

# Lifestyle

October 23, 2005

NEW JERSEY SUNDAY HERALD

D-1



## FRIGHT NIGHT!

You know Halloween is here when the peaceful shores of Tomahawk Lake become overrun with ghosts and ghouls

By JESSICA SEDA  
Herald Staff Writer

She is lurking in the graveyard as a tractor pulls the wagon of unsuspecting victims slowly down the dirt road. They are too busy listening to a ghost story told by the strange woman wearing the black cape to notice her.

She smiles as she leaps in front of the wagon, screams at the top of her lungs and lifts up what she has been carrying with her throughout the night — the skull of her dead husband.

No, this is not some scene out of a horror movie, it is a normal night in the life of Jaimee Hardy who has been playing the role of the ghost bride at the Halloween Experience in Tomahawk Lake for the past few years.

Hardy, 20, of Jefferson, says Halloween is her favorite holiday and she looks forward to the month of October when she spends her weekends dressed in a tattered, flowing bride's gown, jumping out at people on hayrides.

"It's just fun," Hardy said. "I've been doing it since I was 15. I played a different role the first year, but ever since I played the bride the second year, I haven't wanted to be anything else."

Hardy's ear-piercing scream is one reason Mark Wallace, one of the lake's owners, wants to keep her in the bridal role.

"It's just a very scary, chilling scream," he said.

For 12 of the last 13 years, Tomahawk Lake has become inhabited with Halloween enthusiasts during the month of October, Wallace said.

"Most of these people just love Halloween so much, that's why they get involved," he said.

Hardy verified that many of the "ghosts" are very involved in the holiday, noting a lot of the same people come back each year.

"It's like a family reunion, but you only see them once a year," Hardy said.

While she dreams of being an actress, Hardy says she just participates in the haunted hayride for fun each year. The small blonde, who still trick-or-treats, wears dark blue circles around her eyes and white make-up to make her skin look pale. Each night the hayride runs, she waits in the woods for hours just for the chance to startle those passing by. While the dark doesn't scare her, she admits her fear of spiders.

Lake Tomahawk, located in Sparta, is a prime vacation spot during the summer, but Hardy said she is not interested in visiting during the warmer months.

"It would be weird to see it in the light," she said.

"I'm so used to navigating during the dark."

Through the event, Hardy met her best friend, Tammy Peterson, who also enjoys the holiday. The two are also fans of vampire novels and scary movies.

"Halloween has just always been our thing," Hardy said. "We were both Goths in high school and this just goes along with that."

The Halloween Experience also brought Kathy and Fred Eshelkhusyen Jr. together. The two have both played different roles since the hayride began and were married last October.

"We both love fall, it's our favorite time of the year,"



Photos by Ellis Ashby/SH

Jason from "Friday The 13th" fires up a chain saw as he comes up to a group of visitors.

See TOMAHAWK, Page D6



Jaimee Hardy, the Halloween bride, carries a cleaver and the head of her dead husband.