

# Fraud artists pick on local residents

If you're a fraud artist, I have a sucker for you. Allow me to introduce you to Whitchurch-Stouffville. This municipality's a sitting duck for the latest in con lines and sleazy tricks.



Joan Ransberry

A few years ago, the Ontario Provincial Police Phone Busters squad reported a widespread telephone scam operating across the province. Its victims included people from Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Phone Busters issued warnings to residents, especially the elderly. In this fraud, victims were called by a charming gentleman and told they were the lucky winner of a major prize such as a car.

All that was required was to pay the shipping charges in order to transport the vehicle from Montreal to Toronto. Mr. Charm then offers to look after the administrative matters linked to the shipping charges.

The victims were asked to hand over their credit card number, bank account number and/or debit card number. Of course, there was no prize. But there was a surprise. The victim's bank account was drained.

While Phone Busters make some arrests, telephone scammers manage to steal millions of dollars. The elderly are prime targets. They're vulnerable, often lonely and thieves take full advantage.

About three years ago a Stouffville businessman disguised himself as a financial agent, wrapped himself in Christianity and walked off with more than \$4 million of other people's money. David Blow's victims included fellow church goers from Whitchurch-Stouffville. While Mr. Blow did a little time behind bars, none of the money was recovered. His victims were left bitter, sad and, perhaps, wondering about who sits beside them at church.

Last week, Whitchurch-Stouffville residents Sharon and David Baxter learned they were victims of debit card skimming. York Regional Police's fraud squad says this new type of fraud is at an epidemic level.

Thieves have found a way to steal personal identification numbers (PIN) and are using them to access bank accounts. The bad guys inflate the accounts by making fake deposits, then follow up with real withdrawals. The Baxters

call it being robbed by a "modern day Jesse James".

More than 100 cases of this fraud have been reported in Stouffville and Markham.

The point of compromise is usually gas bars. When keying in your PIN number at the gas bar, a lap top-like box underneath the counter is downloading the debit card information. A new card is made and off the thief goes to make a withdrawal.

If I buy gas from anywhere other than my usual spot at the corner of Ninth Line and Main Street, I'm going to look underneath the counter.

I'm not going to be a victim of fraud for the second time. I'm a product of the old teaching: Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me. Yes, I've been a victim of fraud.

Six years ago I bought a three-month membership at a fitness centre at Success Plaza in Stouffville.

I was into my fourth week when the owner called to say she had a sell-off, made up of a one-year membership package for \$200. It was a bargain. I visited her immediately and gave her a cheque.

The next morning I arrived at the centre for my one-hour workout, only to find a note stating the centre was closed for the day, "due to a family emergency."

The same note was at the fitness centre the next day. I assumed it was a death of a close family member. Three days later, still no sign of anyone. An alarm bell rang. I started to snoop.

Yes, my cheque had been cashed. I learned the business was belly up and the owner had been evicted. Just before she split, she hit on her members with the sell-off package.

I have no idea how an elderly person feels when robbed of his or her life savings. I only lost \$200. Still, if I ever see that woman, I'm going to sneak up on her and give her a boot in the derriere.

## RUBY RED GRAPEFRUITS

It has been a long summer if you're a grapefruit lover — they haven't been that good — until now. These are new crop 'size 32' which are big, juicy and ready to get you started on a new season of citrus.

From the Bahamas!

**.59** each

## DRISCOLL RASPBERRIES

It's the last call for great fall raspberries. These are 'Driscoll' brand (the best), nice and plump and delicious. They're usually a sharp price for a week, maybe two, in the fall, then they're gone till next spring. So if you want great raspberries, get in and grab some at a great price!

From California

**1.99** pkg.

## OUR APPLE PIES

At our bakery counter we'll have a couple of features. One is our homemade apple pies — both in pastry and streusel top (crumble) in both the large and smaller individual size. We use a variety of apples, including Spys and Courtlands, to make these. We have a delicate hand with the seasoning and we have a big appetite — that's why we make the bigger ones in a 9" size — You don't want to run out part way through.

