

# Probation given in money-order scheme

Woman earned \$200 weekly through scam

By Dan Holtz  
Leader-Telegram staff

An Eau Claire woman will spend four years on probation for serving as a conduit for a scheme involving hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of fraudulent money orders.

Teresa A. Smalley was paid \$200 a week for her involvement in the scheme.

Authorities said they took about \$800,000 worth of fraudulent money orders from Smalley's residence in April.

Smalley, 66, 934 Barland St., pleaded no contest Friday in Eau Claire County Court to a felony count of conspiracy to commit theft. A second count of the same charge and 14 felony counts of uttering a forgery were dismissed.

As conditions of probation, Smalley cannot have access to the Internet or engage in any business over the Internet.

Judge Paul Lenz also ordered Smalley to make two presentations about such scams and how senior citizens can avoid them. Lenz would prefer Smalley make the presentations at the L.E. Phillips Senior Center.

"That way your experience

“

I needed money, that's all. I didn't mean to hurt anybody.

— Teresa A. Smalley

”

can help others," Lenz said.

Smalley apologized for her actions.

"I know I learned my lesson. It's taken a toll on me," she said. "I know I shouldn't have done

it. I needed money, that's all. I didn't mean to hurt anybody."

According to the criminal complaint:

Eau Claire police received a call in February from a man who works with two websites that track Nigerian scams. In these Internet-soliciting scams, people are offered a job, are told they have won a lottery or are asked to be part of a lucrative financial transaction.

The solicited people are required to process money orders or checks. They are allowed to keep some of the money and send the rest of the money orders or checks to people in for-

eign countries. The checks or money orders are either fraudulent or counterfeit.

Police learned about the scheme in which Smalley was involved after a man identified Smalley as someone who was sending out counterfeit money orders. A police officer went to Smalley's home April 21, at which time Smalley told him she was part of a work-at-home business.

Smalley eventually started to cry and told the officer she knew what she was doing was wrong. Smalley said she was

See **PROBATION**, Page 2B

## Area professor charged with sexual assault

Music instructor's appearance in court scheduled for Sept. 21

By Leader-Telegram staff

A UW-River Falls professor has been charged with sexually assaulting and falsely imprisoning a teenager at a Hudson movie theater.

Thomas W. Barnett, 42, of Baldwin, faces up to 46 years in prison and \$110,000 in fines for the alleged sexual assault and false imprisonment.

UW-River Falls has placed Barnett, an assistant music professor, on administrative leave, with pay, and has directed him not to have contact with any UW System students.

The status of Barnett's employment could change as the investigation moves forward, said Blake Fry, special assistant to the chancellor.

Fry said UW System regulations would direct those decisions.

According to the criminal complaint:

A 13-year-old girl told police Barnett stopped her inside a movie auditorium, told her he was security and that he needed to speak with her in private.

When everyone else had left the theater Barnett cornered the girl and assaulted her, the girl said.

A teenage boy who was with the victim also said Barnett told him he was security and that he would need to speak to the girl in private.

The boy then asked an employee if Barnett was a security officer and the employee told him no.

An adult witness told police she saw Barnett talking to the victim as they walked out of the auditorium.

Barnett is scheduled to appear in St. Croix County Court Sept. 21 at 9 a.m.



Contributed photo

Mark Degner of Eau Claire spends time each month with Chance, 11. The pair was matched almost a year ago through Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwestern Wisconsin, which is seeking additional adult volunteers.

## Recruiting effort

Regional Big Brothers Big Sisters chapter seeking mentors

By Christena T. O'Brien  
Leader-Telegram staff

His own children grown, Mark Degner of Eau Claire decided he'd share some of his time with another child and became a volunteer through Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwestern Wisconsin.

Degner was matched with his "Little Brother" Chance, 11, in November, and the pair typically get together about every 10 days to go bowling, go to movies, play basketball or ride their bikes. And their outings almost always involve getting something to eat.

