

Identity theft has grown so learn to protect yourself

Everyone is aware of identity theft and as time goes on and technology grows by leaps and bounds, it is getting more and more scary.

The Hays Social Security office manager recently said that the worst case of identity theft happened about 60 years ago but it was not motivated by greed but rather by ignorance.

In 1938, wallet manufacture E.H. Ferree Company in New York wanted to push his product by showing how a Social Security card would fit into its wallets so a sample card was put in each wallet. The vice president thought it would be a clever idea to use the actual Social Security number of his secretary.

The wallet was sold all over the country and even though the card was only half the size of an actual card, was printed all in red and had the word "specimen" written across the face, many people who purchased the wallet just adopted the Social Security number as their own.

In 1943, there were 5,755 people using the secretary's number. Social Security tried to correct the problem by voiding the number and publicizing that it was incorrect to use it.

However, the publicity did not work and people continued to use the number. In fact, over 40,000 people reported it as their Social Security number and in 1977, 12 people were still using it. The number, however, continued to be used for many years.

The secretary could not understand how people could be so stupid.

Today, identity thieves are not stupid. People should be wary if anyone asks for personal information. Give that information to employers and financial institutions who need it for wage and tax reporting. Some businesses may ask for the Social Security number to do a credit check or in general record keeping.

But, remember, just because someone asks you to give your Social Security number doesn't mean you have to give it to them.

Ask questions like: Why do you need the number? How will it be used? What law requires that I give you my Social Security number? What will happen if I don't give you my Social Security number?

How you answer the questions will help you decide if you really want to give out the number.

The Hays Social Security Office official recommends that people never give out personal information to telemarketers because too many criminals get the information they need just by asking for it. If someone calls saying they are from a bank, for instance, ask if you can call them back and confirm the number you are calling back really belongs to that business.

Keep your Social Security card in a safe place. Don't carry it in your wallet or purse.

For more information on how to protect yourself or if you think someone has stolen your identity, go to <http://www.consumer.gov> —Karen Krien

Hangin' With Marge

By Margaret Bucholtz



What ever happened to the "Good Old Days" when you parked your car and didn't bother to lock it, went to bed at night with the doors wide open and the top thing was, you could walk out of a store and not worry about the alarm going off because someone forgot to demagnetize the product you bought?

I have had a few of those embarrassing moments. I think the first one was several years ago when I had been Christmas shopping with all of my small children at the time and was walking out of the store. Immediately the alarm went off and as I looked around I saw all of the people in the store running to the aisles to see who the shoplifter was. By the time the clerk realized she had forgotten to take the little metal thing out of the item I had bought, everyone was back to shop-

ping and I was sure they were discussing who the lady was at the door that had been "caught."

One day I had several of these embarrassing alarms. When we were at the football game in Fairplay, we came back to Denver. The football boys were very hungry and wanted to go to a buffet. As we got to the restaurant it was dinner time and there was a huge line waiting. People were even lined up on the sidewalk. We all got out stood in line. It seemed like forever before we finally made it to the inside of the door. There really wasn't enough room for our whole party so one of the grandchildren crowded back to allow the last person to come on in. In doing this, somehow one of them hit the fire alarm. Not only did it sound off but it also sort of fell off the wall. I really

think it must not have been the first time this had happened as all of the people in line just stood there and stared and the manager didn't walk very fast (nor did she look very happy) but she flipped a switch and all was fine.

We got through our meal and headed for a motel. The boys didn't want to leave their football uniforms outside so they all lugged the sweaty bags in. All seven of us got in the elevator with the bags and it was a little crowded so one of the boys went to move their bag and accidentally hit the alarm in the elevator. Again the bell starts ringing and my nerves are getting a little more shattered. Why, I would think, that seven people, three of them with sweaty bags, wouldn't have been noticed anyway, but the alarm was a little much.

After getting into the rooms one of the kids needed a pair of shoes out of the car. Thinking that it would be easier for me to go and get them instead of all of the kids going I ran downstairs to the car, unlocked it with our neat automatic switch, got out the shoes then punched the button to relock it. Instantly I heard a car honking and lights blinking. I looked around to see who had pushed the panic button only to see my own car lights flashing.

