

Informative & Protective Services State Committee
November 2019 Articles & Quick Blips

**Hugh Increase in Older Folks
Fatal Falls**

From the Journal of American Medical Association

Causes:

- Prescription drugs that affect balance
- Some medications that cause drowsiness and vision problems

Results:

- Traumatic brain injuries
- Broken hips

Prevention techniques:

- Weight bearing exercise such as walking
- Balance and resistance exercises to strengthen muscles
- Know the side-effects of prescription medication



Lonely? Get a Pet!

From the Healing Power of Pets, by Susan Yerkes Health & Wellness article, Nov. 2018

Research indicates interaction with animals can provide emotional stability, alleviate stress, help with loneliness and pave a therapeutic path toward better mental health.



Psychology Today further reports that a bond with an animal can help people develop a better sense of trust, stabilize their emotions and improve their communication, self-regulation and socialization skills.

**Newest Fraud: Census
2020**

Legitimate Census workers, as well as utility workers, police officers and/or sheriffs, will have a photo ID. Ask for it! Anyone can steal a uniform or badge but they must have a picture ID. If in doubt call the agency or government office. A census worker will NOT ask for you to verify your social security number. They are only collecting demographic data for the census required by law every 10 years.

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Don't forget to Vote!

Tuesday, November 5 is election day with 10 Texas Constitutional Amendments that impact our state for you to consider, study and approve or disapprove.

Online “Romance” Scams are Fleecing Americans

Scammers are trolling social media sites looking for victims; Adapted from Forbes On-line article by Diana Hembree, June 2017

Another fraud perpetuated against seniors are online dating sites where a vulnerable person corresponds with another and a romance begins. The victims tend to be widowed or divorced women in their fifties (or older) targeted by criminal syndicates usually based in Nigeria, according to the FBI. (Russian fraudsters are also heavily involved in romance scams, according to romancescam.com.) The victims are educated, computer-savvy and emotionally vulnerable, the agency adds. Con artists are able to hone in on that vulnerability because potential “marks” post openly about their lives and dreams on social media and dating sites.

After their romance continues, the perp asks for a “loan.” According to the FBI’s Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) received close to 15,000 reports of “romance scams,” amounting to more than \$230 million in losses in 2016 alone. (That was 2,500 more reports than the previous year.) The states with the most victims were California, Florida, Texas, New York and Pennsylvania. In figures from romancescam.org, which has 59,000 members, 1,813 members have reported more than \$25,891,837 in

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losses to romance scams – an average of more than \$10,430 in losses per victim. What can you do to prevent being a victim?

Do your research. If you're in an online relationship, take it slowly. Since social media profiles may be fake, do online searches on your sweetie's photo and profile to see if it has appeared somewhere else. Be wary if someone asks you to leave Facebook or a dating service to talk "offline."

Be skeptical of boyfriends/girlfriends you've never met. "If someone is asking for money or professing their love to you before you've even met them, that should suggest this may be fraud," Other common red flags include a suitor who can't meet you because he/she is supposedly working overseas, and one who tries to isolate you from your friends and family or to keep your online relationship secret.

Do not send money to anyone you don't know personally. Once money is wired overseas, it is virtually impossible to recover. (Insurance policies don't cover such scams.) Do not believe the scammer's promises that you will be repaid, she says. In addition, don't give anyone access to your bank account information so they can "store" money there. And beware of anyone who asks you to mail packages on his or her behalf: You might find yourself implicated in a criminal operation.

Cut off all contact with a scammer. Once you realize you're dealing with a fraudster, cut off all contact. Block the person from your email and social media.

Don't try to exact revenge. Although it may feel tempting to get back at someone who has hurt you so badly, realize that you are dealing with a professional crime syndicate. Report what you know to the police and the FBI's IC3 unit instead.

Fraud Alert!! The Sex Fraud Hoax

Not long ago I received an email that listed a web address that was linked to pornography and that if I did not send this entity money, the damaging information with photographs would be sent to all of my contacts. I knew I did not visit porn sites, but the email was an old one that I used to use. How did this blackmailer get my old email address? I was perplexed. Luckily, the day before I had heard a presentation by the F.B.I. about fraud. We were told to call them if we had any questions or problems. I told them about what I had received and they said it was a common fraud scheme. Ignore it and do not respond. How did they get my old email?

"Have you ever received a notification that your data has been compromised?" the FBI asked. I remembered that I received a letter from a bank and Target that their data systems were hacked and private information about their clients stolen. This hacker was using this stolen information to harass and intimidate people through attempted extortion. Don't send money to anyone who demands it on line!

Honoring Our Veterans Past & Present-To all of our TRTA members and veterans in our communities, both past and present, who have served or who have had, or currently have, family members who serve: we salute and honor you on behalf of a grateful nation.

Thanksgiving Greetings and Best Wishes to you and your families from the TRTA State Informative & Protective Services Committee: Earl Wall, Chair; Dr. Amy Jo Baker; Sandra Barber; Mary Sexton & Alicia Smith