"It's been a great match," said Degner, who agreed to volunteer after hearing a presentation by Craig Monson, CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwestern Wisconsin.

The organization is kicking off a campaign to find 90 "Bigs" in 90 days because of an increasing demand for its services and the slow rate at which volunteers are stepping forward.

### Options available

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwestern Wisconsin matches children ages 7 through 17 with mentors in professionally supported one-to-one relationships. The organization serves Chippewa, Dunn, Eau Claire, Pierce and St. Croix counties.

Big Brothers Big Sisters is looking for volunteers willing to become a "Big" to an area child through one of the following programs:

■ **Community-based:** Bigs provide Littles with one-on-one time and attention approximately four

times a month. Together they enjoy activities such as attending a ball game, baking cookies, fishing or going for a walk.

■ **School/site-based:** Bigs meet with their Littles at their school or a specified site, such as the Boys and Girls Club, at the same time each week. Together, they can eat lunch, talk, read or play games.

If interested in learning more about becoming a Big, contact Big Brothers Big Sisters at 715-835-0161 or info@bbbsnw.org.

"In the past year we've been struggling to find volunteers willing to spend one hour per week with a child," Monson said. "Being a 'Big' is as simple as spending one lunch time per week with a child or going to a movie, but the impact on the child is long-lasting."

If the goal of 90 volunteers by the end of November isn't reached,

then fewer children will be served in 2011 than were served in 2010, Monson said.

More than 200 children have been matched with a Big Brother or Big Sister so far this year, said Christina Thrun, development and marketing director for Big

See **BIGS**, Page 2B

## Vans collide



Staff photo by Andi Stempniak

Authorities inspected a pair of vans that collided during a three-vehicle accident Friday after 8 p.m. at the intersection of North Crossing and Truax Lane. One child who suffered minor injuries was taken by ambulance to Mayo Clinic Health System in Eau Claire. A van collided with a semitrailer truck before hitting another van. Nine people were involved in the crash, but only one was injured.

## Ramp-building effort launched

By Joe Knight  
Leader-Telegram staff

Phyllis Ginder is getting around better these days thanks to a helping hand from two local organizations.

The Jim Falls Lions Club partnered with Boy Scouts from Bloomer and Chippewa Falls to build a wheelchair ramp at the 92-year-old Ginder's Lake Hallie home. The ramp is the first of what Lions Club members plan as an ongoing effort to assist people in wheelchairs.

Lions Club member Jim Raleigh, who is chairman of the organization's Wheelchair Committee, got the idea for building wheelchair ramps after being involved in a similar

United Way program in Michigan before he moved to Wisconsin six years ago.

"We are doing it strictly for the benefit of those in need," he said.

Like the Lions Club, 17-year-old Spencer LaGessee of Bloomer was looking for a way to help

■ **For more information about the Jim Falls Lion's Club wheelchair ramp program, contact Jim Raleigh at 715-382-4111 or 810-423-1713.**

someone in need. LaGessee, a Boy Scout, was searching for an Eagle Scout project and figured the wheelchair ramp endeavor was a perfect fit.

LaGessee convinced six Boy Scouts from Troop 72 in Chippewa Falls to help build the ramp. He also solicited local companies for help. Three businesses — Sold 4U Auctions of Chippewa falls, ProBuild

of Bloomer and the Lake Hallie Wal-Mart — donated materials. The Lions Club also chipped in.

The ramps are constructed to be compliant with building codes, Raleigh said. "Those Boy Scouts, hey, we could use a lot more like them," said Ginder, noting she is grateful for the ramp.

"I hadn't been out of my house for two years, except when my kids would come and help me down," she said. "I had fallen so many times I was afraid to go down my steps."

See **RAMPS**, Page 2B



Contributed photo

From left, Boy Scout Spencer LaGessee of Bloomer, Phyllis Ginder of Lake Hallie and Jim Raleigh, a member of the Jim Falls Lions Club, stood on a wheelchair ramp at Ginder's home. The ramp was a joint effort of the Lions Club and the Boy Scouts. The Lions Club plans to continue building ramps for homebound people. Raleigh was involved in a similar effort in Michigan before moving to Eau Claire.