It was a perfect ending to a perfect alarming day.

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Echoes on the South

by Dorthy L. Mast

Benjamin Bird having been a business associate of Tootle, Wheeler and Motter Company had prior knowledge of the speculative activity of merchants, land buyers and farmers in the settlement of the country. At many of the established settlements across western Missouri, Kansas and Nebraska, representatives of various towns worked feverishly to interest backers in the new town enterprises.

The legislation providing for the reservation of town sites was enacted by congress May 23, 1844. It provided that 320 acres could be held as a town site when it was occupied. Such a plot was not subject to entry at the land office under the pre-emption act. (The pre-emption claim: Settlers could purchase outright from the government, a quarter section at \$1.25 per acre. Claiming by pre-emption did have a drawback that most settlers found insurmountable. The smallest unit they were allowed to buy was 40 acres, cost \$50.00, plus a registration fee. This was simply too much money for most pioneers to afford. The owners of the town site were given the privilege of buying the plot at the minimum price. The disposal of the lots and the proceeds of the sales thereof were to be in accordance with the regulations of the legislative authority of the state or territory in which the town was located.

The ordinary thing was for a group of speculators, three, four or half a dozen to incorporate by a special act of the legislative, stake out the 320 acres which the government allowed, and then in order to enlarge the site, engage settlers to pre-empt adjacent quarter sections. Title, of course, could be secured by the settler swearing that the land was to be used for farming by him. A number of towns were chartered

by the first General Assembly in each state. These towns were almost without exception the so called "kiting" towns. The word "city" was appended like a kite's tail to the name of the place to make it sound more important.

There were many amendments to the original homestead law, for various reasons which led to several different types of patents. A full history of these patents would fill a book. However, I will briefly cover one aspect of a patent amendment that affected the beginning of Bird City.

Legislators made certain exceptions in the case of soldiers, but only minor changes in the policy. One such change allowed war veterans to apply their service time in the army to the residence time required for proving up on a homestead. Another amendment allowed an ex-soldier of the Civil War, who had served nine months, to take 160 acres of land within the limits of a railroad grant or an educational grant (school land) whereas all others could take only 80 acres.

Dennis W. Cave patented the land on

which the original Bird City town site stands. D.W. Cave was a Civil War Veteran, with the required military service time. The town site land was originally school land and was located near to or within the limits of a railroad right-of-way. Because D.W. Cave chose to pay cash when making application papers, the land became his right away. The Cave patent to the future town site land-Section 36-Twp 3S-Range 38W, was dated June 2, 1885. He sold the land within a short time to the Northwest Town-Site Company.

On June 17, 1885, a deed to the Bird City Town Site land was issued. The temporary name of Birdton was dropped. The founders of the Bird City town site (each holding 1/7 interest in the Northwest Townsite Company) were: A.L. Burr, Max Rich, Dennis W. Cave, Benjamin Bird, W.H. Dimmick, R.M. Pendarvis, and Hilam B. Ketcham. These names or a portion of a name remain on the streets and are a significant part of the history of Bird City.

Next month - A dangerous blizzard.

Letters to Santa

Dear Santa,
I love you. Can you pretty please with sugar on top, bring me Miricle baby and new shoes. I want them to be all white in my size (12). I would like a fake TV with a fake channel changer.
Merry Christmas.
Kylie Sherlock, age 5

Dear Santa,
I am learning to use the typewriter so I am typing my letter to you. How are you and Mrs. Claus. Are Rudolf and the other deer getting fat and ready to

fly. Do the elves have all the presents ready.

For Christmas I want a Barbie doll, lipstick, a Barbie camera, a fuzzy bear, a sticker animal book, a wagon, puzzles, markers and a few clothes for my mom. Will you bring her a little dog that will stay little.

I'll leave you some cookies, cheese and milk and some grain and apples for the deer.

Thank you and a Merry Christmas to everyone.

Love, Jacy Hilt

GOD SAYS
Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel: But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.
I Peter 3: 3, 4

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