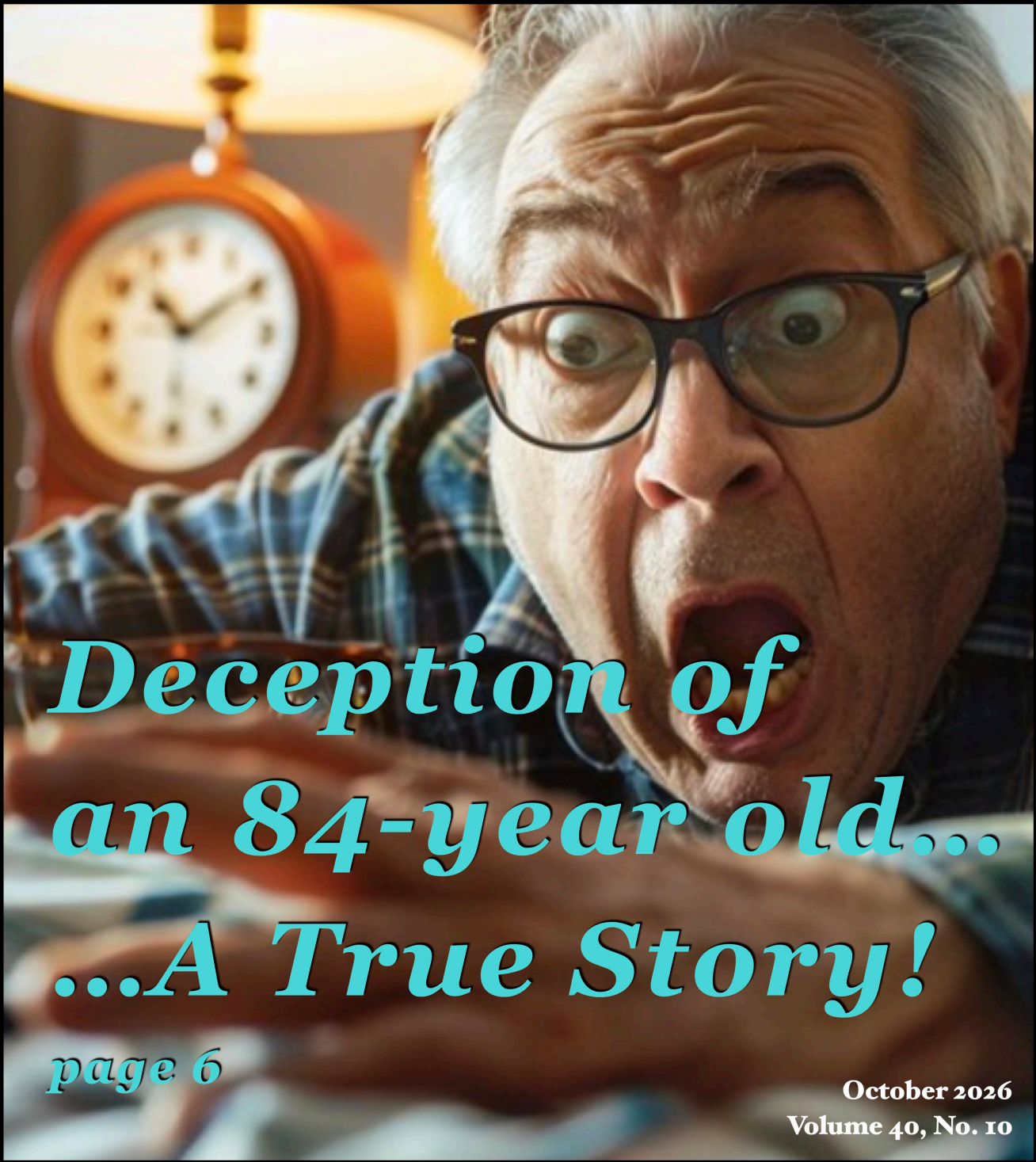


Senior News

Georgia

Providing Helpful Information for Mature Adults in GEORGIA!



