who was killed in a mining accident last summer in Nome, Alaska. ... The Friends of Pride Park asked the city to serve as a surrogate for funding to create a first-class ball diamond at Pride Park. ... The Board of Public Works explored potential benefits and drawbacks to reconstructing the North Fourth Street Bridge in 2011 and Veteran's Memorial Bridge in 2012 or doing them both in 2012. ... Some 500 people showed up for the first-ever Music on the River outdoor concert event at Veteran's Memorial Park. The concerts would continue through the summer. ... Ben Wurl-Koth, 21, Tomahawk, was injured while skateboarding in Harrison and was airlifted to Wausau. ... Jeffery Robinson, 31, Merrill, went to jail following a hit-and-run incident involving pedestrians on State Road 107 near Merrill. ... Derek Domke sat silent in Lincoln County Circuit Court as defense attorney Robert Rusch entered a not guilty plea on his behalf to the charge of murdering Rochelle Anderson. Along with first-degree intentional homicide, Rusch also entered not guilty pleas to armed robbery and two additional charges of armed burglary and misdemeanor theft.

**July 15** – The third annual Harley-Davidson Tomahawk Operations Employee Riders Association Ride for Peanuts was deemed a success, with \$2,250 raised for veterans at Camp American Legion in Lake Tomahawk. ... New charges of attempted burglary were issued against accused murderer Seth Louis in Oneida County. Louis allegedly broke into several Rhinelander businesses, stealing money, computers and other items prior to being arrested for the homicide of Tracy Maurer of Tomahawk. ... Scott Platke, 46, Tomahawk, was arrested for an eighth offense charge of operating while intoxicated.

**July 22** – The Irma family of Randy and Tara Anderson, who was already coping with the tragic murder of daughter, Rochelle Anderson, was struck by heartbreak once again when a fire destroyed their home. Firefighters were able to save some of their personal belongings but the majority of their memories of their as well as their three dogs were lost in the blaze. ... Seth Louis claimed that an accomplice helped him kill Tracy Maurer in spring 2007, delaying an August jury trial. ... Cody Woodward, 18, Merrill, was arrested for allegedly breaking into Klug's

Country Gold in Merrill and stealing jewelry. ... Lincoln County introduced a new discount drug card program. ... A Lincoln County jury trial found Timothy Dodd, 23, Covington, Ky., guilty of second degree sexual assault of a child, use of a computer to facilitate a child sex crime and child enticement with sexual contact for meeting a 16-year-old Merrill female online and then coming to see her at a Merrill hotel. ... Fate of the county's Merrill-based Annex was reviewed as the new \$6.2 million service center neared completion. ... Timothy Dittmar, 32, Merrill, a member of the U.S. Air Force, died while serving at Osan Air Base in South Korea. ... Raymond Mikkelson, 24, Rhinelander, was sentenced to 54 months in prison for his involvement in several area burglaries and the shooting of a horse in Irma in 2006.

**July 29** – An explosion at the Tomahawk Packaging Corporation of America mill resulted in three employee fatalities, Steve Voermans, 52, Harrison, Donald Snyder, 46, Merrill, and Randy Hoegger, 55, Tomahawk. A recycled fiber storage tank exploded and three employees doing maintenance on top of the tank were killed. A fourth employee on a lower level of the tank was injured. ... Reporter Cherie DuPlayee-Brown wrote a feature story on the sinking of the USS Grunion submarine 66 years ago during World War II, its recent discovery and local ties to a Tripoli family. ... The Tomahawk Dog Park, by SARA Park, officially opened. ... Evan Kagie, 22, formerly of Tomahawk, was sentenced to 13 years in prison in Lincoln County Court for being the leader of a burglary and arson ring in 2005 and 2006.