## Obituaries

## Milo Van Beek

Milo Van Beek was born in Linton, ND on February 13, 1946 to Raymond and Dorothy (Vander Vorst) Van Beek. He grew up in Westfield, ND, enjoying horses, sports and rural life with his big extended family and community. He held a 1961 district track record at Pollock High School for almost 50 years. When his father pursued his education, the family moved to Ellendale, ND where Milo played varsity basketball and graduated from Ellendale High School in 1964. The family made a second move to Holland, MI where his father attended seminary and Milo began his college career at Hope College.

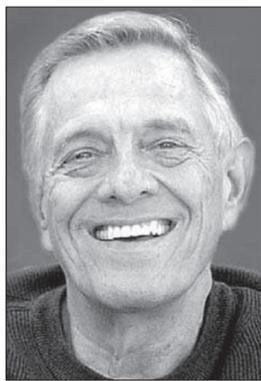
During his freshman year of college, an automobile accident changed the course of Milo's life, leaving him a quadriplegic and in a wheelchair. His disability did not prevent him from finishing his education and after a long year of rehabilitation, he attended the University of Wisconsin-Marathon County and was able to develop the skills that enabled him to live independently. His search for a wheelchair accessible campus in 1970 took him to California where he earned two bachelor's degrees and a master's degree in the areas of English, Speech Communications and Radio/Television at California State University Long Beach.

Milo's 38-year career as a teacher inspired thousands students who enrolled in his ESL courses at the community colleges of Orange County, CA. His influence in their pursuits to be more independent was rewarding for him and he modeled for them, life-lessons in perseverance and the message that anything is possible.

Following a hospitalization and complications related to his disability, Milo died at his home in Santa Ana, CA on August 18, 2011 surrounded by his family.

He was preceded in death by his father and mother.

Milo is survived by four brothers and sisters, Roger, Laguna Woods, CA, Marcia (Jack Kaiser), Eau Claire, WI, Dorinda, Long Beach, CA, Paul (Laurie), Eau Claire, WI;



and four nephews and nieces, John Kaiser, Boston, MA, Margaret Kaiser, Hudson, WI, Christopher Van Beek and Carley Van Beek, both of Eau Claire, WI. He is also survived by his uncle, Harley; and aunt, Marion Vander Vorst; special cousin, Michael; many loving Van Beek and Vander Vorst cousins; and aunts, Darlene Vander Vorst, Eileen Besse and Yvonne Vander Vorst. Milo will also be missed by Kathy, Diane, Patty and many other wonderful friends.

Special thanks from his family go to Peter, his orderly in 1965, who played a major role in helping Milo find new purpose in life.

Milo was loved by all who knew him, for his winsome smile, his engaging personality, his unending efforts at independence and his love of the English language. Milo lived life as though he were able-bodied, in such a way that others did not see him as disabled.

Inurnment will be held in the Memorial Gardens at the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, CA. A celebration of Milo's life will be held on September 17, 2011 at 10:30 a.m. in McAulay Hall at First Presbyterian Church of Orange, CA.

Memorials to the family will be used to support a scholarship established in his name by his colleagues and friends at the Community Colleges of Orange County, CA.

Remembrances and condolences may be sent online to [www.hilgenfeldtmortuary.com](http://www.hilgenfeldtmortuary.com).

## Ryan Brick

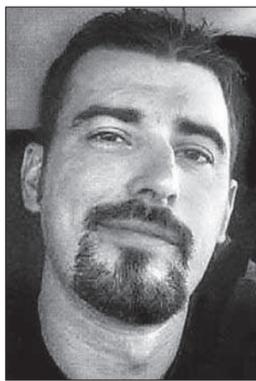
Ryan J. Brick, 27, of New Orleans, LA, formerly of Chippewa Falls, died Thursday, August 18, 2011 in New Orleans.

