

Opinion

READER OPINION

'STAR' once again shines, sheds light on downtown Veterans Fall Ride

With the commencing of fundraising for the downtown Veterans Fall Ride, the STAR Foundation has awarded \$1,500 to the support of the Wurl-Feind-Ingman Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2687 community service project.

This is the fourth year in a row that the Tomahawk STAR Foundation has endorsed the event that brought in 42,000 visitors in 2018. According to the Tomahawk Area Chamber of Commerce survey after the 2018 Fall Ride, the numbers were well substantiated. They found \$27.3 million passed through the hands of businesses in the area. It is estimated that this amount of money circulates 4-6 times before leaving the community. It is no wonder this event is important to Tomahawk and great organizations like STAR support it.

Let us give you a bit of important info about the Tomahawk Star Foundation. It has been around since 2004. The name STAR comes from Support Tomahawk Area Resources. STAR serves the Tomahawk area by acting as a community chest for businesses and individuals by accepting contributions and distributing (through grant applications) money to community groups, clubs and non-profit organizations that contribute to the health and vitality of our area.

Along with accepting contributions, they do 2 major fundraisers of their own to supplement their funds. These events are the Best Burger promotion and the Star Splash Down (their own version of an icy plunge at the Happy Snapper on the Wisconsin River). It is important to note that all of the STAR funds stay and assist the Tomahawk community. There has been over \$400,000 distributed to local community groups since 2004. Any business or individual may make a contribution by contacting a STAR Foundation representative.

"You may want to suggest your place of business begin a payroll deduction for employees for the purpose of supporting your community, as every bit counts," Kathy Rankin, STAR Foundation Board member shared.

In the meantime, a galaxy of thank you's go to the STAR Foundation for its involvement in Tomahawk's continued reputation of being the "best place to be" and the most supporting community.

Submitted by Pat Haskin for the VFW

Northwoods and changing climate

The League of Women Voters-Northwoods (LWVNOW) will meet Tuesday, June 11 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the Minocqua Public Library, 415 Menominee St. Minocqua. The topic will focus on climate change as it affects the Northwoods. The speaker will be Nancy Turyk, an emeritus water resource scientist and outreach specialist from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

For more than a decade she has participated in climate change-related discussions, research, outreach and course development. She is on the Wisconsin Green Fire's Climate Change workgroup; represents the North American Lake Management Society, a federal climate change and freshwater workgroup; conducts outreach with community groups; and is assisting a Wisconsin community with climate adaptation. Turyk's one-hour presentation will be followed by a discussion about ways to address climate change.

This event is co-sponsored by Northwoods Climate Action Group. The public is welcome and all are encouraged to bring their questions and ideas.

The League of Women Voters of the Northwoods encompasses Lincoln, Oneida, Florence, Forest, Langlade and Vilas counties. The local league belongs to the state and national League of Women Voters, a non-partisan organization devoted to helping members and fellow citizens develop educated political opinions and act upon them through the democratic process. Monthly meetings and sponsored events are open to all. For information email Information@lwvnow.org. The website is lwvnow.org.



By **Jalen Maki**
COLUMNIST

Driving is a privilege we all take for granted. It can be relaxing, fun and even cathartic. Having to share our nation's roadways with other drivers, on the other hand, is none of those things, ever. Besides being a Packer fan, I can't think of anything that can make me feel genuine joy and almost die of a coronary within five minutes of each other.

At times I wonder if some people obtained their licenses via bribery; someone slips the portly gentleman working the counter at the DMV a crisp Hamilton from their wallet, he punches away at a keyboard for a minute or two, and before you know it, some guy with the depth perception of Cyclops can now legally operate a motor vehicle. Although my theory is only that—a theory—I can say with confidence that the driving skills of many motorists would not stand up to even the mildest scrutiny from a trained professional. I have seen too much out there to believe otherwise.

Nowhere in America, other than maybe in government buildings in the greater Washington, D.C. area, will you find higher levels of Doofus Energy on display than on our roads.

I once followed a person through almost the entirety of the city of Eau Claire with their turn signal on the entire time. I believe George Carlin referred to this as an "eventual left."