## **August**

**Aug. 5** – Pilot John Hein, 51, Tomahawk, and his passenger, Mike Lins, 66, DeForest, walked away from a plane crash after Hein had to put the plane down in a hay field due to an alert of loss of oil pressure. ... Funerals were held for the three Tomahawk Packaging Corporation of America mill employees who died in a tank explosion. ... Louisiana-Pacific Tomahawk plant said it would undergo two temporary one-week layoffs due to the slumping house market. ... A two-vehicle crash in the town of Scott resulted in the death of Dorothy Tremmel, 71, Argonne. She was a passenger in a vehicle that was struck by a car driven by Elaine Steinke, 82, Merrill.

**Aug. 12** – John “Homer” VanMeter, 54, Rhinelander, was found guilty of providing false information to police after he alleged he was involved in a shootout with two assailants, one who shot him, while logging in the town of Tomahawk in April 2006. ... Lydia Trostle, 17, was recovered from the Wisconsin River after she was unable to swim safely to shore while swimming with a friend.

**Aug. 19** – The U.S. Chemical Safety Board (CSB), an independent federal agency, began an investigation into the July 29 storage tank explosion that killed three workers and injured another at Tomahawk's Packaging Corporation of America (PCA) mill. ... Gov. Jim Doyle announced that a 1,546-acre Stewardship Fund purchase along the Tomahawk River near the Willow Flowage would protect seven miles of streambank, connect parts of the Bearskin State Trail, and improve fish and wildlife habitat. ... The mining company Tomahawk native Tyler Kahle, 19, was working for in Alaska last summer was assessed \$115,000 in fines for safety violations that led to Kahle's and a fellow co-worker's untimely deaths. ... Lack of rain was taking a toll on area flowages, with dams reported several feet below normal. ... Tomahawk man Tom Loka donated a Wisconsin bear harvest tag to a disabled

youngster through the United Special Sportsmen Alliance. A 14-year-old North Carolina girl was selected to come to the Northwoods with her mother for the experience. ... The Tomahawk Relay for Life took place at Tomahawk High School, raising money to fight cancer.

**Aug. 26** – Aurora Pharmacy in downtown Merrill reported an armed robbery, with the male asking for prescription drugs. Based on store video and a description, the man was identified as Lloyd Bergmann. ... Amy Brunner of Irma was shocked when her home was destroyed in a blaze. She and fellow occupant Debbie Leverance lost all of their personal belongings. ... A feature story welcomed Roger Rindo, new administrator at Tomahawk School District to the community. ... With rising costs of food and transportation, the Tomahawk School Board increased breakfast and lunch prices. ... An open house in honor of Sister M. Theresa Regler, a community icon, was held before she relocated to the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother Franciscan Courts Retirement Center in Oshkosh.

## September

**Sept. 2** – Northland Stainless, Inc., began an expansion project, including a 21,000-square-foot addition to house machinery. The total investment totaled \$5 million. ... 350 firefighter and rescue personnel were slated to attend the Tomahawk Fire and Rescue School. ... Lloyd Bergman, the man accused of robbing a Merrill pharmacy, was taken into custody in Wausau and charged with theft and armed robbery. ... New to classrooms in the Tomahawk School District would be Becky Plath, a fourth grade teacher, and Todd Senoraske, an eighth grade history teacher. ... Derek Domke's defense attorney questioned whether the procedures used and information obtained during a search of his client's one-room apartment should be admissible in court. ... Tomahawk Fall Ride postcards went on sale, with proceeds benefiting Tomahawk Main Street Inc. and its historic preservation efforts. With the Tomahawk Post Office, the *Tomahawk Leader* also announced it would offer a commemorative stamp and special cancellation.