*Deception of
an 84-year old...
...A True Story!*

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October 2026
Volume 40, No. 10

Opinion

SAY IT DIDN'T HAPPEN!

by Daniel W. Gatlyn, USN Ret; Minister/Journalist – dangatlyn@gmail.com

While traveling in ministry across forty two states, it normally became necessary to choose a place for lodging. As a matter of convenience, and familiarity, we had chosen Days Inn, when available; and, had become fairly acclimated to their facilities, even without a light on. On this occasion of alternated route and destination, we were forced to procure another motel for lodging... one a little less known; and, obviously with things placed differently. BIG Mistake!

In the "wee hours of darkness," it became time for a pit stop! Half asleep, I made my way in an assumed direction for matters at hand; and, recalling the location of all implements in Days Inn, it was... mistakenly... taken for granted that I needed no light. Being confident of where I was, I readied myself for a seat "on the throne," never dreaming of what was about to happen next!

Upon taking my seat, I sailed through "nine floors without a chute... landing in a bundle of mistakes and error." I mentally and rapidly noted that things gone "haywire," wondering just where I might have ended up! With no light, I could only guess, as I checked for broken bones!

Hearing the commotion, and loud thud, my wife switched on a light, and came rushing to the dilemma! I had landed in the tub... bottom side up... and thoroughly confused!

My first thoughts were, "I don't drink! How did this happen?"

Concerned, my wife made sure that I had no fatal injuries... **THEN BURST FORTH INTO UNCONTROLLED LAUGHTER!**

It wasn't even funny; and, it took me a while to view the comical side of the affair. Over breakfast, my wife "cracked up" again and again!

To be serious, I could have broken my neck! Like Motel 6, I now "leave a light on!"

I could visualize the Emergency Room! However my main injury was only around my pride! **"SAY IT DIDN'T HAPPEN!"**

"BUT... IT REALLY DID!"



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Taking Care!

When A Loved One Has Cancer... Help For Caregivers To Manage The Stress!

By Lisa M. Petsche – lmpetsche@gmail.com

A diagnosis of cancer is life-changing for the diagnosed person and those close to them. It launches them into a whole new world of medical information and procedures. Life suddenly revolves around consultations, tests and treatments, and the outcome is uncertain. If the diagnosed person has pre-existing health conditions, such as dementia, their care needs are multiplied.

If you are caring for a relative with cancer, the following are some things you can do to help manage the stress.



**Lisa
Petsche**

Accept

Accept the reality of the illness. Let go of any bitterness resulting from interrupted goals and plans, so you can channel your energy in constructive ways.

Allow yourself to experience all emotions that surface.

Bear in mind that cancer affects people physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually and that, although there may be similarities, no two people will experience it the same way.

Accept that how your relative feels and what they can do may fluctuate. Be flexible about plans and expectations.

Learn

Educate yourself about your relative's type of cancer. Share information with family and friends as appropriate, to help them understand. Do respect your relative's preferences regarding privacy. This can sometimes be a fine line.

Research community services that can help. The local Cancer Society branch and office on aging are good resources.

Communicate

Allow yourself time to adjust to your relative's illness and the changes it necessitates. Your relative will also need time to adapt. Be patient and keep communication lines open.

Allow your relative to express any and all emotions. Don't try to talk them out of their feelings, discourage tears or change the subject because of your discomfort.

Involve your relative and other family members in decision-making as much as possible. Don't shoulder all of the responsibility.

Ask questions and express concerns when meeting with healthcare professionals. Bring a notebook to appointments.

Prepare

Find out what to expect in terms of caregiving skills, medical equipment and community supports likely to be needed.

Talk with your relative about their wishes. Discuss living arrangements, outside help, surrogate decision-making, medical intervention and end-of-life care, and funeral arrangements if appropriate. Be careful not to make promises you may not be able to keep.

Help your relative complete legal paperwork such as advance directives, powers of attorney and a will.

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Simplify

Eliminate as many sources of stress in your life as possible. Set priorities, streamline tasks and learn to settle for less than perfection.

Take things one day at a time so you don't become overwhelmed.

Practice living in the moment and focusing on life's many simpler pleasures.

Practice Self-Care

Set aside quiet time each day, to nurture your spirituality and help keep you grounded.