He was born April 14, 1984 in Madison to Connie (Friberg) and Patrick Brick. He was raised in Eau Claire and graduated from North High School.

Following high school, he attended and graduated from the National Polytechnic College of Engineering and Oceanoeering in Long Beach, California. Ryan worked as a Sub-Sea Commercial Diver in New Orleans for the past three years.

Survivors include his father, Patrick of Chippewa Falls; a brother, Joshua Brick of Chippewa Falls; his girlfriend, Julie Wanamaker of Long Beach, Calif.; six uncles, Tom Brick of River Falls, Mike Brick of Eau Claire, Steven Brick of Chippewa Falls, Tony (Jeanne) Brick of Chippewa Falls, Manny (Sue) Friberg of Eau Claire, Peter Friberg of Colfax; and an aunt, Nancy (Steven) Chilson of Washington and other relatives and friends.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Connie on January 17, 1991, when Ryan was just five years old; and his maternal and paternal grandparents.



A memorial service will be held at 12 p.m., Wednesday, September 7 at Pederson-Volker Funeral Chapel, Chippewa Falls, with Deacon Mark Arnold, officiating. At the family's request, a private interment will be held at the North Running Valley Cemetery, town of Cooks Valley.

Friends may call from 4 to 8 p.m., Tuesday, September 6 and one hour prior to the time of service Wednesday at the funeral chapel.

Pederson-Volker Funeral Chapel, Chippewa Falls is serving the Brick family.

Visit [pedersonvolker.com](http://pedersonvolker.com) to express online condolences.

## Death Notices

**DUCKWORTH**, Ellenor D., 95, of Mondovi died Friday at American Lutheran Home in Mondovi.

Poeschel-Talbot Family Home and Cremation Services, Mondovi, is handling arrangements.

**FIELDS**, Lillian J., 95, formerly of Cornell, died Thursday at Colfax Health Center.

Arrangements are pending at Borton-Leiser Funeral Home, Cornell.

**KRALL**, Edith L., 80, of Eau Claire died Thursday at home.

Visitation will be at noon Tuesday at Evergreen Funeral Home and Crematory, Eau Claire.

Services will be at 1 p.m. Tuesday at the funeral home.

Burial will be at a later date. **NEISIUS**, Hattie E., 80, of Thorp died Thursday at Clark County Health Care Center in Owen.

Visitation will be from 5 to 8 p.m. Thursday at Thorp Funeral Home, where there will be a 6 p.m. rosary, and at 9:30 a.m. Friday at St. Bernard-St. Hedwig's Catholic

Church, Thorp.

Services will be at 10:30 a.m. Friday at the church. Burial will be at St. Hedwig's Catholic Cemetery.

**REED**, Shirley A., 72, of Rice Lake died Thursday.

Visitation will be from 4 to 8 p.m. Monday at Appleyard's Home for Funerals, Rice Lake, and at 10 a.m. Tuesday at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Campia.

Services will be at 11 a.m. Tuesday at the church. Burial will be in the Cedar Lake Cemetery.

**SEYMOUR**, Ernest, 84, of Eau Claire died Thursday at Dove Healthcare-West in Eau Claire.

Visitation will be at 10 a.m. Thursday at First Congregational United Church of Christ, Eau Claire.

Services will be at 11 a.m. Thursday at the church.

Burial will be at First Congregational United Church of Christ Memorial Garden, Eau Claire, at a later date.

Fuller-Speckien-Hulke Funeral Home, Eau Claire, is handling arrangements.

## In Brief

## Pittsburgh man dies in accident

A 61-year-old Pittsburgh man died in a rollover crash on Interstate 94 Friday at 5:11 p.m. at mile marker 65, according to the State Patrol.