**Sept. 16** – Rainy weather played a role in the 27<sup>th</sup> annual Tomahawk Fall Ride for the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA). Overall, numbers were expected to level out near 30,000. The winner of the 2008 Ultra Classic Electra Glide was Bill Stueck of Clintonville. And, Georgi Tomasoski of Iron River, Mich., won the 2008 Sportster 883 Custom. The MDA estimated 15,000 people attended activities at SARA Park and MDA reportedly grossed \$200,000, which was down from last year's numbers. ... About 100 members of the 951<sup>st</sup> Sapper Company of Tomahawk and Rhinelander were given clearer notice of deployment plans to Afghanistan and Iraq, expecting to be ordered to active duty at the end of November. ... The Board of Public Works recommended to the Department of Transportation to begin underground work on the North Fourth Street and Veteran's Memorial bridges in fall of 2011, with road reconstruction and bridge replacement in spring of 2012.

**Sept. 23** – Tomahawk was treated to a rare opportunity to see the Harlem Wizards basketball superstars play at the Tomahawk Elementary School fieldhouse. ... As Lincoln County made the move to its new Service Center in Merrill, two other projects for the jail and courthouse were in the process of being bid out and built. ... Randy Smith, 44, Tomahawk, was killed in a logging accident at his home on Kaufman Road in the town of Bradley when a large tree he was cutting fell on and entrapped him in his truck. ... The Lincoln County Board

voted to pay the federal government \$80,000 for alleged child support services that dated back several years.

**Sept. 30** – A 48-year-old Indiana man, Charles D. “David” Doss, wanted in connection with a June murder in that state, admitted to authorities he committed the act after he was located living in an apartment on West Leather Avenue in Tomahawk. ... Derek Domke, the Tomahawk teenager charged with killing Rochelle Anderson and robbing the fueling station where she was working in March admitted to being at the scene but denied committing the murder. The state crime lab began testing a DNA sample of a third party. ... Two people died in a motorcycle-semi trailer crash at the intersection of State Road 17 and County Road C in the town of Schley. Driver Andrew Hitt, 22, Mosinee, and passenger Kayla Shafel, 19, Bryant, were the victims. ... Author Sandra Kring’s new novel, “Thank You For All Things,” hit book stores. ... Fire destroyed a housing structure at Northern Lights Playhouse in Hazelhurst.

## **October**

**Oct. 7** – The Hatchets claimed a 37-13 Homecoming win over Eagle River. Dylan Brietzke and Trina Sorce were crowned king and queen. ... Lincoln County residents were urged by Edward Jones in Tomahawk to stay afloat despite the failing American economy. ... Members of Tomahawk Fishing Unlimited worked to construct a final connecting point to the two-mile trail that extends from near SARA Park to the Tomahawk School District, part of the city’s newest and most extensive walking and biking trail. ... The Tomahawk Regional Chamber of Commerce held its annual dinner and honored the following individuals and businesses for their dedication and leadership to the chamber and to the community: Dixie Zastrow, Lifetime Service Award; Sharon Lamer, Service Award; Tomahawk Ace Hardware, and Tomahawk Log and Country Homes, Spirit Awards; and Nicolet Area Technical College, Ambassador Award. ... Dr. Jim Barr and Ed Steigerwaldt took part in the national grueling Ironman challenge in Madison. ... Wisconsin Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen awarded \$71,160 in Victims of Crime Act funding to Lincoln County’s HAVEN.

**Oct. 14** – Derek Domke entered not guilty pleas to two lesser felony counts in the Rochelle Anderson murder, waiving his right to a trial. Domke’s defense attorney advised against his client’s guilty plea to party to a crime first-degree intentional homicide and party to a crime armed robbery, indicating Domke was present at the scene Anderson was beaten and stabbed to death, but did not participate or see the murder. ... The Lincoln County Highway Department considered drastic measures to meet a \$1.5 million shortfall, including far less snowplowing than in previous years. ... The Tomahawk Common Council approved the borrowing of \$102,000 and will act as a surrogate for the Northwoods Passage Snowmobile Club to allow the purchase of a new snowmobile trail groomer. ... Collin Schultz, a Merrill man, 19, died from injuries in an off-road motorcycle crash in the town of Corning. ... Ken Johnson, 64, Elburn, Ill., and Regina Johnson, 46, Hawthorn Woods, Ill., were injured when they swerved to miss a bear on US Hwy. 51 and the vehicle overturned. Johnson, the passenger, was ejected.

