

## **BE CAREFUL WHO YOU ALLOW INSIDE**

We are fortunate we don't see much violent crime in this area directed against senior citizens. But in other places, it does happen, and I just learned of an incident which can offer us some cautions.

Toni Hehlke of Clinton informed me her uncle, 86 year old Lavinne Cox, died of injuries he suffered in a robbery in his home in Phoenix, Arizona. Now that is a long way from here, but there are some things we can learn from this tragedy. Mr. Cox and his wife lived in a condominium. They noticed a man around the neighborhood, and one day in January 2016, this man came to their door. He talked his way inside and begged for money, for food and diapers. The Cox's gave the man \$60, and he left. The next day, he returned, displaying a credit card, and wanting a ride to an ATM. He promised to re-pay the \$60 if he got the ride. Well, this sounded too fishy to the Cox's. They tried to get the man out, but a fight started over Mrs. Cox's purse. Mr. Cox came out on the losing end of the battle, and the robber escaped. The injuries Mr. Cox received led to his hospitalization several days later, and then to his death.

What can we take away from this? I always recommend you don't allow strangers into your home. Once they cross that threshold into your home, you are at a disadvantage, even if they are only a door-to-door sales person. It is a lot easier to keep people out, rather than decide later that you want them out, and they are not ready to leave. And something else to consider – how much of a fight is a purse worth?

I recall a series of incidents from several years ago, when a woman went from door to door in Clinton, asking for money to buy gas to get to Iowa City. The woman claimed a relative just got airlifted to Iowa City, and she needed to get there. As it turned out, what the woman needed was crack cocaine. I'll say this again – if someone comes to your door that you do not recognize, keep them on the other side of the door. If they are persistent or demanding, call the police. The police will be happy to straighten the situation out.

## **MORE IRS SCAMMING**

I wrote several times about the IRS phone scam, but it seems that is not the end of imposter scams involving the use the Internal Revenue Service name. On Feb 18, 2016, the IRS issued a consumer alert to watch out for email scams, as well as the well-known phone scams. The IRS warning tells us, scammers are sending out thousands of phony emails, appearing as sent by the IRS, or tax preparers. I call this type of email "phishing". The phishing messages ask for information on refunds, filing status, to confirm personal information, and to verify PIN information. The IRS reported complaints of these phishing messages increased 400% in the last year.

Because of the great deal of publicity on IRS phone scams, I'd like to think most of the public is on to this scam, but what concerns me about this phishing is the posing as tax preparers or tax professionals. That is something not widely reported on, so far. In fact, some tax professionals reported they are targeted by these same phishing messages, seeking their professional credentials.

The IRS warning states, "it is important to keep in mind the IRS does not generally contact taxpayers by email to request personal or financial information." If you receive an email which looks like it came from the IRS, or another tax organization, forward that on to [phishing@irs.gov](mailto:phishing@irs.gov). You can see more information on this scam on the IRS website, [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

### **DISH IMPOSTERS**

Ed Goddard of Clinton alerted us to an imposter scam involving the use of the DISH cable provider name. Mr. Goddard received a phone call from a man with an Indian accent. The caller wanted to upgrade his DISH service. The caller offered a cut-rate deal, but NEEDED A CREDIT CARD NUMBER. The caller knew a partial credit card number only. Mr. Goddard agreed to this deal, but did not give up his credit card number. After he hung up, he started thinking about this, and felt it sounded fishy. Mr. Goddard called DISH, who told him, they did not make this offer, and referred him to the fraud department.

A couple of days later, the Goddards got a message from DISH, telling them to expect a DISH tech the next day to install the upgrade. This surprised the Goddards, so they called DISH again. The DISH representative told them someone called and scheduled the upgrade. So it seems this scammer called DISH and impersonated Ed Goddard to get the upgrade. Ed speculates if he would have allowed this installation, the scammer would have called back and got his complete credit card number, with Ed thinking he was just paying for this upgrade.

Moral of the story – DISH is not making phone calls to upgrade their service. If you get such a call, it is a scam.

### **CONTACT SENIORS VS. CRIME**

Let me know about scams, fraud, or other crookedness you run across. Most of what I learn, I learn from you. Contact me at Seniors vs. Crime, Clinton County Sheriff's Office, 563-242-9211 extension 4433, or email me at [randymeier@gapa911.us](mailto:randymeier@gapa911.us)

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