Here's an image that's permanently seared into my brain: while driving on a freeway, I saw a fellow motorist in the lane next to mine driving with their *bare left foot on the dash*. While this person's contortionist skills are impressive, this



Ups-N-Downs

By **Larry Tobin**
PUBLISHER

It's been a great ride. For more than 37 years, Kathy and I have published the *Tomahawk Leader* in a most wonderful part of Wisconsin. For virtually all of my younger life I lived in big cities. I grew up in Kansas City, Missouri, went to school and worked in Milwaukee for 5-1/2 years, and lived in Madison for 12 years. As I've told many people, when we moved to Tomahawk it was like coming home. I have no thoughts of leaving.

But like all things, eventually there is an end, just like a beginning. I'm left with many mixed emotions. Our tenure here—the second longest of any owner of the *Leader*—has been beyond my wildest imagination. It's now over. We've worked very hard to provide the community with the news of everything that has happened here. We did it as honestly and

completely as we could. Our only bias has been Tomahawk. We've done all we can to support the area and the people who call this home. It's a tremendous community, inhabited by hard working, resourceful and caring people. Most we consider our friends whether we know them all or not.

So much of our success here has to be attributed to Kathy. She's truly incredible, working 60-80 hours most weeks. Without her, I think the paper might have died in recent years. My health has been such that she has had to do virtually everything. I spent the first two weeks of December in hospitals and she was by my side 24/7 and still managed to run the paper via computer and telephone. She still does nearly everything for me. She does such a great job of it that I've threatened not to tell her if I ever recover enough to help out. On top of all else she remains one of the sweetest, most caring people I've ever met. I don't know how anyone could not care for her.

We've also had the

benefit of some wonderful people working with us at the *Leader* who've been hard workers and good friends. Without them, little would ever be accomplished. One in particular was Graham Foster, editor for many years, who was diligent, honest and incredibly talented (as his many newspaper awards testified). Even after he retired, he came back to help out whenever we needed him. Sadly, Graham passed away last week. I never knew what he thought about any of the many changes we made at the paper. He never complained ... just went about his job as usual and, as always, did it promptly and well.

And there have been a lot of changes. Early on, we eliminated the social news which stirred a lot of controversy among some of our readers. We created an advertising section that goes to our non-subscribers. And we were one of the first weekly newspapers in the state to switch to desktop publishing. Graham and all

our other employees simply dug in and made the changes work. We thank them for that.

Finally, we have to thank the community for taking us into their homes and businesses every week for so long. Certainly, there have been those who haven't cared for us, especially those who disagreed with things I wrote. A few even cancelled their subscriptions. I had no problem with disagreement but I never understood the cancellation. Why not just skip my columns and read the rest of the paper? There is so much in it. We certainly covered all the local bases. On the other hand, thanks to all those who supported my opinions and said so. They kept me going.

This, at last, is not a farewell but a change of lifestyle. I have some new interests to pursue and, knowing her as I do, I know Kathy will find something. She just can't slow down. Best to everyone and we'll see you around town. And best wishes to the new ownership.



By **Mark Gaedtke**
COLUMNIST

On the horns of a dilemma

I realize I have not written a column in quite some time, but I had made myself a promise not to write a column if I had nothing to say. And besides the airplane crash, the UFO sightings, and the restraining order from the Green Bay Packers, it's been a relatively quiet season of life for me. I have come back this week for one reason only. And no, I don't need a loan. The hard fact is, I find myself on the horns of a difficult dilemma. (Is there any other kind?)

This week my neighbor reported finding a bloated deer carcass floating on his shoreline. The textbook way of handling this problem is to push the animal back out into the river, and viola! It becomes someone else's problem. But my neighbor is not that kind of person. He is the kind of person who, when seeing a problem, digs in and does something about it, even if it could leave him smelling like limburger cheese wrapped in an unwashed sweat sock. But let's not get ahead of ourselves.