**Oct. 21** – Seth Louis admitted to causing the death of Tracy Maurer of Tomahawk as part of plea bargain in Lincoln County Court. Louis pleaded guilty to first-degree intentional homicide as party to a

crime and had two robbery charges in Oneida County dropped. Sentencing is slated in early 2009, with the state requesting Louis not be eligible for parole until he is 70 years old. Louis stated that his then-girlfriend, Katie Decker, 17, and Heather Ward, 19, both of Rhinelander, helped in the murder by providing knives. Decker is charged with aiding a felon for hiding bloody clothes he wore to commit the homicide while Ward is accused of driving him to and from Maurer's home the night of the murder. Louis will be sentenced in January 2009. ... Ministry Health Care welcomed Shane Durkes, MD, to family practice at the Tomahawk clinic.

**Oct. 28** – Special downtown Halloween activities helped make trick-or-treating spooktacular for youngsters. ... Tomahawk Main Street, Inc. hired Laurie Groskopf as director to oversee the downtown economic and historical revitalization program. ... Bradley Benzinger, 26, Merrill, was arrested and faced numerous charges after allegedly breaking into a home in the town of Scott and wielding a large knife. ... The Lincoln County Board approved a resolution to sell the former Land Services Building in Merrill for \$240,000.

## November

**Nov. 4** – Tomahawk's co-ed cross country team traveled to Wisconsin Rapids to compete in the WIAA state cross country meet. The Hatchet boys won the Division 2 state championship with 78 points to outdistance Catholic Memorial by 10 points. The Hatchets were ranked #1 in the state. The lady Hatchets finished seventh among D2 teams. ... Northlands Stainless, Inc., announced it was receiving \$250,000 in state Technology Zone tax credits to offset part of a \$5 million, 21,000-square-foot addition expected to create a dozen new jobs. ... The Tomahawk School District budget showed a \$608,000 levy decrease. The shift moved money to state funding and meant taxpayers would pay 1.75 percent more than the year before, or a levy of \$10.56 million based on a \$19.1 million total budget package. ... Rebecca Rumpf, 23, died from injuries sustained in a one-vehicle crash in the town of Crescent Oct. 4. ... A feature story brought readers into the lives of Todd and Heather Leverance and their autistic son, Nate, 4. ... Golden LivingCenter-Golden Age was one of 57 nursing homes out of more than 10,000 eligible nationwide that earned the prestigious Step I and II Quality Award from the American Health Care Association and the National Center for Assisted Living. ... Town of King residents were asked to support a 50 percent town tax levy increase.

**Nov. 11** – Tomahawk Packaging Corporation of America said it would shut down for two weeks due to the economic downturn. Louisiana-Pacific also announced it would extend a two-week shutdown an additional week. ... Jessica Amelse, who represented the towns of Bradley, Birch, Skanawan, Tomahawk and Rock Falls on the Tomahawk School Board, vacated her position due to time constraints. Applications for the position were being collected. ... With Wisconsin's 715 and 920 area codes projected to run out of available phone numbers near the end of 2011, the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) ordered relief for both areas by means of an overlay. Area code 715 will have an overlay of new area code 534, while area code 920 will have an overlay of new area code 274. ... Lincoln and Oneida counties followed the country in support of now-president-elect Barack Obama over Republican hopeful John McCain. ... Winning local seats in the election were Democrat Jim Holperin, Eagle River,

for the District 12 State Senate seat, incumbent Republican Don Friske as State Assembly District 35 representative, and incumbent Dave Obey to District 7 in the U.S. Congress. ... Two Rhinelander School District referendum questions were narrowly defeated.

