

Ask for I.D.

Bogus utility workers prey on aged

By JACKIE KLEIN

The victims are usually elderly persons.

The suspects are transient groups of con artists who operate in daylight hours, posing as utility workers or repairmen. They have been known to drive pick-up trucks with compressors in the back but no tail-pipes, or new luxury cars with Ohio license plates.

Police in Oakland, Macomb, Livingston, Washtenaw and Monroe counties

say attempts to bilk older residents are occurring frequently.

It's happened in Southfield more than once. The crime is called fraud and the con-games are called scams.

Perpetrators drive into areas seeking victims. They use a variety of scams to get into the homes of senior citizens, who are often vulnerable and afraid to complain or say no.

"Some members of the crew pose as gas men and Edison workers," said Southfield patrolman John Hieronymus. "They're telling homeowners they're going to give them a rebate on their utility bills or that they need immediate repairs."

"Driveway resurfacing, roof and cement repairs and electrical and furnace service are examples of other fraudulent schemes against unsuspecting residents."

LAST YEAR, Hieronymus recalled, a man wearing blue coveralls, posing as a gas company employee, told an 80-year-old resident of a home in the city's Evergreen-Eight Mile area that he had checked her meter and was going to give her a \$25 rebate on her bill.

He asked the woman if she had change for \$50. This is a common ploy in the operation. When the residents reach into their pockets, purses or drawers for change, the con-men grab all their money and run away.

Fortunately for the 80-year-old woman, her husband came in from the backyard and chased the impostor out of the house. The couple didn't take the license number of the vehicle. If they had, Hieronymus said, police might have caught the suspect and arrested

him for illegal entry.

Another Southfield woman, who lives alone, didn't get off as easily. She fell for the rebate scam and the would-be gas company worker took off with her savings.

"MANY OLDER persons can't pick a suspect out of a line-up," Hieronymus said. "They're afraid to get involved. Maybe the con-artist used scare tactics."

"In Pontiac, two guys with compressors in back of their pick-up trucks told an older couple they needed their driveway and roof resurfaced and repaired. The men used a high-pressure sales pitch and they did a very incomplete job. But they intimidated the old man and woman, who gave them a check for \$850."

If you see an old pick-up truck with compressors and no tail-pipe, or a new car with an Ohio license plate, be wary, the police officer warns.

Hills volunteer honored for work

Michael Strong of Farmington Hills was one of 12 Michigan State University student volunteers to be honored recently for their outstanding service to the Michigan State Legislature.

Special tributes were made to the volunteer legislative aides in presentations in the House chambers and at a reception following the House proceedings.

The students, who served as aides during the 1978-79 academic year, worked with legislators in constituent relations, press and public relations and on short- and long-term research.

No garbage pickup July 4

There will be no garbage collection on Wednesday, July 4, said Farmington Hills DPW Director Ed Taylor.

Normal Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday collection days will be moved back one day to Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

Residents who usually put out refuse Tuesday night are asked to do so Wednesday night next week.

Normal refuse collection schedules will resume the week of July 9.

Posen debuts

Larry Posen will be seen in the first play this summer season at Vincennes University in Indiana. He will portray Toby in "110 in the Shade" on July 5, 6, and 7.

Posen joined the Vincennes University staff this past spring as manager of food service. He has performed in numerous plays in the past and worked as lighting and sound director for productions. Posen has also been involved in puppetry for 13 years.

He is the son of Willard and Babette Posen of 29148 Randlewood Drive in Farmington Hills.

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Phi Kappa initiates

Three Farmington Hills students have been initiated into the Michigan State University chapter of Phi Kappa Phi in Lansing. They are among 516 new members.

Initiated are: Colleen M. Hanlon, 25465 Wykeshire, a junior in political science; Larry R. Schrock, 30387 Windy Brook Lane, a graduate student in business administration; Theresa Zapala, 34134 Gloucester Circle, a senior in retailing.

Phi Kappa Phi is a national honor society which recognizes and encourages superior scholarship in all fields of study. To be eligible for membership, juniors must have a grade point average of at least 3.84 and be in the top 1.5 percent of their class. Seniors must be in the top seven percent of their class and have a grade point average of at least 3.62. Graduate students in the top 1.5 percent of their class must have a grade point average of at least 3.94. All grade point averages are based on a four point scale.

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