Do something that provides you with meaning and purpose outside of the caregiving role, such as scrapbooking or researching your family tree.

Look after your health. Eat nutritious meals, get adequate rest, exercise and see your primary physician regularly.

Find something relaxing you can do every day – perhaps reading or listening to music.

Schedule regular breaks. Take a couple of hours, a day or an overnight. By being kind to yourself this way, you'll be more effective when you resume your caregiving tasks.

Connect

Stay connected to your friends.

Find a person you can talk to openly - someone who will listen and empathize. It's important to express your thoughts and feelings.

Talk with other caregivers. Join a support group in your community or online.

Get Help

Accept offers of help. Ask other family members to pitch in and be specific about what you need.

Take advantage of outpatient and home care services in your community.

Lisa M. Petsche is a social worker and freelance writer specializing in boomer and senior health matters. She has extensive personal experience with caregiving.

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Deception of an 84-Year Old... A True Story!

How an intelligent 84-year-old man was drawn into a carefully crafted deception and why it could happen to almost anyone. A true story.

By Carolyn Brenneman, Columnist

COVER: Panic and fear happen! Photo from Stockcake!

On an ordinary September afternoon, Jon, an 84-year-old man, sits at his computer. Jon is my friend. He is not naïve, nor is he careless. He is a thoughtful, intelligent man who has spent a lifetime making decisions, solving problems, and taking responsibility for the people he loves. Like many of his generation, his instinct when trouble arises is to face it directly. You do not ignore it. You do something.

That deep-seated instinct to protect, to act, and to fix a problem is precisely what makes him vulnerable.

It begins one morning with a shocking message on his computer screen. The pop-up claims that child pornographers have hacked his family's desktop computer. The words cut through him like ice. Jon's heart races, his mind fracturing into a thousand frantic questions. Before his brain can even process the full weight of the threat, he is already moving, driven entirely by pure survival instinct.



For most people, such an accusation would be deeply disturbing. For an older man whose life is built upon honor, responsibility, and protecting his family, the message carries a devastating weight. This is no longer just a technical glitch; it is an immediate threat to his reputation, his morality, and his home.

In that moment of sheer panic, Jon does what many would do. He calls the number on the screen. What follows is a masterfully constructed trap.

For over 90 minutes, a woman identifying herself as Iris (ID) speaks calmly and professionally from Microsoft's fraud department. She provides a case number, explains complex procedures, and establishes absolute authority. Then, she drops another bombshell: thirty thousand dollars has just been withdrawn from Jon's money market account at the Federal Credit Union in connection with the illicit ring. The threat has now reached into his life savings.

Next come the isolating instructions. Do not use the computer or your phones, as they are compromised. In an instant, Jon's ability to verify the truth is stripped away. He cannot call his credit union nor can he reach out to a family member. Instead, his ability to verify the truth is stripped away. He cannot call his credit union nor can he reach out to a family member. Instead, he is isolated in a psychological ecosystem manufactured entirely by strangers.

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Panic and fear happen! Photo from Stockcake!

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A new voice enters the call. A man identifying himself as Sam claims to be from the central office of the Federal Credit Union fraud department. Official and confident, he offers a quick solution: "Go to the bank. Withdraw the cash to protect it. Act quickly." With each step, the urgency intensifies.

Psychologists describe this as creating a "high-pressure emotional state" – a threshold where fear completely overrides skepticism. The mind narrows its focus to a single goal: ending the emergency. While this can happen to anyone, older adults are uniquely targeted. Raised in an era where authority figures, bank officials, and major corporations were inherently trusted, Jon is conditioned to respect the official language and case numbers provided to him.

The criminals understand this perfectly. They know an 84-year-old man cannot be motivated by greed. He is motivated by duty.

John jumps into the car. Nausea churns in Jon's stomach as he drives to the bank, his hands trembling violently against the steering wheel. He feels completely exposed, stripped of his dignity, as he requests \$30,000 in cash under the teller's bewildered gaze. Every tick of the clock feels like a sentence. Following the voice on the phone, he places the stacks of cash into a small box, his chest tightening as it is wrapped and sealed.