The man, whose identity is being withheld pending family notification, was the only person involved in the one-vehicle crash. The crash happened when the man's 2000 GMC truck struck a guardrail and rolled down the freeway's east embankment. The crash still is under investigation.

The State Patrol, Eau Claire Sheriff's Department and Township Fire Department all responded to the crash.

## Assistant DA arrested on I-94

Pierce County prosecutor Greg Amann was arrested early Friday morning in St. Croix County for drunken driving.

Amann, 54, an assistant district attorney, was pulled over and arrested on Interstate 94 for first offense operating while intoxicated at 1:22 a.m., the State Patrol confirmed Friday. Amann has yet to be charged.

Pierce County District Attorney John O'Boyle said he had not seen the State Patrol's arrest report because it was not available Friday.

O'Boyle said he wanted to look at the report and see the circumstances of the arrest before making a decision regarding Amann's employment.

"It's a little premature now to make a decision," O'Boyle said.

Amann has been with the Pierce County district attorney's office for at least three years and works part-time, O'Boyle said.

## Seven injured in two-vehicle crash

A crash that resulted in multiple injuries and involved a semitrailer truck closed one lane of westbound traffic on Interstate 94 at mile post 130 in Jackson County on Friday morning.

The Wisconsin State Patrol said the crash, reported at 5:55 a.m., forced the closure of the left westbound lane for emergency vehicle use.

Troopers along with Jackson and Monroe county deputies responded to the crash involving a semitrailer truck and a full-sized passenger van. The collision resulted in seven injured people from the two vehicles.

The van came to rest in the right-side ditch, approximately 150 feet off the road. The truck rolled on its side, stopping 3 feet off the road on the median side.

All crash victims were evacuated from the scene. No condition reports were immediately available.

The closure was expected to last most of the morning as crews cleaned up debris from the truck.

## Minnesota man arrested for OWI

A Minnesota man was arrested for drunken driving after he fled from state troopers early Thursday morning in Dunn County.

Carl Christian, 48, of Anoka, Minn., was headed east on Interstate 94 near mile marker 46 when a Wisconsin State Trooper attempted to stop him, according to the Wisconsin State Patrol. Christian sped away, reaching speeds of 90 to 100 miles per hour during the chase.

Authorities took Christian and a passenger into custody after using a tire deflation device on the fleeing vehicle, stopping it near mile marker 63.

According to the State Patrol, Christian was charged with operating while intoxicated, third offense, felony fleeing, reckless driving and operating without a valid license.

## BRF teacher wins state award

BLACK RIVER FALLS — A Black River Falls High School teacher has been named Wisconsin's High School Teacher of the Year for the 2011-12 school year, the state Department of Public Instruction announced Friday.

Bradley Markhardt, an agriculture education teacher at Black River Falls High School, received the award during a school assembly Friday. Along with the award, Markhardt will receive \$3,000 from the Herb Kohl Educational Foundation. Markhardt has developed partnerships in the community to provide opportunities for his students, DPI said.

## Charge: Man abused 3-year-old boy

BARRON — A 25-year-old man has been charged in Barron County Court with a felony count of child abuse for reportedly slapping a 3-year-old boy several times and striking him repeatedly on the buttocks with a belt Sunday because he believed the boy lied to him.

Eric W. Strong of Barronett is scheduled for a preliminary hearing Tuesday. The charge has a maximum penalty of three years in prison.

According to court records: The boy, who had black and blue marks under one eye, red marks on both cheeks and black and blue marks with defined lines on his buttocks, told police Strong caused those markings.

Strong told police he slapped the boy 4 or 5 times on each cheek, representing the number of times he believed the boy lied to him. He said he kept slapping the boy until he admitted what he did. He said he struck the boy because he believed the boy lied to him about playing with an air conditioning unit.

Strong also admitted hitting the boy with the belt and said he also struck a 5-year-old girl with the belt because he believed she should have been watching the boy.

