

CRIME FIGHTER

The Safety Newsletter of the Oro Valley Police Department

Third Quarter 2015

Inside This Issue

Block Parties
4

Tire Maintenance Tips
5

Online Dating Scams.
6

Flag Retirement 7

Contact
Information 9

Microsoft, IRS and Your Grandchildren: They All Want Money

Every once in a while people ask me, what's the biggest problem we have in Oro Valley? If we were to go by dollar amount, the most obvious answer is without a doubt: frauds.

Let's talk about the top three that we're taking reports on right now.

IRS SCAM

How it works:

You get a phone call from someone claiming to be with the IRS. They say you owe back taxes. You send them money via Western Union and/or Greendot Money Card. Simple, right!



THE CATCH

If you refuse to pay or question it, they will start to threaten you with arrest! In fact, the more you resist, the greater the threats increase! I heard one report recently that the scammers kept the victim on the phone while she went to the store, obtained the Green Dot card, and paid the scammers. They threatened to come and arrest her, right there on the spot, if she hung up!

WHAT TO DO NEXT

According to the IRS.gov website, here's what you should do:

- If you know you owe or think you might owe taxes, call the IRS at 1.800.829.1040. The IRS workers can help you with a payment issue.
- If you know you don't owe taxes or have no reason to believe that you do, report the incident to the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA) at 1.800.366.4484 or at www.tigta.gov.
- You can file a complaint using the FTC Complaint Assistant; choose "Other" and then "Imposter Scams." If the complaint involves someone impersonating the IRS, include the words "IRS Telephone Scam" in the notes.



www.ovpd.org

Microsoft, IRS and Your Grandchildren: They All Want Money Continued

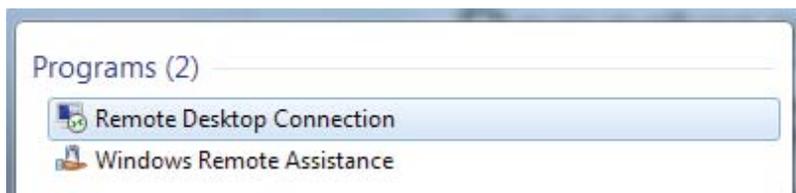
MICROSOFT SCAM

How it works:

You get a phone call from some one claiming to be with Microsoft security, saying you have a virus (or something else is wrong with your computer). The very helpful technician on the phone will help you fix your computer, and asks for you to give them remote access to your computer.

THE CATCH

The bad guys will get access to your computer, except with this level of access it's as if the bad guy was sitting right there at your keyboard. They will begin to upload all sorts of nasty stuff on to your computer, including software that will record your keystrokes. With this information, they can begin stealing passwords, and from there, commit credit fraud and bank fraud by logging in to your bank accounts. They will also ask you to send hundreds of dollars via Green Dot money card or Western Union.



Recently there was even a case that involved the scammers saying they were only going to charge \$4.95. In turn, they actually billed the credit card for \$501.00. When she re-contacted the scammers and asked them to fix the charge, they said they needed an additional \$500.00 to fix the erroneous charge, and they would send her a check to make up the

difference. Needless to say, this continued until she had spent well over \$2,000.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

When you get this call, HANG UP! That's the single best way to deal with these folks. There's no need to even continue talking to them. In fact, the more you talk with them, the more they waste your time, and the more they think they can get away with it. By ending the phone call immediately, you send a message that these scams aren't worth their time to try any more.

If you did provide access to the bad guys, make sure you get your computer cleaned somehow. Whether it's by a family member who's knowledgeable, or a professional service, make sure you get that taken care of!

GRANDPARENT SCAM

HOW IT WORKS

You get a phone call from someone claiming to be a grandchild. They start off saying, "Grandpa?" and you, thinking the voice sounds like your grandchild Timmy, replies asking, "Timmy, is that you?" They say, "Why yes, it is me, Timmy! I need money..."

Microsoft, IRS and Your Grandchildren: They All Want Money

THE CATCH

Believe it or not, people will lie to get money. This includes lying about being a grandchild who is in desperate need of money. Some of the reasons they need money include:

- Traveling in a foreign country and arrested
- Need money for a medical issue
- Some other reason

And to make sure you don't check on their story and bust it, they ask you to NOT TELL ANYONE!

Of course, this is a bogus phone call.

Now some of these guys are getting extremely good at obtaining background information on their targets. We saw one case a while back where the grandparent got a call from someone claiming to be their grandchild, knew the grandchild's name, and even addressed the grandparent using slang for "grandpa" from their particular country that he was from.

This may come as a shock, but the fraudsters will want the victim to send money using Western Union or Green Dot money cards.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

Again, this one is simple: hang up. And if you're worried, make some phone calls and verify that the grandkid is safely at school, and not sitting in jail in Mexico.

