



TANGLED WEB

MAN'S TALES LEAVE A TRAIL OF MISERY

BY SHEREEN SKOLA | FOR CENTRAL WISCONSIN SUNDAY

Penny Schoenke was deeply in love with Adam, her husband of 17 years, when he died in her arms after a two-year battle with cancer. Adam's death in 2009 left her and their two young sons devastated; she thought she'd never find love again.

Then a successful, single businessman entered her life. Two years after Schoenke lost her husband, she thought God had given her the gift of a new beginning.

"I was so heartbroken when Adam died," Schoenke said. "And in walked this man, this amazing man, who not only understood the pain I was going through, but he wanted to give me the world. You see, that's how he is. He literally charms the pants off you."

Schoenke, 41, of Menasha met Tim Swinea in June 2011 through an online dating service. Swinea, who also was living in Menasha at the time, told Schoenke he was a cancer survivor whose longtime girlfriend had left him under the strain of his condition. Schoenke's heart went out to Swinea, who was left alone to endure the chemotherapy treatments meant to cure his condition, and the two bonded over their shared heartbreak and loss.

"When you think you've found someone who understands the worst thing that's ever happened to you, it's an amazing thing," Schoenke said. "We talked for hours every night. It was just magical, it really was."

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

Reporter Shereen Skola began to investigate the background of Tim Swinea after he was implicated in the sudden closure of a Wausau-area day care center in December. She uncovered a history of elaborate deceptions and multiple reported victims. In this three-day series, Skola documents the accusations against Swinea and the shattered lives he's left behind.

TODAY: Penny Schoenke of Menasha tells the story of how a relationship with a man she met online started as a dream come true but evolved into a nightmare.

MONDAY: Schoenke's life takes a harrowing turn as Swinea convinces her that she and her children are in danger and persuades them to flee with him to Texas and Oklahoma to seek the protection of federal agents.

TUESDAY: Swinea's criminal history in Wisconsin starts 16 years ago in Wausau and is far from over.

ONLINE EXCLUSIVES: Visit this report at to read court complaints, police reports, bank letters and other documents to further learn the tale of one man's tangled web, and to view a video report on this series.

Bill would change how schools can schedule referendums

By Logan T. Carlson
Central Wisconsin Sunday
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A bill recently passed by the Wisconsin state Assembly that makes sweeping changes to the state's election laws would also affect when school districts could hold referendums.

The bill would prevent school districts from scheduling referendums outside of the four regularly scheduled elections in the state, among other changes to state election law, including doubling the amount individuals can contribute to candidates, and reinstating a controversial Voter ID

provision currently making its way through the state's court system.

The objective argument supporters make for the provision is the inherent costs of holding a special election, said Ed Miller, a political science professor at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point who fol-

lows education policy.

"The other argument is the level of turnout in special elections is generally lower if no other election is on the ballot," he said. "If you can hold an election separate from other elections, and you can get

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1B

Obituaries

There are no obituaries in today's paper.

Weather/8B

Today: Showers and a heavier storm.

High: 88 Low: 71