## Man sentenced in theft scheme

MADISON — Chad Wyttenbach, 36, of Sommerset, was sentenced Wednesday to six months in prison for transporting stolen tractors between Minnesota and Wisconsin, according to a release issued by the Department of Justice.

Wyttenbach pleaded guilty to the charge in February. Wyttenbach, along with Eric Garvey, 40, of White Bear Lake, Minn., and Victor Trejo, 51, of Prescott, originally was indicted in July 2010 in a ten-count indictment.

From staff reports

## Submitting obituaries, death notices

Email paid obituaries or free death notices to [obits@ecpc.com](mailto:obits@ecpc.com) or fax them to 715-858-7333 by 4:30 p.m. Sundays through Thursdays and by 3:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. To confirm receipt of obituaries or death notices, call 715-833-9238 or 800-236-8808 Mondays through Fridays and 715-833-9203 or 800-236-7077 Saturdays and Sundays.

## Bigs/Organization has waiting list

from Page 1B

Brothers Big Sisters of Northwestern Wisconsin. The organization usually serves more than 300 each year.

"As the need continues to increase, now is the time we really need our community members to step up to be a friend to a child," Monson said.

Currently, more than 100 children are waiting for their Big Brother or Big Sister, including Jim and Madilyn.

Jim is a 10-year-old smart boy, who recently has been getting into trouble, such as skipping an after-school program. Madilyn is a fifth-grade student who could use an extra friend to eat lunch with because she often eats alone.

Madilyn loves horses and being creative. She especially loves to read and draw. Jim loves the outdoors, monster trucks, car races and swimming.

Degner recommends others consider becoming a Big Brother or Big Sister. "It's not expensive, it's not

time consuming, and you get a lot out of it," he said.

Thrun couldn't agree more. She and her 13-year-old Little Sister have been matched for three years. The pair like to go to movies or plays, work on craft projects and sometimes volunteer together.

"I'm there as a friend she can talk to," Thrun said. "I hope that I change her life in some small way."

O'Brien can be reached at 715-830-5838, 800-236-7077 or [christena.obrien@ecpc.com](mailto:christena.obrien@ecpc.com).

## Probation/Various mailboxes used in crime

from Page 1B

disabled and could only work from home. She applied for a job and had been doing this for several months.

Smalley said she only does this because she needs the money and didn't know what else to do.

Smalley told the officer she received packages from men named Jack and Alex. She believed Jack was from Nigeria, while Alex was from London.

Smalley said she received packages nearly every other day. Once she filled out the information on the counterfeit money orders, she sent them out. She said she had to drop them in different mail-

boxes throughout Eau Claire.

Smalley received \$200 a week in cash as a result of mailing the money orders. She received her money via Western Union.

Smalley got involved with this activity in June or July 2010. She moved from Cadott to Eau Claire in September 2010.

Cadott police had contacted Smalley about stopping her involvement with this activity. A postal inspector told Eau Claire police he had contact with a woman in the Cadott area in 2010 regarding counterfeit money orders.

Holtz can be reached at 715-833-9207, 800-236-7077 or [dan.holtz@ecpc.com](mailto:dan.holtz@ecpc.com).

## Ramps/Group hoping for trailer to move tools

from Page 1B

The Lions Club requests that homeowners who can afford it pay for the cost of materials to build a ramp. However, if they can't afford that cost, the Lions Club will pay for it, Raleigh said.

The ramp at Ginder's home was built in sections at the Lions Club's Jim Falls location. In the future, club members hope to obtain a trailer to haul tools and materials so ramps can be constructed at residents' homes.

The Lions Club will re-

tain ownership of the ramps they build. That way, if residents like Ginder no longer require ramps, they can be moved to the home of someone who does.

Raleigh said he is uncertain how many requests for ramps the club may receive, but he knows there are residents who would benefit from having a ramp at their home.

"We thought we'd take them one by one," he said.

Knight can be reached at 715-830-5835, 800-236-7077 or [joe.knight@ecpc.com](mailto:joe.knight@ecpc.com).

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