With every new notification, the instructions grow increasingly invasive. What are you wearing? What is your vehicle? What is your license plate number? What password will identify our courier? Then comes the drop-off location – a parking lot near Magnolia and East Ontario.

A profound, quiet tragedy unfolds. Standing in the middle of an ordinary parking lot, Jon holds tightly to the box containing \$30,000. He is operating under the terrifying, false belief that this drop-off is a controlled sting to shield his family and assist a federal investigation.

When an agent named Kevin approaches, the tension breaks briefly. Kevin utters the designated password, takes the box, and offers a brief nod of reassurance. He tells Jon that Sam will call shortly with final instructions, then drives away into the traffic, leaving Jon alone.

A fleeting sense of relief washes over Jon as he sits in his car. Seeking closure, he drives down the street to a physical Federal Credit Union branch, convinced that his total cooperation has finally cleared his name and secured his funds.

He walks inside, approaches a teller named Kass, and prepares to put the nightmare behind him. Jon calmly asks Kass to check his account and page Sam from the central office. Kass opens the account profile, checks the money market balance, and grows quiet. There is no returned money. The account is short, exactly \$30,000. She reviews the contact list and gently informs Jon that the Federal Credit Union has no fraud representative named Sam.

The case numbers, the tech support badges, and the authoritative voices instantly evaporate into a cold, hollow silence. The danger existed only in the story. There is no investigation. There is only an empty account and the crushing realization of betrayal.

Long after the money is gone, the real devastation lingers with the emotional fallout of fear, shame, and violated trust. Modern scams are not built upon ignorance; they are built upon the weaponization of human emotion. Criminals know exactly which levers to pull.

This story matters because it is about all of us. Most people do not lose their life savings because they stop thinking. They lose it because they care deeply, act under intense pressure, and trust the wrong voice at the wrong moment. On that September day, Jon believed he was being a protector. Instead, the very qualities that define him as a good man, his sense of duty, his honor, and his desire to do the right thing, were the exact weapons used to destroy his peace.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: Unfortunately, for we senior adults, this is a tremendously troubling situation to deal with as we're adding on the years and our minds aren't "what they use to be!"

Personally, I have a family member who is presently experiencing a very similar situation with a "con artist" located down in Central or South America. This guy is utilizing fake "doctored" photos and has convinced the family member (a female) that he is Elon and is in love with her; or, that at the least, that they are extremely close friends. He continues to drain ever dollar possible out of her. Unfortunately, no family member has been able to reach and convince her of this great deception!

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BBB Tip: Prepare Now for Emergencies, Disasters and Scams!

Submitted by Kelvin H. Collins, President/CEO, Better Business Bureau

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OFFICES: Macon: 277 M.L. King Jr. Blvd, Ste 201, Macon, GA 31201 • Augusta: 119 Davis Road, Ste 3-B, Augusta, GA 30907 Columbus: 233 12th Street, Ste 911-B, Columbus, GA 31901

BBB shares a reminder that emergencies can happen with little warning. Hurricanes, tornadoes, severe thunderstorms, flooding, fires and extended power outages can disrupt families and communities and cause significant property damage. BBB encourages consumers to prepare before an emergency occurs. Planning ahead can help protect your family, pets, home and finances – and can make you less vulnerable to scams and questionable contractors following a disaster.

Make a Disaster Plan

A good place to begin is Ready.gov, which provides resources to help families prepare for emergencies and disasters. Discuss these questions with everyone in your household:

- How will we receive emergency alerts and warnings?
- Where will we shelter if severe weather threatens?
- What is our evacuation route?
- Where will we meet if we become separated?
- How will we communicate if cellular service is disrupted?
- Do we have an out-of-area emergency contact?
- What arrangements do we need to make for children, older family members or anyone with special needs?
- What is our plan for our pets?

Make sure your cell phones are enabled to receive Wireless Emergency Alerts and consider signing up for alerts from your local emergency management agency. Having more than one way to receive emergency information is important.

