

Thefts alleged at Walmart as suspects ditch girlfriend at Ladysmith store

Two suspects are facing charges of retail theft after they allegedly stole from the Ladysmith Walmart on Sunday, July 2.

Shawn N. Lau, 41, and Sarah B. Oelbaum, 38, both of Eau Claire have been charged with retail theft – intentionally taking \$500 - \$5,000.

According to the criminal complaint, officers responded to the Ladysmith Walmart for an active merchandise “roll out,” in which two male suspects, one identified later as Shawn N. Lau, had left the store with two cart loads of unpaid merchandise. A third suspect, later identified as Sarah B. Oelbaum, was left at the scene.

Oelbaum was asked about the backpack she had left in the parking lot, also full of unpaid merchandise. The criminal

complaint shows that Oelbaum admitted to pulling the fire alarm and leaving the backpack after she realized she had been ditched by her co-conspirators.

Video surveillance shows Lau and the other male suspect leaving the store with two carts full of products. They were able to load one cart’s worth of goods into their car before police arrived, before panicking and leaving both Oelbaum and the other cart behind.

According to Walmart employees, the items left behind included a crossbow and a 12-pack of Twisted Tea. Including the items recovered from Oelbaum’s backpack, the total value of merchandise that passed the point of purchase and exited the building without being paid for is \$1,572.96. The value

of the unrecovered items is unknown at this time.

The criminal complaint alleges that while officers were arresting Oelbaum, Lau contacted Walmart to ask about the whereabouts of his girlfriend. Officers were then able to contact Lau on the phone where he apologized for the whole thing. Officers advised that Lau return to Ladysmith with the stolen merchandise. According to the complaint Lau then stated, “I will do that, I will. I want to do it for Sarah,” and told officers he would return before 7 a.m.

As of the time of publication, it is not known if Lau has turned himself in as promised or not.

A cash bond of \$1,000 was set for Oelbaum. An initial court appearance was set for July 11.



COMING SOON — The foundation is completed for the new Dollar General store being constructed in Holcombe. The new development on a 2.07 acre site is at the northwest corner of Wis. 27 and 263rd Ave., roughly across the road from Meadow Creek Mall. Plans call for about a 10,600 square foot building with 6-10 full time employees. There is highway access to the property, slightly north of and across from the mall driveway. Town Chairman Brian Guthman said state plans for site and driveways were all approved. He added owners plan to open this October or November. — News photo by Luke Klink

Past Weyerhaeuser mail carrier sentenced

A former Weyerhaeuser mail carrier who was originally charged with a methamphetamine distribution offense nearly three and one-half years ago was sentenced to two years’ probation Wednesday, June 28, in Barron County Circuit Court.

In a deal with prosecutors, former Chetek resident Timothy D. Wilson, 69, now living in Chippewa Falls, pleaded guilty to

a reduced felony charge of methamphetamine possession, in exchange for dismissal of two other charges.

Conditions of Wilson’s probation require him to remain absolutely sober and to work with his probation agent to complete any and all evaluations, counseling, treatment and follow-up.

He cannot possess or consume controlled substances, unless prescribed, and “must not associate with anyone known to have or be using controlled substances, except in a controlled setting,” court records added.

Wilson was originally charged with possession between 10 and 50 grams of meth with intent to sell after his ar-

rest while he was on his mail delivery route near Weyerhaeuser Monday, Feb. 10, 2020.

Earlier the same day, Barron County Sheriff’s investigators executed a search warrant at the defendant’s home in Chetek. No one was there at the time. But investigators seized unused plastic bags, a digital scale covered with alleged meth residue, smoking devices, and a sandwich bag containing more than 20 grams of meth.

When he was taken into custody in Rusk County, the defendant was allegedly found in possession of more meth and \$929 in cash, mostly in the form of \$20 bills, the complaint said.

Chetek man faces sentencing in OWI plea deal

A 33-year-old Chetek man is in jail awaiting sentencing in about six weeks after he pleaded guilty to a fifth drunk driving charge last Friday, June 30, 2023, in Barron County Circuit Court.

Bobby Bohannon Defendant Bobby F. Bohannon

hannon made a deal with prosecutors, agreeing to plead guilty to the charge in exchange for dismissal of multiple charges in two other felony cases.

At the time of Friday’s hearing, Bohannon was facing charges that included a sixth drunk driving charge filed last November and two felony bail jumping charges dating from an arrest in January of this year.

Also dismissed as part of the plea deal were three traffic tickets issued

in connection with the May 2022 OWI arrest, including speeding, driving left of the centerline, and refusing to take a field sobriety test.

The May 2022 criminal complaint said Bohannon already had four drunk driving convictions on his record when a Rice Lake officer allegedly saw him ride a motorcycle through a stop sign on May 8, 2022.

Court records said Bohannon faces up to 10 years in prison and/or a \$25,000 fine when he is sentenced Aug. 17.

Cornell man faces OWI charge in Brill crash

An Aug. 1, 2023, preliminary hearing is set for a Chippewa County man charged with felony drunk driving after he crashed just outside the village of Brill on Memorial Day Weekend, according to a complaint filed July 5 2023, in Barron County Circuit Court.

