

Social Security number snafu could lead to ID theft

As I was going through the mail, I came across a letter of apology addressed to my husband and me because our names and social security numbers inadvertently appeared on the 2001 tax booklet label for all to see. Although we certainly appreciated being notified about this situation, I can only imagine the headache this could cause us and countless thousands of other taxpayers.

It is very important that we protect ourselves from identity theft. Although identity theft can be resolved, it can take some time to clear up and the process can be very frustrating. To some people, the time may not be important, however, to the individuals who are trying to use credit to purchase a home or a vehicle, time could be very important.

What can we do about it at

CRIME WATCH

this point? Well, there are a few things that we can do, such as calling our creditors and having them put an alert on our credit report. This action will send up a red flag should an unwanted credit card or new utilities be applied for. The credit card company or utility company will call the individual listed on the application and ask for more extensive information. They will call you at home as well as at work if you would like.

If you would like to take advantage of this free service, just call the credit reporting companies. These credit reporting companies will not only put a caution on your account, but will also send you a free credit report. You may contact Exper-

ian at 1-800-311-4769, Equifax at 1-800-525-6285, and Trans Union at 1-800-680-7289. All three companies must be called and a separate call must be made for each social security number involved.

These numbers access an automated system into which you input your vital information. Husband and wife must call separately. This is probably a good time to take advantage of receiving your free credit report, there may be items on your credit status that are not yours. I took advantage of this service and found information that is not true and needs to be corrected, you may too.

Good Luck.

Juliet McGlinch is a Crime Prevention Technician with the Farmington Hills Police Department.

POLICE CALLS

The following reports were filed this week with the Farmington Hills Police Department:

ARMED ROBBERY

At the CVS drug store on Haggerty, employees said a man walked in the store around 1:20 a.m. Thursday and asked for change from the cashier. The man then opened his jacket and displayed a handgun in his waistband. He told the cashier to give him the money in the register and not to lock the doors. He got the money then fled on foot. He was described by employees as a white male, 6-foot tall, around 180 pounds, with blond hair, a slight beard, wearing a blue jacket and blue jeans.

CELL PHONES STOLEN

A woman at the Time-Warner Cable company said someone took her cell phone out of her purse between 1:30-7 p.m. Wednesday. The purse was under her desk. Loss was \$140.

At the International School, 28555 Middlebelt, a woman reported her \$100 cell phone was taken from her desk in a classroom Thursday.

CAR DAMAGED

In the 37800 block of McKenzie Ct., a 1995 Acura Integra was damaged with paintballs between 5:30-5 p.m. Wednesday. Damage was estimated between \$500-\$1,000.

SHOPLIFTING MOM

A 34-year-old Farmington woman was arrested for shoplifting at the T.J. Maxx on Orchard Lake around 10:45 p.m. Thursday. Police said security spotted her putting six items of clothing in her baby stroller and leaving without paying.

FRAUD INVESTIGATION

At the McDonald's restaurant at 37555 W. 12 Mile, the manager told police a woman has come in four times in the past two weeks claiming she is being short-changed by \$4 after her order is completed. The last incident occurred Thursday.

LAWN JOB

In the 39200 block of Plumbrook Dr., a 16-year-old Farmington Hills girl was apprehended after police were called about her running her SUV over the lawn of a fellow student's home around 9 p.m. Thursday. Both attend North Farmington High School. Three other girls from the high school were in the vehicle.

DRUNKEN DRIVING

Around 2:35 a.m. Friday, police pulled over a 21-year-old New Hudson woman for speeding along Orchard Lake near 12 Mile. She had a .13 blood/alcohol level.

--Compiled by staff writer Paul R. Pace

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