Build or Replenish Your Emergency Supply Kit

Don't wait until a storm is approaching to look for emergency supplies. Buying supplies in advance can help you avoid shortages, long lines and higher prices. Your emergency kit should be tailored to your household and may include:

- Water and nonperishable food
- Flashlights and extra batteries
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio
- First-aid supplies
- Prescription medications and necessary medical supplies
- Portable phone chargers or power banks
- Cash
- Copies of important documents
- Personal hygiene products
- Supplies for infants, older adults or family members with special needs
- Food, water, medications, carriers and other supplies for pets

Review your kit at least once a year. Replace expired food, medications and batteries and update supplies as your family's needs change.

Prepare for Power Outages

- Severe weather can leave homes without electricity for hours or even days. Keep flashlights, batteries and portable chargers readily available and keep mobile devices charged when severe weather is expected.
- If someone in your household relies on electrically powered medical equipment, have a backup plan in place before an outage occurs.
- If you use a portable generator, follow the manufacturer's safety instructions carefully. Never operate a generator inside your home, garage or other enclosed area.

Make a Financial Readiness Plan

Recovering from a disaster is easier when important financial and insurance information is organized beforehand.

BBB recommends taking several steps:

- Create a household inventory. Photograph or video your home's contents, including valuable items, appliances and electronics. Keep receipts for major purchases when possible.
- Protect important documents. Keep identification, insurance policies, financial information, property records and other critical documents in a secure location.
- Maintain secure digital copies. Consider storing encrypted or password-protected copies of important documents in secure cloud storage or another protected location.
- Keep some emergency cash available. ATMs, credit card terminals and electronic payment systems may not work during extended outages.
- Review account information. Make sure financial institutions and insurance companies have your current contact information.

Review Your Insurance Before You Need It

Don't wait until after a disaster to discover what your insurance does – and does not – cover. Review your homeowners or renters insurance policy and talk with your insurance agent about:

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"EXHILARATING!
A JAW-DROPPING,
SOUL-STIRRING MUST-SEE."

The Washington Post



Natalia Yanelia Belcon. Photo by Bradley Credit

Such beauty being near the waterfalls!

Inside Mercier Market!

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- Your coverage limits
- Deductibles
- Temporary living expenses
- Replacement-cost versus actual-cash-value coverage
- Coverage for personal belongings
- Flood, wind or other exclusions that may require separate coverage

Keep your insurance company's claims number and policy information somewhere you can access it even if you cannot return home.

Prepare Your Home

Inspecting your property before severe weather arrives can prevent minor problems from becoming major ones. Consider:

- Are there damaged or missing roof shingles?
- Are gutters and downspouts clear?
- Are there signs of leaks or water intrusion?
- Are trees or large limbs too close to your home?
- Are doors, windows and exterior structures secure?
- Are drainage systems working properly?
- Are there areas of your home that could be vulnerable to flooding or wind damage?

BBB.org can help you find BBB Accredited Businesses for roofing, tree service, waterproofing, restoration and other home-improvement needs.

Don't Let a Disaster Turn Into a Contractor Nightmare

After major storms and other disasters, contractors often arrive in affected communities offering immediate repairs. Many are legitimate businesses, but disasters can also attract "storm chasers" and scammers. BBB recommends:

- Research contractors at [BBB.org](https://www.bbb.org) before hiring them.
- Check the company's BBB Business Profile, rating, complaints and customer reviews.
- Verify required licenses and insurance.
- Get multiple estimates when possible.
- Be cautious of unsolicited door-to-door offers.
- Resist high-pressure sales tactics.
- Get the scope of work, price, payment schedule and warranties in writing.
- Read contracts carefully before signing.
- Be cautious about paying large amounts upfront.
- Don't allow someone you don't know unrestricted access to your roof, attic, crawl space or other areas that are difficult for you to inspect yourself.

Be especially cautious when someone tells you that you must make an immediate decision to receive a special price. A legitimate contractor should give you reasonable time to understand what you are agreeing to.

Watch for Price Gouging

- High-demand products and services can become difficult to find after a disaster. Consumers may encounter unusually high prices for gasoline, hotel rooms, generators, bottled water, building materials, tree removal and other necessities.
- Buying essential supplies before an emergency can help you avoid shortages and unnecessary expenses.
- Consumers who believe a business is engaging in illegal price gouging should document the product or service, price, business name, location and date and report their concerns to the appropriate authorities. Consumers can also report misleading advertising and questionable marketplace practices to BBB.