The fact is the bad guys have a wealth of information at their disposal, and digging up intelligence on their targets is quite easy today. In fact, it's only getting easier with the more data breaches that occur and the more we share our lives online through social networking sites like Facebook.

OVERALL

Red flags you should look for are:

- Inbound phone calls where the caller is asking for money
- Asking for money via Western Union, Green Dot cards, or some other medium that makes it easy to move money
- A sense of urgency ALWAYS accompanies. Whether it's from a grandchild pleading for money, or the IRS telling you you're going to be arrested, these guys work best when you don't think and just respond.

Block Parties

Block parties are a great way to get to know your neighbors, and one of the biggest items we like to encourage for our neighborhood watches. But here's some good news: you don't need to have a neighborhood watch to have a block party!

Block parties are still a terrific way to get to meet everyone on your block, and those social connections and bringing neighbors together are some of what helps keep our neighborhoods safe. Here's some tips to get you going:

Tactics for a Fun and Frugal Block Party

Buy Only the Basics – But Buy Far in Advance

As soon as you're sure you're going to host a block party – even before you set a date in stone – make a shopping list. The earlier you make a list, the longer you have to shop for the items – meaning, the more time you have to find huge sales on the items you need to get.

Invite a Neighbor or Two to Co-Host

This enables you both to serve as hosts and be involved in the meeting and greeting of everyone, but split the costs and effort in setting up, hosting, and tearing down.

Rely on Guests for Side Dishes and Some Beverages

Preparing a flyer for the party is key – and on that flyer, be sure to highlight some key information – your address, your phone number, and also a note to bring a side dish.

As for beverages, you can set out a few beverages in bulk – like water and tea – in self-dispensing jugs with cups, but if other beverages are desired, you should note this for guests who might come.

Borrow Equipment

Don't hesitate to ask the people you know well if you can borrow some items for the party, such as extra chairs they might have, extra tables, or even their grill. The more items you can borrow, the fewer items you have to invest money in for such a limited use.

Buy food that can you prepare easily in large quantities for entrees

I almost always think sandwiches are a good idea. Have bratwursts, hot dogs, and veggie dogs (for any vegetarians) – or have burgers (beef and soy options). Another option – pulled meat sandwiches.

Along with these, you'll need to buy buns in bulk, as well as condiments. Again, plan this as far in advance as you can, so you can seek out bargains.

Tire Maintenance Tips

- Keep your tires properly inflated.
- Tire age is dated from the date of manufacture, not sale, as tires deteriorate even in storage
- Test all of your tires and if possible, replace them all at the same time. Mismatched tires will not provide the same safety, performance and efficiency as a matched pair will.
- On 4-wheel-drive or all-wheel-drive cars you should replace all four tires if it is recommended in your service manual. Differences in tire diameter, even due to different states of tread wear, can permanently damage differentials.
- Treadwear grades are an indication of a tire's relative wear rate. The higher the treadwear number is, the longer it should take for the tread to wear down.
- Tires do not wear perfectly evenly, so be sure to insert the coin at several points from the outside to the inside of your tires. Tires generally wear more on the inside but over-inflated tires will wear more in the middle.
- If you see uneven wear on a front tire, chances are that the front end is out of alignment. You should have this checked and rotate the tires to the rear if possible (some vehicles have different sizes on front than the rear). The tires from the back should be fine and the uneven tires moved to the rear will start to correct themselves.
- Tires age faster in warmer climates.
- A good practice is to rotate the tires by replacing the front tires with the back ones, especially on a two-wheel drive vehicle
- Check the tread by using the "penny test." Take a penny, and place it upside down with Lincoln facing you in the center of the tread (at the thickest part of the tire). A quarter can be substituted for a penny; just use Washington's head as the point instead of Lincoln's.
 - If you can see the very top of Lincoln's head or the copper above it, replace the tires immediately.
 - If Lincoln's hair on the top of his head is partially visible, it is time to go shopping for tires.
 - If you cannot see the hair on the top of his head (if the coin is inserted enough that the tire tread is at least as deep as Lincoln's forehead), your tires do not need replacing yet.



Online Dating Scams

In case you haven't noticed, people like to date folks who they meet on the internet. This is enabled through any number of dating websites. While this is something that used to be ridiculed and mocked, as times have changed the idea of dating someone you meet online or from a dating website has actually become pretty well accepted. Most people can name a friend or family member who has gotten in to a relationship thanks to meeting someone online (if you can't think of anyone, it may be because you're the person who dates strangers from the internet. . . not that there's anything wrong with that).

However, as with everything else on the internet, there's that nefarious part of the population that seeks to take any opportunity it can to make a buck off of someone vulnerable. And when are we more exposed and vulnerable than when we're looking for love?