Made totally from scratch  
Reg. \$8.95 each

**1/3 OFF** THIS WEEK

## SCARY HALLOWE'EN STUFF!

We'll have some pretty scary stuff available from our bakery from now till Hallowe'en. It will include extra-scary cupcakes, really pretty decorated ginger or sugar cookies and white or chocolate cakes in various sizes, with frightening Hallowe'en decorations!

## WHAT'S FOR DINNER?

We've taken what seemed like a mountain of pork tenderloins, seasoned and roasted them and served them up in a variety of sauces. The first is Porcini Mushroom sauce, the second a Sun-Dried Tomato Sauce, the third is with domestic Porta Bella Mushrooms and the last is with a mild Green Peppercorn Sauce.

Just heat and serve,  
Serves 2-3  
Reg. \$14.95

**25% OFF** THIS WEEK

## OUR DELI ROAST PORK

Our stuffed roasted pork is on sale this week at the deli. It will be available warm, by-the-chunk at dinner time or available cool, by the slice all the time. It's our great roast pork, stuffed with our sage & onion stuffing, seasoned and slow-roasted.

At the Deli.  
Reg. \$1.99 / 100 g

**1/3 OFF** THIS WEEK

## LOCAL CAULIFLOWER

Eat up your veggies folks, and this week it's Cauliflower. We have really nice and large snow-white cauli for your dinner this week.

Product of Ontario!

**.99** each

## YOU COULD WIN OUR HUGE PUMPKIN — BUT THAT'S NOT ALL!

As we've done for a number of years, we have a huge pumpkin in front of our store. If you are under 12 and guess the weight (or are the closest), you could win it. We'll deliver it — and pick it up later if you wish — but that's not all. This year, if you wish, it can be expertly carved for you by none other than 'Farmer Frank' from Whittamore's Farm — an expert carver of scary pumpkins! — and even that's not all. We have a few other large pumpkins, and two runner-up guesses will get one too! And — all three winners will get a Village Grocer Loot Bag to make sure that you've got enough treats for Hallowe'en.

— So place your guesses at the cashier desk at the front of the store. The big one is between 750 and 850 lb!

## JUST ARRIVED!

We've just received a shipment of some 'U.S.D.A. Prime' filets and rib eyes. They'll be available at the meat counter — and at the Village 'Chop House' on Main Street for dinner!

You may need a reservation, so phone early —

**905-480-0094**

## COMING NEXT WEEK!

We'll have our Holly plants in both male and female, which are looking really good, we'll have a corned beef sale and we'll be receiving the beginnings of a great selection of Fall - winter outside decorations — and our annual KNIFE SALE!

## WHAT ABOUT A WAXER'S GAME

My friend, Don Bremner, who owns the Markham Waxers, brought me a few tickets to pass out to the Friday evening game. It's the 100th year of junior level hockey in Markham and, until we get an NHL Franchise, it's the most exciting hockey going. So grab your kids, and a couple tickets from us, and get out to the game — it's great fun.

## OUR ONION SOUP

Most of you know that we supply some of our frozen products to other stores — far and wide, actually. When prospective (or regular) customers come for a tour of our Markham kitchen, they pass the supply storage shelves — and invariably they notice the cases of Guinness beer. Most say "boy, I'd like to work here" — but I tell them that it's one of the key ingredients in our Onion Soup. The other ingredients are great onions, made from scratch beef stock and a delicate hand with seasoning. It's a great soup!

Reg. \$5.49  
Serves 3-4

**25% OFF** THIS WEEK

[www.whittsminigolf.com](http://www.whittsminigolf.com)  
**WHAT'S ON**  
**HAUNTED BARN NOW OPEN**  
Thurs / Fri. 4 - 9 pm; Weekends 10 am - 9 pm  
Open till Hallowe'en  
**7325 Reesor Rd., Markham**  
3km south of Hwy. 7.

**the VILLAGE GROCER**  
QUALITY FOODS

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Sat. 9:00-6:00 ~ Sun. 10:00-5:00  
**548 Carlton Road, Unionville**  
**940-1770**