



Informative & Protective Services

Texas Retired Teachers Association

July 2017's QUICK BLIPS:

Your committee's quick warnings and information to keep you safe and informed

Committee Members

- Judy Hart**, chair: District 16
Dr. Amy Jo Baker: District 20
Lynne James: District 5
Jose Lugo: District 1
Dr. Thalia Matherson: District 10

Ticks are spreading a new, rare virus

Ticks are now responsible for a serious, but rare virus called Powassan. Currently there is no cure, but the disease's symptoms can occur after only 15 minutes of attachment. It is carried by the same ticks that carry Lyme disease. Symptoms include fever, seizures, headaches, vomiting, confusion, speech difficulties, and loss of coordination. Stay away from bushy areas. Wear bug spray, and always perform a tick check when you've been outside. [NBC Nightly News with Lester Holt. June 1, 2017]

Sixteen-Year Old Dies from Caffeine

Davis Allen Cripe collapsed May 15 after consuming café latte, Mountain Dew, and an energy drink within two hours. He died from heart arrhythmia. Caffeine prompts the release of natural compounds called catecholamines, including norepinephrine, a stress hormone that can speed the heart rate. [NBC Nightly News with Lester Holt. May 15, 2017]

Important Deadline!
 Get a senior pass from the National Park Service before the cost soars! Before August 1, any U.S. citizen age 62 or older can buy a lifetime senior pass for \$10. The cost of that pass starting August 1 will be \$80, the same cost as a standard annual pass. The pass allows:

- Entrance to more than 400 national parks
- If you purchase a pass on line (Store.USGS.gov/pass) or through the mail you pay an additional \$10 for the document processing OR
- You can avoid the fee by getting the pass in person at one of the National Park Services sites listed at the same website.

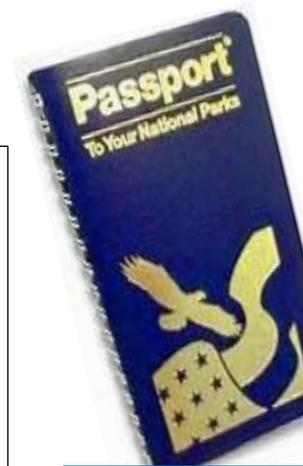
[Kupper, Kathy. Public Affairs Specialist at the National Park Service in Washington D.C., NPS.gov] [submitted by Dr. Amy Jo Baker]

New Mortgage Scam

Cyber thieves are intercepting emails to mortgage companies at the loan's closings. The emails of the mortgage company and consumer are intercepted by hackers. They establish fraudulent accounts, where the scammed buyer sends his or her monies. Before sending in your money, make a personal call to verify the authenticity of the mortgage company's email and the account number. In this digital age, your money is gone in a keystroke. The stolen money could be in Romania by the time you discover the scam. [NBC Nightly News with Lester Holt. May 30, 2017]

Healthier Habits

Exercise a minimum of 150 minutes per week. Eat vegetables & whole grains while limiting whole grains and processed and red meat. Eat tree nuts twice a week. [NBC Nightly News with Lester Holt. June 1, 2017.]



New Cashier's Check Scam

If thieves aren't creative, they are repetitive because scams work. Cashier's checks are being mailed in a priority envelope issuing a large check for filling out a marketing survey. All the surveyor needs to do is deposit the check into a bank account & forward \$1,300 through a money gram to a person in El Paso. Customers are responsible for fraudulent checks. [Balaskovitz, Ronald. "Potter County Warns of Cashier's Check Scam." *Amarillo Globe-News*. July 1, 2017. A-3].

Men, Retirement, and Suicide

Older men grew up thinking that expressing emotions is weak. The active, vibrant man can become depressed during retirement. Signs of depression include lack of energy, lack of motivation, less interest in eating or getting out of the house, and loss of interest in activities he previously enjoyed. He needs to feel connected; isolation is the enemy. Talk to the men; encourage them to volunteer. They have much to offer.

[Van Buren, Abigail. "Overlooked Suicide Rate Is Tragic." *Amarillo Globe-News*. June 30, 2017. A-10.]

New Phone Scams Prompt Warnings

Xcel Energy reports that scammers are operating in the Texas-New Mexico service area. The scammer threatens service disconnections if a past-due balance is not paid over the phone. The scams can come from an automated system with a call-back number. Xcel reminds customers that they will receive printed disconnect notices in the mail if their accounts are past due. They never ask for payment via telephone calls. Please hang up and call Xcel's customer service at 1-800-895-4999. You will receive legitimate representation. The company will share the complaint with federal investigators. [Davis, April. "New Phone Scams Prompt Warnings." *Borger News-Herald*. July 3, 2017. A-1 and A-2.]

CELL Phone Number Boon to Scammers

Thomas Martin, a former FBI agent, states that cell phone numbers are being used increasingly by information brokers as the window to personal information that is kept by all corporations, financial institutions and social media networks. Stop giving your cellphone number away to businesses. The cell number implies the customer's convenience, but it can be used for marketing. No companies are mandated to keep it private. JD Sherry, vice president at Remediant, a top cybersecurity company, says that cell numbers are a tasty target for attackers.

SMiShing is an emerging trend of sending a text message containing questionable links to websites that might not be in your best interest to visit. The bad guys want to steal your credentials or install malicious software so they can log into your banking site as YOU. If a company has your cell number, it can be hacked.

Never give your number to people you do not know. Get a virtual phone number, where you have a fake number as your public number. Get one from Google Voice: <https://voice.google.com>. Allow multi-factor authentication on all your devices. You do this at an ATM. Get more than one cell phone. One of them will not have any data or personal information on it. That is the one you give out. [Petrow, Steven. *USA Today*. Rpt. in *Amarillo Globe-News*. June 19, 2017. B-4.]

Get a SCAM Education

On the Internet search box, type in "common fraud schemes www.fbi.gov." Then click on the appropriate link to begin your education. There you'll have choices of scams to educate yourself. The schemes are waiting to pounce on the innocent or ill-informed. [Heloise. "Dear Heloise." "Get a Scam Education." *Amarillo Globe-News*. Dec. 12, 2016.]

Anaplastic large cell lymphoma has been linked to breast implants BIA-ALCL, especially those with textured surfaces. Look for lumps, pain, swelling, or asymmetry.

[Grady, Denise. "9 Deaths Are Linked to Rare Cancer from Breast Implants." *New York Times*. March 21, 2017. www.nytimes.com/2017/03/17]



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Education Retirees**



Oh, what a tangled web we weave!