Be Careful When Shopping Online

Scammers know consumers may urgently search online for generators, emergency supplies, home repairs and other products before and after a disaster. Before purchasing from an unfamiliar website:

- Research the company at [BBB.org](https://www.bbb.org).
- Check the website address carefully for misspellings or impersonator sites.
- Be skeptical of prices that are dramatically lower than those of established retailers.
- Avoid sellers demanding payment through gift cards, cryptocurrency, wire transfers or other difficult-to-recover payment methods.
- Use a credit card when possible because it generally provides additional protections if something goes wrong.

If you encounter a suspicious offer or believe you've been scammed, report it to BBB Scam Tracker at [BBB.org/ScamTracker](https://www.bbb.org/ScamTracker). Your report can help BBB investigate and warn other consumers.

Start With Trust

Preparation can make a significant difference when an emergency occurs. Make a plan, build your emergency supplies, review your insurance, document your property and know where to turn for trustworthy help before you need it. When hiring a business, use [BBB.org](https://www.bbb.org) to research businesses and find BBB Accredited Businesses in your area.

Kelvin Collins is president & CEO of the Better Business Bureau serving the Fall Line Corridor, which serves 77 counties across Georgia, Alabama and South Carolina. BBB helps consumers make informed marketplace decisions, promotes trustworthy business practices and provides resources to help consumers avoid scams.

To research a business, file a complaint, submit a customer review or report a scam, visit [BBB.org](https://www.bbb.org). For assistance from your local BBB, call 800-763-4222 or email info@centralgeorgia.bbb.org.

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BBB Warns: Be on the Lookout for Fake Home Warranty Letters!

Submitted by Kelvin H. Collins, President/CEO, Better Business Bureau

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A consumer recently shared a letter he received in the mail with BBB after noticing it urged him to confirm that his home warranty had not expired. The letter was marked “FINAL NOTICE – IMMEDIATE RESPONSE NEEDED” and warned that if his warranty had expired, he could be financially responsible for all repairs needed in his home. Better Business Bureau (BBB) and government regulators like the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) have noted recent spikes in these letters, prompting our organizations to issue alerts to homeowners. If you receive an unexpected letter or email claiming to be from or affiliated with your mortgage company, take a close look before responding. Here’s how to spot the signs of a potential scam:

The concerning letters typically claim to be from the “Home Warranty Department” and may contain markings meant to make it look more official, with wording such as “Official Business, Penalty for Private Use \$300.” The letter itself may list your mortgage company, but that’s data that can many times be obtained online from local government agency sites.

The letter also usually warns that the sender has been trying to reach you and has not received a call back, noting that a failure to call by a stated deadline may result in lapse of coverage. But, looking beyond these attempts to make the correspondence look professional, you’ll probably see other details that offer clues the letter is fabricated.

One BBB Scam Tracker report noted: “At the very bottom of the letter in small print is the comment, ‘Not all consumers have previous coverage. We are not affiliated with your current mortgage.’”

If you don’t read the fine print (or it doesn’t appear in the letter you receive), you’ll likely be concerned your home warranty has lapsed, leaving your mortgage at risk. In reality, you wouldn’t be dealing with your mortgage lender. Instead, you’ll be talking with a company that employs deceptive advertising tactics. Or, this may be a ploy used by a con artist who is simply seeking a way to obtain your bank account or payment information.

In the cases where the company does exist, this scheme can be considered [similar to some extended car warranty calls](#). The product may be real, but there are several things to consider before buying an extended warranty, including whether the business offering coverage is resorting to misleading tactics to sell you the service.

While many of the mailings look like official letters, there’s been examples of items looking like official checks being sent as well. Here’s an example of a common BBB Scam Tracker report being provided by homeowners who responded to one of these home mortgage promotional letters with what they thought was a valid check:

"My grandmother received a paper in the mail that said, Final Notice. She called the number on the paper. The man on the other line [name redacted] he went by, tried giving her a "home warranty" deal of \$234. This mail she received looks like a check with the amount \$199 on it with her name in bold letters. He agreed that her payment would be that monthly. She gave him her debit card info where he took exactly \$199.86 out on June 18th 2024 for this "home warranty."