Enter, dating scams. These are nothing new, but rather a play on another old scam that's getting a reboot thanks to technology, and our ever-changing world. Here's how the typical scammer will work:

Let's leave the site: Online dating sites have the ability to monitor and boot members who exhibit problematic behavior or are perpetrating scams, so con artists want to quickly move their victims elsewhere. Beth Kipps, who has experimented with several dating sites, says the men who have attempted to con her almost always have a reason why they shouldn't continue to communicate via Match.com or eHarmony. Most commonly, the excuse is "My membership on this site is almost up. How about if we text or communicate through our personal phone/email?"

Moving off-site before launching a scam reduces the chance that you'll report the crook to the relevant site. That's important to the con artist, who'll want to troll the site again for future victims when done with you. Do your fellow legitimate members a favor and be sure to report abusers.

Geographic challenge. It's rare for a scammer to meet you in person. The reasons are varied but practical. Many are operating out of foreign countries, despite profiles saying they live nearby. Their photographs are also likely of someone else, and that would be tough to explain in person.

Commonly, when the victim proposes an in-person meeting, they'll come up with some excuse for why it can't happen: They're traveling, stationed overseas or have some long-distance emergency.

Too Serious, Too Soon. Watch out for someone rushing things. A catfish usually makes the first move, often out of left field and sometimes creates a bogus, dreamy profile that sounds like the ideal mate you've described in your own dating desires. They play on your sympathy and strike when you are the most vulnerable — caught up in the romance and emotion

You Are Not an ATM Machine

If they ask for money, lock them out of your life. Shut off communication immediately, and close all open doors if you have a hint that it is a sympathy scam. Although most catfishers are not after money, this one should be a wake-up call to a scam.

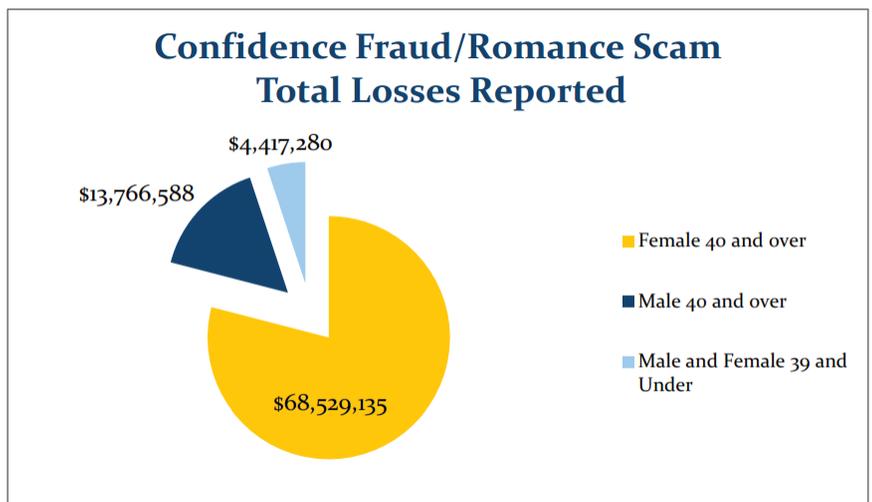
The important thing to remember with these is don't beat yourself up if you fall prey to one of these scammers. They are predatory, and using victim's shame is another method they use to keep victims quiet. Don't let them rule your life, and don't be afraid to report it or ask friends and family for help!

Interesting statistic from the Internet Crime Complaint Center 2014 Report:

<http://drphil.com/articles/article/726>

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/6-red-flags-of-a-romance-scam/>

http://www.ic3.gov/media/annualreport/2014_IC3Report.pdf



FLAG RETIREMENT

AT OVPD AND THE OV COMMUNITY & RECREATION CENTER

DROP OFF YOUR RETIRED FLAGS
FOR PROPER DISPOSAL.

JULY 4 – SEPTEMBER 11, 2015

DID YOU KNOW?

U.S. FLAG CODE DICTATES THAT “THE FLAG, WHEN IT IS IN SUCH CONDITION THAT IT IS NO LONGER A FITTING EMBLEM FOR DISPLAY, SHOULD BE DESTROYED IN A DIGNIFIED WAY, PREFERABLY BY BURNING.”

IN HONOR OF THIS TRADITION, THE FLAGS WILL BE TURNED OVER TO THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY ORO VALLEY UNIT 132 FOR PROPER DISPOSAL OF FLAGS THAT SHOULD BE RETIRED DUE TO WEAR AND TEAR.



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Oro Valley Community & Recreation Center
10555 N. La Cañada Drive

www.orovalleyaz.gov

Mark Your Calendar

Dispose-A-Med

Target, 10555 North Oracle Road

August 1 8 am - noon
October 10 10 am - 2 pm
December 5 10 am - 2 pm

Sun City Social Hall

November 10 9 - 11 am

National Night Out

October 16 6 - 8 pm



You know it's hot in Arizona when...



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www.ovpd.org

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