The defendant, Matthew A. O’Donnell, 37, Cornell, could face up to a six-year prison term in connection with the charge, court records added.

The crash was reported just before 5 p.m. May 28, at the corner of County Hwy. V and 23 1/2 Street. A state trooper responded to a 911

call about a vehicle that had struck a bridge.

The trooper arrived to find a van on the highway next to a guard rail on a bridge over the Brill River. The driver, later identified as the defendant, was moaning but otherwise not responsive.

The trooper said he was helping medical personnel with the driver when he saw a crushed beer can in the cupholder under the radio.

There was a 12-pack of beer on the floor between the front seats. The driver smelled of alcohol.

After the driver was flown to Mayo Hospital in Eau Claire, two

troopers helped to get a blood sample for a chemical test. The sample was later returned with a reading of .286, more than three times the state’s legal limit of intoxication.

Records show O’Donnell has three prior convictions for OWI dating back to 2005.

The complaint also includes traffic citations for failure to keep a vehicle under control, failure to transfer a vehicle title, operating a vehicle without insurance, and failure to wear a seatbelt.

Court records said the defendant is free on \$2,500 signature bond pending further action.

Village of Birchwood seeks state water loan funds

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) announced the village of Birchwood is an applicant for funding through

the Safe Drinking Water Loan Program (SDWLP) to address deficiencies in its public drinking water system.

The project would perform repairs on the elevated water tank and update the Well #1 chemical feed system.

Activities related to this project are minor actions under Chapter NR 150, Wis. Admin. Code, for which no environmental analysis is required; however, following the Safe Drinking Water Loan Program federal requirement 40 C.F.R. §35.3580, an environmental review must be conducted before funding this project.

The Safe Drinking Water Loan Program has determined that the project will not result in significant adverse environmental effects, and no further environmental review or analysis is needed before proceeding with funding the project.

The public is encouraged to submit comments regarding this decision and the potential environmental impacts of this project. Submit comments by Thursday, July 20, to: Department of Natural Resources; C/O Dee Surillo, Community Financial Assistance, CF/2; 101 S. Webster St.; P.O. Box 7921; Madison, WI 53707. Comments also may be emailed to DNR-CFELEnvironmentalreview@wisconsin.gov

Based on the comments received, the Safe Drinking Water Loan Program may prepare an environmental analysis before proceeding with the funding process.

The analysis would summarize the DNR’s consideration of the project’s impacts and reasonable alternatives.

Weather forecast		
DAY	PRECIP	TEMP
WED	41%	57° - 75°
THU	24%	58° - 79°
FRI	56%	56° - 79°
SAT	15%	56° - 81°
SUN	22%	54° - 79°
MON	20%	51° - 75°

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Ladysmith News
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USPS 301-260 • ISSN: 0749-7059
 Postmaster send address changes to: P.O. Box 189, Ladysmith, WI 54848

Telephone: 715-532-5591
 Published every Thursday, Periodicals postage paid at: 120 W. 3rd St. S., PO Box 189, Ladysmith, WI 54848
 email address: editor@ladysmithnews.com

Catch us on the web at: www.ladysmithnews.com

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YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION RATE

Rusk, Barron and Sawyer Counties and Holcombe, Wis.	\$50.00
Out of County/In State	\$52.00
Out of State	\$55.00
Single Copies	\$1.50
E-edition	\$49.00

Prices effective Dec. 1 - Dec. 1, 2023

Ladysmith Northland Mardi Gras Arts & Crafts Fair and Car Show!

Miner Avenue - Saturday July 22nd, 2023
 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

- Arts & Crafts Vendors from all over Wisconsin!
- Rusk County Farmer’s Market!
- Local shopping!
- Car show!
- Cold drinks and food available at local restaurants and bars Downtown like LJ’s American Pizza & Pub, 5th Quarter Tavern, Miner Station, Theater Lounge, and Ladysmith Family Restaurant, Eastern Chinese Restaurant, Subway, and Toad House!

Car Show
 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM
 Outside of Miner Station - 211 Miner Ave. W.
 Classic cars please enter on Miner Ave. from W. 2nd St. N. (Follow sign on Highway 8)

Drivers’ Choice

- Best in Show - Drivers’ Choice: Trophy plus \$100 in Chamber Bucks!
- 1st Runner Up - Drivers’ Choice: Trophy plus \$50 in Chamber Bucks!
- 2nd Runner Up - Drivers’ Choice: Trophy plus \$25 in Chamber Bucks!

People’s Choice

- Best in Show - People’s Choice: Trophy plus \$100 in Chamber Bucks!
- 1st Runner Up - People’s Choice: Trophy plus \$50 in Chamber Bucks!
- 2nd Runner up - People’s Choice: Trophy plus \$25 in Chamber Bucks!

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 For more information email manager@liveruskcounty.com

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Join Express Medical on July 14th between 8-4 p.m. for a piece a cake.

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