My neighbor devised a plan for dealing with the dead animal by first wrapping a chain around it, and using his kayak, floating the creature out into

the middle of the river. There he attached the chain to a concrete block and threw it over the side. It was his hope that the block would sink the carcass to the river bottom, where nature would take its course and the problem would be solved in a short time. The problem was, the deer did not sink. Due to the methane gas that forms within the body of a deceased carcass (Isn't science fun?!) the thing had become quite buoyant.

So, my neighbor hustled back to his house and grabbed yet another block and proceeded to tie on more weight. You may be eating supper as you read this, so we won't even discuss the smell. The point is, even after two concrete blocks and a chain, the deer's posterior was still sticking up out of the Tomahawk River—a virtual deer butt buoy. So, he grabbed his .22 rifle and fired several shots into the unfortunate creature, but to no avail. Apparently, there was still enough fat to seal up the bullet holes, and therefore the deer remained floating defiantly butt-first in the middle of the Tomahawk River.

So, my neighbor, who is not one to give in to just any old dead deer that floats up to his shoreline, devised another plan.

And this is where I suspect he ran afoul of the law. He took a knife and taped it onto the end of a long stick, creating a spear. He then began poking at the deer with the knife until he was able to penetrate the carcass and release the entrapped methane gas, finally allowing the poor creature a proper burial at sea.

And therein lies my dilemma. I would love to report my neighbor to the authorities, but I don't want to be implicated as an accessory. That could look bad on my resume if I were ever to apply for a real job. Heck, I don't even know if what he did was illegal. I know it's illegal for me to spear fish. My worry is that it might well be illegal to be spearing deer on the Tomahawk River prior to the spawning season. I tried to call the DNR to find out but they keep hanging up on me. First the Packers won't return my calls, and now the DNR. And also, how do you clean a hunting knife that smells like limburger cheese wrapped in an unwashed sweat sock?

Stay Tuned.
(Mark Gaedtke's book, "Insomniac Dreams," is available at the *Tomahawk Leader* office.)

The trials of a motorist

is the sort of behind-the-wheel technique both driver's education instructors and law enforcement officials alike would frown upon. I tell this story mainly because I feel it's my journalistic duty to relay that this person's foot looked like, to put it gently, it had been through the wringer. Its appearance fell somewhere on the spectrum between "novelty Halloween decoration" and "about to be harvested from a cadaver at Harvard Medical School." It was horrifying to look at. I hope they were driving to the hospital.

Although I don't have as much driving experience some of my older fellow motorists have, I feel I have witnessed enough out there on the road to be able to offer some observations, recommendations and tips:

First thing's first: We can all go at least five miles per hour faster in just about every situation. We're driving cars, not riding Galapagos tortoises; these things can move. If a trip to the gas station to pick up a six pack and a bag of Funyuns was meant to take half a day, the internal combustion engine would be nothing more than a crudely sketched idea in a dusty notepad somewhere, and our saddle and reins budgets would be substantially higher. Pick up the pace, people. Some of us actually have places to be.

I don't feel like my views on driving are that radical; I simply believe that anyone who pulls out in front of me and goes slower than the speed I was driving belongs in a maximum security penitentiary.

A problematic percentage of people approach four-way

stops thinking. "Welp, I have no idea how this works, I don't know what I'm doing, and I am 100% about to wing this and hope for the best."

Contrary to popular belief, using your turn signal is free. You know the space between those lines painted on the pavement in parking lots? That's where your vehicle goes. If you park between those lines, rather than on them, other people can park between them as well, and we can all coexist in comfortably-spaced, door-ding-free harmony. A paradise, if you will. My God, what a concept.

Speaking of parking, to all the guys who drive jacked up trucks and actively take up multiple parking spots: Why are you like this? Unless it involves drinking beer outside Miller Park, avoid tailgating.

If you have a dog in your car, I will be taking a photo of it. That's the Jalen Maki Guarantee™.

Driving in a large group of vehicles going over the speed limit is as close as most of us will ever get to participating in organized crime.

One day, I hope our nation steps into the 21st century and implements high-speed bullet trains nationwide. The upside to relieving our nation's drivers of the substantial burdens of mentally arduous tasks, such as parking like normal people and using their turn signals as required by law, is limitless.

At least, if socks and shoes are required.