



# Senior Siren

August—September, 2009

Volume 1, Issue 2

## Special points of interest:

- The Arvada Police Dept. created the Senior Liaison Officer position to address the needs of our city's senior population.
- Most crimes against seniors involve financial exploitation — that include frauds, scams, and cons.
- The Lockbox Program provides a house key for emergency medical responders in the event the senior cannot get to the door.

## Wallet Thief Captured!

As many of you already have heard, the wallet thief who was working mostly grocery stores from March to June has been captured. He has confessed to more than 50 wallet thefts and numerous attempts in Arvada, Westminster, Wheat Ridge, Jefferson County and Lakewood where he was finally caught and arrested. During my jailhouse interview with him he advised he would never try to take a wallet from a purse which was actually in the possession of the victim. He would only take wallets from purses left in shopping carts unattended. He advised it usually only took one second to retrieve the victim's wallets from out of their purses and they all usually made it very easy for him. He advised that in most cases the purses were sitting in the carts wide open with the wallets in plain view. He further stated he was not opposed to unzipping a purse given the chance. Please, if you have to take a purse to the store instead of a fanny pack or another item you might wear, keep your purse with you at all times. I guarantee you that this suspect is not the last one who will try to take your purse or wallet. They are very good at it and sometimes we make their jobs even easier. Let's be careful out there.

See the related story on page 4.

## Inside this issue:

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Wallet Thief Captured!            | 1 |
| Fraudulent Credit Card Calls      | 2 |
| Humor of the Month                | 3 |
| Upcoming Triad Community Meetings | 3 |
| Operation Undercover Granny       | 4 |

## **CONSUMER ALERT!**

From the Office of Jefferson/Gilpin Counties  
District Attorney Scott Storey

Volume 1, Issue 2

### **Storm Damage & Home Improvement Fraud**

The recent storm may have caused damage to your home or yard. You may have a need for roof repair, water damage repair, or tree trimming. This situation offers an opportunity for home-repair con artists to target unsuspecting victims. Often they will drive neighborhood-to-neighborhood looking for the most damage and then approach residents door-to-door.

Home-repair scam artists often require a hefty down payment up front and then never return to do the work or do sub-par work that will need to be re-done by a competent home repair business. Don't be fooled—these con artists are often friendly, gracious, and overly helpful in approaching their victims; they usually offer a price that is 'too good to be true,' and may inflate their price with additional repairs that needed to be made before all of the work could be completed.

Because Colorado does not have a State Contractor's Licensing

Board, the consumer must expend the effort to check out repair businesses before any work is done, any contract is signed or any money is paid. District Attorney Scott Storey warns consumers, "It may be wise to never do business with door-to-door contractors."

To protect from home improvement fraud:

Call the Better Business Bureau for references on repair companies;

Get known references from friends who have had satisfactory work done;

Get a written contract, at least 3 bids, and don't be pressured into paying more for any reason;

Don't pay money up front for materials; offer to pay the material's vendor directly;

Never allow any door-to-door contractor into your home—they may use the opportunity to steal personal information;

Call local law enforcement if home repair companies are going door-to-door in your neighborhood.

*The consumer must expend the effort to check out repair businesses before any work is done, any contract is signed or any money is paid.*

**For questions, assistance, or to schedule  
a "Power Against Fraud" seminar,  
call: 303-271-6980**

### Closing sermon words

A preacher was completing a temperance sermon: with great expression he said, "If I had all the beer in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river."

With even greater emphasis he said, "And if I had all the wine in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river."

And then finally, he said, "And if I had all the whiskey in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river."

He sat down. The song leader then stood very cautiously and announced with a smile, "For our closing song, let us sing Hymn # 365: "Shall We Gather at the River."

## Upcoming Events -- An Invitation to TRIAD!

The Jefferson County TRIAD is a cooperation between seniors, senior service providers, and criminal justice (DA, police, and sheriffs) who meet together once a month to discuss, inform, and disseminate information related to senior safety and security. The purpose of the meetings is to lend a voice for safety concerns from seniors, news and information from service providers and safety information from law officers. Each meeting also has a speaker who can inform the group in a matter pertaining to senior issues.

By attending the monthly meetings, you will be able to bring issues from your community to the table, and bring back valuable information to your community or senior group.

The next two meetings will be held on Tuesday, August 18th and Tuesday, September 15th. Meetings begin at 1:30 p.m. and are held at the Jefferson County District Attorney's Conference Room. Address is 500 Jefferson County Parkway, Golden, CO. I will see you there!

**Come to a  
TRIAD meeting!  
It is a chance to  
learn and share  
valuable crime  
fighting information!**

## Operation Undercover Granny



From the desk of  
Officer Don Sikkema,  
Senior Liaison,  
Arvada Police  
Department

Criminal Investigations Unit  
8101 Ralston Road  
Arvada, Colorado 80002

Phone: 720-898-6724

Fax: 720-898-6701

Email:

dsikkema@arvada.org

In an attempt to capture the son-of-a-gun who was stealing the wallets I had an idea for an undercover sting. It would require a lot of people to make it happen though. I knew we couldn't place a civilian in jeopardy of being hurt during the sting operation, so we needed a way of turning one of our female officers into a senior citizen. I contacted the Arvada Center for the Performing Arts and asked the Drama Coordinator for help. Without any hesitation he put together a team of prop and makeup artists. That amazing group of ladies spent at least an hour transforming and adding thirty years to Officer Mary Miklos from the Arvada Police Department. The attention to detail was perfect, right down to the purse with a picture of the grandchild hanging on the key ring and a large wallet with cash and coupons sticking out in plain view. She was a theft target looking for a place to happen.

With Patrol Team One from the APD serving as civilian shoppers, we all be-

gan working a local grocery store that the thief seemed to prefer.

For an hour and a half Officer Miklos shopped ever so slowly, leaving her purse unattended in the shopping cart again and again. We observed some interested parties who got particularly close, but no takers.

On that day we were unable to catch the wallet thief. But what a great success in spite of that. Different Arvada departments and agencies all working together for one good cause.

The next time you are at the Arvada Center for a program, leave a note or try a personal thank you for the makeup crew and their very supportive assistance in this operation. After all, they had your safety and welfare in mind as they worked diligently to ultimately help the APD capture this theft suspect.