**Nov. 18** – After years of planning and effort, an open house was held for Lincoln County's new 42,000-square-foot Service Center. ... Jacob Baars, 21, Tomahawk, was sentenced to 14 years in prison for taking part in a string of burglaries and arson as well as for helping shoot and kill a pet horse in 2005 and 2006. ... Town of King residents approved a tax levy raise of 10 percent.

**Nov. 25** – The many challenges faced by Joellen Lechleitner, from the time she was diagnosed with an enlarged heart as a high school freshman, to a heart transplant, marriage and now, their first child, was featured in an article. ... Louisiana-Pacific eliminated four salaried and two hourly positions as the nationwide housing market continued to crumble. ... Gas dipped below \$2 per gallon. ... Lincoln County and the U.S. government finalized an \$80,000 settlement involving allegations of fraudulent billing by the county between 1997 and 2006 related to a federally-funded child support program. The settlement included a provision that Lincoln County does not admit any wrongdoing.

## December

**Dec. 2** – Family, friends and community overfilled the gymnasium at Rhinelander High School to wish farewell and God's speed to 112 soldiers of the 951<sup>st</sup> Sapper Engineer Company before leaving to spend the next year in active duty in Afghanistan. ... The Tomahawk Finance Committee reviewed disadvantages of selling a city-owned building for less than the assessed value, versus doing so in exchange for business grown and more jobs. Universal Industries, LLC, which occupies the former Harley-Davidson North Plant off North Fourth Street, offered \$250,000, \$400,000 less than the price agreed upon via a memorandum of understanding in 2005. ... An Oneida County judge ruled that some statements made by Katie Decker, 18, Rhinelander, would not be allowed in court. The comments were made by Decker after she told detectives she didn't want to talk anymore about the role of her then-boyfriend, Seth Louis, 26, Rhinelander, in the death of Tomahawk woman Tracy Maurer. ... Tomahawk High School's Adam Benner won multiple gold medals at Special Olympics competitions over the past year, drawing the attention of Wisconsin World Games Committee. Benner was nominated by coach, Bonnie Kahn, for a spot on Team U.S.A. to compete in cross country skiing at the 2009 World Games in Idaho, and he was one of 52 cross country skiers selected. ... Randal Arndt died from injuries sustained in a logging accident in the town of Cassian.

**Dec. 9** – A feature story looked into the lives of Rick Peterson, 38, and his spouse, Lisa, after Rick was deployed with the National Guard's Tomahawk and Rhinelander-based 951<sup>st</sup> Sapper Engineer Company. ... Four people applied for a Tomahawk School Board seat left vacant by the resignation of Jessica Amelse. ... Lincoln County 51.437 Services Board continued to seek proposals for the sale of the county's five residential group homes. ... The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) indicated a preliminary kill tally for the nine-day November gun deer hunt of 276,985. Deer registrations were down significantly in the Tomahawk area. ... The Tomahawk Common

Council agreed to just over a \$3.7 million budget, including a \$1.5 million tax levy.

**Dec. 16** – Terry Collins Sr. and his wife, Charlotte, lost their Tannery Road home after a blaze destroyed it. No one was injured in the fire, but the house and items inside, including many heirlooms from the family homestead, did incur significant damage. ... Tomahawk Community Bank and Merrill Federal Savings and Loan, two mutual community banks, jointly announced plans to merge. There was no monetary buyout and the joint venture will benefit both institutions and their respective clientele, officials said. ... Longtime Lincoln County Sheriff's Department Chief Deputy Mike Soucy died after fighting bone cancer.

**Dec. 23** – Snowmobile trails opened in Oneida County. ... The Lincoln County board opted not to change snowplowing policies, curtailing plowing schedules and slashing hours to save money. ... Kay Kissinger-Wolf, Irma, was appointed to fill a vacancy on the Tomahawk School Board. ... A funeral and memorial service was held for Mike Soucy.