Here’s tips from your BBB on how you can avoid mortgage and home warranty scams:

- **Go to the source.** If you receive any correspondence about your mortgage or home warranty that you aren’t sure about, don’t use the contact information in the message or letter. Instead, call your lender directly to inquire about the matter. Look up their contact information separately on your mortgage bill or search for your lender’s customer service line on their website.
- **Watch out for high-pressure offers or threats.** Don’t let scammers pressure you to act immediately, even if they say you could lose your home or failing to respond can be costly. If someone tries to use scare tactics, it’s best to stop communicating with them and contact your bank or lender directly. best to stop communicating with them and contact your bank or lender directly.
- **Never provide your financial information in response to an unexpected letter or on the phone to someone you don’t know.** If you’re being asked to urgently pay for something over the phone, it’s best to hang up. Don’t provide your credit card or banking information over the phone to someone who you haven’t confirmed to be a valid and representative of a trusted company or organization. Be aware of common red flags of scams like paying for something with a [prepaid gift card](#), a wire transfer, or through a [digital wallet app](#).
- **Be cautious if you receive an unexpected check from someone you don’t know.** You could unknowingly agree to sign up for a service by cashing the check – or the check could be drawn on a compromised account.
- **Shopping for a home warranty?** Do your research first. If you are in need of a home warranty, you want to be sure to evaluate several options and read the terms closely before signing a contract. You can also find BBB Accredited Businesses offering these services. Check out [this BBB Tip about home warranties](#) for more advice.

When something doesn’t seem right, take the time to check it out. Visit BBB.org for information on businesses and BBB.org/ScamTracker to research and report scams.

Kelvin Collins is president & CEO of the Better Business Bureau serving the Fall Line Corridor, which serves 77 counties across Georgia, Alabama and South Carolina. BBB helps consumers make informed marketplace decisions, promotes trustworthy business practices and provides resources to help consumers avoid scams. To research a business, file a complaint, submit a customer review or report a scam, visit BBB.org. For assistance from your local BBB, call 800-763-4222 or email info@centralgeorgia.bbb.org.



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~ CHAMPION SAFER STREETS IN MACON ~

We're excited to announce that **Macon's Big Bike Ride** returns on Saturday, November 7, 2026! Join hundreds of Middle Georgians for one of Macon's biggest biking celebrations.

At a time when transportation policy and federal priorities are shifting, there is an urgent need to demonstrate support for active transportation and the proven tools that help make our streets safer.

Macon's Big Bike Ride is an opportunity to show that our community believes in better streets, greenways, and transportation options for everyone. Together, we'll celebrate the progress Macon has made while building momentum for the work still ahead.

The ride kicks off at Rosa Parks Square and winds through Macon's streets, highlighting projects that are improving connections across our neighborhoods. We'll finish with a celebration at Fall Line Brewing Co., where you can connect with fellow riders and explore updates on the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail.

Whether you're a new rider or a seasoned cyclist, join us! We can't wait to ride with you!

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS:

- Kick-off & registration: Rosa Parks Square, 2:30 PM
- The Ride: 8-10 miles, 4:00 PM
- After-party: Fall Line Brewing Co., 6:00 PM
- Registration: \$10 per person. Kids under 12 ride free. Free registration is available for anyone in need - contact charity@bikewalkmacon.com for more details.
- Support: Further our mission by **donating to an ambassador, becoming a member or sponsoring, or purchasing a 2026 Big Bike Ride Shirt**. Your support helps create a safer, more inclusive, and sustainable biking community.



BECOME A BIG BIKE RIDE 2026 AMBASSADOR

We're looking for passionate riders and community champions to help make this year's ride our biggest yet. As an ambassador, you'll play a key role in fundraising for safer streets and encouraging friends, family, and neighbors to join the ride. It's a fun, simple way to make a big impact - and you don't need to be a pro-cyclist to get involved!

For more info, email

sophie@bikewalkmacon.com