

FROM THE MAIN GATE

October 2018

In previous "From The Main Gate" articles, I have warned about various scams where people call your home and use convincing stories ("You've won a car!" or "A loved one is in jail and needs you to post bail.") to persuade seniors to reveal their bank account numbers or to wire money.

Especially during peak air conditioning season and winter months, scammers will pose as utility company representatives and place telephone calls to homeowners. The scammer will tell the homeowner that their service is about to be shut off because of unpaid bills; and to avoid an immediate shutoff, the homeowner must pay their overdue bill by providing the caller with a credit card number or pre-paid debit card number. These scammers will try to confuse and deceive people by stressing the urgency of paying the bill immediately over the phone. In some cases, these scam artists have been demanding payment for several months' worth of purported unpaid utility service; and they even have the ability to falsely display the name and phone number of your utility company, or any other phone number, on your Caller ID. Once these scammers have your credit/debit card numbers, they will proceed to drain your account of any remaining credit. If you receive a phone call from a utility company that is threatening to cut off your service, do not give any information to the caller. Rather, dial the customer service number on your corresponding utility bill and verify the information with an actual utility company representative.

Also, Security has received a few reports of people knocking on doors and stating that they were sent by your utility company or even from your village management company. At times, their goal is to get a credit or debit card number from you; and other times, they are looking to steal something easily accessible from your home while you go look for a bill or to step outside to look at a "problem" with the exterior of your property. Thankfully, I am not aware of anyone within Hershey's Mill who has lost money or property as a result of this scam. However, if you find yourself facing a situation like this, do not let the visitors into your house into your home; and do not go outside and leave your home unattended. Simply tell them that you're going to call Security, or the police, and close the door. Once you've closed the door, please call Security immediately at 610-436-6403 and let the officers on duty know of your experience and where the visitors headed next, if possible.

Solicitation and peddling is not allowed within Hershey's Mill without permission, so if you see someone going door-to-door, please contact Security at the number listed above.

Also be aware of anyone calling and stating you should send money in any form...especially if they claim to be:

1. The IRS (threatening you over unpaid taxes)
2. Publisher's Clearing House (you've won a prize/cash and must pay to have it delivered)
3. Microsoft (your computer has been infected or needs an update)

4. Anyone claiming to be a loved one is hurt and needs money.
5. The Sheriff's Office or Police Department regarding your jury duty absence.
6. Anyone pretending to be a loved one who is in jail and in need of bail or attorney fees.
7. Credit card company saying your card has been compromised and asks you to provide information from your card.

Remember that these scammers are well-trained and very convincing, so if you ever think that a telephone call may be related to a scam, simply hang up the phone.